

THE
PULPIT COMMENTARY,

EDITED BY THE
VERY REV. H. D. M. SPENCE, D.D.,

DEAN OF GLOUCESTER;

AND BY THE
REV. JOSEPH S. EXELL, M.A.

WITH
INTRODUCTIONS

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E P H E S I A N S.

Exposition and Homiletics
By REV. PROFESSOR W. G. BLAIKIE, D.D.

Homilies by Various Authors.

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THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE EPHESIANS.

INTRODUCTION.

I. BY WHOM WRITTEN.

TILL the days of De Wette, who was followed by Baur and Schwegler, Dr. Samuel Davidson, and some others, it was never doubted that the Epistle to the Ephesians was written by St. Paul. This had been all along the uniform tradition of the Church. The external evidence in his favour is about as strong as the case admits of. The list of early writers who are believed to attest this includes Ignatius, Polycarp, Marcion, Valentinus, Irenæus, Clemens Alexandrinus, Tertullian, and the author of the Muratorian Canon, and thereafter the Epistle is constantly included among the Pauline writings. It is not alleged that there is the faintest external evidence in favour of any other writer.

It is solely on internal grounds that the anti-Paulinists base their opinion. 1. Generally, it is alleged that the Epistle is a somewhat wordy repetition of that to the Colossians, and that so fresh and vigorous a mind as that of the apostle would not have been likely to repeat itself in such a way. 2. There are expressions that seem to show that the writer had never been at Ephesus; *e.g.* ch. i. 15, he has *heard* of the faith, etc., of the Ephesians; ch. iii. 2, 3, the Ephesians may have *heard* of the commission given to him; ch. iv. 21, "*If so be ye have heard him.*" Such expressions seem to show uncertainty as to their position and knowledge. 3. There are no salutations to the members of the Church at Ephesus, as we should certainly have looked for, considering how long St. Paul was there (Acts xx. 31). 4. The Church at Ephesus consisted of both Jews and Gentiles (Acts xix. 8—10, 17); but the Epistle is addressed wholly to Gentiles, and rests mainly on the fact that privileges of equal value had been brought to them by the instrumentality of the apostle. 5. Many things in style, sentiment, and aim are not Pauline.

The hypothesis as to the authorship which those who hold these views have

adopted is that some worthy man, residing at Rome, wishing to do good to the Ephesians, or perhaps to a cluster of Churches of which that at Ephesus was one, wrote this Epistle, and, in order to obtain acceptance for it, issued it in the name of Paul; nor was this an absolute fabrication, for, as it consists to a large extent of the views of Paul as expressed in the Epistle to the Colossians, it really is in substance Pauline. People were not very critical in those days; they received it as genuine, and ever after it passed as such. The date at which it is supposed to have been written is various; De Wette assigns it to the apostolic age; Schwegler and Baur give it the same date as that of the fourth Gospel—the middle of the second century; but Davidson is compelled to place it between A.D. 70 and 80.

In this hypothesis, the error is committed, so common with critics of the new light, of removing one set of difficulties by creating much greater. The difficulties of the new view are both moral and intellectual. Morally, there is the very serious difficulty of giving, as author of the Epistle, the name of one who was not its author. The guilt of this is aggravated by the way in which the writer's claim to be listened to is set forth, "Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God," and by the fact that all writings that were really apostolic carried to the Church supernatural authority. The real writer assumes Paul's name; he not only trifles with the apostle, but with the Divine authority which all true apostles enjoyed. Intellectually, the hypothesis has this difficulty—it maintains that Paul could not have been the author, yet that, from the very beginning, the Church accepted him as the author. The writer makes it plain that he was never at Ephesus, but the blind Ephesians received the letter as from Paul, who had been three years there. The style, the sentiment, the aim, are not Pauline, yet they were accepted as such. The writer was so careless that he did not take the trouble to avoid expressions that could not have been written by Paul; and the recipients were so stupid that, in spite of these things, they accepted it as his. An hypothesis so clumsy and hanging so ill together refutes itself.

The objections referred to, though attended with considerable difficulty, are not at all conclusive. The very principle of the De Wette hypothesis, that the Epistle was passed off and accepted as Pauline, may show that it cannot contain anything obviously un-Pauline. It is true that many topics are the same as those handled in Colossians; but the matters peculiar to Ephesians are very remarkable (*e.g.* the statement of salvation by grace, ch. ii.; the prayer for the Ephesians, ch. iii.; the Christian panoply, ch. vi.). Every devout reader feels that the parts peculiar to the Ephesians contain some of the finest of the wheat; and though repetitions are not usual with the apostle, there is no reason why he, like any other letter-writer, should not have repeated to the Ephesians what he had written to another Church, if their circumstances required a similar communication.

The objections which we have marked 2, 3, 4, do certainly cause a feeling of surprise. We should certainly have expected the apostle to refer to his

personal intercourse with the Ephesians, and to send salutations to some of them, especially the elders he had met at Miletus; and we should not have expected the Epistle to be written so preponderatingly to Gentiles. But, in point of fact, in many of his Epistles the apostle sends no personal greetings; to do so was by no means his universal habit. Besides, as the Epistle was sent by Tychicus, a personal friend in whom he had great confidence, the greetings might be conveyed orally by him. We find, too, that in his Epistle to Philemon, who was one of his own converts, he uses that very expression, "*hearing of thy faith and love,*" which in Ephesians is said to prove that the writer had never been at Ephesus. And as for the composition of the Ephesian Church, there are several incidents which show that, from the Jews, there came for the most part only bitter opposition (Acts xix. 9, 13, 14; xx. 19); so that the great majority of the Church, which was a very numerous one, must have been Gentiles. In fact, the shrine-makers for Diana would have had no cause for fear if it had not been for the multitude of pagans whom Paul was persuading to abandon the old religion. Moreover, in our everyday life, we are ever finding things that are mysterious to us when our information is imperfect, but that become plain and simple when some missing link of explanation is supplied. It is certain that the early Church did not see in the features of the Epistle now adverted to any reason for doubting that Paul was the author. As to the allegation that the style, tone, and sentiment are in many respects not Pauline, no weight is to be attached to it. To trace salvation to grace as its fountain; to magnify the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ; to proclaim the freedom of the new dispensation; to interlace doctrine and duty in the web of exhortation; to sound the military trumpet, as it were and stimulate his readers to intrepid action in the service of Christ;—what were more eminently Pauline objects than these? and where are they more characteristically promoted than in this very writing?

A conjecture has been adopted by some writers that this Epistle was not addressed to Ephesus only, but was a kind of circular letter, sent first to Ephesus, but afterwards to various neighbouring Churches. On this hypothesis it has been held that an explanation may be given of those things which create a feeling of surprise. To this hypothesis we shall have to advert further on.

The Epistle bears throughout to have been written by Paul, and, as he speaks in several places in the character of "a prisoner of the Lord," it appears that he was a captive at the time. There were two places where he suffered captivity—Cæsarea and Rome. The reference to Tychicus, the bearer of the letter for the Colossians as well as of this one for the Ephesians, and other allusions, make it probable that he was at Rome when he wrote this letter. It is usually thought that the Epistle to the Ephesians was written shortly after that to the Colossians, while both were despatched together, and that their date is A.D. 62. No one could have inferred from the tone of the letters that at the time the writer was

confined in bonds. Anything more bright, cheerful, and even exulting than the tone of the letter to the Ephesians can hardly be conceived. No doubt some critics would say that this showed that the letter could not have been written in such circumstances. But negative critics are never more at sea than in estimating spiritual forces. The triumphant tone of the letter is no proof that the writer was not in prison, but it is a signal proof that his Master had kept his word to him, "Lo, I am with you alway, even to the end of the world."

II. TO WHOM WRITTEN.

The words of the first verse (as it is in our text), ἐν Ἐφέσῳ, sufficiently show the destination of the Epistle; but the authenticity of these words has been disputed. Basil the Great received the Epistle as addressed to the Ephesians, but quoted and commented on ver. 1 so as to show that ἐν Ἐφέσῳ was not in the manuscripts he used, at least not in those of early date. In the Codex Vaticanus and the Codex Sinaiticus the words are written by a later hand. Marcion appears to have called it Paul's Epistle to the Laodiceans, and quoted ch. iv. 5, 6 as from that Epistle. But the liberties taken by Marcion with the canon and canonical books show that but little weight is to be attached to him. Undoubtedly a difference was introduced in the manuscripts at an early date. It is not easy to decide whether the words were omitted in some manuscripts from the original text, or whether they were inserted in other manuscripts where the text had them not.

By some it has been thought that the Epistle was originally addressed to the Laodiceans, and that it is therefore the writing referred to in Col. iv. 16. Bleek favours this view, while he holds that the letter may have been an open one, intended for Laodicea in the first instance, but for other places near Laodicea that were even less known to the apostle personally. In opposition to this view, it is to be remarked that in no manuscript are the words ἐν Λαοκιδείῃ to be found in place of ἐν Ἐφέσῳ, and, moreover, the letter referred to in Colossians is not a letter to the Laodiceans, but an Epistle from Laodicea. What that Epistle was is unknown, and can be only matter of conjecture.

Another supposition, as we have already said, is, that while this letter was addressed to the Ephesians in the first instance, it was not meant for them alone. It is supposed that there were other Churches in much the same condition as that of Ephesus, and that the Epistle was intended as an encyclical letter, to go the round of them all. This might in some degree account for the absence of familiar salutations, and for other features that might have reasonably been looked for in a letter to the Ephesians. On the other hand, and in opposition to this hypothesis, there is nothing to indicate that the letter was meant for a variety of Churches. There is throughout an assumption of the unity of the Church, the letter

is addressed apparently to one set of people, whose spiritual history had been marked by the same features.

To get over the difficulty arising from the absence of all personal references, and other difficulties, some have thought that Ephesus was not included among the places to which the letter was addressed; but fresh difficulties arise with this supposition: it makes it impossible to account for the words *ἐν Ἐφέσῳ* occurring so generally, and for the universal tradition that the letter was addressed to that Church. Nor is it easy to conceive that Paul should write to a circle of Churches adjacent to the city where he spent three years, and say nothing to the Christians in that city.

On the whole, taking both external and internal evidence into account, there seems to be no reason for giving up the traditional view that the Epistle was addressed to the Ephesians. It is not a question that admits of demonstration, but the difficulties attending this view are less than those attending any other. Even if it were a perfectly open question, if Ephesus were not now in possession, we should say that it had the best claim; certainly nothing has been advanced to show that that claim ought to be surrendered in favour of any other.

III EPHEBUS AND ITS CHURCH.

Ephesus was an important city, situated at the mouth of the river Cayster, near the middle of the western coast of the peninsula of Asia Minor. The term "Asia," however, was in those times confined to the Roman province in the west of the peninsula, of which Ephesus had become the capital nearly two hundred years before it was visited by Paul. Its inhabitants were half Greek, half Asiatic, and their religion and superstitions were a compound of the East and the West. Diana, or Artemis, a goddess of the West, was the chief object of worship; but the style of her worship had in it much of Oriental mystery and munificence. The temple of Diana was renowned as one of the seven wonders of the world. It had been two hundred and twenty years building; its roof was supported by one hundred and twenty-six columns, each sixty feet high, the gifts of as many kings. The image of Diana, said to have fallen from heaven, was of wood, forming a striking contrast to the magnificence around. Ephesus was notorious for its luxury and licentiousness. Sorcery or magic, an importation from the West, was exceedingly common. The *Ἐφέσια γράμματα* were a celebrated charm, which continued to be used more or less till the sixth century, A.D. Ephesus was a great and busy centre of commerce; "it was the highway into Asia from Rome; its ships traded with the ports of Greece, Egypt, and the Levant; and the Ionian cities poured their inquisitive population into it at its great annual festival in honour of Diana." It is known from Josephus that Jews were established there in considerable numbers; it is the only place where we read of disciples of John the Baptist being found, and retaining that designation; while the case of Apollos coming to it from

Alexandria, and that of Aquila and Priscilla from Rome and Corinth, show that it held ready intercourse with the rest of the world.

The apostle paid his first visit to Ephesus in his second mission tour (Acts xviii. 19—21), but it was very short; in his third tour he returned and remained two years and three months. The unusual length of time spent by him in the city shows the importance he attached to the place and the measure of encouragement he received. His labours were very assiduous, for he visited "from house to house," and "ceased not to warn every one of them day and night with tears" (Acts xx. 20, 31). The opposition he met with was correspondingly great. He writes to the Corinthians that he had fought with beasts at Ephesus, and the tumult that occurred at the instigation of the silversmiths connected with the temple of Diana, where he was assailed ever so long with brute force and insensate yelling, justified the expression. At first, the opposition was chiefly from the Jews; latterly from the pagans too. On his last recorded journey to Jerusalem he sailed by Ephesus, and summoned the elders of the Church to meet him at Miletus, where he delivered a solemn charge to them to continue their work with fidelity and diligence. He laboured under a great dread of unfaithful teachers arising from among them, and heartless plunderers falling on them from without, that for selfish ends would make havoc of the Church. The anxiety which the apostle had about the Ephesian Church seems to have led him to place Timothy in a peculiar relation to it. There is no mention of Timothy having been ordained to any special office at Ephesus, but he is called to "do the work of an evangelist" (2 Tim. iv. 5). The apostle speaks of him more as his assistant and personal friend than as sustaining an independent and permanent office in the Church (1 Tim. i. 3, 18; iii. 14, 15; iv. 6; 2 Tim. iv. 9, 13, 21). It has always been the tradition of the Church that the Apostle John spent the last part of his life at Ephesus, although very recently this has been questioned by Keim, who holds that the John who laboured at Ephesus was not the apostle, but another John. This view, however, has obtained little support.

At Ephesus, Paul was helped by Aquila and Priscilla, and by Apollos, and he likewise enjoyed a special manifestation of supernatural power, for many miracles were wrought by him. The first scene of his preaching labours was the synagogue; but his reception there was so unfavourable that he had to leave it, and then he reasoned daily in the school of one Tyrannus. His success among the Gentiles was much greater than among the Jews. The power of the Word of God was so great that it even subdued those who had become rich by lucrative sin. The power given to Paul to cast out evil spirits was so manifestly above any that they possessed, that many exorcists and persons who practised magical arts became converts to Christ, and gave proof of their sincerity by burning their books and abandoning for ever a business which may have enriched them for this world, but would have ruined their souls.

The sovereignty of Divine grace was shown in the wide difference between the conduct of the believers and that of the men who feared that the gospel was going to dry up the sources of their wealth, and raised the tumult that led to the expulsion of the apostle. Those who were led by a Divine hand surrendered everything for Christ; those who followed the impulse of their own hearts would have crucified the Son of God afresh rather than given up their gains. A Church that had surrendered so much for Christ could not but be very dear to the apostle. It may be said that we do not find in the Epistle any special allusion to this sacrifice. But neither does any such allusion occur in the address to the elders at Miletus nor in the Epistles to Timothy. Possibly the form of expression in ch. iii. 8, "the unsearchable *riches* of Christ," may have been suggested by the fact that, for his sake, many Ephesians had given up the riches of this world. But both in the Epistle to the Ephesians and in those to Timothy the mind of the apostle seems to have passed from the minuter features of the individual character and life to those broad manifestations of corruption, on the one hand, that marked their unregenerate life, and those precious fruits of Divine grace, on the other, that thereafter began to adorn their character. The anxieties he had about the Ephesian Church arose from a restlessness and selfishness of which doubtless he saw many evidences. It seems to have been a strongly emotional Church—distinguished for the warmth of its first love (Rev. ii. 4). Where there is not a strong backbone of conscientious fidelity to truth and submission to law, Churches of the emotional type are very liable to degenerate; hence the anxiety of the apostle, and hence those forebodings of coming declension that, in one point at least, were verified before the close of the century (Rev. ii. 1—7).

IV. DESIGN AND SCOPE OF THE EPISTLE.

No specific object occupies the apostle's attention in this Epistle, as in those, for instance, to the Galatians and the Colossians. His design is a general one—to confirm, animate, and elevate. By God's blessing on his labours while he was among them, they had started aright on the Christian course; he now desires to give them a fresh impulse in the same direction. The evils of which he had warned the elders at Miletus had not yet begun to break out; against these, therefore, he does not require to sound the trumpet anew. At the moment of his writing there was little to correct either in doctrine or in practice, and there was little to disturb the serenity of the apostle's mind in the contemplation of their state. The atmosphere of this Epistle is thus very calm, and the sky bright and sunny. The apostle and his correspondents seem to walk together on the Delectable Mountains; they sit with Christ in heavenly places. We seem to hear the call and enjoy the scenery of the Song of Solomon: "For, lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone; the flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our

land." We are near the New Jerusalem, and the Lord is to us an everlasting light, and our God our glory.

After the usual salutation, the apostle breaks out into a fervent thanksgiving on behalf of the Ephesians, for the Christian blessings now in their enjoyment, tracing these to their ultimate source, the good will of the Father who had placed their welfare on the securest possible footing, seeing he had chosen them in Christ before the beginning of the world, and blessed them with all the blessings of the Spirit. From the beginning of the Epistle the several functions of the three Persons of the Trinity in redemption are recognized, and the medium or element in which all the blessings of redemption are possessed and enjoyed by believers is made prominent—"in Christ Jesus."

Then we have an earnest prayer for the spiritual growth of the Ephesians, and more especially for their growth through experience in their souls of that Divine power of which the nature and the measure were seen in the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and in his elevation to the position of Head over all things to the Church. The Church is declared to be Christ's body, and, in subsequent parts of the Epistle, this figure is worked out in a practical way.

The spiritual history of the Ephesians is then more fully and minutely dwelt on, in order to bring out the sovereignty and riches of the grace which they had experienced. From death they had been brought to a state of life; from wrath to acceptance; from lying spiritually in the grave to sitting with Christ in heavenly places; from moral distance to moral nearness. No atom of this was due to themselves,—it was all of grace; and one purpose why they had been so treated was that the riches of God's grace might thereby be for ever revealed. Jew and Gentile were thus on an equal footing in the sight of God, and a great spiritual temple was in the course of being reared, in which Jew and Gentile would equally share, and which would, when completed, exemplify the fulness of blessing and the fulness of beauty of the new creation in Christ Jesus.

The apostle then makes a digression to emphasize the goodness of God in placing Jew and Gentile on the same level, and he takes occasion to show the greatness of the privilege conferred on himself as the instrument that God chose to announce his goodness to the Gentiles. Having shown that the Gentiles had received a right to all the unsearchable riches of Christ, he proceeds to offer an earnest prayer to the effect that they might practically receive and enjoy a larger measure of these riches—a larger measure of blessing in their relation to each of the three Persons of the Godhead.

Then begins, at ch. iv., the more practical part of the Epistle. Some principles have yet, however, to be laid down. The relation of believers to each other, and also their relation to Jesus Christ, are made the basis of encouragement and exhortation; Christ, as Head of the Church, treating his Church as one, has obtained for her and bestowed on her certain gifts with a view to edify all the members and advance them in the direction of

completeness. The office-bearers of the Church, whether temporary, like the apostles and prophets, or permanent, like pastors, teachers, and evangelists, are gifts of Christ for this end. As such they are to be received and prized, and all members of the Church are to aim at growth in the direction of perfection.

Coming closer to the region of character, the apostle contrasts the principles of Gentile character with those of the Christian, and on the latter urges that they should walk worthy of their vocation. Personal holiness and purity are urged under the figure of putting off the old man and putting on the new, and on the ground of the oneness of believers as one body, whose welfare all are bound to seek. The spirit of love and forbearance is specially urged by the consideration that in Christ our Father has forgiven us, and we all ought to be imitators of our Father. Another figure is then taken up—children of light, and similar exhortations are based on it to a holy life.

The apostle proceeds to further exhortation based on the several social relations of Christians as husbands and wives, parents and children, masters and servants. Being united to Christ, and living in the element of union to him, their character in all these respects should be the very purest possible.

Lastly, in the view of all the powers, earthly and spiritual, that were ranged against them and their souls, he exhorts them to put on the whole armour of God, and maintain a vigorous and fearless conflict with the forces of evil. And after a few words about himself, he closes with prayer and benediction, invoking peace and other blessings on the brethren of Ephesus, and grace on all who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity.

The Epistle is marked by a tone of great exuberance and spiritual elevation. The frequent occurrence of such expressions as "fulness," "riches," "abounded," "exceeding riches," "riches of glory," "exceeding abundantly," and the like, shows that the writer was in the spirit of glowing satisfaction and delight at the thought of God's provision for the wants of sinners. The three Persons of the blessed Trinity are ever present, in the various functions which they fulfil in the economy of Godhead. The foundations of the believer's security and blessedness are laid deep in the eternal counsels of God. The believer is not viewed merely as an individual, but also, and very specially, in his relation to the Church, both to its Head, Jesus Christ, and also to its members. The moral counsels of the Epistle are searching and salutary. The standard of Christian privilege is very high, but so also is the standard of Christian character. The great aim of the writer is to urge the Ephesians to aspire to the very highest reach of Christian attainment, and thus bring the greatest revenue of glory to their God and Saviour.

No part of Scripture presents in a more striking light the riches of the grace of God, or furnishes his people with stronger inducements to walk worthy of the vocation wherewith they are called.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE EPHESIANS.

EXPOSITION.

CHAPTER I

Ver. 1, 2.—ADDRESS AND SALUTATION.

Ver. 1.—Paul an apostle of Christ Jesus. Paul's one but all-sufficient claim on the Ephesians is his relation to Christ: he is Christ's apostle, not only as sent forth by him, but also as belonging to him; elsewhere his servant or bondman. He makes no claim to their attention on the ground of his great experience in the gospel, his profound study of it, or even his gifts, but rests simply on his being Christ's apostle; thus recognizing Christ as the only Head of the Church, and source of authority therein. By the will of God. The First Person of the Trinity, the Fountain of Godhead, has not only devised the whole scheme of mercy, but has likewise planned the subordinate arrangements by which it is carried out; thus it was by his will that Paul held the office of an apostle of Christ (see Gal. i. 1; Acts xxvi. 7; Gal. i. 11, 12). His authority and his dignity as an apostle are thus the highest that can be: "He that heareth you, heareth me." To the saints that are at Ephesus, and the faithful in Christ Jesus. This designation is expanded in the verses that immediately follow. "Saints" means set apart for God, and, as the result thereof, persons pure and holy; "faithful" (*πιστοίς*) is equivalent to "believers;" while "in Christ Jesus" denotes the Source of their life, the element in which they lived, the Vine into which they were grafted. Such persons were the heart and nucleus of the Church, though others might belong to it. In the fervour of his salutations here and elsewhere, Paul seems to see only the genuine spiritual members of the Church; though afterwards he may indicate that all are not such (see Phil. iii. 18). With regard to the clause, "that are at Ephesus," see Introduction.

EPHESIANS.

Ver. 2.—Grace unto you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. As in most of Paul's Epistles, "grace" is virtually the first word and the last (ch. vi. 24), equivalent to free, undeserved mercy in all its manifold forms and manifestations. This Epistle is so full of the subject, that it has been called "The Epistle of Grace." The apostle dwells more fully on it than even in the Epistle to the Romans, and with a more jubilant sense of its richness and sufficiency. Peace is conjoined with grace; they are like mother and daughter, or like twin sisters. Grace is the only foundation of true peace—whether peace with God, peace of conscience, rest and satisfaction of soul, or peace toward our fellow-men. The source of grace and peace is "God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ." The two are always in apposition as the Source of blessing, never in opposition. The notion is eminently unscriptural that the Father personally burned with anger until the Son rushed in to appease; both are in beautiful harmony in the scheme of grace. "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son," etc.

Vers. 3—14.—THANKSGIVING FOR THEIR DIVINE ORDINATION TO THE BLESSINGS OF GRACE. In this glorious anthem, in which the apostle, tracing all to the Divine Fountain, enumerates the glorious privileges of the Church, and blesses God for them, he first (ver. 3) states summarily the ground of thanksgiving, expanding it with glowing fulness in vers. 4—14.

Ver. 3.—Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with every blessing of the Spirit, in heavenly places in Christ. Here we have (1) the Author of our blessings; (2) their nature and sphere; (3) the Medium through whom we have them. 1. The Author is "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." Jesus

called God his God and his Father (John xxi. 17) in virtue of the state of subjection to him in which, as the Son of man, he had voluntarily placed himself. In this aspect and relation to Christ, God is here thanked because he hath blessed us in him. 2. *Ἐν πατρὶ εὐλογία πνευματικῇ*; not merely spiritual as opposed to material, but as applied by the Holy Spirit, the office of the Third Person being to bring Divine things into actual contact with human souls—to apply to us the blessings purchased by Christ; which blessings are *ἐν τοῖς ἐπουρανίοις*—in heavenly places. They belong to the heavenly kingdom; they are therefore the highest we can attain to. The expression occurs three times, and with the same meaning. 3. *Ἐν Χριστῷ*. The Medium or Mediator through whom they come is Christ; they are not fruits of the mere natural bounty of God, but of his redeeming bounty—fruits of the mediatorial work of Jesus Christ. Thus, in this summary, we recognize what is eminently characteristic of this Epistle—the doctrine of the Trinity, and the function of each Person in the work of redemption. No other writing of the New Testament is so pervaded with the doctrine of the Trinity. The three great topics of the Epistle will be found to be considered in relation to the three Persons of the Trinity. Thus: 1. Origin and foundation of the Church, referred to the eternal counsel and good pleasure of the Father. 2. The actual birth or existence of the Church with all its privileges, to the atoning grace and merit of the Son. 3. The transformation of the Church, the realization of its end or purpose, in its final holiness and glory, to the sanctifying grace of the Holy Spirit. This throws light on the expression, “every blessing;” it includes (1) all that the Father can bestow; (2) all that the Son can provide; (3) all that the Spirit can apply. The resources of all the three Persons thus conspire to bless the Church. In the verses that follow, the First Person is prominent in vers. 4—6; the second is introduced in vers. 6—12; and the third in vers. 13, 14. But all through the First Person is the great directing Power.

Ver. 4.—*Even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world*; literally, *he chose us out, or selected us* (*ἐξελέξατο*) *for himself* (middle voice). The Father chose the heirs of salvation, selected those who were to be quickened from the dead (ch. ii. 1) and saved. He chose them *in Christ*—in connection with his work and office as Mediator, giving them to him to be redeemed (John xvii. 11, 12); not after man was created, nor after man had fallen, but “before the foundation of the world.” We are here face to face with a profound

mystery. Before even the world was founded, mankind presented themselves to God as lost; the work of redemption was planned and its details arranged from all eternity. Before such a mystery it becomes us to put the shoes from off our feet, and bow reverently before him whose “judgments are unsearchable and his ways past finding out.” That we should be holy and without blame before him in love. This is obviously the design of God’s electing act; *εἶναι ἡμᾶς* cannot denote the ground, but the purpose, of the choice. God did not choose some because he foresaw their holiness, but in order that they might become “holy and without blame.” These two terms denote the positive and negative sides of purity: holy—possessed of all the fruits of the Spirit (Gal. v. 22, 23); without blame, or blemish—marked by no stain or imperfection (see ch. v. 27). The terms do not denote justification, but a condition of sanctification which implies justification already bestowed, but goes beyond it; our justification is a step towards our complete final sanctification. This renewal being “before him,” must be such as to bear the scrutiny of his eye; therefore not external or superficial merely, but reaching to the very heart and centre of our nature (1 Sam. xvi. 7). The expression further denotes how it is of the very nature and glory of the new life to be spent in God’s presence, our souls flourishing in the precious sunshine which ever beams out therefrom. For, when thus renewed, we do not fly from his presence like Adam (Gen. iii. 8), but delight in it (Ps. xlii. 1; lxxiii. 1). Fear is changed to love (1 John iv. 18); the loving relation between us and God is restored. It has been much disputed whether the words *ἐν ἀγάπῃ* ought to be construed with the fourth verse or with *προσπορεύσθαι* in the fifth. The weight of authority seems in favour of the latter; but we prefer the construction which is given both in the Authorized and the Revised Version, first, because if *ἐν ἀγάπῃ* qualified *προσπορεύσθαι*, it would come more naturally after it; and second, because the scope of the passage, the train of the apostle’s thought, seems to require us to keep *ἐν ἀγάπῃ* in ver. 4. We never could come to be holy and without blemish before God unless the loving relations between us were restored (comp. ch. iii. 17, “Rooted and grounded in love”). The spirit of love, trust, admiration, directed to God helps our complete sanctification—changes us into the same image (2 Cor. iii. 18).

Ver. 5.—*Having predestinated (or, fore-ordained) us to adoption through Jesus Christ unto himself*. The same idea is denoted by *προσπορεύσθαι* in this verse and *ἐξελέξατο* in ver. 3, but while in *ἐξελέξατο* the idea of

selection out from among others is prominent, in *προσφοράς*: the special phase of thought is that of the *time*, *πρὸ*, before—the foundation of the world. Both denote the exercise of Divine sovereignty. In ver. 4 we have the *ultimate* purpose of God's decree—the entire sanctification of the elect; here, in ver. 5, we find one of the intermediate steps of the process—adoption. The apostle's reason for speaking of adoption in this place, and of justification afterwards, is that he had just referred to the restoration of a *relation of love* between us and God as connected with our ultimate complete sanctification; thus it was natural for him to bring in our *adoption* as the preordained act in which this loving relation is formed. Our obedience is not the forced obedience of servants, but the loving obedience of sons. Adoption implies more than sentiment—a real legal relation to God as his sons (Rom. viii. 17). The adoption is “by Jesus Christ:” “As many as received him, to them gave he the right to become children of God” (John i. 12). And it is *ἐἰς αὐτόν*, unto or into himself—denoting a movement towards God which terminates in union to him. According to the good pleasure of his will. The spring or motive to the selection is solely in God, not in man. It is an act of sovereignty. It has been disputed whether “the good pleasure of his will” is equivalent to *benevolentia* or to *bene placitum*. Parallel passages like Matt. xi. 26 and Luke x. 21 lead us to prefer the latter. The idea of kindness is not excluded, but it is not what is affirmed. Kindness is always involved in the Divine will; but the point here is simply that it pleased God to choose and ordain the Ephesian believers to the privilege of adoption through Jesus Christ. This is presented as a ground of praise, a reason for their blessing God. The Divine sovereignty is not presented in Scripture to *seekers*, but to *finders*. It is apt to embarrass those that seek; and accordingly the aspect of God's character presented to them is his good will to men, his free offer of mercy: “Look unto me, and be ye saved;” “Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out.” But it is a ground of thanksgiving to those who *have accepted* the offer; they see that before the foundation of the world God chose them in Christ. What an interest he must have had in them, and how thoroughly they may rely on his finishing the work he has begun! Divine sovereignty, human responsibility, and the free and universal offer of mercy are all found in Scripture, and, though we are unable to harmonize them by our logic, ought all to have a place in our minds.

Ver. 6.—To the praise of the glory of his grace; with a view to praise being given to the glory of his grace. The purpose of

grace *quoad* man, is to make him perfectly holy; *quoad* God, is to give to the universe a right conception of his grace, and draw forth corresponding tributes of praise. It is to show that Divine grace is not a limp, shallow attribute, but one of glorious riches, deserving infinite praise. The idea of the richness, fulness, abundance, of God's grace is prominent throughout the Epistle. God desires to draw attention, not only to this attribute, but to the boundlessness of it—thus to draw the love and confidence of his creatures to himself and inspire them with the desire to imitate him (comp. Matt. xviii. 21—35). Wherein he abounded toward us in the Beloved. Two slight difficulties are found here—one in the text, the other in the interpretation. After *χαρίτος αὐτοῦ*, some copies read *ἐν ᾧ*, others *ᾧ*. A.V. follows the former; R.V. the latter. *Χαρίτω* usually means to bestow grace; sometimes, to make gracious or beautiful. The former is more in accordance with New Testament usage (Alford) and with the tenor of the passage. The glory of the grace of which God desires to create a true impression is not an abstraction, not a glory hidden away in some inaccessible region, but a revealed glory, a communicated glory; it is revealed in the grace wherein he abounded to us, or which he freely bestowed on us, in the Beloved. The grace bestowed on believers exemplifies the glorious quality of the attribute—its glorious riches. The connection of God with Christ in the bestowal of this grace, and of believers in the reception of it, is again noted by the remarkable term, “in the Beloved.” That the Father's relation to Christ was one of infinite love is a fact never to be lost sight of. His having constituted the Beloved One the Kinsman and Mediator of sinners shows the riches of the glory of his grace. “He that spare” not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not, with him also freely give us all things?” Our union to the Beloved, our participating in all the blessings of his purchase, our becoming heirs of God and joint heirs with Jesus Christ, further illustrates the glorious riches of his grace. “Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God!”

Ver. 7.—In whom we have the redemption through his blood. Some of the blessings referred to in ver. 3 are now specified—beginning with redemption (*τὴν ἀπολύτρωσιν*). The article makes it emphatic—the great redemption, the real redemption, compared to which all other redemptions are but shadows. It is a redemption *through blood*, therefore a proper propitiation or expiation, blood being always the emblem of expiation. In Christ, or in union to Christ, *we have* or *are having* this blessing; it is not

merely in existence, it is ours, we being in him by faith; not a privilege of the future merely, but of the present as well. Even the forgiveness of our sins. Ἀφεσις denotes release, separation from all the consequences of our transgressions; equivalent to Ps. ciii. 12. "As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us." According to the riches of his grace. The completeness of the forgiveness, its ready bestowal now, the security of its being continued in the future, and such like qualities show the richness of his grace (comp. Matt. xviii. 27; Luke vii. 42, 47).

Ver. 8.—Which he made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence. This rendering of the R.V. is better than the A.V., "wherein he hath abounded," for ἧς before ἐπεπλάσεν can hardly be put for the dative; it is genitive by attraction for the accusative. The wisdom and prudence refer to God; he has not made his grace abound to us in a random manner, but in a carefully regulated manner. This is more fully explained afterwards, in reference to God's concealment for a time of the universality of his grace, but manifestation of it now. Some have found a difference between σοφία and φρονησις, the one being theoretical wisdom and the other practical, or the one intellectual and the other moral; but possibly they may be meant merely to intensify the idea—the height of wisdom is shown in God's way of making his grace abound toward us (comp. Rom. xi. 33, "Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!").

Ver. 9.—Having made known unto us the mystery of his will. The wide extent of God's grace was a *mystery*, i.e. a hidden counsel, before Christ came and died, but it is now made known. In this, and not in the modern sense of mystery, the word μυστήριον is used by Paul. The thing hidden and now revealed was not the gospel, but God's purpose with reference to its limits or sphere (see ch. iii. 6). According to his good pleasure which he purposed in himself. The whole phraseology denotes that, in this transaction, God was not influenced by any external considerations; the whole reason for it sprang from within. The threefold expression brings this out: (1) according to his good pleasure (see ver. 5); (2) he purposed, or formed a purpose; (3) in himself, without foreign aid, "For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor?" (Rom. xi. 34).

Ver. 10.—With a view to the dispensation of the fulness of the times (or, seasons) (vers. 9 and 10 are one sentence, which should not be broken up). This seems to denote the times of the gospel generally; not, as in Gal. iv. 4, the particular time of Christ's

advent; the οἰκονομία, or economy, of the gospel being that during which, in its successive periods, all God's schemes are to ripen or come to maturity, and be fulfilled. To gather together under one head all things in Christ. Ἀνακεφαλαιώσασθαι is a word of some difficulty. It is true it is derived from κεφάλαιον, not κεφαλή; therefore some have thought that it does not include the idea of *headship*; but the relation of κεφάλαιον to κεφαλή is so close that this can hardly be. The word expresses the Divine purpose—what God προέθετο—which was to restore in Christ a lost unity, to bring together disunited elements, viz. all things, whether they be things in heaven or things on earth. There is no hint here of a universal restoration. Such a notion would be in flat contradiction to the doctrine of Divine election, which dominates the whole passage. God's purpose is to form a united kingdom, consisting of the unfallen and the restored—the unfallen in heaven, and the restored on earth, and to gather this whole body together under Christ as its Head (see ch. iii. 15). We cannot say that this purpose has been fully effected as yet; but things are moving towards it, and one day it will be wholly realized. "He that sat on the throne said, Behold, I make all things new" (Rev. xxi. 5).

Ver. 11.—Even in him—in whom we were also made his inheritance. This is the literal rendering of ἐκκληρώθημεν, and it is more expressive than the A.V., "In whom also we have obtained an inheritance." God taking us for his own heritage involves more than our getting an inheritance from God (see Deut. iv. 20, "The Lord hath taken you . . . to be unto him a people of inheritance"). It is implied that God will protect, care for, improve, and enjoy his own inheritance; he will be much with them and do all that is necessary for them. Formerly God's inheritance was Israel only; but now it is much wider. All that God was to Israel of old he will be to his Church now. Having been predestinated according to the purpose. The reason why the reference to predestination is repeated is to show that this new privilege of the whole Church as God's inheritance is not a fortuitous benefit, but the result of God's deliberate and eternal foreordination; it rests therefore on an immovable foundation. Of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his will. Predestination is not an exception to God's usual way of working; he works, or works out (ἐνεργῶντας) all things on the same principle, according to the decision to which his will comes. When we think of the sovereign will of God as determining all things, and in particular determining who are to be his heritage, we must remember how

differently constituted the will of an infinitely holy Being is from that of frail and fallen creatures. The fallen creature's will is often whimsical, the result of some freak or fancy; often, too, it is the outcome of pride, avarice, sensual affection, or some other evil feeling; but God's will is the expression of his infinite perfections, and must always be infinitely holy, wise, and good. Wilfulness in man is utterly different from wilfulness in God; but the recoil we often have from the doctrine of God's doing all things from his mere *bene placitum*, or according to the counsel of his own will, arises from a tendency to ascribe to his will the caprice which is true only of our own.

Ver. 12.—That we should be to the praise of his glory, we who had before hoped in Christ. The "we" which hitherto has been applied to the whole Church, Jewish and Gentile, begins to have a more limited reference, and to contrast with "you" in ver. 13. The first "we" in this verse embraces all, as in the preceding part of the chapter; the second (omitted in the A.V.) is conditioned by the words following, and is applicable to the Jewish Christians, who, through the promises given to the fathers, had seen Christ's day afar off, and had thus hoped in him. This special reference to ἡμεῖς is followed immediately by a reference to ὑμεῖς.

Ver. 13.—In whom are ye also, having heard the word of the truth, the good news of your salvation. A.V. has "in whom ye also trusted," or hoped, supplying a verb from προηλπικότες in ver. 13, but without the prefix. This seems hardly natural, because the prefix πρὸ is characteristic and emphatic in ver. 12. It is a much less strain to supply simply ἐντὶ, the important point being that you are now in him—in Christ. This expression, "in Christ," is one of the hinges of the Epistle; it occurs times almost without number, denoting the intimate vital union through faith between Christ and his people, as of the members to the head, in virtue of which they not only get the benefit of his atonement, but share his vital influences, live by faith on the Son of God. Having heard and received the truth as it is in Jesus, the glad tidings of salvation through a crucified Jesus, they became one with him, just as freely as did the believing Jews, and to the same blessed effects. More than that—in whom also having believed, ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of the promise; thus receiving a new ground for thankfulness, a new proof of the riches of the grace of God. Many explain this seal of baptism, which undoubtedly seals Christ and all his blessings to believers. But though the seal of the Holy Spirit may have been given in and with baptism, it is not identical with

baptism. The impression of it is partly within believers and partly without. Within, it is the felt result of the working of the Holy Spirit—the feeling of satisfaction and delight in the work and person of Christ, of love, confidence, and joy flowing out toward God, and the desire and endeavour in all things to be conformed to his will. Without, it is the fruit of the Spirit, the new man, created in righteousness and holiness after the image of Christ. Within, the Spirit bears witness with their spirits; without, the transformed life corroborates the inward witness, and gives it to the world. The first is never complete without the second, nor the second without the first. The spiritual history of believers is thus presented: (1) hearing the truth; (2) believing; (3) being sealed. The Spirit is called the Spirit of the promise, because he is often promised in the Old Testament (Isa. xxxii. 15; Ezek. xxxvi. 20; Joel iii. 1, etc.).

Ver. 14.—Who is the earnest of our inheritance. The gift of the Spirit is not only a seal, but an earnest, firstfruit, or instalment, a pledge that the rest shall follow. The seal of the Spirit not only assures us of the full inheritance to come, but gives us a right conception of its nature. It shows us the kind of provision God makes for those whom he takes as his heritage, his peculiar people. It is an inward heaven the Spirit brings them. "The kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost." The full inheritance will consist in a heart in full sympathy with God, and in those occupations and joys, intellectual and moral, which are most congenial to such a heart. Unto the redemption of the purchased possession. The *until* of the A.V. is not textual, and does not give the force of εἰς, which implies that the earnest of the Spirit is a contribution toward the result described; it tends to realize it. "Redemption" here is not quite equivalent to "redemption" in ver. 7; for there it is a thing accomplished, here it is a thing to come. It is obvious that here the meaning is the completed redemption—the full and final deliverance of the Lord's heritage from all sin and sorrow, from all the evils and disorders of this life. The term περιποίησις, translated "purchased possession," is an unusual one. But its resemblance to περιούσιος, the Septuagint rendering for "a special people;" its use by Peter, λαὸς περιποίησις, "a peculiar people;" the use of the verb ἐκκλησίων τοῦ Θεοῦ, ἦν περιποίησάτο διὰ τοῦ αἱματος αὐτοῦ, "the Church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood;"—show that it must be regarded in this place as denoting the special, own, purchased possession of God,

whose final glory is so often presented to our thoughts in this Epistle. To the praise of his glory. For the third time in this paragraph, these or similar words are introduced. In this place the precise meaning is that the consummation of redemption will be the highest tribute to God's glory—his infinite excellence will be wonderfully manifested thereby. Neither men nor angels are qualified to apprehend the glorious excellence of God in an abstract way; it needs to be revealed, exhibited in acts and operations. The teaching of this verse is that it will be manifested with triumphant brightness in the final redemption of the Church, when the groans of nature shall come to an end, and the creation shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into "the glorious liberty of the sons of God" (Rom. viii. 21).

VERS. 15—23.—PRAYER FOR THEIR SPIRITUAL GROWTH.

Ver. 15.—Wherefore I also, having heard of the faith among you in the Lord Jesus, and your love which extends to all the saints. The "wherefore" has reference to their present standing in grace, described in the verses preceding: since ye have heard, believed, been sealed, and thereby shown to be in the right line, I apply myself towards promoting your progress, towards advancing you to the higher stages of the Christian life. Special mention is made of their faith and love, as cardinal Christian graces, to which elsewhere the apostle adds hope (1 Cor. xiii. 13; 1 Thess. i. 3; 2 Thess. i. 3). The literal expression, "faith among you" (*καθ' ὑμᾶς*), indicates that it was a marked social feature, but perhaps not universal; while their love was not mere general amiability, but a love that embraced the saints as such, having a special complacency in them, and being directed to them all. If it be asked—Could this knowledge of the condition of his correspondents have been derived from *hearsay* ("having heard") if the letter was addressed to the Ephesians, among whom Paul had lived so long, and whose condition he must have known by personal intercourse (Acts xix. 10; xx. 31)? we reply that, though he derived his first acquaintance from personal intercourse, it was some years since he had been at Ephesus, and the *ἀκούσας* refers to what he had heard in the interval (see Introduction).

Ver. 16.—Cease not to give thanks for you. This clause expresses the continuation of a former action—the giving thanks for them had begun before the hearing of their faith and love—from the days, in short, of his personal intercourse. We notice as a remarkable feature of Paul's personal religion, as well as his pastoral care, the frequency of his thanksgiving, indicating the

prevalence in him of a bright, joyous state of mind, and tending to increase and perpetuate the same. Constantly to recognize God's goodness in the past begets a larger expectation of it in the future. Making mention of you in my prayers. This seems additional to his giving thanks. "Prayers" (*προσευχῶν*) refers more to supplication and entreaty. While thankful for them, his heart was not satisfied regarding them; he wished them to forget the things behind, and reach forth to those before. The apostle's prayers for his spiritual charge are always remarkable. They are very short, but wonderfully deep and comprehensive; very rich and sublime in aspiration; powerful in their pleas, whether expressed or implied; and exhaustive in the range of blessings which they implore.

Ver. 17.—That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory. The invocations of Paul—the terms by which he calls on God—are always significant, involving a plea for the blessings sought. God, as "the God of our Lord Jesus Christ," gave to him the Holy Spirit without measure, and might well, therefore, be asked and expected to give the gifts of the same Spirit to those who were "in him"—one with him as members of his body. Being also the "Father of glory," and having glorified Jesus, even after his suffering, with the glory which he had with him before the world began, he might well be asked and expected to glorify his people too. May give to you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the full knowledge of him. "Spirit" here is neither exclusively the Holy Spirit nor the spirit of man, but the complex idea of the spirit of man dwelt in and moved by the Spirit of God (Alford). Wisdom seems to denote the general gift of spiritual illumination; revelation, capacity of apprehending the revealed—of perceiving the drift and meaning of what God makes known, so that it may be a real revelation to us (comp. Matt. xiii. 11). *ἐντελέσσει* is something more than mere *γινώσκει*—full knowledge of Christ, implying that it is in becoming better acquainted with Christ that we get the spirit of wisdom and revelation. In seeking to know Christ more, we are in the true way to get more insight into all that is Divine (comp. John xiv. 9). The importance of seeking more knowledge, even after we have believed and been sealed by the Holy Spirit, is here apparent; a growing knowledge is a most healthful feature of Christian life. "Grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (2 Pet. iii. 18).

Ver. 18.—That having the eyes of your heart enlightened. "The eyes of your heart" is an unusual expression, but it denotes that to see things clearly there is needed, not

merely *lumen sticum*, but *lumen madidum* (to borrow terms of Lord Bacon), not merely intellectual clearness, but moral susceptibility and warmth—a movement of the heart as well as the head (compare the opposite state, “blindness of the heart,” ch. iv. 18): “Ye may know what is the hope of his calling; the hope which he calls you to cherish. The glory which he invites you to look forward to, when Christ shall come again, how sure it is and how excellent! How infinitely it surpasses all earthly glory! How it at once ravishes and satisfies the heart! And what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints. If the saints form God’s heritage (see ver. 11), it may be asked—Where are the riches of God’s glory in them? But it is not necessary to take the *de rois aïlés* so literally. It may be rendered, “in reference to the saints.” The riches of the glory of his inheritance in reference to the saints is the riches of the glory of their privileges as the Lord’s heritage, or people; that is, their privileges are glorious. But this glory is not limp, limited—it is wonderfully rich, full, abundant. God gives liberally—gives as a King, gives glory to all Christ’s people. “When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory” (Col. iii. 4); “The glory which thou gavest me I have given them.” The difference between this glory and other glory is, human glory is often unjustly accorded, it passes away with wonderful quickness; but this glory is real and everlasting. “When the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.”

Ver. 19.—And what the exceeding greatness of his power toward us who believe. A new object of knowledge is here brought forward—knowledge of a power which works in us—a great power, a Divine power, a power surpassingly great. The whole energy of the Divine Being is turned on to our feeble, languid nature, vivifying, purifying, and transforming it, making it wonderfully active where all was feebleness before, as the turning on of steam suddenly awakens up a whole mass of inert machinery. When we think of the glory of the inheritance, we feel unfit for it; our narrow hearts, cold temperaments, feeble and dislocated faculties, how can they ever be right? Our fear is removed when we think of the greatness of the Divine power that works in us—God’s power to transform us so that, “though we have lien among the pots, we shall be as the wings of a dove covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold.” According to the working of his mighty power. We are now furnished with a standard and sample of the mighty power which energizes in believers—are referred to one of its grandest

achievements, in order to elevate our conceptions of what it is capable of effecting in us. In the prophets we find a similar encouragement for God’s people, in sublime descriptions of the almighty power of him who was working in them and for them (Isa. xl. 21, etc.; xlv. 7, etc.).

Ver. 20.—Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead. The same power that produced the marvellous miracle of Christ’s resurrection now works in the hearts of believers. To appreciate this, we must bear in mind the apostle’s full doctrine of the resurrection of Jesus, embracing not only the revivifying of his dead body, but the transformation of that body into a spiritual body, and the constituting of Jesus a second Adam, who should transmit or communicate to his spiritual seed both a renewed soul and a glorified body, as the first Adam transmitted a sinful nature and a corruptible body to his natural seed. The power that accomplished all this now works in believers, and can surely work in them all needed transformation. And set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, effecting on him a change alike sudden and marvellous: from the cross and the tomb to the throne of glory, from being as a worm and no man, to be higher than the kings of the earth—King of kings, and Lord of lords. It is frequently represented in Scripture that Jesus in heaven is at the right hand of God. There must be a spot in the heavens where his glorified body exists, in immediate contact with some manifestation of the glory of the Father. There Stephen saw him; thence he came to meet Saul on the way to Damascus; and his promise to his people is Where I am, there shall ye be also (John xiv. 3).

Ver. 21.—Far above all rule, and power, and might, and dominion. Separate shades of meaning may doubtless be found for these expressions, but the main effect of the accumulation is to expand and deepen the idea of Christ’s universal lordship. Hardly anything is revealed to us on the various orders of the spiritual powers, unfallen and fallen; and the speculations on them in which the Fathers used to indulge are of no value; but whatever may be true of them, Christ is exalted far above them all—far above every creature in earth, heaven, or hell (comp. Ps. ii.; lxxii.; cx.; Dan. vii. 13, 14, etc.). And every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come. The pre-eminence of his Name is to be eternal. It shall never be eclipsed by any other name, nor shall there ever be a name worthy to be coupled with his Name. In human history we find no name that can be fitly coupled with Christ’s. In the world to come, it shall ever shine

forth with an unapproached effulgence. All this is said to exalt our sense of the Divine power that so raised up and exalted the God-Man, Christ Jesus—the same power that still works in believers.

Ver. 22.—**And put all things under his feet;** a strong, figurative expression, denoting high sovereignty. It does not refer merely to defeated and arrested enemies, but to the whole of creation and the fulness thereof. They are as thoroughly under Christ and at his disposal as if they were literally under his feet. As a military commander, proceeding even through his own country, has power to requisition everything needful for his army, and deal with all property as may be required for military purposes, so Christ has the whole creation at his disposal, animate and inanimate, hostile and friendly. **And gave him to be Head over all things to the Church.** The exaltation of Christ is not merely an honour conferred on himself, but has also a definite practical purpose; it is for the benefit of the Church. God gave him to the Church as Head over all things. The gift of Christ to the Church is the gift of One who has sovereign authority over all things. The official subordination of Christ to the Father is recognized throughout this remarkable passage. So in Philippiana, though he was “in the form of God, and thought it not robbery to be equal with God, he made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men.” It is this Jesus, in the form of a servant and in the likeness of men, that is now Head over all things, and as such given by the Father to the Church. With such a Head, what need the Church fear, and what can she want?

Ver. 23.—**Which is his body.** The Church is Christ's body in a real though spiritual sense. He is the Head, his people the members; he the Vine, they the branches. He dwells in the Church as life dwells in a living body. He fills it with his life, replenishes it with his strength, feeds it with his body and blood, beautifies it with his comeliness, calms it with his peace, brightens it with his holiness, and finally glorifies it with his glory. All things are delivered unto him of the Father; and all that he

has he has for the Church: “My beloved is mine, and I am his.” The fulness of him that filleth all in all. The grammatical structure of the words would lead us to construe “fulness” with “the Church,” and to regard the Church as Christ's *πλήρωμα*. Some object to this, inasmuch as, in point of fact, the Church is often very empty, and therefore not worthy of the term “fulness.” But it is not meant that the Church has actually received all the fulness of him who filleth all in all, but only that she is in the course of receiving it. The Church on earth is an ever-changing body, perpetually receiving new members, who are at first empty; so that it must always in this state be in the course of filling, never filled. It is in the course of being filled with all Divine things—with all the treasures of heaven. As the empty cells of the honeycomb are being filled with the sweet essences of flowers, so the empty vessels of the Church are being filled with the glorious treasures of God; or, as the courts and compartments of a great international exhibition get filled up with the choicest products of the lands, so the Church gets filled with the handiwork of the grace of God. When the Church is completed, it will be a representation of the fulness of God; all of God that can be communicated to men will be made manifest in the Church. For he whose fulness the Church is, is he that filleth all in all, or filleth all with all. He possesses all things, and he fills all space with the all things. He fills the ocean with water, the organic world with life, the firmament with stars, the entire creation with forms innumerable, alike beautiful and useful. So also he fills the Church. Thus appropriately concludes this chapter, beginning (ver. 3) with thanksgiving to him who had blessed the Ephesians with every blessing of the Spirit in Christ Jesus, and now ending with a sublime picture of the Infinite One filling the Church with these Divine blessings out of the infinite stores of the kingdom of heaven. Thus we see the quality of richness, exuberance, overflowing abundance which is so conspicuously ascribed in this Epistle to the grace of God (comp. Ps. *xxxvi.* 8; *ciii.* 3—5; Matt. v. 3, etc.).

HOMILETICS.

Vers. 1, 2.—*Address and salutation.* Character and scope of the Epistle as a whole (see Introduction); circumstances of the writer; jubilant tone of the Epistle; cordiality of the Ephesian Church.

I. The writer speaks with authority. He is an “apostle,” sent and commissioned directly by Christ, and acting in his name—a real ambassador of the Lord of glory.

II. He holds this office “by the will of God;” pursues neither an irregular nor a merely volunteer course unsanctioned by the supreme Ruler, but acts by the will of God.

III. The Church is a society of "saints," and "faithful," or believing, "in Christ Jesus." If we want these attributes, we may be of Israel, but we are not Israel.

IV. Divine blessings are invoked and brought near to the Church, viz. (1) grace (see Exposition); (2) peace; both of these having their only source for sinners in God and Christ. This salutation is more than a pious wish or even prayer; the blessings are brought as it were to the door of all. It rests with them either to receive them or not. "Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God!" The blessings brought near are very precious, for God in Christ with all his fulness is there. Let us beware of trifling with the offer. Let us open the door and welcome the Lord of *grace* and peace.

Vers. 3—14.—*The thanksgiving.* The condition of believers is fitted to excite the profoundest emotions of gratitude and praise in all who know them. Grounds of this thankfulness are—

I. STATED SUMMARILY. (Ver. 3.) (For outline discourse on this text, see Exposition.)

II. STATED IN DETAIL. (Vers. 4—14.) The chief elements of blessing are: 1. Holiness and blamelessness in love, secured by God's eternal election (ver. 4). 2. Adoption, secured in the same way (ver. 5). 3. Acceptance in the Beloved (ver. 6). 4. Redemption through Christ's blood, especially forgiveness of sin (ver. 7). 5. Abundance of grace, regulated by wisdom and knowledge (ver. 8). 6. Enlightenment in the mystery of God's will as to the Gentiles (ver. 9). 7. Especially, knowledge of Jesus Christ as the predestined Centre or Head of all things (ver. 10). 8. Fellowship with Christ in the enjoyment and purpose of his inheritance (vers. 11, 12). 9. The seal of the Holy Spirit, or earnest of our inheritance, the pledge and assurance of the eternal glory. Observe the constant allusions to the glory of God's grace, the riches of his grace, the abundance of his grace, the riches of his glory; the munificence of God. It is the narrowness of our hearts that will not take in this boundless generosity.

Ver. 5.—*Adoption.* I. In a certain sense, all men are children of God (Mal. ii. 10); i.e. God has a fatherly interest in them and yearning towards them. But sinners have forfeited the rights and position of sons; they are like the prodigal son, "not worthy to be called thy son." Thus they have no claim on God. Nay, they are "children of wrath" (ch. ii. 3).

II. Sonship in God's family is for sinners only the fruit of adoption. Adoption is solely by grace, through Jesus Christ. It is the result of Divine predestination. It belongs only to "as many as receive him" (John i. 12). It is the fruit of spiritual oneness with Christ. When we are by faith united to the eternal Son of God, we become, in a lower sense, sons of God ourselves.

III. Sonship has many privileges; parallel between nature and grace. Sons have a right to a due provision, to protection and shelter, to education and training; they share their father's house; they get the benefit of his experience, wisdom, counsel; they enjoy his fellowship, and are moulded by his example and influence.

IV. Sonship has many duties: obedience, honour, trust; gratitude, complacency, affection; co-operation with the father in his designs and aims.

V. In Christ, sonship is indissoluble and everlasting.

Ver. 7.—*Redemption.* "In whom we have the redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of our sins."

I. What men need is more than instruction, education, or an elevating influence. They are in sin—condemned, enslaved, and disordered; in the fetters of a strong man armed, and a stronger is needed to disarm him and spoil his house. In a word, they need redemption from sin.

II. What the gospel specially announces is such a redemption. Christ came, not merely to enlighten, or elevate, or improve, but to redeem. He came to grapple with sin in all its bearings and results.

III. This redemption was consummated by the shedding of Christ's blood. Jesus died as a sacrifice or propitiation for sin. He came by water and by blood, not by water only. His blood "cleanseth us from all sin;" his Spirit renews the soul. Calvin

says the blood figured atonement, the water ablution. The side of Christ, he says, was the fountain of our sacraments.

IV. Forgiveness of sins is a fundamental element of this redemption. The gospel of Christ is a gospel of forgiveness. Sin is blotted out freely through Christ's merit. We need nothing short of forgiveness, and should not rest till we have it.

V. All this is to be enjoyed in union to Christ. "In whom" we have redemption. Thus union to Christ is the turning-point of all blessing.

Ver. 10.—*Christ the Head of all.* "To gather together under one head all things in Christ." Unity a characteristic of God's works. Unity of the solar system, the stars, the heavens. In the moral and spiritual world there are diverse orders of holy being. To us only two are known—angels and men. But there may be many more. All these it is God's purpose to form into one economy. Jesus Christ is the Centre of this great plan. We have some glimpses of this in the Apocalypse. Besides countless angels, "Every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying," etc. (Rev. v. 13). This does not imply that there will be nothing outside this glorious host of holy beings; for the Apocalypse affirms the contrary.

I. This subject gives us an exalted conception of the place of honour to be occupied by Christ in eternity. As was his humiliation, so will his glory be.

II. It gives us also an exalted conception of the glory and dignity of all true believers. How glorious the fellowship of such an order of beings! How insignificant the honours of earth, for which men toil so hard!

Ver. 13, 14.—*The seal of the Spirit and the earnest of the inheritance.* I. THE SPIRIT IS HIMSELF THE SEAL BY WHICH BELIEVERS ARE KNOWN AS GOD'S. 1. *In his inward operations on their hearts.* (1) Revealing to them the all-sufficiency of the Saviour. (2) Enabling them to close most heartily with his offers. (3) Satisfying them with Christ and his blessings. (4) Drawing out their hearts in love, trust, and cheerful obedience. (5) Conforming their wills and affections to the will of God. 2. *In the outward effects of his working.* (1) Generally, in their contrast to their former life. (2) In their renewal in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness. (3) In their specific points of resemblance to Christ. (4) In their active interest in Christ's work and kingdom. (5) In their visible ripening for heaven.

II. THE SPIRIT IS ALSO THE EARNEST OF THE INHERITANCE. Heaven a condition more than a locality. Heaven is brought to men before they are brought to heaven. Renewal of soul is the beginning of heaven. It is thus the firstfruits of their inheritance. It is the pledge and assurance of "more to follow." Apart from this there is no heaven. "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

Ver. 15-23.—*Prayer for spiritual growth.* General characteristics of Paul's prayers (see Exposition, ver. 16). The prayer is (1) *retrospective*; (2) *prospective*.

I. RETROSPECTIVE. Consists of thanksgiving (ver. 16). Happy key-note for prayer.

II. PROSPECTIVE. Of supplication. Here we may note: 1. The name by which God is invoked (ver. 17; see Exposition). 2. The blessing sought, viz. further illumination in the knowledge of God's will. 3. The points needing to be more fully revealed, viz.: (1) The hope of his calling, or to which he calls. (2) The riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints. (3) The greatness of his power toward believers. 4. The working of God's power in Christ, as foreshadowing his working in believers. (1) In his resurrection. (2) In his elevation to God's right hand. (3) In his universal dominion. (4) In his relation to the Church.

To what a glorious elevation we are carried in such prayers! We seem to luxuriate in infinite stores of blessing. Observe, again, that all is connected with Christ and his redemption. If the power that raised Christ should raise us, to what a glorious elevation should we rise!

Ver. 22.—*Christ Head over all things for the Church.* The double headship of Christ—(1) *Head of the Church*; and (2) *Head over all things for the Church*.

I. AS HEAD OF THE CHURCH, he is the sole Fountain of authority, grace, influence, blessing. No other to be set above him or alongside of him on his throne.

II. AS HEAD OVER ALL THINGS FOR THE CHURCH, he has complete control: 1. Over the devil and all his hosts, to restrain their malice, etc. 2. Over the angels, to command their services. 3. Over all kings and rulers, heathen and Christian, to counteract their opposition or summon them to his side. 4. Over Nature and all her resources. 5. Over the whole realm of mind—philosophy, art, science, literature, etc. 6. Over all the stores of grace and blessing (see Ps. ii.). But this headship of Christ is not to be held as superseding civil authority, which is a Divine ordinance in its own sphere. Though Christ is Head over all things for the Church, he has not called his ministers to share this authority; he keeps it in his own hands.

Ver. 23.—*The Church the fulness of Christ.* The Church, when completed, will show the fulness of Christ's love, grace, wisdom; it will reflect the fulness of his meekness, self-sacrifice, forbearance, and bountifulness; it will show the fulness of his power to bless the individual and to regenerate the world.

HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Vers. 1, 2.—*The salutation.* The apostle introduces his Epistle by a duplicate order of ideas: a double blessing—"grace and peace;" a double source of blessing—"God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ;" a double designation of the Christian people—"saints and faithful in Christ Jesus;" and a double source of authority—"an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God."

I. THE AUTHOR. "Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God." As one standing outside the circle of the twelve, who overshadowed all others by his immense authority, it was necessary he should preface his Epistle by the mention of his independent apostleship. Yet in no spirit of vanity or self-assertion does he use the high language of apostolic authority and inspired conviction. He disclaims all personal merit in his call. His apostleship was linked with grace in its original bestowal; therefore he speaks of "grace and apostleship" in the same breath (Rom. i. 5); it was "by the will of God," not by the suggestion or call of man, that he found his place in the service of all the Churches. For us the interest of our author's name has a profound significance; for, though in language of the deepest humility he speaks of himself as "the least of the apostles" and "less than the least of all saints," he stands before all coming ages as the great apostle of the Gentiles, whose personal history and writings fill one-third of the New Testament Scriptures, and who, more than any other apostle, has shaped the theology of Christendom in its best periods, supplying at once the bone and marrow of the evangelical system of thought.

II. THE PERSONS ADDRESSED. "The saints which are at Ephesus, and the faithful in Christ Jesus." 1. This double title seems to suggest the objective and subjective sides of Christian life; for if it is God's work to make saints, "it is man's to believe;" we are chosen to salvation "through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth" (2 Thess. ii. 13). God has joined these two principles together: let not man put them asunder. 2. It is in Christ we obtain our standing both as saints and as believers. He is made unto us "wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption" (1 Cor. i. 30). The expression, "in Christ," which occurs here for the first time in this Epistle, is found thirty-three times in the New Testament. Christian life, like revelation, is Christo-centric. 3. The Christians at Ephesus had grown from twelve disciples (Acts xix. 1) into a large and influential community, worshipping the Lord under the very shadow of the great Temple of Diana. The apostle has a deep personal interest in the fortunes of a Church established in the very acropolis of paganism—the first of the seven Churches of Asia—forming the third capital of Christianity, as Antioch was the second and Jerusalem the first. He remembers the three years of untiring and anxious labour he had spent in the city, as well as the interest of the Ephesian Christians in himself and his work which he seeks shortly to intensify by the projected visit of "a beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord" (ch. vi. 21, 22). The Apostle Paul was unique among the apostles of Christ for his quickness in finding out a common

ground of interest among the believers of every place, for his deep yearning after appreciation, and the heartfelt joy of finding his services recognized by the Churches he served, as well as by the facility with which he held a hundred interests in his hand, and engaged the sympathy of all sorts of men in the cause of Christ.

III. THE TERMS OF THE SALUTATION. "Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ." This is the apostle's usual salutation to Churches—it is only in the pastoral Epistles that he adds the word "mercy"—but its form suggests a beautiful and significant blending of the Greek and Hebrew methods of salutation, as if to anticipate the share of Jew and Gentile alike in the future blessings of the gospel. How sweetly Christianity sanctifies the common courtesies of life! 1. *The double blessing.* "Grace and peace." The word "grace" has a unique history among English words. It means ever so many things, all suggestive of the happiest associations, and has never suffered that contraction of meaning which has spoiled the moral beauty of so many other words. In the gospel sense, whether it applies to the origin of man's salvation or to the Christian disposition which is the result of it, grace marks a beautiful movement of life in the direction of blessing given or received. Grace is the key-note of the Ephesian Epistle. Grace is the well-spring of all blessings. "The way to heaven lies not over a toll-bridge, but over a free bridge, even the unmerited grace of God in Christ Jesus." Peace is the fruit of grace, which can never be severed from its fruits. It is the very testament of Christ: "My peace I give unto you:" the very equanimity, firmness, serenity, of his own life carried into the lives of his saints. This peace so "keeps the heart and mind" that nothing can break down a spirit so established. The two graces are here in their due order; for there is no peace without grace. They cover the whole space of a believer's life; for if it begins in grace, its latter end is peace. The Lord always has "thoughts of grace and peace toward us" (Jer. xxxix. 11). They are together the bright sum of the gospel. 2. *The double Source of blessing.* "From God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ." There is a certain intensity of bright suggestion in the asserted origin of these blessings. God the Father is the "God of grace" (1 Pet. v. 10) and "the God of peace" (Heb. xiii. 20); and equally so "grace and truth came by Jesus Christ" (John i. 17), and he is also our Peace (ch. ii. 14). But the Father is the original Fountain of all blessings, and the Son the Dispenser of blessing to us. The juxtaposition of Christ with the Father is the significant proof of the divinity of the Son of God. No man's name can be placed beside God's in the dispensation of Divine blessings. The Holy Ghost is not named, because it is he who communicates the grace and the peace. Similarly, the believer has "fellowship with the Father and the Son" (1 John i. 3), but the Holy Ghost is the power of this fellowship. 3. *It is neither improper nor unnecessary to pray for grace and peace*, though we already possess them. We need a continuous supply and a continuous experience of both blessings. Believers are, therefore, fully justified in coming boldly to a throne of grace, that they may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.—T. C.

Ver. 3.—*The blessings of redemption.* Full minds overflow in long sentences. The sentence which begins with the third verse runs on continuously to the fourteenth, marked all the way by many rich and happy turns of expression. The apostle pours forth his thoughts with a splendid exuberance, which dazzles common readers, but is kindling to congenial minds. The whole passage is "a magnificent anthem," in which the ideas "suggest each other by a law of powerful association." It takes up the spirit of the psalmist, "Bless the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy Name" (Ps. ciii.).

I. THE BLESSINGS ARE TRACED UP TO THE FATHER AS THEIR SOURCE. It is he who has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus. It is a mistake to represent the Father as a harsh creditor, who has no point of contact with his debtor except at the moment when the bond is being discharged; or to represent the Son as the tender and compassionate Redeemer, who prevails with his Father to grant a salvation he is unwilling to bestow. The true source of salvation is in the Father's heart, and the mission of the Son was to execute the loving will of the Father who is in heaven. The atonement was the effect, not the cause, of Divine love. Jesus did not die on the cross that God might be induced to love us, but because he did love us. The cross could

not originate Divine love, which is an eternal perfection of the Divine nature, seeking an object on which to exhaust its riches. But the cross was the mode in which, for reasons known to himself and partially discernible to us, it was expedient and necessary that his love should be expressed. But then the same God who exacted the atonement has also provided it; and therefore we may glorify the love of the Father; for "herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and gave his Son to be the Propitiation for our sins."

II. BUT IF THE FOUNTAIN OF ALL OUR BLESSINGS IS IN THE FATHER'S HEART, THEY FLOW DOWNWARD TO US IN THE CHANNEL OF CHRIST'S MEDIATION. The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is our covenant God. God, being his Father, becomes our Father; for "we are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus" (Gal. iii. 26). The blessings flow first from the Father to Christ, and then from Christ to us. Jesus said to Mary, "I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; to my God, and your God" (John xx. 17); not, says Augustine, "I ascend to our Father and our God," but first *mine*, then *yours*, as if to indicate the distinction between his own essential sonship and their derivative sonship by adoption. But it is a distinguished part of the Christian's privilege that not only "he is Christ's," but "Christ is God's" (1 Cor. iii. 23), according to the prayer of Jesus himself, "All mine are thine, and thine are mine;" for it was an idea near to the apostle's heart that Christ and the Church are one—*one Head and one body*—and that Christ in the Church and the Church in Christ are God's possession. Therefore we can understand the grandeur of the conception that all God's blessings descend to us in Jesus Christ.

III. THEY ARE SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS. There is no allusion to earthly blessings—riches, honours, beauty, pleasures—as if New Testament believers had ascended to a higher platform than that held by Old Testament saints. God "has provided some better thing for us." The spiritual blessings include all that is involved in the Father's electing love, the Son's satisfaction for sin, and the Holy Spirit's application of redemption. We thus see the relation of believers to the three Persons of the blessed Trinity. It is "*all* spiritual blessings," but they are so linked together in the Divine order that if you have one you have all: "Whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified." Christ's ministry began with words of blessing, in the eight beatitudes of his first sermon; his gospel brings with it fulness of blessing (Rom. xv. 29); and the final glorification of the saints is accentuated in the glorious words of the Judge, "Come, ye blessed of my Father."

IV. THESE BLESSINGS CONNECT US WITH HEAVEN. They are spiritual blessings in heavenly places. The reason is that Jesus Christ, as our Forerunner, has gone within the veil, with the anchor of our hope in his hands, to fasten it upon the "two immutable things in which it was impossible for God to lie"—the promise and the oath of God, so that we might have a strong consolation who have fled for refuge to the hope set before us (Heb. vi. 18—20). His forerunnership is identified with his representative position as the Head of all true believers; and his presence in heaven is not only a sublime guarantee of spiritual blessings accruing to us while on earth, but a pledge that "where he is we shall be also." Thus we can understand why our hope should be laid up "in heaven" with its "many mansions," (Col. i. 5); why our hearts ought to be there in supreme aspiration (Col. iii. 2); why our citizenship should be on high (Phil. iii. 20); and why we should identify the scene of our future blessedness with all that is spiritually aspiring on earth.

V. THE RECIPIENTS OF THESE BLESSINGS. "Us" emphatically—Jewish and Gentile believers, with special reference to those who loved Christ, and maintained their integrity in the great focus or centre of Grecian vice and Eastern fanaticism, to which the Epistle was addressed. There is no depth of iniquity to which God's mercy and grace cannot descend.—T. C.

Ver. 4.—*The origin of our blessings: the election of grace.* The difficulties that attach to this doctrine do not arise from any ambiguity in the Scripture proofs which support it, but from the nature of the doctrine itself, and its apparent inconsistency with other doctrines of Scripture. Many of the difficulties, indeed, that we associate with the doctrine are involved in the doctrine of Divine providence; so much

so that William III. could say to Bishop Burnett, "Did I not believe absolute predestination, I could not believe a providence; for it would be most absurd to suppose a Being of infinite wisdom to act without a plan, for which plan predestination is only another name." Predestination is but God's plan of action; providence is the evolution of that plan. "If this providence has ordered and ordained everything which relates to the temporal lot and life, it is absolutely inconceivable that man's eternal lot should be determined without God's eternal counsel being fulfilled therein" (Oosterzee).

I. THE ELECTION OF GRACE, WHICH IS THE FOUNDATION OF ALL OUR SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS, HAS CHRIST FOR ITS CENTRE; for "God hath chosen us in him." We are regarded as existing in him, even in the Divine plan. The Son of God is the Firstborn, as well as the eldest Brother of the vast family of God. He who is the Centre of creation, providence, history, is also the Centre of the Divine plan.

II. THE ELECTION IS FOUNDED ON THE GOOD PLEASURE OF HIS WILL, WHICH IS ABSOLUTELY ONE WITH HIS MORAL PERFECTIONS, AND CANNOT, THEREFORE, PARTAKE OF AN ARBITRARY CHARACTER. The great question is—Is God or man the author of salvation? Are not faith and repentance, though man's acts, God's gifts? Is not the Christian God's workmanship—"created in Christ Jesus unto good works"? Is it possible to maintain the doctrine of grace without referring man's salvation to God? The system which rejects an election of grace does not make provision for the salvation of a single soul.

III. THE ELECTION IS FROM ETERNITY. It is "before the foundation of the world." It is as eternal as God himself, and not, therefore, founded in man's excellence, or even originated by sin, like an after-thought to rectify disorder or mistake; for believers are chosen, not on the ground of foreseen holiness, but that they may become holy, their faith itself being the effect, not the cause, of their election.

IV. IT IS AN ELECTION TO ADOPTION OR TO HOLINESS; for "God hath chosen us in him . . . that we should be holy and without blame"—the positive and the negative sides of Christian life—or he hath "predestinated us to the adoption of children." A holy God cannot choose us to be anything but holy. Holiness is the end of our calling, as it is of our election. The Church of God is to be finally "without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing." Holiness is the way to happiness. "A holy heart is a happy heart," even in this world of care.

V. IT IS AN ELECTION OF INDIVIDUALS. There is a national election, or an election to covenant privileges; but there is an individual election inside it: "Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for, but the election hath obtained it" (Rom. xi. 7). This fact is further manifest from the manner in which the Apostle Paul comforts believers, and urges them to sanctification by reminding them of their personal election. Believers are comforted besides with the assurance that their names are written in heaven, or in the book of life (Phil. iv. 3; Luke x. 20; Heb. xii. 23).—T. C.

Ver. 5.—*The adoption.* "Having predestinated us to the adoption of sons by Jesus Christ to himself." "Adoption" in Scripture expresses more than a change of relation—it includes the change of nature as well as the change of relation. It thus combines the blessings of justification and sanctification, or represents the complex condition of the believer as at once the subject of both. In a word, it presents the new creature in his new relations. This passage teaches—

I. THAT ADOPTION ORIGINATES IN THE FREE GRACE OF GOD; for we are predestinated thereunto. By nature we have no claim to it. "It is not a natural but a constituted relationship." The idea is not of sonship merely, but of sonship by adoption. None can adopt into the family of God but God himself, and therefore it may be regarded as an act of pure grace and love. "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God!" (1 John iii. 1). He may ask the question, "How shall I put thee among the children?" but he has answered it graciously in the line of covenant promise: "I will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord," (2 Cor. vi. 18).

II. THAT ADOPTION IS IN CONNECTION WITH THE PERSON AND MEDIATION OF CHRIST. He is not merely the Pattern of sonship to which we are to be conformed, but the adoption is "by Jesus Christ." The apostle declares elsewhere that "we are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus" (Gal. iii. 26), and that "God sent forth his

Son, made of a woman, made under the Law, to redeem them that were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption of sons" (Gal. iv. 4, 5). It is evident from these passages that we do not receive the adoption merely in virtue of Christ's incarnation. Some modern divines hold that the adoption springs, not from the death, but from the birth of Christ; that its benefits are conferred upon every member of the human race by virtue of the Incarnation; that Christ being one with every man, the Root and Archetype of humanity, all men are in him adopted and saved, and that nothing remains for faith but to discern this oneness and his salvation as already belonging to us. 1. This theory makes Christ, and not Adam, the Head of humanity. Yet Scripture makes Adam the true head of humanity, and Christ the Head of the redeemed. Christ is no doubt called "the Head of every man" (1 Cor. xi. 9), in so far as he is "the Firstborn of every creature," and as "all things were created" by him and for him; but the allusion is not to the Incarnation at all, but to the pre-existent state of the Son, and to the fact that, according to the original state of things, the world was constituted in him. But the whole race of man is represented as in Adam (Rom. v. 12). How else can we understand the parallel between the two Adams? "That was not first which was spiritual, but that which was natural." "The first man was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit." Is it proper to regard Christ as the Archetype of fallen humanity alienated from God, and needing to be created anew in the Divine image (Col. iii. 10; ch. iv. 24)? 2. This theory is inconsistent with Scripture, which makes the Incarnation and the cross inseparable. They are both means to an end: the expiation of sin, the vindication of Divine justice—the meritorious obedience to be rendered to the Law. Jesus was born that he might die. The event of Golgotha not only explains but completes the event of Bethlehem. Our Saviour came to save the lost (Matt. xviii. 11); he came to give his life a ransom (Matt. xx. 28); he came into the world to save sinners (1 Tim. i. 15); he took part of flesh and blood to destroy death (Heb. ii. 14); he was manifested to destroy the works of the devil (1 John iii. 8); it was on the cross he triumphed over principalities and powers (Col. ii. 15). There are a hundred passages in Scripture which ascribe our salvation to his death to one passage ascribing it to his birth. It is a suggestive circumstance that he should have appointed a festival to commemorate his death—the Lord's Supper—and should have appointed no similar festival to commemorate his birth. The effect, if not the design, of this theory is to destroy the necessity for the atonement, and thus to avoid the offence of the cross. The Incarnation is presented to us as a remedial arrangement by virtue of its connection with the cross, and the connection of man with Christ is represented as corrective of his connection with Adam. Our primary connection is with the first Adam, and we only attain to connection with Christ by regeneration.

III. THAT ADOPTION IS FOR THOSE WHO ARE UNITED TO CHRIST BY FAITH. Scripture is exceedingly plain in its testimony upon this point. "Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus" (Gal. iii. 26); "As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his Name" (John i. 12); "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God" (Rom. viii. 14). Yet it is said that faith does not make the sonship, but discerns it as already ours. The proper office of faith, however, is not to recognize the blessing of adoption as ours, but "to receive and rest upon Christ alone for salvation, as he is offered to us in the gospel." The blessings of salvation are not conferred on all men prior to their faith or without their faith. The union between Christ and believers, of which the Scripture is so full, is not accomplished by our Lord's assumption of our common nature, but is only realized through an appropriating faith wrought in each of us by the grace of God.

IV. THAT THE ISSUE OF THE ADOPTION IS TO BRING BELIEVERS AT LAST INTO COMMUNION WITH GOD HIMSELF. "Ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's." We are brought into the Divine family—"the family in heaven and in earth" (ch. iii. 15)—of which God is the Father; for "adoption finds its ultimate enjoyment and blessing in God." If we are thus brought to God and belong to God in virtue of our adoption, ought we not with a profound earnestness to aim at a high and spiritual tone of living?—T. C.

Ver. 7.—*Redemption through blood.* "Redemption" is a large and exclusive term, implying deliverance from sin, Satan, and death. It includes, not the mere remission of

sins, which is, however, the primary element in it; nor the mere adoption, though that is the consequence of it—for “we are redeemed that we may receive the adoption of sons” (Gal. iv. 4), but the completed sanctification of our souls and the consummated redemption of our bodies. The price of redemption is the blood of him who is here described as “the Beloved.”

I. THE REDEMPTION IS NOT, ANY MORE THAN THE ADOPTION, EFFECTED BY THE INCARNATION, BUT BY THE DEATH OF CHRIST. More was needed for redemption than the mere birth of the Redeemer, else he need not have died. Therefore we preach, not the person of Christ, nor the child born, but Christ crucified, “the wisdom of God, and the power of God.” Some lay stress upon his life rather than upon his death. But the one righteousness on the ground of which we are justified, consists at once of the obedience of his life and of the sufferings of his death. Our Saviour was our Substitute both in life and in death. Yet Scripture assigns the greater prominence to the death. We are “bought with a price;” “We are redeemed by the precious blood of Christ.” Not only is redemption set forth objectively in Christ’s person, because he is of God made unto us “redemption” (1 Cor. i. 30), but the ransom price is definitively described as “his blood,” considered as the reality of the ancient sacrifices and as procuring the full salvation which they only figured forth.

II. THE REDEMPTION IS NOT A MERE MORAL RENOVATION. Some divines say the work of redemption is wholly subjective, its sole aim being the moral transformation of the sinner, or the rooting of sin out of the soul. They say, indeed, that no such thing as remission of sin is possible, except through the previous extirpation of sin itself. But, according to Scripture, redemption includes everything necessary to salvation, both the change of condition and the change of character—both justification and sanctification. And both these come to us in virtue of Christ’s blood. If nothing was required for salvation but the exercise of spiritual power upon us, no person need have come from the bosom of the Godhead, and there need have been no crucifixion. The double aspect of Christ’s death is presented in such passages as these: “He bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness” (1 Pet. ii. 24); “He gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works” (Titus ii. 14, 15). That is, his ultimate design is to deliver us from sin itself. But the moral power of the cross depends upon those substantial objective benefits which it procures for us. On the theory of some modern divines, the redemption cannot extend to Old Testament saints at all, for they have not seen the manifestation of Divine self-sacrificing love which we have seen in the cross.

III. IT IS A REDEMPTION STILL IN PROGRESS. The original word implies this—“we are having” this redemption. Naturalistic writers give us a dead Christ. But we have a living Saviour who, because he was crucified once, is dead no more, but “ever liveth to make intercession for us.” He is now carrying on in heaven the work of our redemption. The Holy Spirit applies to us all its blessings, and seals us unto the day of redemption.—T. C.

Ver. 7.—The forgiveness of sins. Redemption consists essentially in forgiveness as its primary fact in respect of importance and of order, not as a mere element belonging to the more advanced stages of Christian life, nor as dependent on the renovation of our nature.

I. SCRIPTURE ASSEKTS A DIRECT CAUSAL CONNECTION BETWEEN THE BLOOD OF CHRIST AND THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS. There is no absolute forgiveness. Christ’s blood was shed for the remission of sins (Matt. xxvi. 28). The original word for forgiveness is a judicial term, referring to deliverance from the punishment due to sin rather than deliverance from its power. Scripture does not say that Christ contemplated a mere moral redemption—though sanctification as well as justification is included in his work; nor does it teach that his death was a mere example of self-sacrifice, or merely designed to confirm the truth of his doctrine or to ratify the promise of an absolute forgiveness. In that case, the Old Testament saints could have no share in the benefits of Christ’s death. But Scripture clearly teaches that forgiveness is the direct result of the atoning death, without any addition of works of ours or works of Law to secure exemption from punishment.

II. **FORGIVENESS IS TO BE DISTINGUISHED FROM ATONEMENT.** Forgiveness is the act of God as Judge; atonement is the act of Christ as Surety. The atonement is the foundation or ground of forgiveness. It is from the neglect of this distinction that some divines declare the impropriety of our praying for the forgiveness of sin, inasmuch as all our sins, past, present, and future, were put away in one day. The atonement was certainly made in one day; but forgiveness is a continuous act. To purchase a gift is a different thing from bestowing it. We cannot expunge a debt till it has been contracted, and we were not in existence when Christ died, either to sin or to receive forgiveness. "But we were not in existence to be atoned for." The cases are different. A father can lay up property for an unborn son, but the son cannot come into possession till he is born. Besides, if all our sins were forgiven at Christ's death, how could pardoned believers ever have been guilty? And why should there be examples in Scripture of prayers for forgiveness?

III. **THE ORIGIN OF THE FORGIVENESS.** "According to the riches of his grace." Though it comes to us through the blood of Christ, it is really traceable to the "riches of his grace." It has been said that ransom and the exercise of grace are not consistent. Yet the apostle here expressly asserts the consistency of the two things—a complete satisfaction and a free pardon. Though the pardon is free to us, it was not procured without the payment of a price. The grace of God is the source or impelling cause in our redemption; the blood of Christ was the meritorious ground of it. We may, therefore, glorify God for "the riches of his grace" in the full forgiveness of all our sins. We may, therefore, "be of good cheer," for our sins are forgiven us; we may love him much for the much that he has forgiven us; and call upon our souls to bless the Lord for all his benefits, and especially for this—"Who forgiveth all our iniquities."—T. C.

Ver. 9.—*The revelation of the mystery.* It was the high distinction of the Apostle Paul that to him, and not to any one of the twelve apostles, was committed the revelation of a great mystery. Ten times is this mystery named in his Epistles. It is called significantly "his gospel;" for which he was, indeed, an ambassador in bonds; but a gospel even more gloriously practical than it was speculative in its tendency and character. It was a revealed secret, "hid from generations"—indeed, hid "from the foundation of the world;" a matter, not indeed unknowable, but simply unknown till it came to light through the revelation of this last apostle.

I. **THERE IS A TIME WHEN THE WORLD IS NOT READY FOR GOD'S MYSTERIES.** The Divine purpose might be defeated by a premature disclosure to minds untrained for their reception. The presence of mysteries is a sort of moral training for man, in so far as it stimulates a sort of sober and devout inquisitiveness in minds blunted by sin, while reason needs likewise to be humbled under a sense of the necessity of illumination from on high. While we sit under the solemn shadows of Divine mysteries, we feel the need of lifting up our mantled eyeballs to the great Father of lights.

II. **THE MYSTERY DOES NOT COME WITHOUT DUE PREPARATION HAVING BEEN MADE FOR IT.** Not only is the New Testament contained in the Old, but the whole pre-Christian period is one long preparation for the coming of Christ. Not only the types and prophecies of the Mosaic dispensation, but the whole history of the world, with all the marvellously intricate movements of providence, had a certain Christward tendency and leaning, as if to prepare the way for him who was the end of the Law, the turning-point between the old and the new time, "the pivot on which the entire plan of God moves." Thus we find "the Incarnation to be the centre of gravity to the world's great movements."

III. **BUT THE MYSTERY OF THE GOSPEL WHICH THE APOSTLE MADE KNOWN WAS A VERY LARGE AND INCLUSIVE THING, EMBRACING JEW AND GENTILE, HEAVEN AND EARTH, IN ITS FULL AND GRADUAL DEVELOPMENT.** Sometimes it appears as if it meant only Christ: "To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Col. i. 27). Sometimes it appears as if it included nothing but the reception of the Gentiles into the Christian Church upon conditions of perfect equality with the Jews: "The mystery of Christ, 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 the

Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel" (ch. iii. 4—6). It was no mystery to pre-Christian ages that the Gentiles would be afterwards included in the Christian Church—for the prophetic Scriptures are full of the subject; but it was never known till after the day of Pentecost that the theocracy itself was to be abolished, and that a new dispensation was to be established, under which the old distinction of Jew and Gentile was to be abolished. Sometimes it appears as if it meant a Divine purpose or plan, with Christ for its Centre, stretching out over the whole length of the Christian dispensation, and finally re-collecting into one "things on earth" and "things in heaven" (vers. 9, 10). In fact, it means all three things; for the Divine plan for "the summing up" of all things included, as one of its earliest and most momentous facts, the inclusion of the Gentiles in the Church, and Jesus Christ as the very Centre of the whole Divine dispensation, to whom shall be "the gathering of the people" in all ages of the world. This is the mystery of the gospel: not the Church, as some say, restricting the term to believers of the Christian dispensation; for it was by the Church the mystery was to be made known: "To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the Church the manifold wisdom of God" (ch. iii. 10). Yet the Church was included in this glorious mystery of God, as the form in which there should be the final "summing up" of all things in heaven and in earth.—T. C.

Ver. 10.—"*The dispensation of the fulness of times.*" This marks the period during which the summing up of all things is to be accomplished—the period of the dispensation of grace.

I. THE TERM SUGGESTS THE IDEA OF A PLAN OR SYSTEM, NOT CONSISTING OF MERE FRAGMENTARY AND UNRELATED PARTS, BUT A THOROUGHLY COMPACT AND ORGANIZED SYSTEM, IN WHICH THE INDIVIDUAL PARTS HAVE THEIR DUE PLACES IN THE WORKING OUT OF A DESTINED RESULT. Just as in creation there is a unity of plan with certain typical ideas and regulative numbers lying at its basis, so there is in God's dispensation a certain succession of times and seasons working out the purposes of his will. "God is the Steward of all time." The God who has made of one blood all nations of men "hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation" (Acts xvii. 26). Christianity marks a new era in history, dividing it into two unequal parts, the appearance of Christ marking the turning-point between them.

II. THIS DISPENSATION DATES FROM THE FULNESS OF TIMES, THAT IS, FROM THE PERIOD WHEN ALL THE TIMES DESTINED TO PRECEDE IT HAD RUN OUT. The pre-Christian ages have seen their end in Christ's advent, which becomes thenceforth "the fulness of times." It was a chronological as well as a moral fulness. The epoch in question is the best time in the Divine calendar; for it is God's time, and he is the Lord of all time. The age that saw the advent of the Saviour was ripe for the event. It was "the time appointed by the Father" (Gal. iv. 2). The Roman power had opened highways for the gospel in every land by its immense conquests and its large toleration, while Greece gave the world the richest of languages to become the vehicle for New Testament inspiration. Meanwhile religion had outlived itself, and scepticism mocked at the decaying superstitions of the people. "The world by wisdom knew not God." All Gentile experiments in living had been tried, but with the unvarying result of disappointment. Meanwhile there was at the heart of heathenism a mysterious longing for some change in the world's destinies, and the eyes of men turned instinctively to the East. Whether this tendency sprang up among the dispersion of the Jews over the East and the West, or from some instinctive longing, it was God's will that the Gentiles should, with a conscious need of redemption, feel after him for themselves, "if haply they might find him" (Acts xvii. 27). Among the Jews, likewise, there was a significant "waiting for the consolation of Israel;" idolatry had totally disappeared; new and more liberal ideas prevailed, in spite of the bigotry of the sects; and many hearts were prepared to welcome the "Desire of all nations." "The full age had come," when the heir would enter on his inheritance. Thus the advent was in every sense "the fulness of times." It was "the due time" when Christ died for the ungodly. The world had waited long for it. The purpose of God had only to receive its fulfilment by the coming of Christ. Equally so still is there a longing in the heart of men for a Saviour. Men may try experiments in life; they may taste of its

pleasures; they may try to extract from it all the wisdom the world can give; but there is still a void which nothing can fill till he comes whose right it is to possess and subdue and save the soul for himself.—T. C.

Ver. 10.—*The summing up in one of all things in Christ.* This was the mystery of God hid for ages, but now revealed.

I. IT IMPLIES A PRIOR SEPARATION OF THE THINGS RE-COLLECTED OR REGATHERED TO GOD IN JESUS CHRIST AS CENTRE OR HEAD. Sin is the great divider. It separates man from God; it separates man from man; it causes a schism within man himself. Rebellion introduced disorder. There was a break of moral continuity between earth and heaven caused by the Fall. "Earth was morally severed from heaven and the worlds which retained their pristine integrity." The primary reference here may be to the separation or enmity which so long held apart the Jew and the Gentile, but it undoubtedly has a wider reference to the relations between heaven and earth which were so profoundly affected by the fall of man.

II. THE OBJECTS OF THE REUNION. 1. Jews and Gentiles, so long apart, are now "made both one" through the blood of the cross. Men try in our day to bring about a union of humanity on a basis of moral rule, or of socialism, or of the creed of "liberty, equality, and fraternity;" but the cross is the only reconciler of man to man. It is only under Christianity that any approach has been made toward a juster view of human rights, and toward a more genuine interest in the welfare of individual men. 2. The whole Church of God in heaven and in earth is reunited in Christ. This includes the saints of all dispensations, who, whether they lived under the comparative twilight of the Jewish dispensation, or in the days of antichristian apostasy in our own dispensation, found their home at last in glory. There are those who imagine that the pre-Christian saints do not belong to the Church of God, because this Church, they affirm, first came into being on the day of Pentecost, and therefore they assign to the saints of Jewish times an inferior place of glory in heaven. The Church of God for which Christ died (ch. v. 2) must include the saints of all time. This is the Church which he hath purchased with his own blood, and, if the Old Testament saints are not in it, they are lost. There is no redemption apart from union with the person of the Redeemer; for the one sentence in the Corinthian Epistle covers the destinies of the whole human race: "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive" (1 Cor. xv. 22). And if we are Abraham's seed, we must have union with Christ; for "they that are of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham" (Gal. iii.). Those, therefore, who are to be gathered together in Christ must include the saints of every dispensation. 3. The angels of heaven are probably included among "the things of heaven." When we consider that Jesus Christ is Head of angels as well as men, that the angels are ministering spirits to the heirs of salvation, that they had a profound interest in the work of redemption, that the Church itself was to be the means of instructing them in the wonders of God's plan of salvation (ch. iii. 10), that the angels themselves may have been confirmed in their holy steadfastness by the Son of God, that our Divine Redeemer continues to wear in the sight of angels the human nature he wore on earth,—it is no extravagant speculation that all the heavenly hosts are united under a new Head, and in a new bond in virtue of the grand transaction of Calvary. 4. There seems no just reason for believing that the passage sanctions the restoration of lost men and lost angels. The parallel passage in Col. i. 20, which speaks of "things in heaven and things on earth"—that is, the redeemed saints of earth and heaven—seems to exclude such an interpretation.

III. THE CENTRE OF REUNION IS CHRIST. The re-collecting or regathering is twice-told as in him. An ancient prophetic voice spoke of him as the One to whom "shall the gathering of the people be" (Gen. xlix. 10). He is the Centre of everything in the universe. He is the Centre of nature, for not only were all things made by him, but in him they consist; he is the Centre of providence, for he upholds all things by the word of his power; he is the Centre of Christendom, just as he was the Centre of the old theocracy; he is the Centre of the Church invisible, for he is its Head and its Life; he is the Centre of heaven, for it is the Lamb that is in the midst of the throne; he is the Centre of the Godhead itself, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. It is, therefore, in him that "all things in earth and all things in heaven" are re-collected or summed up, for the

showing forth, with a lustre before unknown, of the majesty and glory of God. "I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one" (John xvii. 23).—T. O.

Vers. 11, 12.—*The believer's inheritance.* This is for the children, who are not only partakers of the knowledge of redemption, but heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ Jesus (Rom. viii. 17). Property in this world usually goes by inheritance, but it is not so with Heaven's highest blessings. They are "not of blood, neither of the will of man," but of God. The serious question suggests itself—Have we any part or lot in the great gathering together in Christ of which the apostle has just spoken? "We have obtained an inheritance."

I. *THE NATURE OF THIS INHERITANCE.* It is difficult to describe it, because "it doth not yet appear what we shall be;" but it is described more negatively than positively in Scripture, rather by the absence of certain things, that we may the better understand the things that are really present in it. It is "incorruptible, undefiled, and unfading;" there shall be in our future life no more death, nor curse, nor night, nor weeping, nor sin, nor transitoriness. But it is possible to gather up from Scripture some of the positive elements in our future inheritance. Man's twofold nature, as body and spirit, demands a twofold satisfaction. 1. There are many mansions in our Father's house; there are heavenly places not made with hands; there is a better and more enduring substance in store for us. The promise of Jesus, "Where I am, there ye shall be also," carries with it the assurance that our future home will be adorned with all the art and workmanship and glory our Redeemer has lavished upon this world, with all its sins and miseries. It cannot be that the Son, the Creator, will be less powerful when he stands at the head of a redeemed world, or less willing to show forth his glory as the Author of all the beauty which has been ever seen or dreamt of. Whether our future home is to be a star, or a galaxy of worlds, or a vast metropolis, it is reasonable to suppose that it will display infinitely more material glory, as the expression of his creative genius and his infinite love, than he has ever lavished upon this beautiful world, with all its deep scars and its traces of sin and sorrow. 2. But there are certain spiritual aspects of our future inheritance, concerning which we may speak with more confidence. (1) There will be a vast increase of knowledge as well as of the capacity of knowing. We shall know even as we are known (1 Cor. xiii. 12). It will be a knowledge which will dispel error, disagreement, ignorance, which will make us marvel at our own past childishness. (2) There will be holiness, for "without holiness no man shall see the Lord;" and the Church will be presented to him at last "without spot," because without a trace of corruption; "without wrinkle," because without one trace of decay, but "holy and without blemish" (ch. v. 27). (3) There will be rest and satisfaction of heart. The weary heart of man says, "I have seen an end of all perfection," but the believer can say in happy assurance, "I shall be satisfied when I awake in thy likeness" (Ps. xvii. 15). "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, for they shall rest," not from their works, but only "from their labours." Their rest will be that of joyful strength, of congenial employment, in a perfect world. (4) It will be a social blessedness; for the elect shall be gathered from the four winds, that they may dwell together, seeing the same glory, singing the same songs, and rejoicing in the presence of the same Lord. "To be with Christ" is not inaptly described as the hope of the believer, for he is the chief and central Source of the heavenly joy.

II. *BELIEVERS HAVE THE INHERITANCE THROUGH CHRIST.* "In whom we have obtained an inheritance." It is not a hereditary possession, like an entailed estate; for grace does not run in the blood. It comes to us through Christ. He purchased it with his blood. His righteousness gives us a title to it, as his grace gives us "a meetness for the inheritance of the saints in light;" and now he keeps possession of it for us, writing our names upon the royalties of heaven, and will put us into full and final possession at the last day.

III. *THE INHERITANCE IS ACCORDING TO THE DIVINE PURPOSE;* for we are "predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will." We are predestinated, not to adoption merely, but to the inheritance that it involves. The Lord provides a heavenly portion. It is a sure portion, because it is according to a purpose that cannot be frustrated. Grace is the key-note of this Epistle. Our salvation is first and last of grace.

IV. THE END OR DESIGN IS TO PROMOTE GOD'S GLORY. "That we should be to the praise of his glory." Believers are either in their lives to be "living epistles of Christ, to be known and read of all men," as instances of the power of Divine grace, or they are to set forth his praises by ascribing everything to his grace and nothing to their own merit.—T. O.

Ver. 12.—*Hope in Christ.* "Who first hoped in Christ." Hope, as one of the great springs of human action, is to be distinguished from simple foresight or simple expectation; for the one may be a foresight of evil, the other an expectation of coming misfortune. Hope, on the contrary, is the expectation of future good. We do not hope for mistake, or for misfortune, or for pain; we hope for what will fill our future with brightness. "Hope is the noblest offspring, the first born, the last buried child of foreseeing and forecasting man." Hope is often illusive, but the hope of the gospel is real on account of its deep, strong, and immutable foundations.

I. JESUS CHRIST IS THE TRUE FOUNDATION OF OUR HOPE. So strongly linked with it, indeed, that he is expressly called "our Hope" (1 Tim. i. 2), and "the Hope of glory" (Col. i. 27). To have hope in Christ is a higher thing than to have hope directed towards Christ. What is there in the person or work of Christ to awaken or sustain our hope? 1. In his atonement there is a foundation laid for the hope of pardon in the heart of the chiefest of sinners. 2. In his present work as our High Priest and Intercessor there is a foundation laid for the hope of purification. 3. Christ in us—"dwelling in us by faith"—is the assurance of our hope; for it is Christ *in* us who is the Hope of glory. 4. Christ is the Pattern of our hope, for when he shall appear, we hope to be like him, being "predestinated to be conformed to his image." 5. The climax of our hope will be reached at his appearing, for that is the blessed hope of the Church. We are "to hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ" (1 Pet. i. 13).

II. THE SOURCE OF OUR HOPE IN CHRIST. We are predestinated thereunto (ch. i. 11). It is the "God of hope" who causes us "to abound in hope" (Rom. xv. 13); it is he who gives us "a good hope through grace"—not of nature or man's merits, for it is ascribed to his "abundant mercy" as the spring of it (1 Pet. i. 3); and he gives us "the patience and comfort of the Scriptures, that we may have hope" (Rom. xv. 4).

III. IT IS A HIGH PRIVILEGE TO HAVE AN EARLY HOPE IN CHRIST. "Who first hoped in Christ." This was the great privilege of the Jews. The Gentiles were last, not first, in their enjoyment of Christ. The Apostle Paul deemed Andronicus and Junia highly favoured, because "they were in Christ before him" (Rom. xvi. 7). It must always be subject of pious regret that we had not an earlier experience of Christ; for we should thus have been preserved from many sins and follies; we should have had such a fuller enjoyment of his gospel, and we should have had many more opportunities of doing good.—T. C.

Ver. 13.—*The means of salvation.* "The Word of truth, the gospel of your salvation." This double title is significant because the faith which cometh by hearing has a relation at once to the understanding and to the will. The Word of truth is to satisfy the understanding; the gospel of salvation is to satisfy the will, which embraces Christ as he is freely offered in the gospel. It is the "Word of truth"—not cunningly devised fables or illusory dreams of men; for it comes from the God of truth, it has Christ the Truth for its substance, and the Spirit of truth applies it by imparting a true spiritual discernment of its meaning. It is "the gospel of your salvation;" for it is "the power of God to salvation to every one that believeth" (Rom. i. 16). Therefore we ought all "to take heed what we hear" (Mark iv. 24), and to ponder one of the signs of a godly character, "He that is of God heareth God's words" (John viii. 47).

I. THE SCRIPTURES ARE NECESSARY TO OUR BELIEVING. "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God" (Rom. x. 17). "Receive with meekness the ingrafted Word, which is able to save your souls" (Jas. i. 21). Not but that in some extraordinary cases God seems to have converted men without the agency of preaching or of the written Word—Divine mercy suddenly coming into contact with men that were not seeking for it, and found in quarters where it might least be expected. It is very doubtful, however, whether in cases of this sort, the Word of God, once learned but long

forgotten, may not have been revived by the Spirit of God as the means of salvation. The Scriptures "make wise unto salvation" (2 Tim. iii. 15), and souls need to be nourished up with the words of faith and good doctrine, even with the wholesome words of our Lord Jesus Christ. The parable of the sower shows the uses of the seed (Matt. xiii.).

II. THE SPIRIT OF GOD IS NECESSARY TO THE DUE RECEPTION OF THE WORD. Thus the Word of God is called the sword of the Spirit (ch. vi. 17; Heb. iv. 12), which he holds in his hand as an instrument of power. We are "born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God" (1 Pet. i. 23). The influence of the Holy Spirit is uniformly distinguished from that of the truth itself; because it is necessary to the reception of the truth (1 Cor. ii. 12-15). It is true that faith cometh by hearing, but there is a hearing which brings no faith; therefore the Spirit is needed to give effect to the truth. "Open thou mine eyes, that I may see wondrous things out of thy Law." Men see by the light, yet the eyes of the blind are not opened by the light. The Spirit must give efficacy to the Word, that it may save the soul.

III. WE OUGHT TO STUDY THE SCRIPTURES IN A RIGHT SPIRIT. 1. Reverently, because they are the Word of God, and not the word of man. 2. Meekly (Jas. i. 21), with a humble and submissive temper. 3. In faith (Heb. iv. 2); for else the study were utterly unprofitable. 4. Prayerfully (Ps. x. 17); for the Lord will thus prepare the heart. 5. Practically (Matt. vii. 24, 25), that our life may be a comment upon the Word.—T. C.

Ver. 13.—*Faith in Christ.* "In whom having believed." Faith is a God-given reliance on an all-sufficient Mediator.

I. IT IS MORE THAN A MERE BELIEF OF THE TRUTH: it is an act of the will; it is trust in a Person. It has been strongly urged in our day that faith is simply the belief in God's testimony that Christ has died for us. "It is simply believing that Christ died for me." There are two statements here: Christ is the Saviour of sinners; he has saved me. The first is true, whether I believe in him or not; the second only becomes true on my believing. Faith is not believing that I am saved; it is believing in order to be saved. The grant of salvation is absolute or it is not. If not, the grant does not make the pardon mine before I believe; if it is absolute, it makes the pardon mine before I believe; so I am justified before faith and therefore without faith. On this theory of faith, faith is utterly impossible; for the soul would require to accept the proposition, "I am saved," in order to be saved. A man may firmly credit the testimony of God, and yet doubt whether he is himself a believer, though he is convinced that Christ will save all true believers. The position of some is practically this: "I believe that I am a believer." If this is true faith, we cannot deceive ourselves; for the more firmly a man believes he is a believer, the stronger must his faith be. But nothing but a theory of universal salvation could warrant a sinner, while he is still a sinner, to believe that Christ died for him and will assuredly save him. The apostle said to the Galatians, "Let no man deceive himself;" but on this principle there is no need for any warnings against self-deception.

II. FAITH IS TRUST IN A PERSON. It thus becomes the instrument of our justification. It is the receptive organ or the hand by which the graciously provided ransom is received by the sinner; or, it is the bond which attaches him to Christ. When the object of faith is stated in Scripture, it is presented in connection with certain significant forms of grammatical construction. We are said to believe *in* or *upon* Jesus Christ. This form occurs fifty times in the New Testament, and the object is always a Person, and not a statement to be believed. If faith, indeed, is not taken to include trust, we have not a single exhortation in the whole New Testament to trust in the Lord like what occurs so often in the Old Testament; and if faith does not include trust, where is the evidence that the Old Testament saints had faith at all, apart from the Epistle to the Hebrews (Heb. xi.); for in the Old Testament they are not said to believe, but always to trust in the Lord?

III. FAITH IS THE SUSTAINING PRINCIPLE OF OUR CHRISTIAN LIFE. It is not the mere root-principle; it is the continuing principle of it; for the apostle says, "The life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God" (Gal. ii. 20). He who believes receives the saving blessings which Christ's death procured. Faith apprehends Christ under three gracious aspects: "Christ for us," for our justification; "Christ in

us," for our sanctification; "Christ with us," for comfort and confidence. These are not three separate blessings, any one of which we may have without the others, but three parts of the Christian's privilege, bound up together in the same bundle of life, and given upon our believing. There is a mysticism which speaks of Christ in his people which fails to realize Christ for his people; but our fellowship of life with Christ is not redemption, but as the Bible everywhere represents it, as the result, reward, and fruit of the ransom offered by our Divine Redeemer.—T. C.

Vers. 13, 14.—The sealing of the Holy Spirit. "In whom, having believed, ye were sealed." It is spoken of as a past process, but, though dating from a certain specific point of time, it is continuous in its operation.

I. THE NATURE OF THE SEALING. It is something different from faith, as the sealing of a letter is different from the writing of it. In the order of nature there must be a difference; in the order of time, the faith and the sealing may be contemporaneous. The sealing implies the direct contact of the seal with the thing sealed, and an impression made by it. It has both an objective and a subjective meaning. It is objective so far as it is for identification. "The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his" (2 Tim. ii. 19); for the Lord sets his mark upon believers to keep them safe for himself; and it is also for security, for "we are sealed unto the day of redemption" (ch. iv. 30), that is, to be preserved unto that day, the sealed ones of the Revelation being expressly sealed for safety (Rev. vii. 3). Then it is subjective as it involves the assurance of faith, saints being thus assured of their interest in the favour of God and in the blessings of his kingdom. "Faith is the hand that takes hold of Christ; assurance is the ring which God puts on faith's finger." Believers as sealed by the Spirit have the witness within themselves that they are children of God (1 John v. 10; Rom. v. 5; viii. 18).

II. THE SEALER. This is God, not the Holy Spirit; for it is said, "Now he which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God, who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts" (2 Cor. i. 21, 22). The Holy Spirit is not the Sealer, but the Seal.

III. THE PERSON INTO WHOM BELIEVERS ARE SEALED—JESUS CHRIST. "In whom ye were sealed." The sealing has direct relation to our union with Christ, as the passage implies; but the apostle also says, "He which stablisheth us with you in [rather, 'into'] Christ is God . . . who hath also sealed us" (2 Cor. i. 22). Jesus said, "At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you." Thus all the three witnesses in heaven, as well as the three witnesses on earth, concur in the testimony to our interest in the blessings of salvation. Our sealing is indeed in virtue of the sealing of Christ himself; for "him hath God the Father sealed" (John vi. 27).

IV. THE SEAL IS NOT BAPTISM, OR THE LORD'S SUPPER, OR EXTRAORDINARY GIFTS, BUT THE HOLY SPIRIT HIMSELF. "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, in whom ye were sealed till the day of redemption" (ch. iv. 30), as marking the element or sphere of the sealing. God stamps the image of his Spirit upon the Christian soul; and all that is involved in the Spirit's operation—love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance (Gal. v. 22)—is worked into man's spirit; for "we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, as from the Spirit of the Lord" (2 Cor. iii. 18), that is, as reflecting his image.

V. THE SEALED ARE BELIEVERS. It is not truths, or promises, or experiences, that are sealed upon the heart; it is believers themselves who are sealed. A hard, cold, lifeless heart cannot receive the seal. The believing heart must be melted by the love shed abroad by the Holy Ghost, just as wax is melted to receive the device carved on the seal, before it can be in a state receptive enough for taking the impress, that is, the witness of Divine favour and security.

VI. THE INDELIBILITY OF THE SEAL. This seems implied in the very nature of the term employed, "ye were sealed"—in the past tense. "Whatever bears God's image will be safely carried home to his bosom." The seal that may be broken is no security. "Ye were sealed till the day of redemption"—till no day short of that; but it is a sealing that implies a perseverance in holiness. It is this security that supplies the strongest argument why we should not grieve the Spirit. The apostle does not

suggest the fear of the Spirit's withdrawal, but rather the ingratitude of believers who could grieve One who had done so much for them.—T. C.

Ver. 14.—*The believer's earnest of his Divine inheritance.* The Spirit is the earnest—the sample as well as pledge of future blessedness. It is now we see the purpose of the seal. It is because the Spirit is an earnest of our inheritance that his indwelling is a seal. The earnest is the same in kind with the prospective inheritance. It is “the inheritance in miniature.” It is a sample of the stock, a pledge that all the rest will come in due time. The indwelling of the Spirit is part of the blessings of redemption, and a security for our enjoying the rest. Therefore it is called “the firstfruits of the Spirit.” Three times does the word “earnest” occur in the New Testament in relation to the work of the Spirit.

I. IT HAS RELATION TO AN ETERNAL INHERITANCE—to “the redemption of the purchased possession,” that is, the final deliverance from all evil which is to take place in the end of all things. It is an earnest of that completed redemption.

II. IT IS ALSO AN EARNEST, NOT OF THE RESURRECTION MERELY, NOR OF THE CHANGE OF LIVING BELIEVERS AT THE RESURRECTION, BUT OF A CONDITION OF GLORY BETWEEN DEATH AND THE RESURRECTION; for the apostle refers specially to this fact in 2 Cor. v. 5, “Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit.”

III. THE INDWELLING OF THE SPIRIT IS REPRESENTED IN ROM. VIII. 11 AS THE PLEDGE OF THE FUTURE LIFE OF THE BODY; for there is a redemption of the body (Rom. viii. 23), because the Spirit is equally the Source of the life we derive from Christ, both for body and soul. This earnest redounds to the praise of God's glory, as God is glorified in the security of believers.—T. C.

Ver. 15.—*The prayers of an apostle.* In other Epistles the apostle introduces his expression of thanksgiving at the beginning, but here he brings it into the very heart of a doctrinal statement, enumerating in successive steps the immense blessings of salvation.

I. IT IS THE INSTINCT OF A HOLY HEART TO PRAY FOR THE SPIRITUAL WELL-BEING OF OTHERS. “It is an angel's grace to rejoice over the conversion of sinners.” But Paul had the care of all the Churches daily upon his heart; they all had a place in his supplications, as well as individual Christians among them; and he “ceased not” to pray for them till he had received an answer to his prayers. He must have spent a large portion of his busy life in prayer. How could he find time to remember all the Churches in his supplications? A godly pastor in America was in the habit of isolating a day now and then for prayer for the whole world. When asked how he could find matter for a whole day's supplication, he answered, “I spread out a map of the world before me; and as I know something of the religious condition of all the countries on the map, I cannot be at a loss for matter.” What a large heart was that of the apostle, that could bear all the Churches up to the throne of God in earnest and affectionate entreaty!

II. THE GROUND OF HIS THANKSGIVING—“the faith and love” of the Ephesian Christians. These two graces, like the two great commands of the Law, sum up in a sense all the graces of the Spirit. “Faith and love are the two arms and the two eyes without which Christ can be neither seen nor embraced.” They have their origin in the grace of Christ, which “was exceeding abundant in faith and love” (1 Tim. i. 14); faith holding the first place, because “faith in the Lord Jesus Christ” is the first principle of Christian life, because it worketh by love, because love springs out of faith (1 Tim. i. 5)—not love to God, but love to the saints, which is implied in this higher love; for “he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?” (1 John v. 20). It was a catholic love—“to all saints,” with all their differences of character, habit, and life. The apostle was thankful for the exhibition of these two graces at Ephesus, not only because he had been the instrument of their conversion, but because they marked the interest of his disciples in the blessings of salvation. He was delighted, besides, to find them persevering in grace: “Now I live if ye stand fast in the Lord.” The spiritual friendships of the apostle were marked by great intensity of interest and feeling.

III. THESE PRAYERS OF AN APOSTLE WOULD BE EFFECTUAL IN BRINGING DOWN BLESSING UPON THE EPHESIAN SAINTS. "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."—T. C.

Ver. 17.—*Prayer for the Holy Spirit.* The Ephesian saints had already received the Spirit, for they had been sealed by him; but the apostle wishes the Spirit to become a spirit of wisdom and revelation, for further enlargement in a spiritual sense can only be realized in the direction of new knowledge. Some persons say it is wrong to pray for the Holy Spirit, as it seems to imply that he has not already come. The apostle here expressly prays for the Spirit. Our prayers always acknowledge the Spirit as already come, and already operating with power in the Church, and what we desire from time to time is the individual application of his blessings to our hearts. Similarly, the apostle wishes grace and peace to Churches which already rejoiced in the experience of both blessings. "Ye have received an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things." Jesus is the Holy One; his Spirit is the unction; the knowledge of all things the result. This unction imparts the germ and substance of all knowledge.—T. C.

Ver. 17.—*Prayer for the knowledge of God.* The apostle prays that the spirit of wisdom and revelation may be given, so that the Ephesian saints may have a fuller knowledge of God. Knowledge is an essential factor for promoting growth in grace. He does not pray for holiness, but for knowledge, because he knows it is only through the fuller knowledge of God, imparted by the Divine Spirit, that holiness can be promoted. Thus he prays for the Colossians that they may be "filled with the knowledge of God's will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding" (Col. i. 9); that they may "walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing." He prays for the Philippians that "their love may abound in knowledge and all judgment" (Phil. i. 9); the knowledge and judgment being indispensable both for the regulation and for the increase of love. Similarly, Peter prays for the Christians of the dispersion, that "grace and peace may be multiplied through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord" (2 Pet. i. 2). "The knowledge of God is thus the first and best of all the sciences."—T. C.

Ver. 18.—*The connection between the heart and the intellect.* "The eyes of your heart being enlightened."

I. THIS IS A SINGULAR EXPRESSION. Yet it is true in philosophy and true in life, as well as consistent with Biblical language. Scripture speaks of applying our hearts unto wisdom (Ps. xc. 12), and of "the understanding of the heart" (Luke i. 51).

II. THE HEART POWERFULLY INFLUENCES THE UNDERSTANDING. Larocheffoucauld says, after his own cynical manner, "The head is the dupe of the heart." There is often undoubtedly a divided interest in the soul of man, where two powers are fighting for the mastery. Coleridge said, at a certain point in his speculative career, "My head was with Spinoza, while my heart was with Paul and John." Scripture is most emphatic in marking the connection between knowledge and holiness. We "grow in grace and in knowledge"; together, the two growths not hindering but helping each other. "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God." Purity of heart gives the insight. And purity of heart rather than accuracy of thought, is the order of the kingdom. "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God" (John vii. 17). How often do we find in human life that interest, vanity, fear, party spirit, determine the conclusions of the intellect! Our opinions often depend upon our lives quite as much as our lives depend upon our opinions. Fichte says that our system of thought is often no more than the history of our hearts. Our judgment is often swayed by our affections.

III. IT IS GOD WHO GIVES THE INSIGHT. "The eyes of your heart being enlightened." It is God who "hath given us an understanding to know him that is true" (1 John v. 20); not a new faculty, but a new quickness or insight; for "unless a man is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John iii. 3). It is God who "giveth the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ Jesus" (2 Cor. iv. 6). We are "not able of ourselves to think a good thought" (2 Cor. iii. 5), and our highest knowledge is a Divine gift. "To you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom

of God" (Luke viii. 10). It ought, therefore, to be the prayer of every Christian, "Open thou mine eyes, that I may see wondrous things out of thy Law;" and we are encouraged in our supplication by the knowledge that "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him" (1 Cor. ii. 9).—T. C.

Ver. 18.—The knowledge of God and its outlets. The effect of the Divine illumination is to enlarge our knowledge in three different directions—pointing at once to the hope that is lodged in the heart of our Divine calling, to the glory of our future inheritance, and to the greatness of the change involved in our regeneration by the Holy Spirit. The Apostle Peter reproduces exactly the same order of thought when he blessed God (1) for having begotten us by the resurrection of Christ from the dead to a lively hope; (2) to an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and unfading; (3) reserved in heaven for those who are kept by the power of God unto salvation. The ideas are presented in exactly the same order. There is a grand alliance of blessings included in the knowledge of God.—T. C.

Ver. 18.—The hope of God's calling. It is impossible to appreciate the hope till we understand the true nature of the calling to which it is so beautifully attached.

I. THE CALLING IS THE EFFECTUAL CALL OF GOD BY THE SPIRIT. 1. It is posited securely between predestination on one side and justification on the other; for "whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified" (Rom. viii. 30). 2. It is a call to peace: "Let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body" (Col. iii. 15). 3. It is a call to blessing: "Knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing" (1 Pet. iii. 9). 4. It is a call to eternal glory: "The God of all grace who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus" (1 Pet. v. 10). It may, therefore, be well described as a high or heavenly calling (Phil. iii. 14; Heb. iii. 1). New hope is lodged in the heart of this calling.

II. THE NATURE OF THE HOPE. It must be regarded both subjectively and objectively, that is, both as a hope allied to joy—"rejoicing in hope" (Rom. xii. 12), as "a living hope" (1 Pet. i. 3), as a hope full of consolation (Heb. vi. 18), as a hope "that maketh not ashamed" (Rom. v. 5), and as a hope connected with certain deep and strong foundations. These are described in the Epistle to the Hebrews—the Epistle of the better hope—as "the two immutable things," the oath and the promise of God, terminating or converging upon our great High Priest of the Melchisedec order, who is, by virtue of his atoning work, the real "Hope of glory" made known to sinners (Col. i. 27). We cannot know this hope, either subjectively or objectively, without the aid of the Holy Spirit; and therefore the apostle prays, "The God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, by the power of the Holy Ghost" (Rom. xv. 13). The apostle, therefore, prays here that the Ephesian Christians may have an abounding assurance of their interest in Christ based on the best possible grounds. 1. Every believer is called to have an assurance of his personal interest in Christ. A whole Epistle has been written to help toward this assurance: "These things have I written to you that believe on the Name of the Son of God, that ye may know that ye have eternal life" (1 John v. 13). 2. It is implied that believers may not fully know "the hope of their calling." Yet they may still be true believers. Faith and assurance are not to be confounded. The hope in question is held by an anchor that cannot be dragged from its sure holding-ground (Heb. vi. 18, 19).

"Hope of all passions most befriends us here;
Passions of prouder name befriend us less;
Joy has her tears and Transport has her death.
Hope like a cordial, innocent, though strong,
Man's heart at once inspirits and serenest."

T. C.

Ver. 18.—The riches of the glory of God's inheritance. How little we know of this inheritance! We desire to know more. There are five points included in our fuller study of this inheritance.

I. OUR TITLE TO IT. It is "a purchased possession" (ver. 14), the price being the blood of Christ. The death of the Testator was necessary that "they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance" (Heb. ix. 15).

II. IT IS A RICH INHERITANCE. God is rich in mercy, rich in grace, rich in love, rich in power, rich in goodness and forbearance; but as to heaven, he is rich in glory. It is there emphatically he will make many rich. Both here and there it will be delightfully true: "My God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus" (Phil. iv. 19). The rich glory of the New Jerusalem is described in the Revelation (Rev. xxi.). Its riches lie essentially in the perpetuity of its blessedness—it is "an eternal inheritance."

III. IT IS A GLORIOUS INHERITANCE. "The righteous shall shine as the sun" (Matt. xiii. 43), because they are received to the glory of God (Rom. xv. 7), and called to his kingdom and glory (1 Thess. ii. 12). The glory of God himself is to be the light of heaven (Rev. xxi. 11).

IV. IT IS A FATHER'S INHERITANCE. And therefore he is here called "the Father of glory." We are heirs of God as we are children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him."

V. IT IS FOR THE SAINTS. "He that overcometh shall inherit all things, and I will be his God" (Rev. xxi. 7). We need to have "the eyes of our heart enlightened," that we may know all the fulness of glory and blessing involved in these five suggestive considerations.—T. C.

Ver. 19.—*The power of God in salvation.* "The exceeding greatness of his power to usward who believe." This is the third thing the apostle wished them to know "for their furtherance and joy of faith."

I. THE SPHERE OF THIS WORKING. "To usward who believe." Power will always excite our admiration, but it will not inspire comfort unless it is exerted on our behalf. The devils know the power of God, but its exercise inspires them with no comfort. This power is manifested in the various parts of Christian life, both in grace and in glory, from conversion to glorification. It provides all things that pertain to life and godliness. It is God's saving power. 1. *At the beginning of Christian life—in our conversion.* God "hath delivered us from the kingdom of darkness and translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son" (Col. i. 13). The apostle speaks of this power in relation to his own conversion and apostleship: "Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given to me by the effectual working of his power" (ch. iii. 7). The gospel is the instrument of Divine power. It is "the power of God unto salvation" (Rom. i. 16); for "our gospel came unto you, not in word only, but in power" (1 Thess. i. 5). 2. *In its progress—in our sanctification.* The thought of preserving grace is, perhaps, uppermost in the passage. Believers are "kept by the power of God unto salvation" (1 Pet. i. 5). Therefore the apostle prays that God would "fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness and the work of faith with power" (2 Thess. i. 11). God "is able to do exceeding abundantly above all we ask or think" (ch. iii. 20). The apostle prays for himself that he may know "the power of his resurrection" (Phil. iii. 10). There is power everywhere at work in our salvation; for it is thus that "the whole body increaseth with the increase of God by the effectual working in the measure of every part" (ch. iv. 16). 3. *At our final glorification.* "Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like to his own glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself" (Phil. iii. 21).

II. THE NATURE OF THIS POWER. "The exceeding greatness of his power." It was power that could overcome all obstacles. "If God be for us, who can be against us?" (Rom. viii. 31); "My Father is greater than all, and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hands" (John x. 29). We argue from his power to his forgiveness, and, therefore, in the Lord's Prayer, after we have asked for the forgiveness of our sins, we plead for it on the ground, "Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory." Let us not hesitate to accept the fulness of Biblical teaching through any fear of trenching on the free-will of man. Man's freedom works freely within the sphere of God's power. But the apostle does not content himself with merely piling up a succession of phrases

expressive of the wonderful effects of this power. He places it side by side with the power manifested in the resurrection and glorification of the Redeemer.—T. C.

Vers. 19, 20.—*The power of the Resurrection.* "According to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead." The resurrection of Christ was at once an illustration and a pledge of our resurrection, spiritually and physically, with himself. It seems a strange thing to find an exercise of purely physical power compared with an exercise of purely spiritual power. The strangeness disappears when we consider the place of the Resurrection in the scheme of Christian doctrine. The fact of Christ's resurrection is to us both doctrine and life—"the very pillar and ground" of Christianity.

I. IT IS THE CONSTITUTIVE ESSENCE OF CHRISTIANITY, HISTORICALLY AND MORALLY. Strauss admits that "Christianity in the form in which Paul, in which all the apostles understand it, as it is presupposed in the confessions of all Christian Churches, falls with the resurrection of Jesus." In this fundamental fact we have the concurrent witness of the apostles, of Paul in his gospel and his life, of the Gospels, of Jesus himself, of the belief of the disciples, of the attitude of Jewish enemies, of the founding of the Church among Jews and Gentiles. If the Resurrection is denied, Vinet's remark becomes true: "A new history is manufactured for us in the interest of a new theology."

II. IT HAS GREAT THEOLOGICAL VALUE; FOR IT IS THE SEAL AND CROWN OF CHRIST'S REDEEMING SACRIFICE. "He was raised again for our justification" (Rom. iv. 25). If he was not raised, we are yet in our sins.

III. HIS RESURRECTION SUPPLIES THE IMAGE AND THE GROUND OF OUR RENEWAL INTO HIS FELLOWSHIP. (Rom. vi. 1—13; Col. ii. 10—13; iii. 1—10; Gal. ii. 20.) Jesus himself expressively blends together the historical and the moral constituents of our faith in the sublime sentence, "I am the Resurrection, and the Life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die" (John xi. 25). It is not simply that resurrection is the truest description of the living personal experience of the believer from day to day, but by virtue of his oneness with Christ he is "quickened together with Christ, and raised up together with him, and made to sit together with him in heavenly places" (ch. ii. 5). Jesus' extinction of the penalty of sin, his breaking the seal of death, his recovery for man of the power of the Holy Spirit, all attested by the Resurrection, reveal it to us at the same time as a source of moral light and power. This is "the power of the Resurrection" that the apostle prays for (Phil. iii. 10).

IV. THE RESURRECTION IS THE PLEDGE TO US OF PERSONAL IMMORTALITY, AND HIS RESURRECTION-BODY THE TYPE OF THE FUTURE GLORIFIED MAN. (Phil. iii. 21.) The apostle says, "If the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies through his Spirit that dwelleth in you" (Rom. viii. 11). Thus, first and last, the resurrection of Christ is more than a mere illustration of the power of God "to usward who believe;" it is a pledge of the continuance and consummation of all that is involved in the redemption of Christ.—T. C.

Vers. 20, 21.—*The exaltation of Christ.* "And set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places." There was power both in the resurrection and in the ascension of our Lord. As the Resurrection was the seal of his redeeming sacrifice, his ascension was the seal of the Resurrection, usually linked with it in Bible allusions, but specially referred to by Peter (Acts ii. 33—36; 1 Pet. iii. 22). In John's Gospel there is an emphatic reference to the event: "I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world; again, I leave the world, and go to the Father" (John xvi. 28). In the Epistle to the Hebrews it receives greater prominence than the Resurrection itself (Heb. ii. 9; iv. 14, 19). It was a phrase in one of the earliest hymns of the Church—he was "received up into glory" (1 Tim. iii. 16). The sitting at the right hand of God is the immediate and necessary sequel of the ascension from the earth. Several important facts are implied in this heavenly session.

I. KINGLY DIGNITY. This accrues to him from his obedience unto death (Phil. ii. 9—11), and is never referred to Christ before his incarnation, but only to the God-Man after his

ascension. Yet he was in reality King as well as Priest before his incarnation. If he saved men from the beginning, he was King from the beginning. The dominion of the Mediator was conferred upon him in consequence of his obedience unto death, and was yet enjoyed and exercised by him long before his death; just as he saved men from the beginning by the blood of the cross, as being the "Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." The exaltation he received after death was not an accession of new glory or power, but the manifestation under new conditions of a glory he had from the beginning. This was the position assigned to him in the hundred and tenth psalm, "The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand." Its fulfilment is manifest in such sentences as the following:—"Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and Saviour" (Acts v. 31); "He was made higher than the heavens" (Heb. vii. 26); he "sits on the right hand of power" (Mark xiv. 62); he is "now set down at the right hand of the throne of God" (Heb. xii. 2). Thus, though "crucified in weakness," he "liveth by the power of God" (2 Cor. xiii. 14).

II. KINGLY AUTHORITY. Over all the principalities and powers, evil and good, in two worlds; for not only is he far above all these, but God "hath put all things under his feet." He had himself declared immediately before his ascension, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth" (Matt. xxviii. 18). There is nothing excepted from the vast sweep of his power. All things whatsoever are his footstool. The brow that was once crowned with thorns wears the crown of universal dominion. The pierced hand holds the sceptre of the universe. Herein lies the sublime guarantee for the preservation and completion of his Church on earth. He will ultimately triumph over all his enemies (Heb. x. 13).

III. BLESSEDNESS. This points to "the joy set before him" (Heb. xii. 2), the joy of holy love, because "he has received of the travail of his soul and is satisfied" (Isa. liii. 11). It was in allusion to himself that the bright words are used, "Thou wilt show me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand are pleasures for evermore" (Ps. xvi. 11).

IV. PERPETUITY. He liveth ever to God without dying again (Rom. vi. 10). We have to do with a risen Christ who dieth no more, and therefore can be ever helpful, unlike our friends of earth, whose death ends all their relations to us.

V. INTERCESSORY WORK. He is our heavenly Advocate (1 John ii. 1). He has entered heaven "for us," now "to appear in the presence of God for us" (Heb. ix. 24). It is this presence of our High Priest which is so helpful to us in our many infirmities, and is the guarantee of our daily pardon in virtue of the great sacrifice on Calvary. Thus, being reconciled to God by his death, we are saved by his life, in consequence of the power which is unceasingly passing forth from the Head to the members (Rom. v. 10). The salvation of Christ on earth and in heaven is one inseparable whole. Thus the session of Christ is connected with the peace, the sanctification, the security, the hope of all believers.

VI. LESSONS AND ENCOURAGEMENTS TO BELIEVERS. Our Saviour assumes and exercises a lordship over the lives and over the deaths of all his disciples; "for whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's" (Rom. xiv. 8); and in the case of two eminent disciples, Peter and John, he claimed this lordship, "And if I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?" (John xxi. 18, 22). Therefore all the energy and devotion of our lives are to be given to him. He demands of us a heavenly direction of mind (Col. iii. 2), with a sense of our heavenly citizenship to keep us apart from the sins and vanities of life. We ought to cherish a sentiment of holy fear, on account of our relation to a Redeemer so highly exalted in glory; and yet a sentiment of holy boldness, knowing that our High Priest is on the throne of glory and of grace.—T. C.

Vers. 22, 23.—*Christ's headship.* The Resurrection was the point of conjunction between his crucifixion and his coronation. The headship to which he was exalted had a twofold relationship: he was made "Head over all things to the Church," and he was made Head of the Church itself.

I. HIS HEADSHIP OVER ALL THINGS. It is no new thought that our Lord is at the head of the natural order of things; for "without him was not anything made that was made;" "By him all things consist;" he upholds "all things by the word of his power," for "the government is upon his shoulders." But by virtue of his mediatorship

the elements are made subject to him—all kings and nations, all angels in heaven, all fallen angels, all the advances and discoveries of science, are made tributary to the welfare of the Church. Therefore no weapon formed against her shall prosper. Christian people ought to derive comfort and aspiration from the thought that he who is the Foundation of their religious hopes holds in his hands all the complicated threads of providence and directs the course of human history. It is the one Divine hand which clasps together the two great books of nature and revelation. This thought ought to give fresh breadth and strength and healthiness to all our thoughts about him. Above all, let us see in this fact the Divine guarantee for the safety of the Church. "If God be for us, who can be against us?" Jesus "filleth all in all," and therefore has the inexhaustible resources of the universe at his disposal for the good of the Church.

II. HEADSHIP OF THE CHURCH. There is a double relationship involved in this headship—one representative, the other vital. 1. *The representative relation.* He was Head as he was Saviour (ch. v. 23). Believers were in him from eternity, for they were chosen in him (ver. 4). "The covenant which was confirmed before of God in Christ" (Gal. iii. 17) was that in the terms of which they are saved; the promise of life is said to be in him (2 Tim. i. 1), as all the promises are "yea" and "amen" in him (2 Cor. i. 20). Thus grace is said to be given us in Christ Jesus before the world began (2 Tim. i. 9); and believers are said to suffer with him, to be quickened and raised together with him, to sit together in heavenly places in Christ (ch. ii. 6). Christ, indeed, as Head, stands for the whole body: "So also is Christ" (1 Cor. xii. 12). Thus the representative relation extends from eternity to eternity. These passages of Scripture prove the groundlessness of the notion that Christ only became Head after his resurrection with the view of proving that the saints of the Old Testament dispensation do not belong to the body or Church of Christ. He was Head just as he was Saviour; for "he is the Head of the Church, and he is the Saviour of the body" (ch. v. 23). Christ was not and could not be Saviour without death, yet he was the Saviour of Old Testament saints ages before his death. There is no passage asserting that he became Head through resurrection. The resurrection only declared his headship as it declared his sonship. If Christ was not Head before his incarnation, the Old Testament saints had no Mediator. Christ was the Head of all believers because, as being the last Adam, all believers were in him. 2. *The vital relation.* Christ is the Head of the body, the Church, holding the same relation as the head does to the natural body. (1) *As to life.* His life is the life of the members. "Because I live ye shall live also" (John xiv. 19); "The life I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God" (Gal. ii. 20). If the head is severed from the body, life becomes extinct. The life of the Church depends upon its union with Christ; therefore it is a blessed truth, "He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit" (1 Cor. vi. 16, 17). Thus the apostle can say, as if his life were merged in the very life of the Redeemer, "I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me," the Mainspring of all my activity, the Source of all my holy desires, the Fountain of my blessedness. In a beautifully spiritual sense, believers can say, "In him we live, and move, and have our being." (2) *As to motion.* It is the head which directs all the movements of the body; so it is Christ who "worketh all in all" (1 Cor. ii. 6) and "fills all in all." (3) *As to strength.* The members of the body have no power of self-motion; they derive their power from the head. So all our power to fight against sin is derived from Christ. Therefore the apostle prays for the Ephesians that they may be "strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man" (ch. iii. 16); and he says of himself, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Phil. iv. 13). (4) *As to sympathy.* The sensations of the limbs are telegraphed back to the brain, which shows itself in constant sympathy with every part of the body. A pain in the smallest nerve is felt in the head. So Jesus Christ knows all our sorrows and our trials, and "cannot but be touched with a feeling of our infirmities." He says to Saul, "Why persecutest thou me?" and says to the whole company of the redeemed, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me" (Matt. xxv. 40). It is out of this close connection that the members themselves ought to realize the power and the blessing of mutual sympathy. (5) *As to subordination.* Jesus Christ is not only Head of the Church, but Head over the Church. The apostle says, "The Head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is the man, and the Head of Christ is God" (1 Cor. xi. 3). It is implied here

that the body is subordinate to the head, though the subordination is in its nature different in the three cases mentioned. Christianity is not only Christ, but it is subjection to him as Saviour, Lord, and Guide.

III. **THE CHURCH AS THE BODY OF CHRIST.** The Church thus regarded refers not to any one body of Christians; for there is no denomination on earth that contains all the disciples of Christ, nor is there any denomination of which it can be said that all its members are disciples of Christ. It refers to the whole number of God's people, redeemed by the blood of Christ (ch. v. 25). The Ephesian Epistle sets forth the doctrine of the Church in this sense. We never read in it of Churches, but of the Church. The idea is that of one organic whole, represented under various images, borrowed at one time from a temple, at another from a house, at another from the head with its different members, but it always signifies a union of those united to Christ by faith, whether they belong to earth or heaven. The Church is here described as at once the body and the fulness of Christ. 1. *The body of Christ.* The most impressive illustration of the body is supplied by the same apostle in 1 Cor. xii. 12—27. He shows an analogy between the Church and the human body in important particulars. (1) As the body is one organic whole, because animated by one spirit, so the Church is one by virtue of the indwelling Spirit. It follows, therefore, that believers must be one in faith, love, and obedience. But this union must have outward expression in the recognition of all Christians as such, and in mutual helpfulness and harmony. (2) As the unity of the body admits of a diversity of members and organs, the unity of the Church admits of a like diversity in gifts and offices. (3) As all the members of the body are mutually dependent, each existing for all, so members of the Church have beneficiary relations to each other for the purposes of edification or service. (4) It is God who has made the distinction among the members of the body; it is he who bestows spiritual gifts according to his good pleasure. Thus the body exists with a community of condition, feeling, character; all the members bound up in one bundle of life, so united to Christ that all his relationships are theirs—his people their people, his Father their Father, his home their home. 2. *The Church the fulness of Christ.* As the body is not complete without the head, so the head is not complete without the body. The Lord Jesus Christ is not complete without his Church. How can this be? He himself says, "My strength is made perfect in weakness;" but is his power not always perfect? It is declared to be perfect in our weakness. So the Church serves as an empty vessel, into which the Saviour pours his mediatorial fulness. Every fresh convert added to the Church adds to his fulness. His fulness is manifested by the variety of gifts and graces he bestows on his members, who are always growing up into him who is the Head (ch. iv. 15), growing to a stature, to a proportion, till we are filled with the fulness of God. This view of the Church suggests (1) that if we are vessels of mercy, we are empty vessels till the Lord fills us with his Spirit. (2) It suggests the high dignity of the Church. (3) It suggests the rich love of God who gave Christ as the Head of the Church. (4) It suggests the absolute safety and ultimate triumph of all true believers.—T. C.

VERS. 1, 2.—The salutation of the saints. In the present case Paul, without associating any brethren with himself, proceeds to state his apostleship, and to transmit his salutation to the saints at Ephesus. These saints had been gathered for the most part out of paganism, and this will account for the introduction, as well as many of the contents, of this magnificent Epistle. We note the following lessons as here suggested:—

I. **THE APOSTLESHIP OF PAUL HAD BEEN RECEIVED DIRECTLY FROM JESUS CHRIST.** (Ver. 1.) The name "Paul" was the Roman counterpart of the Hebrew "Saul," and its use in these superscriptions to the Epistles was doubtless to conciliate those Christians who had once been heathen.¹ This Paul, then, the man who had made the interests of the Gentile world a chief concern, declares that he had received his apostleship from Christ directly. He thus repudiated any man-given or man-made apostleship. It is Jesus who alone could make an apostle, just as it is he alone who can make a minister. All that any Church can do is to recognize a God-given qualification.²

¹ Cf. Harless, 'Ephesian-brief,' *in loc.*; also Monod's 'Explication de l'Épître de Saint Paul aux Ephésiens,' *in loc.*

² Cf. homily on Gal. i. 1.

Paul was the apostle of Jesus, the man sent forth by the risen and reigning Lord to evangelize the heathen. Such a consciousness of Christ's consecration gave him great power.

II. **HE HERE SALUTES LIVING SAINTS.** (Ver. 1.) Monod has pertinently remarked that, while others seek their saints among the dead, Paul seeks saints, and so should we, among the living. Saintliness should characterize all Christians. In fact, a Christian is a "person set apart, separated from the world, and reserved for the service of Jesus Christ and for the glory of God, according as it is written, 'This people have I formed for myself, they shall show forth my praise.'" Accordingly, Paul did not hesitate to call the Christians at Ephesus "saints," for he expected from them saintly lives. The very name raised the standard of Christian profession throughout the Church at Ephesus. And would it not be well for us to use it, and to strive always to deserve its use? It is to be feared that our saints, like those of Rome, are for the most part dead and gone; whereas what the age needs is saintliness embodied in flesh and blood before it. It is only then that it shall come to acknowledge the power of the Christian faith. Of course, Paul did not imply that every professor at Ephesus was saintly. He used the term presumptively, as a charitable spirit will. But the very use of the term raised the whole standard of holy living there and did immense good.

III. **THESE SAINTS ARE FULL OF FAITH IN CHRIST JESUS.** (Ver. 1.) We take *πιστοί* in this passage in the sense of men of faith. Paul thus states the principle of their saintliness. They had learned to trust Christ and to regard him as their King, and so they came to be consciously consecrated unto all good works. Fidelity flows from this living faith in Christ. They prove reliable men because they have first learned to rely upon the Saviour (cf. John xx. 28; Gal. iii. 9). Let us apply this principle ourselves. If we trust Jesus as we ought, we shall find the trust working itself out into lovable and lovely lives, and we too shall be saintly.

IV. **PAUL DESIRES FOR THESE SAINTS THE GRACE AND PEACE OF GOD.** (Ver. 2.) There is something beautiful in the old forms of benediction. We lose their fragrance in our cold "Good-byes." The Greeks and Romans were accustomed to wish their correspondents "Safety;" the Jews took the simpler form of "Peace." But the gospel came to give to both a deeper meaning and breathe grace and peace of the deepest character into human souls. Hence these salutations of the saints. God's undeserved favour coming forth as grace finds its effects in the responsive human heart in a heavenly peace, so that the once troubled spirit comes into wondrous calm. What Paul is about to state in his Epistle will not interfere with but rather deepen this holy peace.

It is well for us to see the Fountain-head of blessing in the Father's heart, to see the channel of communication in his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, and to experience its effect in the peace which passeth all understanding, which he has ordained should keep our hearts and minds by Christ Jesus (Phil. iv. 6). The saints are meant to be peaceful spirits as they consecrate their energies to the service of the Lord.—R. M. E.

VER. 3—6.—*The electing and adopting love of God.* As soon as the salutation of the saints is over, Paul proceeds to speak about the blessings he and they have received from God. One curious expression meets us and constitutes the key of the whole passage; it is "the heavenly places" (*ἐν τοῖς ἐπουρανίοις*) wherein the spiritual blessing is experienced. This cannot mean merely that out of the heavenly places the gracious Father pours his spiritual blessings upon selected souls; but, as a comparison of ch. ii. 6 will show, it means that the adopted ones are elevated in spirit even to the heavenly places, where they as spiritually ascended ones can survey the Divine purposes and appreciate the Divine blessings in a way impossible otherwise. Let us, then, betake ourselves to these "heavenly places" by the blessing of the Spirit, and see how the Divine plan looks from such a vantage-ground. It is in this way we shall escape much of the obscure thinking which prevails upon the electing love of God. And we are here taught—

I. **THE FOUNTAIN-HEAD OF BLESSING IS GOD THE FATHER.** (Ver. 3.) Paul puts "the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" at the head of all things. Out of that paternal heart all spiritual blessing comes. The dispensation of grace is overshadowed by a Father. All the love which wells up out of parents' hearts for their children, all the

love they lavish with varying success upon their prodigals, but faintly images the wondrous love that wells out of the heart of God. Yet the image, though but faint, is real, and we may climb by the firm footing of analogy up from human experience to some comprehension of the Divine love and plan. Just as earthly fathers plan blessings of all kinds for their children, and give them these on certain understandings, so is it with the infinite Father above. It is a *Father* with whom we have to deal, the "Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."

II. THE RULE OF BLESSING WAS THE GOOD PLEASURE OF HIS WILL. (Ver. 5.) Now, when we get up in spirit to the heavenly places, we have no difficulty in seeing the truth and propriety of this arrangement. For the world above is one whose inhabitants have all learned to acquiesce in the good pleasure of the Father's will. They know that the pleasure of his will can be nothing else than good; they are content to abide by it. They assure themselves of everlasting blessedness in accepting of it as their rule and law. And we have only to get to their standpoint and to perceive how good God is, to acquiesce at once in the good pleasure of his will. God is so good that he could not will anything but what is good. If he has to will vengeance against any of his creatures, it is because vengeance is better than impunity; it is better that he should strike home than that he should be still. Of course, it is hard for our natural hearts which are so opposed to God to acquiesce off-hand in such an arrangement. We think it hard to have to depend absolutely upon the good pleasure of God's will; but we have only to climb up a little by the Spirit's help and see how good he is, and then shall we gladly and gratefully adore his pleasure as always good.

III. THE FATHER PLANNED THE BLESSING OF HIS ADOPTED CHILDREN BEFORE THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD. (Ver. 4.) Starting from the sovereignty of the good God, as the rule of all blessing, we have next to notice that the blessing of his adopted children was deliberately planned from all eternity—"before the foundation of the world." The foresight of a father when carried into every detail of the children's needs glorifies him in our estimation. We would not honour an earthly father who left anything to hap-hazard which he could have foreseen. Hence we conceive of the infinite Father as leaving nothing to chance, but arranging all down to the minutest details. He did not leave a loose thread in the whole arrangement. Why should he, if he is the omniscient and almighty God? What is contended for in predestination, therefore, is that the almighty Father left nothing to chance, but provided for everything in his plan. How this is compatible with human freedom is beyond our feeble comprehension; but that it is compatible we do most firmly believe. There are many problems of advanced mathematics which as rusty mathematicians we cannot now see how to solve, and there are many problems of science which are to the most splendid scientists still unsolved; but we should be foolish in the extreme to pronounce either insoluble. So is it with the Divine predestination and the freedom of the creature. There is a solution somewhere, but it is beyond our terrestrial calculus. We believe in both as facts, and we leave the future to bring the reconciliation. And in the heavenly places to which the Spirit helps us to soar, we rejoice in the thought of that Divine plan which left nothing out, but embraced everything.

IV. THE ELECTION OF INDIVIDUALS WAS TO HOLINESS AND BLAMELESSNESS OF CHARACTER BEFORE HIM IN LOVE. (Ver. 4.) Holiness and perfection are the ends aimed at in God's electing love. It is because this is lost sight of that we have so much confusion on this subject. God could not elect any soul to a salvation without holiness; the idea has no meaning in the Divine mind. Men may desire to separate salvation from holiness, to carry their sins with them into the heavenly world; but such desires are vain, and under God's government they can have no realization. The election is unto holiness. So long as a soul loves sin and hates holiness, he has no warrant to affirm any election. He may subsequently turn from sin to God, and thus receive the evidence within him; but a soul that loves sin and hates holiness has no business in dabbling with this doctrine of election. God saves no man except in the process he makes him holy. Hence we must remember "they were not chosen because they were viewed as holy, and therefore deserving to be distinguished as God's favourites, on account of their obedience or personal purity, but that they *should* be holy."

V. AND THESE INDIVIDUALS FIND THEMSELVES ADOPTED INTO THE DIVINE FAMILY
EPHESIANS. D

AND ACCEPTED IN CHRIST THE BELOVED. (Vers. 5, 6.) We have seen that the infinite Father is the Source of all blessing. But that Father has one only Son, the only begotten, in his Divine family. The eternal Father had an eternal Son, and they held fellowship from all eternity through the eternal Spirit. This Son was and is the well-beloved. He always did the things which pleased the Father (John viii. 29). But, blessed be his Name, he was content to have "joint-heirs" with himself in his inheritance (Rom. viii. 17). Jesus showed no jealousy about enlarging the family circle and about an abundance of brethren. Hence the Father set about *adopting* children, bringing into the charmed circle those who had no claim to the position or to its rewards. But every adopted child is made to feel that he is accepted of the Father for the elder Brother's sake. Jesus as the Firstborn in the mighty family has so endeared himself to the Father that for his sake the Father accepts the persons of the prodigals who are adopted into his family. There is no reason in us for our adoption—there can never be; it is owing simply and entirely to Jesus Christ that we are accepted and adopted. Hence there is in the plan, as so far brought before us, no ground for boasting. Election and adoption alike rest on the good pleasure of God's will. They are sovereign acts. They have their root in sovereignty; and as we rise into the heavenly places, we see that this is exactly as it should be.—R. M. E.

Vers. 7—14.—*The forgiveness and inspiration of the adopted children.* From the electing and adopting love of God, Paul proceeds next to show how it manifests itself in the thorough culture of the adopted children. We saw how they are accepted into the charmed circle for the Beloved's sake, and to him, indeed, owe all. We are now to notice how thorough is the provision made for the upbringing of these adopted ones, And—

I. THROUGH THE BLOOD OF THE BELOVED THEY ARE REDEEMED AND FORGIVEN. (Ver. 7.) For the selected individuals, so far from having any personal merit, are lost in sin. Prodigals by nature and practice, they feel that they deserve not to be called sons of God. They are brought to such a sense of unworthiness as to wonder at the riches of God's grace which could make sons and heirs out of such material. But the great Father has provided redemption and forgiveness through the blood of his dear Son. A terrible price, doubtless, it was for the Father to pay, and for the Son to offer to secure our redemption. Yet it was cheerfully and freely given. The family is thus blood-bought. How holy and consecrated we ought to be! Our redemption price, the terms of our forgiveness, involved no less than the death of the Son of God.

II. THE ADOPTED CHILDREN ARE EDUCATED TO KNOW GOD'S WILL. (Vers. 8—10.) Forgiveness and redemption refer to our state, but after we are set down in the family circle we need to be instructed. Earthly families make the education of the children a first concern. So is it in the family of God. Hence the riches of his grace are shown, not only in our pardon, but also in the revelation of his will and in our education therein. Moreover, his will contemplates the unifying of all things under Christ. His family is not to be split up into sections jealous of each other, but unity is to pervade it all. Gentiles and Jews, the Ephesians and Paul,—one and all are to be united under Christ the Head. Now, there is a great tendency towards unity in the thought of men. Philosophy, properly so called, is the discovery of unity of principle among the facts of the universe. Well, this tendency shall have its magnificent fulfilment in the consummated unity of the dispensation of grace, when the heaven above and the earth beneath shall alike recognize in Jesus the elder Brother and righteous Head. All education is towards this grand unity. This is God's purpose, and everything will in due season subserve it. The knowledge of God's will, then, is the apprehension of his magnificent design in the unification of all things. The gospel is thus but a portion of a mightier plan.

III. ACCORDINGLY, THE ADOPTED ONES ARE INSPIRED. (Vers. 11—14.) Paul speaks of having received an inheritance in Christ, and then he speaks of the Ephesians having got the sealing of the Spirit as the earnest of *their* inheritance. His meaning is plain. For Jews and Gentiles, as God's adopted children, the one great need in this life is *inspiration*. When the Holy Spirit condescends to dwell within us, we are fitted for the duties which belong to the members of God's family. And it is the spirituality thereby communicated which gives to us the true ideal of what heaven is

to be. Our holiest moments, when the indwelling Spirit moves within us, are our heavenliest. Then conformity to God's will is the great delight, and whatever he sends is welcomed. Of circumstances we are then so far independent as to realize that, with God as our Portion, we have all things, though we may have little but him. We are already within the gates when with Habakkuk we can say, "Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation" (Hab. iii. 17, 18). Inspired to do or suffer cheerfully God's will, this is heaven begun below and the true ideal of the heaven to come. The family composed of such elements as these must be harmonious in its relations. May its unity of spirit be always ours!—R. M. E.

Vers. 15—23.—Paul's first prayer for the Ephesians. Having spoken of the inspiration of the adopted children, the apostle proceeds next to his first prayer on their behalf. He has a still more remarkable prayer in ch. iii., but the present one is most instructive too. It begins, as usual, with thanksgiving for the faith towards the Lord Jesus, and love to all the saints which the Ephesians cherish. This need not detain us, but we may at once proceed to the substance of his petition for them. In a word, it is that they may know spiritually the Divine purpose regarding them, and thus be able the better to co-operate with God in the fulfilment of it. This Divine purpose is determined by the Divine power, and the progress of the Christian is simply an experience of "the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power." The point of the passage and of the prayer consists in the measure of the mighty power. This is found in the experience of Christ. His experience, in fact, becomes the measure of the Christian's hope. When the Father can do such wonders in the person of Christ and in the interests of Christ's people, how much may we expect him to do for ourselves!

I. THE FATHER SHOWED HIS MIGHTY POWER IN RAISING CHRIST FROM THE DEAD. (Ver. 20.) The mighty power of God is illustrated in the work of creation; but, as A. Monod pointedly puts it, "Creation is an emanation; resurrection is a victory." Christ was dead; apparently he had been vanquished; the king of terrors seemed supreme. But the first day of the week dawned upon a "risen Saviour," and the Father's mighty power received ample illustration. Now, it must have been a marvellous experience for our Saviour to pass from death into newness of life. For the life after he rose was different from the life before he suffered. It was immortal. He could henceforth die no more. Hence he said in apocalyptic vision, "I am he that liveth, and was dead, and, behold, I am *alive for evermore*." It was thus a transformation from mortality to immortality, from death to everlasting life. The previous resurrections, as far as we know, were only to mortal life. The children raised by Elijah, Elisha, and Christ, and the adults as well, rose to die once more. So that previous resurrections were only foreshadowings of the resurrection of Jesus out of death into life eternal.

II. THE FATHER SHOWED HIS MIGHTY POWER IN CAUSING CHRIST TO ASCEND TO HIS OWN RIGHT HAND IN THE HEAVENLY PLACES. (Vers. 20, 21.) Had Christ been left in this world with his immortal nature, he would have had a wide sphere for influence and authority. The opposing terrestrial powers would have gone down before him in due season, and an emancipated world been the result. But when we consider how limited in size this earth is compared with the rest of the system, we can understand how the Father would resolve to put his best beloved Son in a wider sphere of influence than this world affords. What principalities, powers, mights, and dominions lie beyond this "little sand-grain of an earth" we cannot yet tell; but we are assured here of one fact, that the Father has set the Son above them all, at his own right hand in the heavenly places. Now, the "right hand of God" means the seat of power. It is the very focus and centre of that mighty energy which we are now considering. Consequently the Father has lifted the Son in his immortal human nature into the very centre of power, and given him the *universe* as his empire. This, again, must have been a marvellous experience for Christ. What a joyful enlargement! To pass out of the narrowness and provincialism of this tiny world into the magnificence of a universal

empire; to have all created things and beings as his subjects; to be supreme Administrator under the infinite Father;—this must have been a mighty and a joyful experience for the risen Christ.

III. THE FATHER SHOWED HIS MIGHTY POWER IN PUTTING ALL THINGS UNDER CHRIST'S FEET. (Ver. 22.) The administration is thus guaranteed to be triumphant. Some portions of the vast empire may be rebellious. They may refuse the reign of the Man Christ Jesus. Their rash words may be, "We will not have this Man to reign over us." But they are only putting themselves under the feet of the reigning Christ. Their defeat is certain; the Father's mighty power is pledged to Christ's supremacy. And though, in the words of the Epistle to the Hebrews, "we see not yet all things put under him, we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour," and this is the Father's pledge of ultimate triumph.

IV. THE FATHER SHOWED HIS MIGHTY POWER IN GIVING CHRIST THE HEADSHIP OF THE CHURCH. (Vers. 22, 23.) Now, the administration of a state and the headship of a Church are very distinct things. If the Church is the body and Christ the Head, then it stands in closer relations to Christ than subjects do to any sovereign. Christ *thinks* for the Church; the Church *acts* for Christ. Just as the body is the instrument of the head, carrying out in the details of practical life the commandments of the head, the seat of the mind and will, so the Church is designed to be the instrument in the hand of Christ for the carrying out of his purposes. What a mighty power is needed to bring about a relation so close as this! What gracious power is needed to subdue the individual self-will, and enforce submission to the will and the word of the living Head! This intimate and glorious union between believers and their Lord is what the mighty power of the Father has brought and is bringing about, and this again must be a glorious experience on the part of Christ.

Here, then, we have resurrection, ascension, enthronement, and headship all secured to the once dead Christ by the mighty power of the Father. In such a system what possibilities are opened up for each of us! If this is the measure of the Father's mighty power, which Paul invoked on behalf of his Ephesian converts, truly they may lift up their heads in hope of redemption, complete and glorious, drawing nigh. The more we meditate upon the mighty power of the gracious Father, the more we are assured that mighty grace shall be manifested to us as we need it. When our Lord has had such experience granted him, his members may expect similar experiences in their season. We shall see a parallelism in the experience when we advance to the succeeding section.—R. M. E.

VER. 1, 2.—*Address and salutation.* The great verity of which the Epistle to the Ephesians treats is *the Church of Christ*. It has its place along with other everlasting verities in the twelfth chapter of the Hebrews. It exists in no visible community as it exists in the mind of God. This letter is addressed to the Ephesian Church; but there is nothing peculiarly Ephesian about it. There are no Ephesian errors which are combated. There are no salutations sent to particular members of the Church of Ephesus. This gives it a catholic form; and it may have been that it was addressed as a *circular* letter to a number of Churches of which Ephesus was the centre.

I. ADDRESS. 1. *The writer.* "Paul." He was the founder of the Ephesian Church, as of many Churches besides. Of all Christian workers he clearly bears the palm. It seems as if it would take many of our lives to make up what he succeeded in putting into the latter half of his. And yet what was Paul? He at once brings himself into relation to two personalities, *two* and *yet one*. For the first mentioned, Jesus (Accomplisher of salvation) is the Christ (the Anointed) of the second mentioned. (1) *His relation to Christ.* "An apostle of Christ Jesus." He was *subordinated* to Christ. He is the great efficient Cause who saves (in the fullest sense) by his Word, by his blood, by his Spirit. To him, therefore, must be all the praise of salvation. "Unto him that loved us." But yet he stood in an *important* relation to him as an apostle. He was not the only apostle, but he was as much an apostle as any. He was sent from Christ (with special authority), as Christ was sent from God. With special powers his mission was to bring the salvation that was in Christ to man, and to build up the Church. (2) *His relation to God.* "Through the will of God." This was at once his *abase-*

ment and his support. He had no personal merit entitling him to the position of apostle. At the same time, that position was not a self-chosen one. It was the will of God that Christ (such is the idea) should station him, now here and now there, among the Churches. And whether he was anxiously engaged in the composition of an Epistle, or whether he was pleading tremblingly with his voice for Christ, he was supported by the feeling that he was acting at the Divine instance and under the Divine authority. 2. *The persons addressed.* (1) *Generic designation.* "To the saints which are at Ephesus." The members of the Ephesian Church are designated "saints." We are to think of the Old Testament meaning. Temple, city, land, priests, people, were all holy, or devoted to God. We are to take this name to ourselves, not vauntingly as what we are, but humbly as what we aspire to be. (2) *Specific designation.* "And the faithful in Christ Jesus." This is a designation associated with Christ. They were distinctively a Christian community. We are marked off not merely from those who have no faith (infidels) or an unholy faith (such as those who think it right to offer human sacrifices), but also from the Old Testament Church (the one Sacrifice having now been offered), and also from angels, who admire and adore Christ but have not the same close interest in him as sinners of mankind. In the cross we see the Divine purpose of salvation fully disclosed; and, under a sense of our great demerit, we rest upon Christ (in his boundless merit) as he is offered to us in the gospel.

II. THE SALUTATION. 1. *The two words of salutation.* (1) *Grace.* "Grace to you." The idea to which grace (on God's part) is opposed is merit (on our part).

"For merit lives from man to man,
And not from man, O Lord, to thee."

We feel that, if it were only to fare with our friends according to their deserving before God, it would not be well with them. There would be innumerable things for which they could not answer. We therefore recognize the great condition of their welfare to be that there should be the outgoing of undeserved favour and of loving care toward them. And so that is the first thing we put into our greeting. (2) *Peace.* "And peace." This is not peace of any description, which may only be a curse in disguise. But it is a peace which is conjoined with grace. It is a freedom from anxiety, which results from the consciousness of being loved and mercifully dealt with. It is the child's feeling at rest under the shelter of his father's roof, and, when he acts amiss, in the enjoyment of his forgiveness. 2. *The twofold source to which we look in salutation.* (1) *First source.* "From God our Father." The fatherly in God is higher up than his omnipotence. The Father's heart we have found to be the source of blessing to ourselves, and we feel that it is only from that source that others can be truly blessed. He who is gracious to us be gracious also to them. (2) *Second source.* "And the Lord Jesus Christ." He is the glorious Manifestation of the Father's grace. It is by him that blessings have been obtained, and through him that they come to us. "No man cometh to the Father but by me." We must, therefore, in seeking blessings for our friends, recognize him as the *lordly Dispenser* in his Father's house.—R. F.

Ver. 3.—*Ascription of praise by the Church.* I. THE BLESSED OF THE CHURCH. 1. *God.* "Blessed be the God." It seems better to read, "Blessed be God." Thinking of God as infinitely glorious, how can we add to him by our praises? how can we by any words or deeds make him more glorious than he is? And yet he is pleased to say, "Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me." Our praises are pleasing to God, according as they are sincere and intelligent. When we come upon new and more impressive views of the Divine character, we cannot help saying with lowly adoring hearts, "Blessed be God." There is this outburst of adoration here at the beginning, and there will be fresh outbursts as we proceed. 2. *God in relation to the Church's Lord.* "And Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." The Lord of the Church is he who was anointed Saviour of mankind. He is in the Church, not like a servant, as Moses was, but as a Son over his own house. He has absolute authority to act in the Father's Name in the making of all arrangements, in the dispensing of all blessings. And in all that Christ has done, or is doing, for the Church, God has the glory, and is to be adored as Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

II. FOR WHAT THE CHURCH BLESSES GOD? "Who hath blessed us with every spiritual blessing." We are not to think merely of blessing that has been actually enjoyed. It is rather blessing without respect to time. It is all that God has in store for the Church, and *that* is really inexhaustible blessing. "In our Father's house there is enough and to spare." He is not exhausted in blessing one, but has more than enough for all; and he has not one kind of blessing merely, but every kind—all that we can possibly need to complete our happiness. And he has an infinite willingness and longing to bestow. He is glorified in our coming to him with large petitions, in his bestowing on us large blessings. The blessing being characterized as spiritual seems to point to the connection of the blessing with the Spirit. For, as there has been repeated reference already to the Father and the Son, so now there is reference, though not very explicit, to the Third Person of the Godhead. It is by the Spirit's instrumentality, and with the Spirit's blessed influences, that the Church is enriched.

III. CENTRE FROM WHICH THE CHURCH IS BLESSED. "In the heavenly places." This indicates the centre or *height* from which the blessing proceeds.

"Come, thou holy Paraclete,
And, from thy celestial seat,
Send thy light and brilliancy."

It also indicates the Church's *destination* in being blessed. For, though the Church can bless God for what it has under earthly conditions, there is not yet the full realization of the idea. It is when *drawn to the centre*, taken up to the Father's house, that it will be known how God can bless.

IV. HISTORICAL CONNECTION OF THE BLESSING. "In Christ." It is in the historical Christ that the treasury is opened out of which the Church is blessed.—R. F.

Vers. 4-10.—*Origination of the Church.* I. THE CHURCH TRACED UP TO THE ELECTIVE LOVE OF GOD. 1. *Chosen for himself.* "Even as he chose us." He chose us out of the sinful mass of humanity. He chose us for himself, as he chose ancient Israel for himself. 2. *Chosen in Christ as covenant Head.* "In him." He was God's sovereign choice: "Behold my Servant, whom I have chosen." Abraham, notably among men, was chosen; and, viewed as existing in him as their covenant head, were the Israelites chosen as a nation. And so, viewed as existing in Christ as our greater Representative, have we been thought about and chosen by God. 3. *Chosen from eternity.* "Before the foundation of the world." He chose us ere ever we had thought of him, ere ever we had being, ere ever this world on which we stand was founded. There in the depths of eternity the Church lay in the thought of God, the object of the Divine election. 4. *Chosen with a view to holiness.* "That we should be holy and without blemish before him." For in the thought of God we could not be thought as simply standing before him in our sinful state. Called out of that, the intention was that we should have those positive elements of holiness wrought in us to our highest capacity which God has in absolute perfection; and that we should be free from all that incapacitates for his presence. 5. *Chosen in love.* "In love." It seems best to connect this with what goes before. He chose us to be fit for his presence in love. The love being placed last covers the intention as well as the act of choosing. It was love that was the moving principle in the election of the Church. God was so full of love that he could be satisfied with nothing but his having the Church for himself.

II. THE CHURCH TRACED UP TO THE PURPOSE OF ADOPTION. 1. *Our adoption pre-determined.* "Having foreordained us unto adoption as sons." This predetermining (prearranging, prelimiting) is thought of as anterior to the elective act, covering, we may say, the whole counsel that there was about us. God has foreordained with a view to our having the position of sons. It was the highest position in which God could place us. "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God." It was placing us in most favoured nearness to himself. It was placing us where we could enjoy all the tenderness of his fatherly love, all the plenitude of his fatherly blessing. This adoption was placing us in the family, after we had been displaced, disowned, disinherited. 2. *The predetermining extended to the means by which our adoption as sons was to be accomplished.* "Through Jesus Christ." It was arranged beforehand that Christ should be Accomplisher of our adop-

tion. His own Son had to be parted with that we might be adopted as sons. It was under no sudden impulse of obedience that Abraham lifted the knife against Isaac. He had time to think of what he was doing, a three days' journey to take to the place which God was to show him, and he was animated throughout by a calm, abiding spirit of obedience. So it was no momentary impulse that led God to make so inconceivable a sacrifice; but it was the deep, unchangeable feeling of his heart. It was all well thought over and arranged beforehand. It was deliberately written down in the book of the Divine counsels. 3. *It was an adoption unto himself.* "Unto himself." It was taking men from the street, as it were, that he might surround himself with them in his own home. 4. *It was a sovereign adoption.* "According to the good pleasure of his will." While we were the *gainers* by it, God, in so acting, had a supreme regard to himself. It was his sovereign desire that man should be lifted so high, and lifted by so wondrous means. 5. *It was an adoption that magnified the grace of God.* "To the praise of the glory of his grace, which he freely bestowed on us in the Beloved." The great and ultimate end of adoption was to magnify the Divine love in its freeness. It was not called forth by any excellence or merit God saw in us. In Christ that love could find its fitting object. He is the beloved, the *unadopted* Son of God; and it is only because of the infinite excellence and merit the Father sees in him that we are adopted into his family. This love of God, then, is most free, and, as such, is to be praised. Other attributes of God we see elsewhere; but it is in the Church that the Divine grace shines forth.

III. THE CHURCH IN CONNECTION WITH THE REDEPTIVE PURPOSE OF GOD. 1. *It is in Christ that we enjoy redemption.* "In whom." It was only in a very limited way that the children of Israel were redeemed in Moses. He had not the redemption in his own person. But the person of Christ is of infinite consequence in the matter of our redemption. It is in him that redemption has its everlasting subsistence and sphere of operation. "Neither is there salvation in any other." And it is only as we are united to him and live in him that we are redeemed. 2. *We are the Church of God by redemption.* "We have our redemption." Redemption implies a previous state of bondage. "Out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage:" so the children of Israel were often reminded. Sin brings us under a worse than Egyptian bondage. The most galling tasks are those imposed upon us by our own foolishness. The most crushing tyranny is that which we bring upon ourselves by our own evil habits. It is out of the gall of bitterness, and bond of iniquity, that we have come. Redemption is to be taken in its widest sense. To the Israelites it meant deliverance from Egyptian bondage. It meant also the setting up for them in Canaan of those conditions which were best fitted to develop their national life. So redemption for us means deliverance from all the evil under which sin brings us. It also means the setting up of those conditions, and the bringing unto us of those influences, which are most conducive to our spiritual development. 3. *The procuring cause of redemption is the blood of Christ.* "Through his blood." The word translated "redemption" points to deliverance through a ransom; and the ransom is here stated to be blood. And it is the sacrificial association of blood that we are to lay hold of. The apparent procuring cause of the redemption of the children of Israel was the blood of animals slain in sacrifice, which was sprinkled on their doorposts. That was manifestly an insufficient account of the matter. It was, however, typical, as all blood similarly shed was typical, of what is the real procuring cause of all redemption for men, viz. *the blood of Christ.* (1) *It points to life given for life.* The animal was the substitute of the worshipper. That lies at the root of all sacrifice. When, therefore, the animal gave its life, it was as though the worshipper gave his life. So Christ was our Substitute, and, when he shed his blood, it was as though we shed our blood. (2) *It points to life given in the same kind.* This was wanting in the case of the old sacrifices. But it is manifestly an indispensable condition of all true substitution. And so Christ had the same flesh and blood as those for whom he became a sacrifice. (3) *It points to unforfeited life given for forfeited life.* The animal had done nothing to forfeit its life. It was therefore, in this respect, a fit substitute. It had a life to part with, in order that the sentence of forfeiture might be removed from the offerer, upon whom sin rested. So Christ had no sin of his own, and therefore he had an unforfeited life to give for those who had sinned, in order that forfeiture might be removed from them.

(4) *It points to a more valuable life given.* It was the life of One who, in becoming man, could not part with his essential divinity. It was, therefore, a life of infinite value. And, when he shed his blood, it was far more than if the whole world of sinners had shed their blood. (5) *It was life carried to the highest state of human perfection.* The animal had to be without blemish. But that was only an imperfect symbol. The Head of humanity required to have more than mere innocence. He required to have perfection in human kind. And when he finished the most beautiful human life with an act of perfect love to man and of absolute devotion to God, he once for all touched the summit for us. He first touched the lowest depth of human misery; but it was that, with him, we might touch the summit. Such was the life, not untried, but grown rich in all excellence, that was substituted for ours, that we might be redeemed. 4. *Redemption in its first and characteristic blessing is the forgiveness of sins.* "The forgiveness of our trespasses." God does actually forgive sins. This is a fact, for the certain knowledge of which we are indebted to Divine revelation. What are our sources of knowledge? There is, first of all, nature. The great system and fabric of force, of cause and effect,—does it tell us anything about forgiveness? In the first chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, there is a verse which bears that it is the fault even of the heathen if they do not learn from God's works the lesson of the eternal power and Godhead; but it does not bear that it is expected that we learn, and that it is our fault if we do not learn, from nature the lesson of the Divine forgiveness. Nature has no such message. Its message is this—a working toward good ends, but, according to unchangeable law, a gospel for angels, for unfallen men, and not for sinners. Can human nature, then, give us any assistance? It shows us God's laws broken; but it shows us also conscience testifying to the inviolability of law, as when it haunts the criminal with the feeling of remorse. If not, then, from conscience, are we led to look for forgiveness from any other part of human nature? Is not forgiveness the property of noble, royal dispositions? Does it not belong to the idea of the fatherly character? A father forgives a son; will not God, then, as our Father, forgive us our trespasses? Yes, if it were only a *private matter*, so to speak. He who is the Fountain of all fatherly feeling will not do less than that feeling prompts to in his creatures. But sin is not a private matter at all. There are involved in it *public considerations*. There is raised by it the question of government on the widest scale. A father naturally feels disposed to forgive his erring child; but he cannot do so on any basis whatsoever. He is not to allow him to remain under his roof and defy his authority. It is evident that there must be something in the name of law, and for the safety of other members of the household. And so we are left uncertain as to whether God can forgive our sin. Now, the whole of Divine revelation may be summed up in this—that, in spite of inflexible laws, in spite of the condemning voice of conscience, God can forgive, will forgive, does forgive, sin. The moral consequences of the past can be reversed. This has not been certainly by the setting aside of Law. The blood of Christ speaks to the majesty of Law, and to a basis of righteousness, of satisfaction made to the Law, on which the offer of forgiveness is made. In this the Bible stands alone. Confucianism, Buddhism, Mohammedanism, know nothing of forgiveness. They have something about human purification. But there is this clear ring only in the Bible: "Go in peace; thy sins are forgiven thee." 5. *Redemption has its measure in the Divine grace.* "According to the riches of his grace." Israel was redeemed by the stretched-out arm of God. It had a miraculous origin as a nation. God stretched out his arm, and miraculously interposed for us in Christ. Now that the ransom is paid, there is no hindrance to the forgiving disposition of God, unless it is in ourselves. It goes forth, not according to a penury of nature such as exists in men, but according to a wealth and liberality of disposition which belongs to God. We are thus forbidden to despair. 6. *The grace which determines redemption is conjoined with wisdom and prudence.* "Which he made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence." A parent often makes mistakes in bestowing his favours on his children; not so our heavenly Father. Wisdom is to be taken generally; prudence is rather the application of wisdom, according to time and circumstance. A seaman who is wise prudently looks to wind and tide. An agriculturist who is wise prudently considers the season and the nature of the soil and suitable implements. "His God doth instruct him to discretion, and doth teach him." And

what God gives thus, one in one kind, and another in another, he has in himself in an unbroken completeness. And, therefore, he must always abound in all wisdom and prudence. The whole scheme of redemption is a manifestation of wisdom; but there is specially a look forward here to the *time and manner of its disclosure* with which the Divine prudence has to deal. 7. *The purpose of redemption part concealed and part revealed.* "Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he purposed in him." There is a phase in which the purpose of redemption is the mystery of his will, and a phase in which it is made known. It was hidden in the eternal counsels. It was in part revealed when the promise was given that the Seed of the woman would bruise the head of the serpent. It was more fully revealed when he appeared who was the great Discloser of the Divine counsels. But we are not to suppose that mystery has been entirely removed from the purpose. "Should the sun glare in our eye in all its brightness on a sudden, after we have been in a thick darkness, it would blind us, instead of comforting us; so great a work as this must have *several digestions*." We are not in a position to estimate aright the prudence that has marked the disclosure. It must be held to be a well-timed disclosure, as being what he purposed in himself. And we should feel thankful for our being included within its scope. 8. *It is a purpose in which there is development and a consummation.* "Unto a dispensation of the fulness of the times, to sum up all things in Christ, the things in the heavens, and the things upon the earth." God is here represented as having the *administration of times or seasons*. These must be regarded as making up the whole extent across which the redemptive purpose of God stretches. The time proper for redemption is broken up into epochs. These are all determined and brought in by him, who, from one to another, is ever filling up his purpose and getting nearer to his end. We must not have too rounded conceptions of what these epochs are. When we are tempted to despond, the psalmist tells us that we are to "remember the years of the right hand of the Most High." We are to think of the vast time which God has in which to work out his purpose. (1) *There is a completing-point in the development.* The times administered by God are to come to their fulness. When that will be is yet mystery. (2) *At the point of completion there is to be a unification which is described in terms of universality.* There is to be a gathering up into one of all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth. There is confusion now; all things will be *harmonized* at last. We who are in the midst of the confusion cannot expect that the future shall stand out all clear before us. How many will be included in the redeemed Church of mankind? Will the unification extend to the angels as well as to men? Will it extend to the material creation? In what form will God at last conquer evil? These are questions of which we have not the full solution. The final shaping of the purpose has not been all brought out of mystery. Enough that he who has the administration of the times is to bring all things to an issue which will be satisfactory to his own mind and to that of every rational creature. Such a prospect as is here pictured, while it may not gratify curiosity, is fitted to fill the imagination and to kindle hope. (3) *This unification is to be in Christ.* It was promised that in Abraham all families of the earth would be blessed. The Church has a greater word of hope here. It is Christ who has made this possible and certain. He is harmonizing now by his blood and Spirit, by his Word and Church; and he will not cease until, under the great Administrator, he has harmonized all. It is in him that the purposes of God will come forth at last into all their clearness, and have their complete justification.—R. F.

Vers. 11-14.—Priority in the purpose of redemption. The connecting thought is the divulging of the purpose of redemption (ver. 9), in which there is development and a consummation (ver. 10). Under successive epochs or dispensations men must occupy different standpoints relative to the purpose as more or less fully manifested. And there are those to whom it is earlier divulged than to others. The conspicuous instance is that of Jews and Gentiles. There is a special reference here to Jewish Christians and Gentile Christians; and as the entire community of believers are called children (ver. 5), we may indicate the point of priority by the *earlier born* and the *later born*.

I. **THE EARLIER BORN.** "In him, I say, in whom also we were made a heritage, having been foreordained according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after

the counsel of his will; to the end that we should be unto the praise of his glory, we who had before hoped in Christ." Jewish Christians are described as those who had before hoped in Christ. They did not vaguely hope, but they so grasped the promise of the Messiah that even from Abraham's day they gladly looked forward to him; and as the time drew near they waited for the consolation of Israel. There were a few of them who had stood in a double relation to Christ, first as expectants of his coming, and then as blessed with the object of their hope. They could say in a special sense, "We who before," etc. But the same language could be used by the others (Paul among them) as identifying themselves with the pious of former generations. The hoping in him before he came implies the trusting in him as come, and it is as believers that they were *made possessors of the inheritance*. It is a theocratic word that is used as suiting Jewish Christians. The theocratic life was saturated with the idea of the inheritance all down the generations. Great importance was attached to the lot in each tribe and family being preserved entire. And now, when the earthly Canaan as a type was fading into the past, were they the first to be put into possession of the enduring substance. Why were they thus the first in privilege? Why have we had only a few years, while others, sainted, have had hundreds of years of redeemed existence? Why are we blessed with the gospel while multitudes are placed after us still unblessed? There is an evident pointing to conditions of redemption as lying beyond our control, as determined by the Divine sovereignty. And we can only say, as here, that it is foreordered according to the purpose of him, etc. He is absolutely free to assign some a more favoured "lot" than others. He causes it to rain upon one city and causes it not to rain upon another city (Amos iv. 7). He causes it to rain, with the rains of his Spirit, earlier upon some and later upon others. Their being put first was "to the praise of his glory." We are not to think of this priority under the Divine administration as though it were not glorifying to God. We must think of it, as of all else connected with redemption, that there is that rich grace in it which is characterized by wisdom and prudence (ver. 8). We must believe it to be the best method by which God can compass the end he has in view. We who are to thank God for all men are to thank God especially for the earlier born of the redeemed. They will thank God too; but the glory that God has in them is not merely their matter, it is ours as well, and calls for our song of praise. Especially shall we feel the reasonableness of such priestly service if we go on to think of those who are brought to Christ through the instrumentality of the first born.

II. THE LATER BORN. "In whom ye also, having heard the word of the truth, the gospel of your salvation." These were the Gentile Christians. Christ was the Desire of all nations. The Gentile world in its want and woe called for a Saviour. But it could not be said that they, Gentiles by extraction, had in their generations hoped in Christ. When he came it was to "his own;" and it was only after the Jews, even under the new dispensation, that they "heard." Every generation has a duty to perform to the next. It is to tell what they themselves did hear (Ps. lxxviii.). We in Christian lands have a duty to perform to those placed behind us in Christian privileges. And "how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard?" (Rom. x.). This duty of telling rises out of our possession of "truth," our possession of "salvation." The truth which has a saving power in it is not the private property of any; but we are bound, as soon as we know the value of it, to seek to make it the property of others. It cannot be too widely possessed; it is as fitted to bless all as it is to bless one. And this saving truth we do not have in the varying element of our own thought. But we owe it to God that he has given the truth its proper form in the "word," salvation in "the gospel." And it is this gospel, this good word from God, which we have to make men to "hear." The Jewish Christians acted the part of the first born; for it was Jewish preachers who went forth to the Gentiles. "That all the Gentiles might hear," said the most heroic of them. And in Ephesus, in the face of difficulties (fighting with beasts), he made them to hear this word of truth, this gospel, etc. Hearing does not bring the certainty, but it brings the opportunity and the responsibility, of believing. And their opportunity in that heathen city they solemnly embraced. Faith came by hearing, the faith which sinners need for salvation. It was the right attitude toward the Saviour, and, as it was not different from that of Jewish Christians, by that God with whom there is no difference, they, though later, were placed on the same level of blessing.

III. THE EARLIER BORN AND THE LATER BORN HAVE CERTAIN THINGS IN COMMON. "In whom, having also believed, ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, which is an earnest of our inheritance, unto the redemption of God's own possession, unto the praise of his glory." 1. *A common seal.* (1) What the seal is—the Holy Spirit of promise. And what could be more equalizing to Gentile Christians (Acts ii. 15—17)? This sealing with the Spirit implies a certain similarity of nature along with his power of working on us as the mighty Artificer. (2) What is sealed on us—the Divine image. That image is impressed on us in what is called character, as being something impressed. It is for us to be as wax under the working of the Spirit. It is the holiness of God that he who is the Holy Spirit seals on us. (3) What is sealed to us—that we are the sons of God (Rom. viii. 16). In what the Spirit works in us of conformity to the Divine image do we obtain the comforting assurance that we are born of God. 2. *A common guarantee.* (1) To what the guarantee pertains—our inheritance. "If sons, then heirs." It is the inheritance formerly referred to. And the equalizing further is this, that the later born share it with the earlier born. (2) How far the guarantee extends—until the redemption (full) of the purchased possession. The "purchased possession" are the possessors of the inheritance. It is a theocratic word that was well understood. It was used to describe ancient Israel as property which the Lord had acquired for himself. We Christians now answer to the ancient designation. We are the successors of Israel, and therefore the Lord claims us as a people for his peculiar possession (1 Pet. ii. 9). We are the peculiar property of God by right of redemption. The price was formerly mentioned—Christ's blood (ver. 7). And the redemption, which was there viewed as begun in the forgiveness of sins, is now viewed as carried forward to completion; and it is only as fully redeemed that we come into the full enjoyment of the inheritance. (3) In what the guarantee consists—the earnest of the Spirit. The earnest money is small in comparison with the full payment; but it is part, and is to be taken as a token that the whole will in due time be forthcoming. And so in what we enjoy now of the Spirit we have the foretaste and pledge of what the full inheritance will be. 3. They can join in a *common doxology*: "Unto the praise of his glory." Gregory of Nyssa, referring to the close of the Psalter, pictures the time "when the creatures shall be harmoniously united for one choral dance, and the chorus of mankind concerting with the angelic chorus shall become one cymbal of Divine praise, and the final song of victory shall salute God the triumphant Conqueror with shouts of joy." In this song the first born shall join with the later born, parents and teachers shall blend their voices with those who have come after them to glory; with no feeling of self-exaltation or of envy because of priority, but all rejoicing in the marvellous grace that has given them a place and God the victory.—R. F.

Vers. 15—23.—*Prayer for the Ephesians.* I. *FOUNDED ON INFORMATION.* 1. *Regarding their faith.* "For this cause I also, having heard of the faith in the Lord Jesus which is among you." He had already more than once referred to their Christian faith; he refers to it now as ground for his prayer on their behalf. We are to pray for "all men," even for unbelievers; but whoever through faith are admitted into the same Christian circle, claim a special interest in our prayers. 2. *Regarding their faith as manifested saintward.* "And which ye show toward all the saints." "Love" is omitted in the Revised translation; but the thought must be "faith working through love." It was toward the *saints*. They were saints themselves (ver. 1); they were kind to the saints as to those who were actuated by the same lofty sentiments. They recognized them as having the first claim on their sympathies, according to the order laid down in Gal. vi. 10. It was toward *all the saints*. They exhibited *catholicity*. They did not confine their interest to their own immediate circle, but extended it to the whole circle of the saints. They did not boast of their superiority to other Churches, but were able to appreciate Christian excellence wherever it was to be found. They were not restrained in the outgoings of their brotherly love by any difference in unessentials.

II. *IT COMBINED TWO THINGS.* 1. *Thanksgiving for them.* "Cease not to give thanks for you." His information supplied him with matter for thanksgiving. He heard of their faith and its manifestations, and so he thanked God for them. This is a very interesting part of our priestly office. All joys of others we then make ours.

"I saw thee eye the gen'ral mirth
With boundless love."

We can only do this when we turn to God in thanksgivings for all men (1 Tim. ii. 1). The apostle had peculiar delight in the Ephesians; and as their faith was genuine, and was ever receiving new manifestations, his thanksgiving for them was *unceasing*. 2. *Intercession for them*. "Making mention of you in my prayers." He was in the habit of praying for the Churches by name, as a parent prays for his children by name. They were among the number prayed for, from the time of their becoming a Church. He had special points of interest connected with them. He had been long resident there, and he had not forgotten the affectionate leave-taking at Miletus. And having kept up his information regarding their affairs, he was supplied with matter for intercession. *Observe the twofold use of information*. It is important to circulate missionary information, that we may be supplied with subjects for *thanksgiving*. "Daily shall he be praised" as the result of praying for *Christ* continually (in an unsaved world) and giving of the gold of Sheba; but how shall we praise unless we have the means of hearing? It is important also to know the condition of Churches and of individuals, that our prayer for them may be more intelligent, and may not, from vagueness and indirectness, miss the mark.

III. IN WHAT CHARACTER GOD IS ADDRESSED IN PRAYER. "That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory." As is not unusual in prayer, God receives a name from what is to be prayed for. The prayer is to relate to glory; and so God is styled sublimely the "Father of glory." The glory in store for us is not from ourselves; it is from God. To him all glory *essentially* belongs, and by him as Father it must be produced in us. The first part of the designation is striking; it cannot be said to be *startling*. That God should be called "the God of our Lord Jesus Christ" is in keeping with the language of human dependence on the cross: "My God, my God," and also with the language of identity with his own before his ascension: "I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and my God and your God." Using this language, we identify ourselves with Jesus Christ as our Lord. Taken along with the other part of the designation, the meaning is that God is the First Cause (Father) of that glory which Jesus Christ has obtained for us, and which it belongs to him as our Lord to bestow.

IV. IT IS A PRAYER GENERALLY TO KNOW ABOUT GOD. "May give unto you a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him." Than the *thorough* knowledge of God which is here implied, there is nothing more worthy of attainment. "Every one's elevation is to be measured first and chiefly by his conception of this great Being; and to attain a just and bright and quickening knowledge of him is the highest aim of thought. In truth, the great end of the universe, of revelation, of life, is to develop in us the idea of God. Much earnest, patient, laborious thought is required to see the infinite Being as he is; to rise above the low, gross notions of the divinity, which rush in upon us from our passions, from our selfish partialities, and from the low-minded world around us." A spirit of *wisdom* is that in which we rightly estimate things, vain things as vain, worthy things as worthy, and all things according to their relative vanity or worth. As applied to God, it is the spirit in which we learn to appreciate his infinite worth. It is also a spirit of *revelation*. It is the dawning of his beauty upon our minds. It is the reception of much about God that we could never have found out by our reason. *Condition*. "Having the eyes of your heart enlightened." There is a noticeable change from "understanding" to "heart" in the translation here. It is true that God is an object for the heart more than for the intellect. The Church says in the Song of Solomon, "I sleep, but my heart waketh." It was the heart that detected the voice of the Beloved. The eyes of our heart, more than of our intellect, have been filmed over by sin. We cannot naturally appreciate the Divine unselfishness, what in self-forgetfulness he has it in his heart to do for us. For this there is necessary the cleansing and quickening of our spiritual vision by the revelation without us and through the inward operation of the Spirit. To God, then, we must look for the presence of this condition of Divine knowledge.

V. IT IS A PRAYER SPECIFICALLY TO KNOW ABOUT GOD THE GLORY WHICH HE HAS DESTINED FOR US. "That ye may know what is the hope of his calling, what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints." There is a hope which his calling

produces in our hearts. This is the hope of the inheritance which has already been referred to in the fourteenth verse. Having, then, connected the Divine purpose with the inheritance, he now prays that they may have some worthy *conception* of it, as that to which they were called. There is an accumulation of language to impress us with the *greatness* of the inheritance as worthy of the donor. *The glory of the inheritance in the saints.* The glory of a thing is its highest, most beautiful form, as when the fields are in their summer loveliness. The glory of the inheritance in the saints is all that an inheritance can flower out into for them, the final thought of God regarding the *condition* of his own. It must excel what was the glory of Canaan, as it is an inheritance formed with richer materials. *The riches of the glory.* The riches of his grace ends in the riches of the glory. *The open flower*, of which there was a representation in the Jewish temple, is but a suggestion of the glory which God will manifest in the saints. The higher the existence the richer the efflorescence. So rich is the glory in the saints that it is difficult to form a conception of what it shall be. It is difficult for us to think of ourselves beautified as we shall be in our nature and in our surroundings. But that it may be worthily conceived is an object for which we are to pray for ourselves and for others. It is true that "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him;" but that is not the whole statement, for it is added, "God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit." We are therefore to seek, with the materials we have, some clear, vivid, uplifting conception of the future inheritance.

VI. IT IS A PRAYER TO KNOW ABOUT GOD THE POWER WHICH IS TO EFFECT THIS GLORY TO THE SAINTS. "And what the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe." Again the apostle heaps up language, as though the idea were too great for expression. The power of God has not only greatness; it has exceeding greatness. "The power of God is that ability and strength whereby he can bring to pass whatsoever he pleases, whatsoever his infinite wisdom can direct, and whatsoever the infinite purity of his will can resolve" (Charnock). "God hath spoken once; twice have I heard this: that power belongeth unto God." It belongs to him originally, inalienably. Job discourses of the power of God as seen in the lower parts of the world, in hanging the earth upon nothing, in holding up the clouds, in compassing the waters with bounds till day and night come to an end, in commotions in air and earth, in his garnishing the heavens. Then sublimely he concludes: "Lo, these are parts of his ways: but how little a portion is heard of him? but the thunder of his power who can understand?" The apostle goes to a different field in which to study the power of God. It is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe. It is the power of God as manifested toward the Church of Christ.

VII. IT IS A PRAYER TO KNOW ABOUT THE DIVINE POWER THAT WHICH WAS MANIFESTED IN THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST. "According to that working of the strength of his might which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead." He has spoken of the power of God abstractly; this gives colouring to it. He would show what God can do for the Church, by pointing to what he has already done for Christ. It was power displayed upon Christ in extraordinary circumstances. For how powerless was Christ, when his body was taken down from the cross and laid in the tomb! He continued for a time under the power of death. His humanity was unnaturally divided. The spirit was disembodied, leaving the once active body a pale and motionless corpse. But upon this utter powerlessness the power of God was signally put forth, that power by which he can subdue even death to himself. He recalled the spirit, and gave it to retenant the body subdued to a nobler mould. This, then, is the power which is to give us the riches of the glory of the inheritance. And is it not pertinent as well as sufficient? For our being raised by a similar forthputting of power is preparatory to our being instated in the inheritance.

VIII. IT IS A PRAYER TO KNOW ABOUT THE DIVINE POWER THAT WHICH WAS MANIFESTED IN THE RAISING OF CHRIST TO HIS RIGHT HAND. "And made him to sit at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule, and authority, and power, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come." The working of the strength of the Divine might did not terminate with the raising of Christ from the dead. For a time he remained on earth, and was seen by mortal eye. But by another grand forthputting of power Christ was raised

above earth, was raised to the right hand of God. This denotes an intimacy with God in power such as is beyond any mere creature. And yet it was mysteriously in our creaturely nature that he was raised to the right hand of God. There he was seen afterwards, and recognized, by the prisoner of Patmos; and there he still sits. This is in the heavenly places, the height from which, according to the former thought, the Church is blessed. He has been raised above every form of superiority or prerogative. Four words are used which cannot be distinguished. Earthly orders or powers seem to be included as well as heavenly. Christ is King of kings, whether these are of the human or of the angelic type. He has also been raised above every name that is named, i.e. every one who has personal subsistence or, it may be, is the representative of power. And this has reference, not merely to the present, but to the future order of things as well. Thus, with necessary vagueness, is the superiority of Christ set forth. "We know that the emperor goes before all, though we cannot enumerate all the satraps and ministers of his court; so we know that Christ is set before all, although we cannot name all who are under him."

IX. IT IS A PRAYER TO KNOW ABOUT THE DIVINE POWER THAT WHICH WAS MANIFESTED IN THE GIVING OF CHRIST TO BE HEAD OVER ALL THINGS TO THE CHURCH, "And he put all things in subjection under his feet, and gave him to be Head over all things." There is a climax. He raised him from the dead; he raised him to sit at his right hand; raised to sit at his right hand, he gave him to be Head. The apostle thinks of the Father as *First* throughout, and in viewing him as Head he thinks of the Father preparing for the position by first putting all things in subjection under his feet. His seat at the right hand of God is a seat of *government*. From it he exercises unlimited, universal sway. The elements of earth and air and water, all living things on our planet, the bodies and souls of men, the whole material universe, the invisible world and its inhabitants, are in his hands to be sovereignly disposed of according to his thought. But let us look at the full bearing of the headship of Christ on the Church. *1. Christ is given as Head over all things to the Church.* "To the Church." By the Church we are to understand the collective body of believers, or of those who are called out of the world. The latter conception, to which the derivation points, excludes the holy angels, whose life must be essentially the same with ours, but who have never been called out of a depraved condition. It is the Church of the redeemed, then, about which sublime statements are made. Christ is here set forth as the great Donation to the Church. "Given to the Church" is the language of the apostle; and the gifts of God, we are told, are without repentance. He does not withdraw his Bible, nor his Son to whom it testifies. This is a gift which strikes us with a sense of the disproportion between its value and the recipient. God's own Son given to the Church—how inconceivable a mark of the Divine favour! But it is in his headship over all things that he is gifted to the Church. Had he reigned only within the Church, its interests could not have been sufficiently guaranteed. Danger might have arisen from the quarter to which his reign did not extend. But, as he reigns over all things, he can make all things—without the Church and within the Church too—work together for its good. "The whole economy of creation stands at his disposal as the basis and sphere of activity for the economy of redemption." He does not need to be indebted to the earthly powers for a sphere for carrying on the operations of the Church in the era that is proceeding. "For the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof." He has proprietary rights over it of the most absolute nature as Mediator. It has been put in subjection under his feet; it has been handed over unconditionally to his control. And the earthly powers only hold from him their *portion* of the surface and riches of the earth. They are no more than tenants-at-will; he appoints to them the bounds of their habitation; and they can be used by him for his ends; their schemings and commotions can be overruled for the advancement of the Church. As for the Church, Christ, having unlimited power, can place it where its discipline can best be secured, and where it can have the widest door of usefulness. And even the worldly elements which find entrance into the Church, although they may be allowed to work for a time, can be checked, controlled for his Church's triumph over them. If the Church has a vast work before it, and is yet far from coming up to the prophetic mark, may it not trust to the greatness of its Head? And if the Church is promised a great future after this era has run its course in the eternal order of things, is not its great

Head invested with power sufficient to bring it about? 2. *The Church stands in an intimate relationship to Christ.* "Which is his body." As we stand in relation to our body, so Christ stands in relation to his Church. The body of man is a marvellous piece of workmanship. "Fearfully and wonderfully made" is language applicable to its structure. But the apostle contemplated it, not from the strictly scientific, but from the religious or more particularly the Christian standpoint. He says that the Church is the body of Christ. This raises the body of man to an exalted position. It is not the degraded thing it has been sometimes thought to be. It is after the pattern of things in the heavens. This is the true way of putting it; not, certainly, that the Church is made after the pattern of the body, but that the body is made after the pattern of the Church. Just as fatherhood existed in God before it existed in man, so body existed in the Divine conception of the Church before it existed in the human body. Let us look into the bearing of it. (1) *It is in relation to Christ that the Church has life.* The head or brain is the great seat of bodily life. It is here that there takes place the mysterious union of soul to body. From this as a centre the soul animates the body. There is an equally mysterious union of Christ to the Church. Upon him as *animating* Head the Church depends. (2) *It is in relation to Christ that the Church is organized.* An organism is a living structure that, by means of organs, serves its uses. The human body is an elaborate structure of this kind. It is a number of organs arranged to form an organic whole. It is from the brain that it is organized. From it proceed the various ramifications throughout the body. In the same way the Church is the great living structure, even more elaborate than the human body. It is an organization intended to serve certain uses. It is from Christ as Head that the Church takes the type of its organization. (3) *It is by Christ that the Church is governed.* The brain is the thinking, ruling centre in the body. There the thinking is done. From it the whole regulation proceeds. Its commands are carried by the nerves to every part. So Christ is the brain or centre where the thinking goes on for the Church, whence commands are issued to all the dependent parts. 3. *The Church is that in which Christ is to be fully manifested.* "The fulness of him that filleth all in all." We are to understand it to be Christ that filleth all in all. It is he who fills the sun with its light-giving properties. He fills the seed with its germinating power. He fills the flowers with their power to blossom forth into beauty. He fills the souls of men with all their natural qualities. It is Christ, then, who is to be seen in the sunshine, in the waving corn, in the flowers that deck the field, and also in the blossoming forth of genius. But the Church stands in a special relation to Christ. It is his body, and therefore he is to fill it fuller than he does anything else. It is here called his *pleroma*, or fulness. As he himself is called the *Pleroma* of God, so the Church is called his *pleroma*. There is a high sense in which the body is intended to be the manifestation of the soul. We think of Christ in the days of his flesh as having a body with an *ideal beauty* corresponding to his spiritual excellence so far as flesh would allow. It was not a mere sensuous beauty, but rather a beauty that was expressive of holiness. At the same time, it was not a beauty that excluded *marring* by sorrow and struggle. In the same way the Church is to manifest Christ. It is to be a fitting temple for the Christ within. It is to be that in which he is to body himself without any barrier, other than that which marks the Church's finitude. He is to bring up his Church into the highest form so as to body forth his beauty. All deformity and weakness are to be excluded, as unworthy of him who is receiving manifestation. All imperfection is also to be excluded, such as belongs to lower things which can only, though filled by him, have broken rays of his glory. What a glorious destiny is this for the Church! How fitting that it should be held up before it in all the grandeur of the conception! And how fitting that we should see to it that we belong to the Church, and are guided and ruled by Christ, so that in us, as part of the whole, the glory of Christ shall shine forth!—R. F.

Vers. 1, 2.—*The highest things in the world.* "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: grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ." The words set before us three of the greatest things in human life.

I. THE HIGHEST OFFICE IN THE WORLD. "An apostle of Jesus Christ." 1. He was a messenger of the greatest Person. How great was his Master! Messengers of inferior personages are often but little esteemed, whilst those of illustrious ones are held in high honour. He who represents a king receives something of kingly homage. An "apostle" is a representative of "Jesus Christ," who is the Son of God, the Creator of the universe, and the Head of all "principalities and powers." But what was his message? 2. He was the bearer of the grandest message. He who bears an important message—a message on which the interest of a neighbourhood or the destiny of a nation depends, will stamp the hearts of men with awe. An apostle of Christ delivers the highest message—pardon to the guilty, light to the benighted, freedom to the slave, immortality to the dying, salvation to the lost. 3. He was a messenger of Christ by the "will of God." Many go out in the name of Christ, but not according to the Divine will. The Eternal has never called them to missions so holy and momentous, and hence they misrepresent the doctrines and the genius of his blessed Son. This was not Paul's case. He was called to be an "apostle," "separated unto the gospel of God" (Rom. i. 1). He felt this. "When it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by grace," etc. What office in the world approaches this in sublimity? A messenger of Christ by the "will of God"! He who by the "will of God" bears Christ's message to the hearts of men sustains a position, compared with which the most elevated offices amongst men sink into contempt.

II. THE HIGHEST CHARACTERS IN THE WORLD. "To the saints," etc. "Saints" and "faithful." Who are they? They are those who are consecrated in soul to truth, and love and God, and this because they are faithful. They are made holy through their faith in Christ. All moral excellence in man is derived in this way and in no other. Philosophy, history, and the Bible show this. Notice, these saints resided at "Ephesus." This, the chief city in Asia Minor, was the centre and stronghold of paganism; it had the temple of Diana, one of the greatest wonders of the world. Its influence upon millions was immense, and its appeal was to men's superstition, sensualism, and selfishness. Albeit there were Christians there, holy and believing men. This shows: 1. *Man is not necessarily the creature of circumstances.* 2. *That, with the possession of the gospel, a religious life is practicable everywhere.* What characters in society are equal to those of genuine "saints"? None. They are "lights;" without them the social heavens would be midnight. They are "living stones;" without them the social temple would fall to ruins. They are "salt;" without them the social body would become putrescent and pestilential.

III. THE HIGHEST BLESSINGS IN THE WORLD. "Grace and peace." Here are two blessings. 1. *Divine favour.* "Grace." The love, the benediction, the approbation of God. What a boon this! 2. *Spiritual peace.* "Peace," not insensibility, not stagnation, but a repose of the soul in God. Men through sin have lost peace. "The wicked are like the troubled sea." Sinners are at war with themselves, society, the universe, God. But through God's love, through Christ souls are at one with all. "Peace"—sweet word, blessed thing! To the mariner after a storm, to a nation after a war, how blessed! But far more blessed to the soul after a life-war with self and its Maker. "He will keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed upon God."

Who will say that there are any higher things on earth than are found in this text? And these highest things, thank God, we may all possess. We may all, in a sense, be apostles of Christ. We may be all "saints and faithful." We may all partake of the "grace" of God and possess the blessed "*εἰρήνη*."—D. T.

Vers. 3—6.—*The redemptive predestination of God a reason for man's exultant gratitude.* "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the Beloved." The leading subject of these words is the redemptive predestination of God a reason for man's exultant gratitude. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," etc. We say redemptive predestination, for there is predestination in every

department of Divine operation; from the most microscopic objects to the massive systems of immensity. Before we go on to notice the reasons suggested in the passage why man should adore the Eternal for his *redemptive* predestination, it may be well, in order to remove much of erroneous sentiment and terrible feeling that exist in the minds of some men in relation to this great subject, to state the following things. 1. *The predestination of God contemplates good, and good only.* (1) *The benevolence of his nature* proves this. He is Love, and it is eternally antagonistic to love to plan for misery. (2) *The structure of the universe* proves this. True science sees a Divine plan in every part of nature, from the minutest to the largest objects. Yet it has never discovered, as Archbishop Paley has well said, any contrivance for suffering. Not a single "vessel" has been discovered that has been "made for dishonour." (3) *The declarations of the Bible* prove this. The Bible only reveals God's will concerning man, and it tells us that his will is that we shall all be saved. (4) *Consciousness* proves this. All men feel that God intends their happiness. If they did not, moral sense would be an impossibility. 2. *The predestination of God never interferes with the free agency of moral beings.* It is true that no philosophy has yet harmonized, to the satisfaction of the human understanding, the doctrine of free agency with the doctrine of eternal predestination. This is the great intellectual puzzle of the ages. But that the one interferes not with the other in the slightest degree is attested: (1) *By history.* Amongst the many examples that might be selected, take one—the crucifixion of Christ. That stupendous evil was predetermined. Yet were not his crucifiers free? "Him being delivered," etc. (2) *By Scripture.* The Bible everywhere appeals to men as responsible beings—appeals to their choice, and warns them of a judgment, when every one "must give an account of himself." (3) *By consciousness.* Men feel that they are free. This feeling *defies* all logic. It is the *ultimate* argument. Beyond its decisions there is no appeal. 3. *The predestination of God is not exclusively confined to human redemption.* This we have already intimated. It does not follow, because Paul refers God's predestinating agency in man's salvation to an eternal plan, that he would not have referred it in any other department to an eternal plan. It is a characteristic of a pious man that he traces all that is good to God; and of a truly intelligent man, he would trace everything to the Divine plan. Had Paul been writing on botany, he would have traced every blade and flower and plant that grew to the predestination of God. Had he been writing on anatomy, he would have traced every organ, limb, joint, vein, nerve, and sinew to the predestination of God. But he was writing of *man's salvation*, and it was only to his purpose to refer to predestination in connection with that. Predestination is not a dream of the schoolman, or a dogma of Calvin, but an eternal law of the universe. 4. *The predestination of God is revealed in Scripture according to forms of human thought.* As no finite being can comprehend the Infinite, no finite mind can give a representation of his acts that is absolutely correct. What, for example, in the predestination of God, is there answering to our ideas of that act? The ideas of commencement, observation, resolve, enter into our conceptions of it. But these are foreign to the subject. What is there, too, in God's choice, answering to our ideas of choice? The ideas of beginning, comparison, rejection, acceptance, enter into our conception of choice; but in God's choice there was no beginning, no comparison, etc. What conception can we have of the processes and the workings of a mind that knows no succession, to whom all the future is as the past, who has but *one* eternal thought? Alas! that men should be so impious as to dogmatize upon a subject like this! "Who by searching can find out God?" We now pass on to the question—Why should we exultingly adore the Eternal on account of his redemptive predestination? Paul suggests three reasons in the text.

1. **HAPPINESS IS ITS EXCLUSIVE AIM.** What are the "spiritual blessings in heavenly places," which the apostle in the text traces to it? 1. *Moral excellence.* "That we should be *holy* and *without blame*." The two words represent spiritual excellence. (1) *Negatively.* "Without blame." Perfectly free from all that is wrong in thought, feeling, and practice. Appearing before God "without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing." (2) *Positively.* "Holy." Consecrated to the will and service of God. 2. *Spiritual elevation.* "Heavenly places." A truly Christian man is now in heavenly regions. Though on the earth, he is not of the earth, he is of heaven. His fellowships, ideas, services, aspirations, are heavenly. He is come to an "innumerable company of angels,"

"Our citizenship is in heaven," etc. 3. *Divine sonship*. "The adoption of children." All men are the offspring of God, but none are his true children but those who have the *true filial spirit*. To possess this involves man's highest blessedness. This is the work of Christ. "As many as received him to them gave he power to become the sons of God"—the true sons—"heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ." These are some of the "spiritual" blessings which flow to man through God's redemptive predestination. Paul does not refer to a single evil or woe as coming to man from that source. Good, and good only, he saw flowing from that fountain. The inhuman, the blasphemous dogma of reprobation never entered his mind in connection with this grand subject. What reason for exultant thankfulness is here! Well may we exclaim, "Blessed be God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."

II. JESUS CHRIST IS ITS MEDIUM. Predestination, which in nature makes the sun the medium of lighting, quickening, and beautifying the earth, in redemption makes Christ the Medium of conveying all those spiritual blessings which constitute the happiness and dignity of man. The "heavenly places" to which we are raised are "in Christ Jesus." The adoption of children is "through Jesus Christ." All the Divine grace—favour—bestowed on man is through "Christ Jesus, the Beloved." What a Medium is this! This is the great gift of predestination. God's only begotten, well-beloved Son: "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" What reason for exultant thankfulness is here! Well may Paul exclaim, "Blessed be God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," etc.

III. ETERNAL LOVE IS ITS SPRING. "In love, having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ." 1. *This love existed before the objects of it came into actual being*. Millions of ages before mankind came into existence, before the "foundation of the world," he loved them. His love created them, organized them for happiness as creatures, and provided for their spiritual recovery as sinners. The uncreated, those that are to be, are as real to God as the created that are. 2. *This love is the happiness of his own nature*. Its manifestations are the "good pleasure" of his own will. The good pleasure of malevolence is misery; the good pleasure of love is happiness. Are not the reasons suggested by Paul for gratefully exulting in God's redemptive predestination abundant? "Predestination," "choice," "counsel," "purpose," "decree"! The more ignorant men are, the more they profess to have fathomed the meaning of these terms, as representing the mental acts of the Eternal; and the more flippant they are in their use. But what do they stand for when applied to God? *Volition*—will, nothing more. "God is love," and his will must be happiness. He is "of one mind," and his will must be unalterable. A certain theology, which, thank God, is dying out, has invested these grand old words with attributes of hideousness, before which weak souls in all ages have trembled with horror. But they only indicate the will of infinite love to flood immensity with bliss.

"Love is the root of creation, God's essence; worlds without number
Lie in his bosom like children; he made them for this purpose only,
Only to love and to be loved again; he breathed forth his Spirit
Into the slumbering dust, and upright standing, it laid its
Hand on its heart, and felt it was warmed with a flame out of heaven."

D. T.

Vers. 7—14.—*The redemptive predestination of God in its subjective and objective aspects*. "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace; wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: that in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him: in whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: that we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ. In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance, until the redemption of the

purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory." This passage, treated homiletically, presents redemptive predestination to us *in some of its subjective and objective aspects*. We use those words with no liking, for they savour of a school of thought with which we have but little sympathy. But the terms, experimental and doctrinal, internal and external, would not represent our thoughts so well. Let us then look at the passage as presenting *redemptive predestination*—

I. IN SOME OF ITS SUBJECTIVE ASPECTS. There are certain words employed which indicate its influence and issues upon the heart of its true disciple. There is: 1. *Deliverance*. "In whom we have redemption." This means simple deliverance, and perhaps is used in allusion to the Exodus of the Jews. Unregenerate humanity is in moral bondage, is carnally sold under sin. It is in a captivity compared with which the most cruel physical bondage is but a shadow. The gospel is the deliverer. It crushes the despots. It sounds the trump of jubilee. 2. *Pardon*. "The forgiveness of sins." This, like redemption, means release, but it indicates release, not from calamity alone, but from crime. Redemption delivers man at once from the slavery of sin, forgiveness from its guilt. Divine forgiveness, what is it? It is remedial mercy separating the sinner from his sin. "Far as the east is from the west," etc. Separating not from its memory, nor from all its effects and influences, but from its soul-accusing power. 3. *Unification*. "He might gather together in one." Uniting the disharmonious soul of man with the universe, by uniting it to Christ. As planets are bound together, though millions of leagues apart, by a common centre, so true souls in all worlds and ages are united by being united to Jesus Christ. He is the Head. 4. *Heritage*. "Obtained an inheritance," "the earnest of our inheritance." What is the inheritance of a Christ-redeemed soul? Ah! what? What springing energies, what rising hopes, what high fellowships, what glorious liberties, enter into that inheritance! "All things are yours." The allusion is perhaps to Canaan. What is the true Canaan of the soul? 5. *Divinity*. "Sealed with that Holy Spirit." (1) Divinely *impressed*. (2) Divinely *distinguished*. (3) Divinely *secured*.

II. IN SOME OF ITS OBJECTIVE ASPECTS. We observe that it has objectively: 1. *One primordial source*. Whence does this grand redemptive system spring? From "the riches of his grace." "His good pleasure." "The counsel of his own will." Its spring is in God. Creation and salvation well up from the same eternal fountain. 2. *Manifested manifestations*. How many terms are here employed to represent this *one system*! (1) "*His blood*." Christ's blood, or his self-sacrificing love, is its vital power, its very substance, without which it would be a cloud without water, a body without a soul. Christ is Christianity. (2) "*Wisdom*." Two words are here employed—"wisdom" and "prudence." But they mean in reality the same thing, "wisdom." The word "wisdom" may indicate intelligence, and "prudence" its application. Christianity is "the manifold wisdom of God." (3) "*Mystery*." It is not only necessarily a mystery to all to whom it is not revealed, but it must ever be to a great extent a mystery to its most advanced students. It is that which angels "desire to look into." It has heights no intellect can scale, depths no philosophy can penetrate. It has lengths and breadths for ever outreaching the swiftest and strongest wing of thought. (4) "*Dispensation*." It is a Divine scheme. The intellect that planned the universe planned it. (5) "*The word of truth*." Truth is reality. Divine truth is eternal reality. Reality has many words, and the gospel is the word of this eternal reality. (6) "*The gospel of your salvation*." The good tidings of infinite love. 3. *A gradual unfoldment*. It was once a "mystery," unknown to the universe, unknown to man. It was in the mind of God. He spoke its first sentence, perhaps, to Adam, and from that hour it has been gradually unfolding itself. It has had its striking epochs, and it is moving on to "the fulness of times." It will flood the universe with its brightness one day. 4. *A sublime result*. "Unto the praise of his glory." The highest aim of the creature is to worship with the fullest loyalty and love the Creator. The guilt and misery of this world is that it fails in this. The ultimate aim of Christianity is to tune the world's heart to music, and cause loud hallelujahs to break from every lip.—D. T.

Vers. 15—23.—*Apostolic philanthropy*. "Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; 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: the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, 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: and hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the Head over all things to the Church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all." This passage, which is confessedly somewhat involved and obscure in some of its expressions, may be homiletically regarded as illustrating *apostolic philanthropy*. There is a great deal of what is called philanthropy in this age. Most men who are candidates for public suffrage profess to feel its inspiration, and advocate its claims. Indeed, there are not a few who trade in its holy name. Under the cover of serving their race, they gratify their own vanity and enrich their own coffers. Amongst so much of spurious philanthropy it may be well to take a glance at the genuine thing. Paul was a philanthropist of the true type; his love for his race was disinterested, self-sacrificing, and unconquerable. The passage before us gives us a glimpse of philanthropy as it existed in his noble soul. We observe—

I. HIS PHILANTHROPY REGARDED SPIRITUAL EXCELLENCE AS THE ESSENTIAL NECESSITY OF MANKIND. Two elements of spiritual excellence are mentioned here, which must be regarded, not merely as the specimen of others, but as the *root* of all genuine goodness of heart. 1. *Practical faith in Christ*. "Faith in the Lord Jesus." In the New Testament this is everywhere made the *one* thing needful. Faith in *him* is represented as essential in the moral restoration of man to the knowledge, image, and fellowship of God; and both the philosophy of the human mind and the experience of mankind concur in demonstrating that practical faith in the Son of God can alone confer real and lasting good on man. 2. *Genuine love for the good*. "Love unto all the saints," i.e. all the genuine disciples of Jesus Christ. The love is virtuous, it is for men on account of their goodness—"saints." This love is catholic, it is for "all the saints." Now, Paul regarded these two things as existing in the Ephesian Church as the most hopeful and essential things. He makes no reference to their secular education, to their mercantile progress, to their artistic improvements, to their political advancement; he knew that these were comparatively useless without spiritual excellence, and that with spiritual excellence these would grow up to highest perfection. He looked to the reformation of souls as that which was a good in itself, and which alone could give value to any other reformation.

II. HIS PHILANTHROPY LIVED IN THE RELIGIOUS EXERCISES OF HIS SOUL. "Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers." Observe three things concerning Paul's religious devotions. 1. *They were profoundly reverential*. How great did that God whom he worshipped appear to him! (1) "The God of our Lord Jesus." The God of that mighty Being who wrought such wonders when on this earth. (2) "The Father of glory." One who dwelt "in light which no man could approach unto." The central Fount of all honour and dignity. (3) The Dispenser of the Spirit. "Given unto you the Spirit," etc. Such is the God he worshipped. Great ideas of God generate reverence in souls. 2. *They were unceasing in thanks and prayer*. "Cease not to give thanks for you," etc. In prayer and supplication he made known his requests to God. Unceasing thanks for the past, and prayer for the future, is the grand duty of all, and the happy life of Christians. 3. *They were ever animated with love to men*. As he appeared before this great God in worship, he bore the interest of the Church at Ephesus in his prayers. He presented Ephesus to the care and love of him who alone can save and bless. True philanthropy has ever used, and must ever use, prayer as its chief instrument. The prayer of Abraham all but saved Sodom and Gomorrah. On the day of judgment it will be seen that the world's greatest benefactors were the men of greatest prayer.

III. HIS PHILANTHROPY EARNESTLY SOUGHT MAN'S ADVANCEMENT IN SPIRITUAL INTELLIGENCE. He desired the *increase* of their knowledge in three things. 1. *In Divine truth*. He prayed that God "would give them a spirit of wisdom and revelation

in the knowledge of him." He wished for them clearer and broader views of the Eternal.

2. *In Christian privilege.* "The eyes of your understanding being enlightened, that ye may know what is the hope of his calling." The general idea is that you may know the transcendent and inexhaustible blessings that God has provided for you.

3. *In personal attainment.* "What is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward." The idea is that you may more deeply feel the change that God's power has wrought in you. How great was the change that God's almighty energy had wrought in these people (see Acts xix.)! Such was the knowledge that Paul was anxious to promote, and this, indeed, is the knowledge to bless humanity.

IV. HIS PHILANTHROPY TRACED ALL GENUINE IMPROVEMENT IN HUMAN CHARACTER TO THE DIVINE POWER THAT WAS MANIFESTED IN CHRIST. The mighty power which had done such wonders for them was the "power which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead," etc. The power: 1. *Was manifested in the resurrection of Christ.* Christ's resurrection might be regarded (1) as a symbol of the spiritual resurrection of the soul: "If ye then be risen with Christ," etc.; (2) as the procuring cause of the spiritual resurrection of the soul. Had Christ not risen from the dead the spiritual resurrection would be impossible. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again to a living hope by the resurrection of Christ from the dead." 2. *Was manifested in the exaltation of Christ.* He exalted Christ "far above all principalities," etc. That power will also exalt the soul, give it a dominion over self and circumstances; that power makes men "kings and priests unto God." Paul's philanthropy led him to trace all the improvement at Ephesus, not to his own labours, though he had laboured there long and hard, but to God's power, and to God's power as manifested by Jesus Christ.

V. HIS PHILANTHROPY IDENTIFIED MAN'S INTEREST WITH THE LIFE OF THE SON OF GOD. Those only, he felt, were truly blessed of men who were vitally connected with Christ, as body and soul. "Which is his body," etc. The figure implies: 1. *Christ's animation.* The soul animates the body; Christ animates the good. 2. *Christ's control.* The soul controls the body; Christ controls the good. 3. *Christ's manifestation.* The soul manifests itself through the body; Christ manifests himself in the good. 4. *Christ's Church.* It is a unity. The body, with all its members, is one whole.—D. T.

Ver. 3.—*The Christian blessings.* I. CHRISTIANS HAVE BEEN BLESSED WITH MANY BLESSINGS. 1. Christianity involves *blessedness*. The declaration of its truths is a gospel. It is the religion of the cross; yet it is far happier to bear Christ's cross than to wear the yoke of sin, and there is no other alternative. The way of the cross is itself the way of peace and highest happiness. 2. Christian blessedness is *now enjoyed*. "Hath blessed us"—literally, "*did* bless us." The gifts of the gospel are not all reserved for the future world. Indeed, if we enjoy none now, we are not likely to be able to appreciate any after death (1 Tim. iv. 8). For (1) Christ has already done all that is necessary to secure us the highest blessings; and (2) many of the best blessings are already within our reach, and do not depend upon any change of state to be produced by death. 3. The Christian blessings are *numerous and various*. "Every spiritual blessing." If we have received some blessings there are more to follow. Already what we have had is beyond reckoning. All do not receive just the same kind of blessings. Each may look for fresh varieties.

II. THE CHRISTIAN BLESSINGS ARE SPIRITUAL AND HEAVENLY. 1. They are *spiritual*. This word describes them *subjectively*; it shows what they are in us. They are inward graces, not material possessions. We may receive temporal prosperity, and, if so, should ascribe it to the Source and Author of every good gift. But we may be denied it, and yet be none the less blessed of God. It is a mistake for any of us to look for specially Christian blessings in this category, or to be perplexed at not receiving them. The true Christian blessings are such things as peace and joy, light and love, purity and power. 2. They are *heavenly*. This word describes them *objectively*; it points to what they are in themselves and in relation to their Divine origin. Coming from God, they belong to "heavenly places." They are such things as the forgiveness of sins, and the sympathy and fellowship of Christ, the beatific vision vouchsafed to the pure in heart, and the baptism of the Holy Ghost. Because they are heavenly things they are not beyond our reach; for heaven is let down to earth now that the kingdom

of heaven is in our midst, and we are lifted up to heaven when we have our treasure there, for there our heart is. But it is only the upward gaze that will discern true Christian blessings. Kirke White writes of "this low-thoughted world of darkling woe." The woe is so "darkling" just because the world is so "low-thoughted." We cannot find the stars by searching in the dust.

III. THESE BLESSINGS DESCEND UPON US FROM GOD THROUGH CHRIST. 1. The source of them is *God*. Christianity has its origin in God. He conceived the first thought of it. He sent his Son to bring it to us. 2. The blessings come especially from God in his character of *Father*. God is revealed as Creator, King, Judge; from none of these Divine characteristics could we expect the blessings of mercy which as Christians we receive. They are given by a Father. 3. These blessings flow directly from *God's relations with Christ*. He is the "Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." The blessings are given to us through Christ's great work of mediation. 4. It is *through our relations with Christ* that we enjoy the Christian blessings. They are "in Christ." He first receives them, and we have them by union with him. We must be "in Christ" ourselves in order that the blessings may be ours.

IV. THE ENJOYMENT OF THE CHRISTIAN BLESSINGS SHOULD INSPIRE OUR MOST HEART-FELT PRAISES. The whole verse is an utterance of thanksgiving. Surely it is fitting that we should bless God for such wonderful blessings to us. We cannot repay, but we can at least thank. "Where are the nine?" must often be the sad question that should shame our gross ingratitude. The essence of religious worship. Yet our age has forgotten to worship. We pray, begging favours for ourselves; we discuss truth, seeking light for ourselves; we work—let us hope sometimes unselfishly; but where is our worship, adoration, praising of God? See the grounds for thus blessing God (1) in the richness of the blessings; (2) in our total ill deserting; (3) in the greatness of God, and the consequent depth of his condescension in stooping to our low estate; (4) in the cost of the blessings—the precious blood of Christ (ver. 7); and (5) in the wonderful Divine love which inspired the whole work of redemption.—W. F. A.

Vers. 4—6.—*God's idea of humanity*. We commonly regard our lives from a human standpoint, which we cannot well leave even in thought. But, if it were possible, it would be most interesting to see how God looks upon them. Now, it is one of the objects of revelation to help us to do this—to lead us to see ourselves as God sees us. Next to the vision of God himself, such a picture of humanity as it appears in the eyes of God is of the greatest importance. The manifestation of our present condition in the searching light of God turns out to be a shameful exhibition of sin and failure. But the declaration of God's idea of our lives, of what he wishes and purposes for us, and of his design in fashioning us, is truly sublime, and should fill us with genuine "self-reverence." In the verses before us, by a magnificent feat of inspired imagination, St. Paul describes this idea and the method by which God is working it out.

I. THE ORIGIN OF THE IDEA. It was conceived "before the foundation of the world." The architect's design precedes the builder's structure. God had his plan of mankind before a man was created. 1. Seeing that God is infinite, that plan must extend to *every detail* of the vocation of every individual soul. 2. Seeing that God is independent of time, he must *know* from the first all future issues, and what course will be taken by the free-will of each man. 3. Seeing that all things are united by successive waves of influence, what God *does* from the foundation of the world onwards must all have its bearings on the latest development of mankind, and must therefore be determined in some measure with respect to God's idea of humanity.

II. THE OBJECTS OF THE IDEA. 1. In our *character*. God's will regarding us is our sanctification. He foreordains us to be pure and free from all defilement and imperfection. Thus we learn that the moral and spiritual state of a soul is far more important in the eyes of God than any intellectual gifts, or any amount of comfort and happiness. 2. In our *condition*. God wishes us to be his sons. The high privilege of Christ he desires to bestow upon Christ's brethren. To be thus nearly related to God is to have the highest possible destiny. 3. In relation to *God himself*. The praise of his glory is thus attained. If God seeks his own glory, it is because this is the glory of goodness seen in the welfare of his creatures.

III. THE MOTIVES OF THE IDEA. 1. In *God's sovereign freedom*. He purposes

"according to the good pleasure of his will." Like the potter with his clay, God has a right to choose his own idea of humanity. 2. *In God's great love.* God's will is always holy and always gracious. If, therefore, anything depends solely on his will, it is sure to be done in the best possible way, and in the way that brings most good to his creatures. Instead of fearing God's free choice, we ought to rejoice in it, seeing that it is always determined by love. It is love that leads God to design for mankind so glorious a destiny as was conceived before the foundation of the world.

IV. THE METHOD OF REALIZING THE IDEA. 1. Through *grace* "freely bestowed on us." God does not call us to a high vocation without giving us the means whereby to fulfil it. As he first ordained the future destiny, he alone can now give us power to accomplish it. 2. Through *Christ*. Christ is the greatest gift of God's grace. By our faith in Christ we receive God's grace. Christ, as the Beloved of God, brings us into the blessings of God's love.—W. F. A.

Ver. 7.—*Redemption*. I. WHAT IT MEANS TO US. "Our redemption" is here in apposition with "the forgiveness of our trespasses." The phrases mutually explain one another. 1. *The idea of forgiveness explains that of redemption.* (1) Redemption is a setting free. Sin is a bondage. The guilt of sin is the burden of an unpaid debt. When we are forgiven the debt is cancelled and the yoke broken. (2) Redemption is a recovery. The redeemed man is not merely a captive liberated; he is a prisoner restored to his country and his home. Sin banishes us from God. Forgiveness restores us to the home of our souls in bringing us back to communion with God. 2. *The idea of redemption explains that of forgiveness.* Such forgiveness as amounts to a redemption cannot be a mere withholding of penalties. It must be (1) positive—giving us the status of free, restored souls; and (2) personal—a reconciliation between man and God.

II. WHAT IT COST CHRIST. Redemption implies payment. The redeemed is recovered by means of a ransom. The cost of the Christian redemption is the blood of Christ. Unfortunately, the expression, "the blood of Christ"—or even the mutilated expression, "the blood"—has been used by some so ignorantly and coarsely that many persons have come to turn from it with disgust. It would seem that some so-called evangelical people attach as much efficacy to the charm of the word "blood," repeated without any intelligent idea, as the most superstitious Roman Catholics ascribe to what they believe to be real blood in the sacred chalice. On the other hand, we must not explain away the expression by saying that it simply means the death of Christ, or why was not the word "death" used? And did not Jesus say that we must eat his flesh and drink his blood? According to a venerated Hebrew idea, the blood was life. The shedding of the blood, therefore, was the giving of the life. If Christ's blood is a ransom, that means that Christ gave his life and himself as a ransom. The value of such a ransom must be just the value of such a life. How well pleasing to God must be the obedient yielding up of himself by Christ! How persuasive to us in drawing us out of the power of sin should the same sacrifice be!

III. WHENCE IT ORIGINATED. We are redeemed "according to the riches of his grace," i.e. of God's grace. 1. Then it is *God* who first plans our redemption and desires our forgiveness and provides the means for our restoration. 2. The motive of redemption is pure *grace*. It is not that we have a right to be restored, as Englishmen would claim a right to be set free from ignominious slavery in a foreign land; nor that we shall be worth so much to God when restored as to compensate him for the cost; but simply that, freely loving us, he mercifully delivers us. 3. The grace of God is replete with *wealthy resources*. There are men whose favours are so poverty-stricken that they are not worth having. God's grace is rich enough to provide the necessary ransom for our redemption. Christ our Ransom is given to us as the greatest gift from the treasury of Divine grace.—W. F. A.

Ver. 10.—*The consummation of all things.* We have in this bold, sweeping picture of the great onward movement of the universe a solution of the most ambitious questions of philosophy. What is the meaning of the ever-changing flux and rush of all things? and whither does it tend? It is, says St. Paul, a progress towards organic unity. Can any thought be more modern or more in accordance with strict science? St. Paul recognizes the all-important point, too often ignored in ancient philosophy,

that we have to deal with organic conditions—with living forces and their resultants. He discerns a purpose in the seeming confusion of forces. In spite of many indications of failure, he discovers a sure progress. And the end of this progress he declares to be union and harmony. Yet he is not merely philosophizing. His idea is theological; he sees God's mind planning the whole, and God's hand effecting it. It is also essentially Christian. The end is accomplished through Christ.

I. GOD PURPOSES TO BRING ALL THINGS INTO ORGANIC UNION. This purpose is illustrated by the latest philosophy of evolution. Mr. Herbert Spencer has shown that evolution is a process of increasing integration, accompanied by increasing differentiation. Scattered nebulous matter concentrates into solid worlds. From existence in separate cells, life advances to the union of cells in organic creatures. Society progresses from individual separation, through tribal union, to the formation of great nations. St. Paul carries out the idea on a larger scale. Heaven and earth, things spiritual and things material, will ultimately integrate in one grand unity. Consider some of the wonderful results involved in such a process as it completes itself. 1. *An approach of all things nearer together* and a more ready intercommunication. The earthly will no longer be separated from the heavenly. 2. *Mutual co-operation*. Each will minister to the other. 3. *The more effective work of higher organization*. 4. *The end of all discord*, the overthrow of all evil, the subjection of the lower to the higher. Sin must then be cast out and God's will done on earth as it is now only done in heaven. 5. *No necessary uniformity*. On the contrary, differentiation increases with integration. The most highly organized bodies have the greatest variety of parts. While we look for progress, therefore, we must not be surprised at seeing increasing differences of constitution, idea, method of action, etc., among Christians, but even expect this to accompany a growth in harmonious mutual helpfulness. We are not to see the uniformity of the blades of grass in a meadow; but the unity of the root, trunk, branches, leaves, and fruit of one great tree.

II. THE UNION OF ALL THINGS WILL BE EFFECTED THROUGH CHRIST. We cannot measure the far-reaching effects of the life-work of Christ. But the character of all of them is peacemaking and progressive. Christ comes to quell the discord of life, to draw all into one, and to lead the whole on to a higher life. We may see, partly, by what means this is done. 1. *The Incarnation*. Thus heaven comes down to earth. The process begins here in one man, Jesus. 2. *The sacrifice of Christ*. This is a peace offering. By it the separation between man and God is done away. 3. *The brotherhood of Christ*. All Christians are brethren in Christ. Thus human differences are done away; Jew and Gentile, bond and free, barbarians and civilized, are one in Christ. In the end, the union of Christians in the Church should realize the cosmopolitan oneness which will banish war and mutual jealousies. 4. *The headship of Christ*. As Christ is recognized to be the Head by all, all become members of him, and so members one of another. 5. *The final triumph of Christ* over sin, death, and all evil things.

III. THE ACCOMPLISHMENT OF THE ORGANIC UNION OF ALL THINGS WILL COME WITH "THE DISPENSATION OF THE FULNESS OF TIMES." 1. It is only possible in course of time. Evolution takes time; so do the Divine education of the race, the spread of the gospel, and the growth of the Church in truth and grace. 2. It is *not to be indefinitely postponed*. There will be a fulness of times. The present confusion is only temporary. It may last long, but not for ever. We may do something to hasten the consummation of all things. It will only come when the times are ripe for it; but as we do our part to aid the great Christian progress, we help on the ripening of the ages.—W. F. A.

Vers. 13, 14.—*Sealed*. I. THE ASSURANCE THAT CHRISTIANS ARE SEALED. 1. They are *owned by God*. "The Lord knoweth them that are his." God is said to keep a book of remembrance, so that they who fear him shall be remembered in the day when he makes up his jewels (Mal. iii. 16, 17). 2. They are to be *known by men*. A seal is conspicuous. It is intended to be seen and understood. There are signs in the life by which the inward spiritual religion may be detected. If we know how to read the seal, we shall be able to discover whether or no it is on ourselves. Yet it is possible to be a true servant of Christ, and yet to be sadly doubtful as to one's own

condition, not because we have not the seal, but because we are too blinded with fears to read it, or because we are looking for a different kind of seal. 3. They are *preserved by God*. The seal is a security. All the authority of its owner accompanies it. Christians being once owned will never be deserted by God.

II. THE CONDITION ON WHICH CHRISTIANS ARE SEALED. This is faith. As a preliminary, the gospel must be heard. But all who hear are not sealed. We must, individually and voluntarily, yield submission to the truth we have received. Two motives for faith may be gathered from the words of St. Paul, viz.: 1. *The claims of truth*. It is "the Word of the truth" that we have heard. Truth is royal and authoritative, and rightly demands obedience. 2. *Our own salvation*. This "Word of the truth" is also "the gospel of your salvation." Our highest interest lies in our accepting the gospel and giving our faith to it.

III. THE METHOD BY WHICH CHRISTIANS ARE SEALED. It is "with the Holy Spirit of promise." The early Christians were endowed with the Holy Spirit after they had given their faith to Christ. None but those who were thus "believers" received it. The gift was, therefore, a sign of true faith. We do not have it in the same form—as a gift of tongues, of healing, etc. But we receive it in spiritual graces. Christians are still endowed by the Holy Spirit, and, as a consequence, realize their sonship to God (Rom. viii. 16, 17), and enjoy communion with God (Rom. viii. 26, 27). The reality of these things and of the spiritual gifts from which they flow is proved by the resulting fruits of the Spirit (Gal. v. 22, 23).

IV. THE PURPOSE FOR WHICH CHRISTIANS ARE SEALED. They are sealed by a Spirit of promise. The blessings assured by the Divine recognition are as yet chiefly future. We are heirs, not owners; or, regarding it from another point of view, God has paid the ransom for his own possession, but the redemption of it is not yet fully accomplished. Yet he has so far claimed it as to set his seal upon it. Christians bear the mark of God's ownership, though they are not wholly recovered to him. Their present condition is an assurance of final recovery. It is an earnest of redemption. Enough grace is already given to result in some measure of redemption. If we have not this foretaste of heaven, these first droppings of the showers of blessings, we have no right to expect more. But if we have, the beginning points on to the fulfilment, when God will be glorified in our perfect redemption.—W. F. A.

Vers. 15, 16.—*Spiritual prosperity*. Although St. Paul could soar into strange heights of contemplation, his interest was not confined to cold theological abstractions. If he meditated on the final consummation of all things, he was never negligent of the spiritual condition of the Christians of his day. No man could show more deep, earnest, personal concern for those committed to his charge, than the great apostle evinced for the Churches of which he had the oversight. They were ever in his thoughts and in his prayers. Their prosperity or adversity was his joy or sorrow. It was happy when, as in the case of the Christians of Asia, to which the Epistle to the Ephesians was addressed, St. Paul had little to blame and much to rejoice over. We may learn something by considering what, in St. Paul's estimation, were the marks of Christian prosperity, and how he regarded that prosperity.

I. THE TRUE PROSPERITY OF A CHURCH CONSISTS IN THE GROWTH OF SPIRITUAL GRACES AMONG THE MEMBERS. We make much of numbers, as though prosperity were a matter of arithmetic. "The statistics of the Churches" will never serve as a divining rod with which to discover the precious metal of piety. St. Paul cared less for the number of adherents to Christianity than for the quality of the true Christians. While we busy ourselves in counting the attendants at church, who is to measure the growth or decrease of spiritual life? Then St. Paul's idea of prosperity was not accumulating wealth, the creation of more imposing buildings, a higher social status—things about which some of us are so greatly concerned. All he cared for was spiritual progress. The two essential elements of this are growing faith in Christ and growing love towards one another.

II. THE GROWTH OF SPIRITUAL PROSPERITY IS DESERVING OF JOYFUL RECOGNITION AND THANKSGIVING. If St. Paul is fearless in rebuking where rebukes are necessary, he is ungrudging in his congratulations where these are earned. Some people seem to be afraid of provoking the vanity of others in praising them, if they are not prevented

from giving them their due by jealousy. We might better encourage one another if we were more ready to anticipate the great Master's generous "Well done, good and faithful servant." At the same time, it must be remembered that the glory is due to God, as the grace came only from him. Thus our congratulations should pass into thanksgivings.

III. WHILE THANKFULLY RECOGNIZING SPIRITUAL PROSPERITY, WE SHOULD PRAY FOR THE INCREASE OF IT. The present graces are not enough. We shall deceive our brethren if our congratulations lead them to think that there is no need for further progress. On the contrary, the present attainments are reasons for praying for greater increase. Thus St. Paul makes mention of the faith and love of the Christians of Asia in his prayers. The reward of one grace is the addition of another. One prepares the way for another. Certain spiritual attainments are grounds on which new and higher attainments may be built.—W. F. A.

Vers. 17—19.—*Spiritual knowledge.* After thankfully recognizing the faith and love of the Christians he is addressing, St. Paul describes his prayers for their further endowment with Divine graces, and shows that he is especially anxious that they should receive a Spirit of wisdom. Possibly the Christians of Ephesus and its neighbourhood were backward on the intellectual side of the spiritual life; but more probably wisdom was desirable for them just because they were exceptionally capable of high thinking, and would therefore profit above others by enjoying the light of heavenly revelation. In any case, it is to be observed that faith and love are the more essential graces; that they must precede wisdom and knowledge, which are not, as is often assumed, to be expected as the first and fundamental grounds of religion; but that, nevertheless, the intellectual side of religion is important as an addition to the moral.

I. THE SOURCE OF SPIRITUAL KNOWLEDGE. 1. This knowledge comes from God. St. Paul makes it a matter of prayer. It is not to be attained, then, merely by intellectual culture, nor even by our own spiritual experience alone. 2. It is given as a revelation. In revelation God makes known what was naturally and previously hidden. While the curtain is drawn no guesses can tell what lies behind it. Speculation, unaided by revelation, is as much at sea in discussing the unseen universe to-day as it was at the dawn of Greek philosophy. 3. It results from an inspiration of the Spirit of God. We receive a "Spirit of wisdom." The Holy Spirit is a Spirit of knowledge, leading us into all truth, at once purging us of the sin that blinds our vision, quickening the life within to a more keen sensitiveness, and bringing us into that sympathetic state in regard to spiritual things which makes us feel their presence and understand their character.

II. THE ORGAN OF SPIRITUAL KNOWLEDGE. The eyes of our heart have to be enlightened that we may know spiritual things. 1. The heart has its eyes. There is an inner sight. This is not merely speculative. It is alive with feeling; it is in the heart. Thus the poet will see what the naturalist overlooks; the mother will know her children as the schoolmaster cannot know them; the saint will have visions of Divine truth to which the philosopher is blind. 2. All that the heart needs in order to see the highest truths is light. What is wanted is no new declaration, but an enlightening of our eyes. The landscape is as present when invisible at night as when seen in clear daylight. Divine truth lies open before us. We require no new voices from heaven. All that is wanted is a change in ourselves—the unstopping of our deaf ears and the opening of our blind eyes.

III. THE SUBJECTS OF SPIRITUAL KNOWLEDGE. 1. Christ. It is "the knowledge of him" for which St. Paul first prays. We must begin with knowing Christ. In knowing him we know all; for all the treasures of the gospel dwell in him. 2. The future inheritance. How vainly we speculate about this! We can know it only by spiritual illumination. Not that the formal nature of it can be discerned, but the true character and worth of it will be appreciated. There are riches in this inheritance of which we little dream. In our coldness of heart they look dim and faint. We have yet to learn how infinitely glorious they are. Such a discovery will gladden, cheer, and encourage us in the dark battle of the present. 3. The Divine power. By heaping up expressions, the apostle makes us realize the importance of this subject. God gives us the inheritance. It is vast and glorious. But terrible difficulties stand

between us and it. Till we understand somewhat of the power of God, the hope will seem to be unattainable. But this we may understand in so far as we are enlightened rightly to appreciate the manifestation of it in the resurrection and triumph of Christ—the pledges and grounds of our future blessedness.—W. F. A.

Vers. 20—22.—*The supremacy of Christ.* We commonly think of Christ as the Man of sorrows, humiliated and crucified; but we should more often remember that this familiar picture describes what is completely past. If we would love and worship our Lord as he now is, we must look at him in his exaltation—triumphant, joyous, glorious. We should see the typical Christ in Raffaele's 'Transfiguration' rather than in the many piteous 'Ecce Homo's!' that arrest our attention. We have not to weep at the tomb, "He is not here; he is risen." The supremacy of Christ is twofold—in rank and in authority.

I. THE SUPREME RANK OF CHRIST. 1. *Wherein it consists.* Christ sits at God's "right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule," etc. By an accumulation of titles of beings below Christ, St. Paul not only declares, but helps to make us feel, the lofty rank of Christ. For since we have only seen the humiliation, it is difficult to realize the exaltation. 2. *Whence it arises.* (1) From the nature of Christ. He is Son of God as well as Son of man. In the end every nature finds its level. (2) From the character of Christ. The highest honour is due not to wisdom, nor to power, but to goodness. It is not the Socrates, nor the Alexander, but the holy Jesus of Nazareth who is raised to the right hand of God. (3) The sacrifice of Christ. "Every one that humbleth himself shall be exalted." God exalts Christ to his throne, because Christ humbled himself to the cross. 3. *What effects should flow from it.* (1) It should excite our joy. It is our Lord, our Saviour, our Brother, who is thus honoured. If we thought less of ourselves and more of Christ, our worship would be less plaintive; we should make heaven's arch ring with songs of gladness. (2) It should inspire our reverence. We must have a low nature if we cannot love reverently when we love warmly. Yet with many a genuine affection for Christ seems to inspire an unbecoming familiarity. (3) It should shed glory on the service of Christ. How can we be ashamed to be Christians, if this is to be followers of the highest in rank? (4) It should encourage our hopes. At first it may strike a chill fear as we see our Lord removed far above us. But faith knows that he is the same Man who sat weary by the well of Sychar, and lay sleeping in the fishing-boat of Gennesaret. The risen Christ had his still pierced hands. It is unworthy to think that in his heavenly exaltation he will forget his earthly friends. If he does not, his glory is ours. He will call his people to share his triumph.

II. THE SUPREME AUTHORITY OF CHRIST. 1. *Wherein it consists.* (1) "He put all things in subjection under his feet." All earthly and heavenly things work according to the will of Christ. (2) He is the Head of the Church. He not only teaches and saves and blesses; he rules. And he has never abdicated nor delegated his authority. Any assumption of the headship, which belongs only to Christ, is rebellion against him. If the pope claims this authority, he must be an antichrist. 2. *Whence it arises.* (1) From the nature of Christ. He is a born King. (2) From the character of Christ. He is just and merciful, and has the ideal royal character. He is most fit to rule. (3) From the triumph of Christ. He is victorious over sin and death. He reigns by right of conquest. 3. *What effects should flow from it.* (1) We should obey Christ, and (2) have full confidence in him. Here is good ground for believing that he will make all the strange, dark events of our lives work right in the end; that he will conquer all his foes and all the evil of the world; and that those who suffer with him here shall also reign with him hereafter.—W. F. A.

Ver. 23.—*The Church as the body and the fulness of Christ.* We have here the intimate relation of Christ with his Church described in two aspects—first external, and then internal.

I. EXTERNALLY, THE CHURCH IS A BODY OF WHICH CHRIST IS THE HEAD. 1. The Church is *joined to Christ*. Christ maintains the closest possible relations with his people. His ascension, instead of removing him from us, by taking him to a distant heaven, brings him nearer to us, by his passing into the spiritual universe, through

which he can have immediate contact with individual souls. 2. There is *one life* in Christ and the Church. The same blood pulsates through the head and through the members of the body. The blood of Christ must not only be "applied to" Christians, as some people say, but in them, drunk as wine of life (John vi. 56). Thus, by close communion with Christ in faith, submission, and obedience, the very life of Christ will flow through us, so that we can say, "Not I, but Christ liveth in me." 3. Christ *presides* over the Church. He is the Head of the body. The Church is not a republic; it is a kingdom, and Christ is its King. His thought teaches, his will commands, his Spirit gives grace and order to all the movements of the body. 4. The Church is *one* in Christ. The head has but one body. Through Christ a common sympathy should spring up among Christians, just as, through their connection with the head, the various organs of the body co-operate harmoniously. When the influence of the head is lost, convulsions or confused movements are the consequence. So sectarian enmity is a proof of severance from Christ. Nevertheless, variety is possible and even necessary in a highly organized body. There are many members, and all the members have not the same office. The essential unity consists in the subordination of all the parts to the one head. 5. *Severance from Christ is death* to the Church. A Christless Church is a headless trunk. We may retain the doctrine and ethic of the New Testament, but, nevertheless, amputation of the Head means death. Even a partial severance of connection involves paraisy—loss of spiritual power and loss of spiritual feeling.

II. INTERNALLY, THE CHURCH IS THE FULNESS OF CHRIST. It is filled with Christ. He is not only the Head above it; he is the life within it. He does not only teach, bless, command, and lead from without; he inspires his people and lives in his Church. Christ fills "all in all;" i.e. the Spirit that was in Jesus of Nazareth is in the whole universe, inspiring all creation and all providence with wisdom and goodness, purity and grace. The same Spirit is in the Church. As yet, unhappily, the Church is not filled with Christ. Though Christ is received into the heart of Christians, every door within is not yet flung open to the gracious Guest. But in the perfect time, when his authority is everywhere established, his presence will be universally immanent. In the ideal Church, Christ fills the affections with holy love, the thoughts with higher truths, the imagination with heavenly visions, the will with obedient actions. He fills all and his graces are seen in all. Already he begins the blessed indwelling. We look forward to his great triumph, when he will as fully fill his people as he will absolutely conquer his foes.—W. F. A.

EXPOSITION.

CHAPTER II.

VERS. 1—10.—SPIRITUAL HISTORY OF THE EPHESIANS. This passage corresponds to Gen. i. It is a history of creation, and we note the same great stages. 1. Chaos (vers. 1—3). 2. The dawn—the Spirit of God moving on the face of the waters (ver. 4). 3. The work of creation—in successive stages (vers. 4—10).

Ver. 1.—You also, who were dead in your trespasses and your sins. The apostle returns from his digression, in which he had shown the marvellous working of the Divine power on Christ, to show the working of the same power on the Ephesian converts themselves. The *vous* is not governed by any verb going before; it manifestly depends on the *συνεσώθησαν* of ver. 5, but it is separated from it by a new digression (vers. 2, 3), on which the apostle immediately starts. While the same quickening power

of God was exerted on Christ and on the Ephesians, it was exerted to very different effects: in the case of Christ, raising him literally from the dead and exalting him to heavenly glory; in the case of the Ephesians, raising them from spiritual death and exalting them to high spiritual privileges. We may observe the change from the second to the first person, and *vice versa*, in this chapter as in ch. i. Second person (vers. 1, 8, 11); first (vers. 3, 10, 14); and the two streams brought together (ver. 18). The chapter closes beautifully with an emblem of the Church as the one temple of which all believers are parts. The death ascribed to the Ephesians in their natural state is evidently *spiritual* death, and "trespasses and sins," being in the dative (*νεκρῶς τοῖς παραπτώμασι καὶ ταῖς ἀμαρτίαις*), seems to indicate the cause of death—"dead through your trespasses and your sins" (R.V.); "dead of your trespasses," etc., is suggested

by Alford. It is not easy to assign a different meaning to the two nouns here; some suggest *acts* of transgression for the one, and sinful tendencies or principles for the other, but this distinction cannot be carried out in all other passages. The killing effect of sin is indicated. As sins of sensuality kill truthfulness, industry, integrity, and all virtue, so sin generally, affecting as it does our whole nature, kills, or does not suffer to live, the affections and movements of the spiritual life. A state of "death" implies previous life—the *race* lived before; it implies also a state of insensibility, of utter powerlessness and helplessness.

Ver. 2.—Wherein aforetime ye walked according to the course of this world. The idea of a dead creature walking is not altogether incongruous. It implies that a kind of life remained sufficient for walking; but not the true, full, normal life; rather the life of a galvanized corpse, or of one walking in sleep. The figurative use of *walking* for living, or carrying on our life, is frequent in this Epistle (ch. iv. 1; v. 2, etc.). "The course of this world," elsewhere "the world," denotes the present system of things, as conducted by those who have regard only to things seen and temporal, and no regard to God or to the future life. Where there is spiritual death there is insensibility to these things. According to the prince of the power of the air. It is obvious that this is equivalent to "the god of this world" (2 Cor. iv. 4), but the explanation of the term is difficult. Allusion is made to a corporate body, "the power [or, 'government']" (*ἐξουσία*) of the air," and to one who is "prince" of this government. There is no difficulty in identifying the evil one and his host, of whom Milton gives such graphic pictures. But why should they be specially connected with the *air*? The notion, entertained by some of the Fathers and others, that storms and disturbances of the atmosphere are caused by them, is preposterous; it is unscriptural (Ps. cxlviii. 8) and quite unscientific. The term seems to denote that evil spirits, who have some power of influencing us by their temptations, have their abode in the atmosphere, or at least haunt it, being invisible like it, yet exercising a real influence on human souls, and drawing them in worldly directions, and contrary to the will of God. The spirit which is now working in the sons of disobedience. The fact that this spirit is still working in others makes the escape of the Ephesians from him the more striking. He is not destroyed, but vigorously at work even yet. Though Jesus beheld him fall from heaven as lightning, and though he said that the prince of this world had been judged, these expressions

denote a prophetic rather than an actual condition. This spirit energizes in the "sons of disobedience." This designation is striking; it denotes persons born of disobedience, bred by disobedience, having disobedience in their very nature; comp. Rom. viii. 7, "The carnal mind is enmity against God," and passages where fallen man is called a rebel (Isa. i. 2; lxiii. 10; Ps. lxxviii. 6; Jer. v. 23, etc.). It denotes the essential antagonism of man's will to God's, arising from man's devotion to this world and its interests, and God's regard to what is higher and holier—an antagonism often held in check and suppressed—but bursting out wildly at times in fierce opposition, as at the tower of Babel or the crucifixion of Jesus. The devil inflames man's inherent dislike to God's will, and encourages outbreaks of it.

Ver. 3.—Among whom we also all once spent our life in the lusts of our flesh. The apostle here brings Jews and Gentiles together. "We also," as well as you—we were all in the same condemnation, all in a miserable plight, not merely occasionally dipping into sin, but spending our very lives in the lusts or desires of our flesh, living for no noble ends, but in an element of carnal desire, as if there were nothing higher than to please the carnal nature. Fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind. Desires of the flesh, the grosser and more animal propensities (the flesh, in Scripture, has often a wider sense; see Gal. v. 19—21); and of the mind or thoughts, *διανοίαν*, the objects that we thought about, whatever they might be,—the *waywardness* of our thoughts seems to be denoted, the random roaming of the mind hither and thither, towards this pleasure and that, sometimes serious, sometimes frivolous, but all marked by the absence of any controlling regard to the will of God. The life indicated is a life of indulgence in whatever natural feelings may arise in us—be they right or be they wrong. And we were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest. This is a substantive clause, standing on its own basis, a separate fact, not merely an inference from the previous statements. The life described would have exposed us to wrath; but beyond and before this we were *by nature* children of wrath. "By nature" denotes something in our constitution, in our very being; and "even as the rest" denotes that this was universal, not a peculiarity affecting some, but a general feature applicable to all. "Children of wrath" denotes that we belonged to a race which had incurred the wrath of God; our individuality was so far absorbed by the social body that we shared the lot under which it had come. If there be something in this that seems contrary to justice, that

seems to condemn men for the sins of others, we remark (1) that in actual life we constantly find individuals suffering for the sin of the corporation, domestic, social, or national, with which they are identified; (2) that apart from this altogether, our individual offences would expose us to God's wrath; and (3) that the moral and legal relations of the individual to the corporation is a subject of difficulty, and in this case makes a strong demand on our faith. We should accept the teaching of the Word of God upon it, and leave our righteous Judge to vindicate himself. "Wrath," as applied to God, must be regarded as essentially different from the same word when used of man. In the latter case it usually indicates a disorderly, excited, passionate feeling, as of one who has lost self-control; when used of God, it denotes the holy, calm, deep opposition of his nature to sin, compelling him to inflict the appropriate punishment.

Ver. 4.—But God, being rich in mercy. The preceding verses convey the idea of a rushing towards inevitable ruin—towards some frightful cataract, when all help from man is hopeless. Man's extremity becomes God's opportunity. The "but" is very emphatic, and wonderfully reverses the picture. The sovereignty of God is very apparent, on its gracious side. It interposes to rescue those who would otherwise plunge into irretrievable ruin. We have here the filling up of that Divine saying, "O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself, but in me is thine help." The genesis of salvation is declared to be in two of God's attributes, of which the first is mercy, or compassion. God has a tender, yearning feeling towards men brought to misery by their own sins. And this feeling is not shallow or spare—he is rich in mercy. It is an exuberant, full-flowing feeling in God ("Thy mercy . . . is in the heavens," Ps. xxxvi. 5), and may therefore be appealed to trustfully. For his great love wherewith he loved us. The other attribute from which the plan of salvation sprang is God's love. Love is more than compassion. Compassion may be confined to the breast, but love goes forth in active beneficence. It makes common cause with its object. It cannot rest till its object is put right. Two expressions are used intensifying this Divine love: (1) his great love; (2) love *with which he loved us*; the verb of love governing the noun of love makes the idea rich and strong. This view of the exuberance of the Divine attributes from which salvation has its rise is in harmony with the whole character of the Epistle.

Ver. 5.—Even when we were dead in our sins. Repeated from ver. 1, in order to set in its true light the declaration that follows of what God did for us to make more em-

phatic the free and sovereign mercy of God. Though sin is the abominable thing which he hates, loathsome to him in the last degree, he did not turn from us when we were immersed in it; nor did he wait till we began to move towards him: he began to influence us even when we were dead. Made us alive together with Christ (*συνεζωοποίησεν τῷ Χριστῷ*). Made us alive with the life which is in Christ and which flows from Christ. A parallel is run between the way in which God's power operated on the body of Christ, and the way in which it operates on the souls of believers in him in respect of (1) the quickening; (2) the raising up from the grave; (3) the seating of them in heavenly places. The Father, having "given to the Son to have life in himself," and "the Son quickening whom he will" (John vi. 21, 26), by God's decree we were first quickened by him, made partakers of Christ's life (John xi. 25; comp. John xiv. 19; xv. 5; Col. iii. 4; Gal. ii. 20, etc.). All the life we had lost was restored—the life forfeited by transgression, the life of a calm and well-ordered heart, the sublime life of fellowship with God. By grace have ye been saved. This is a parenthetical clause, more fully dwelt on in ver. 8, thrown in here abruptly by the apostle in the fullness of his heart, to throw light on this great wonder—that Christ should impart his own life to souls dead in sin. Grace in opposition to human merit is at the root of the whole arrangement; free, undeserved mercy. It is not anything that God is bound to by the necessity of his nature. It is the result of his will, not of his nature. Had it not been for his good pleasure, salvation had never been. "Saved" is the past participle (*σενσωμένους*), denoting, not the act of being saved, but the fact of having been saved. Salvation in a real sense is a present possession. When we are one with Christ we are justified freely by God's grace, our trespasses are all forgiven. The spirit of new moral life has been given to us; we are made alive to God. But while salvation is a present attainment in a real sense, its full realization is future, for that includes perfect holiness, and also the glorification of the body. In this sense salvation is to come (Rom. viii. 24; xiii. 11).

Ver. 6.—And hath raised us up with him (comp. Phil. iii. 10); so that we no longer walk "according to the course of this world," but according to the life of Christ; we walk "in newness of life." And seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus. As God placed Jesus at his right hand in heaven, so he has placed his people with him in heavenly places; i.e. places where the privileges of heaven are dispensed, where the air of heaven is breathed,

where the fellowship and the enjoyment of heaven are known, where an elevation of spirit is experienced as if heaven were begun. Such was the case of the three disciples on the Mount of Transfiguration; of the two on the way to Emmaus, when their heart burned within them; of the beloved disciple when he was "in the Spirit on the Lord's day;" of many at the Holy Supper, or in fervent communion with brother and sister believers, when they seem at the very gate of heaven. This is sometimes the experience at conversion, but the vividness of the feeling does not always abide. The repetition of "in Christ Jesus" in this connection emphasizes the fact that this gracious proceeding of God towards us is in immediate connection with the work and person of Christ. It is as being one with Christ Jesus that all this raising up comes to us.

Ver. 7.—That in the ages to come he might show forth the riches of his grace. A special purpose served by God's free grace bestowed on such persons as the Ephesians. It was intended as a lesson for future ages. "The ages to come" denotes eras to begin from that time, running on now, and to continue hereafter. It would be a profitable lesson for the people of these ages to think of the Ephesians, far as they were by nature from God, receiving his blessing so abundantly. From this they would learn how great are the riches of God's grace. In kindness towards us in Christ Jesus. The particular channel in which the riches of his grace flows is kindness shown to us in Christ Jesus. Kindness in the *matter* of the blessing, forgiving us freely, and accepting and adopting us in him; kindness in the *manner* of the blessing, dealing with us as Jesus dealt with the woman that was a sinner, or with the thief on the cross, or with Peter after he had fallen, or with Saul of Tarsus; kindness in the *extent* of the blessing, providing amply for every want; kindness in the *duration* of the blessing—for evermore. But again, the Medium or Mediator of blessing is specified—"in Christ Jesus." It is not the kindness of providence, not the natural bountifulness of God, but that kindness and bountifulness which are specially connected with the atoning work of Christ: "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself."

Ver. 8.—For by grace have ye been saved, through faith. He repeats what he had said parenthetically (ver. 5), in order to open the subject up more fully. On the part of God, salvation is by grace; on the part of man, it is through faith. It does not come to us by an involuntary act, as light falls on our eyes, sounds on our ears, or air enters our lungs. When we are so far enlightened

as to understand about it, there must be a personal reception of salvation by us, and that is by faith. Faith at once believes the good news of a free salvation through Christ, and accepts Christ as the Saviour. We commit ourselves to him, trust ourselves to him for that salvation of which he is the Author. In the act of thus entrusting ourselves to him for his salvation, we receive the benefit, and are saved. It is not that faith is accepted by God in place of works, but because faith indicates that attitude of men towards Christ in which it pleases God to save them, transferring to him all their guilt, imputing to them all his merit. And that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God. Which of the two things is meant—salvation or faith? The grammatical structure and the analogy of the passage favour the former view, "Your salvation is not of yourselves," though many able men have taken the latter. The apostle is so anxious to bring out the great distinguishing doctrine of grace that he puts it in all lights, affirms it positively, contrasts it with its opposite, and emphasizes it by repetition. It is a gift, not a purchase; a free gift, without money and without price; what would never have been yours, but for the generosity of God. It is very usual in the New Testament thus to represent salvation; of our Lord's words to Nicodemus (John iii. 16); to the woman of Samaria (John iv. 14); St. Paul's "Thanks be to God for his unspeakable gift" (2 Cor. ix. 15); "The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. vi. 23); and 1 John v. 11, "God gave unto us eternal life, and the life is in his Son." This usage confirms the view that it is not merely faith, but the whole work and person of Christ which faith receives, that is meant here as the "gift of God."

Ver. 9.—Not of works, lest any man should boast. Exegetical of the last clause, "Not of yourselves; certainly not of your works." The suppression of boasting was a purpose of God in his scheme of salvation; not the chief or final purpose, any more than the manifestation of his grace in coming ages was his chief or final purpose in showing mercy to the Ephesians, but inseparable from the nature of his plan. The spirit of glorying is essentially unsuited to the relations between the creature and the Creator, between the Redeemer and the redeemed. It is the very opposite of the spirit, "Not unto us, O Lord" (Ps. cxv. 1)—the spirit that casts its crown before the throne, and that breathes in the songs of heaven, "Unto him that loved us . . . be glory and dominion for ever and ever" (Rev. i. 5, 6).

Ver. 10.—For we are his workmanship. Another illustration and evidence of grace

We have to be fashioned anew by God before we can do anything aright (see 2 Cor. v. 17). Anything right in us is not the cause of grace, but its fruit. There seems to be no special reason for the change from the second to the first person. Created in Christ Jesus for good works. So little inward capacity had we for such works, that we required to be created in Christ Jesus in order that we might do them. The inward new birth of the soul is indicated. When good works were required, this gracious change had to be wrought to secure them. The purpose of the new creation is to produce them. Christ "gave himself for us, to redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a people of his own, zealous of good works." It is not good works first, and grace after; but grace first, and good works after (see Titus ii. 11, 14). Which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them. A further proof of the true origin of good works. They are the subjects of a Divine decree. Before the foundation of the world it was ordained that whoever should be saved by grace should walk in good works. The term "walk" here denotes the habitual tenor of the life; it is to be spent in an atmosphere of good works. Here we have one of the Divine safeguards against the abuse of the doctrine of salvation by grace. When men hear of salvation irrespective of works, they are apt to fancy that works are of little use, and do not need to be carefully attended to. On the contrary, they are part of the Divine decree, and if we are not living a life of good works, we have no reason to believe that we have been saved by grace.

VERS. 11—22.—CONTRAST BETWEEN THE PAST AND THE PRESENT.

Ver. 11.—Wherefore remember, that once ye, the Gentiles in the flesh. The practical tenor of the apostle's teaching is indicated by his "wherefore." He is always gathering up his views into some lesson. They are to "remember" the change between the past and the present—what they were by nature, and what they had become by grace. This is most useful to all, even though the contrast between the two be not so vivid as in the case of Paul and the Ephesians. The contrast is indicated in various particulars, both of outward condition and of inward privilege and character. First, the old condition. They were "Gentiles in respect of the flesh"—not bearing on their bodies the mark of the Israel of God, therefore not marked out for blessing, not apparently near it. Who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called Circumcision in the flesh made by hands. Nicknamed, as it were, Uncircumcision by those who in a fleshly or mechanical, but not always in the true spiritual sense (comp.

Rom. ii. 28, 29; Phil. iii. 3; Col. ii. 11), were called Circumcision; they had a name which denoted the very opposite of that given to God's people—another illustration of their apparent distance from blessing; they revolved round the sun, as it were, not in the nearer orbits of planets warmed, brightened, and beautified by the solar beams, but in the outermost ring of all—like the cold, dark orbit of Uranus or Neptune, which the sunbeams hardly reach to lighten or to warm.

Ver. 12.—That at that time ye were without Christ. Very comprehensive description, having no knowledge of Christ, no interest in him, no life or blessing from him. Being aliens (or, *alienated*) from the commonwealth of Israel; the *πολιτεία*, or citizenship condition, including a country, a constitution, a divinely appointed and divinely administered economy, rich in blessing. And strangers to the covenants of the promise. The promise of Christ, of which circumcision was the seal. The "covenants" (plural) substantially the same, but renewed to various persons and at various times in which God promised, "I will bless him that blesseth thee, and curse him that curseth thee; and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed." In respect of these they were strangers, not embraced in their provisions, not, therefore, in a state of encouragement to expect a great blessing. Having no hope; no ground for looking forward to better times, no reasonable expectation of improvement in your religious condition. And without God in the world; *ἔθεος*, atheists; but not in the active sense of denying God, rather in the passive sense of unconnected with God; without any friendly and beneficial relation to him, without any vital nexus that would bring into their soul the fulness of God. The words "in the world" intensify "without God." It were bad enough to be without God (without his holy fellowship and blessed influence) anywhere, but it is worse to be without him in the world, in "this present evil world" (Gal. i. 4), in a world dominated by so subtle and evil a god (ver. 2 and 2 Cor. iv. 4). The fivefold negative description of this verse has a cumulative effect; the situation becomes graver and more terrible, and the last clause is the climax.

Ver. 13.—But now; antithesis to *πρὸς* in ver. 11, and *τῇ σαρκὶ ἐκείνῃ* in ver. 12. Another of the very powerful "buts" of this Epistle, completely reversing the picture going before (see ver. 4). In Christ Jesus. This expression is the pivot of the Epistle, denoting, not only that Christ Jesus is the Source of blessing, but also that we

got the blessing *in*, i.e. by vital union and fellowship with him. The "without Christ" of ver. 12 contrasts powerfully with "in Christ Jesus" of this verse; and the addition of "Jesus" to the name is significant, denoting his saving power, denoting One who is not merely an official Saviour, but to whom we get linked by all manner of endearing qualities and personal attractions, whose human name is Jesus, because he saves his people from their sins. Ye that once were far off are become near. The apostle has slid into a new figure; formerly the contrast was between death and life, now it is between distance and nearness. Not merely geographical distance, or remoteness in respect of outward position, but moral distance too: ye were far off from God, i.e. from his favour, his fellowship, his gracious pardoning and renewing grace. In this sense too ye are now brought near. God is become your God and Father. Your orbit is changed to a near and blessed position, where the light of God's countenance falls upon you. In the blood of Christ. This is the particular instrument of the change; not merely Christ manifesting the Father's readiness to receive you, but shedding his blood to make atonement for you (see ch. i. 7). The preposition *ἐν* (not merely *διὰ*) is again significant, denoting more than the instrumentality, viz. personal connection with the blood, as if sprinkled on us, so that we are symbolically in it. Cleansing us from all sin, it brings us nigh.

Ver. 14.—For he is our peace. Explanatory of the preceding verse—of the way by which we are brought nigh. Christ is not only our Peacemaker, but our Peace, and that in the fullest sense, the very substance and living spring of it, establishing it at the beginning, keeping it up to the end; and the complex notion of peace is here not only peace between Jew and Gentile, but between God and both. Consult Old Testament predictions of peace in connection with Messiah (Isa. ix. 5, 6; Micah v. 5; Zech. ix. 10, etc.). Who made both one; literally, *both things, both elements*; so that there is now no ground for separating between a Jewish element and a Gentile; they are unified. And broke down the middle wall of the partition. The general idea is obvious; the particular allusion is less easily seen. Some think it is to the veil that separated the holy of holies from the holy place (Heb. x. 20); but that could hardly be called a *wall*. Others the wall that separated the court of the Jew from that of the Gentiles; but that wall was literally standing when the apostle wrote, and besides, the Ephesians could not be supposed to be so familiar with it as to make it a suitable illustration for them. In

the absence of any specific allusion, it is best to understand the words generally, "broke down that which served as a middle wall of partition"—what is mentioned immediately in the following verse.

Ver. 15.—(To wit, the enmity.) It is a moot point whether *τὴν ἐχθρὰν* is to be taken as governed by *λύσας* in ver. 14, or by *καταργήσας* in the end of this verse. Both A.V. and R.V. adopt the latter; but the former is more textual and natural. Another question is—What enmity? Some say between Jews and Gentiles; others, between both and God. The latter seems right; where "*the enmity*" is so emphatically referred to, it must be the great or fundamental enmity, and the whole tenor of the passage is to the effect that in the removal of the enmity of the sinner to God, the abolition of the enmity between Jew and Gentile was provided for. In his flesh. These words are not to be connected with the enmity, for then they would require *τὴν* before them, but with *λύσας* (ver. 14) or *καταργήσας* (ver. 15). In his flesh, crucified, broken, for our sins, Christ virtually broke down the enmity (comp. Col. i. 22). Having abolished the law of commandments in ordinances. Some think that "in ordinances" (*ἐν δόγμασι*, doctrines) denotes the means by which the Law was abolished—by means of doctrines, i.e. the doctrines of Christianity. But New Testament *δόγμα* is not equal to "doctrine." "In ordinances" limits the law of commandments. The law abolished or superseded by Christ was the law of positive requirements embodied in things decreed, evidently the ceremonial law of the Jews; certainly not the moral law (see Rom. iii. 31). By removing this, Jesus removed that which had become the occasion of bitter feelings between Jew and Gentile; the Jew looking down proudly on the Gentile, and the Gentile despising what he deemed the fantastic rites of the Jews. That he might create the two in himself into one new man. The idea of a corporate body comes here into view. Christ's object was not merely to restore individuals, but to rear a *Church*, composed of many units incorporated into one body. This idea is prominent in the rest of the Epistle. Hence the strong word *κτίσθαι*, create; not only is every believer a new creation, but the corporate organization into which they are built is also a creation. The two are made "one new man;" the Gentile is not turned into a Jew, nor the Jew into a Gentile, but both into one new man, thus removing all grounds of jealousy. This transformation is "in himself;" in vital union to Christ they are formed into one body. No Church connection of man with man is the true connection, unless it is founded on a mutual connection with Christ.

So making peace; that is, between Jew and Gentile. The peacemaking with God, as we have seen, is referred to in the first words of the verse; this at the end is the subordinate peacemaking, the result of the other.

Ver. 16.—*And that he might reconcile both to God in one body by the cross.* Exegetical of preceding statements, and making emphatic the fact of reconciliation to God on the same footing and by the same means; both were to be reconciled in one body (see ch. iv. 4) and by the cross. No preference was to be given to the Jew facilitating his union to Christ: the Gentile was to be taken into Christ's body as readily as the Jew. In reference to the sense in which reconciliation was effected by the cross of Jesus, some say it was only as the cross demonstrated to men the love of God and his willingness to bless them; while others maintain very strongly that it was as providing a satisfaction to God's justice for their guilt, and thus enabling him to receive and bless the sinner. Not only the analogy of other passages of Scripture as well as of this Epistle justifies the latter view, but pre-eminently the words, "by the cross." If Christ had only to proclaim God's friendship toward sinners, why should he have suffered on the cross? The cross as a mere pulpit is hideous; as an altar it is glorious. The love of God is ill revealed, if it subjected Jesus to unnecessary agony. The love of both Father and Son is indeed commended, if the agony was voluntarily borne by the Son, and permitted by the Father, as being indispensable for the pardon of the sinner. Ἀποκατάλλαξις denotes the whole process of reconciliation (see Eadie). *Having slain the enmity thereby (or, thereon).* "The enmity" is the same as at the beginning of ver. 15—the enmity of man to God. The destruction of this enmity is one of the effects of the cross, though not the only effect; it is necessary to root out the enmity of the carnal mind. That this is the meaning here seems plain from Rom. v. 10, "If, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son." The apostle there makes no allusion to the enmity of Jew and Gentile to each other, but to this wider fact—τὸ φρόνημα τῆς σαρκὸς ἐχθρὰ εἰς Θεόν. If any words can denote the result of a propitiatory sacrifice, it is surely "reconciled to God by the death of his Son."

Ver. 17.—*And having come, he preached peace to you that were far off, and peace to those that were nigh.* The coming denoted by ἐλθεῖν is subsequent to the transactions of the cross. It cannot denote what Christ did personally, but what he did by sending his Spirit to the apostles and other early preachers. It was only after the cross and

after the resurrection that peace could be proclaimed on the footing of faith in a Saviour who had died and was alive. And only in the sense of having sent his preachers and given them his Spirit could Jesus be said to have preached to the Ephesians. The repetition of the word "peace" in the R.V. is expressive; if the subject had been merely peace between the two classes of men, we should not have had the repetition; the repetition denotes peace between each of the two classes and a third party, viz. God. It is remarkable that the Gentiles, "those that were far off," are mentioned here before the Jews, "those that were nigh." In point of chronology, the Jews came first; but the order is here transposed, probably to emphasize the offer of the gospel to the Gentiles, and to show that spiritually they were as near as the Jews.

Ver. 18.—*For through him both of us have our access by one Spirit unto the Father.* Further illustration of identity of position of Jews and Gentiles, and of the work of Christ in bringing it about. Subject of this verse, access to the Father; predicate, this access effected through Christ by the one Spirit. Our having access to the Father is assumed as a matter of spiritual experience; the converted Ephesians knew that in their prayers and other exercises they did really stand before God, and felt as children to a Father. How came this to pass? "Through him." Sinful men have not this privilege by nature; "Your iniquities have separated between you and your God" (Isa. lix. 2). They need a Mediator; Jesus is that Mediator; and through him, both Jews and Gentiles enjoy the privilege. But right of access is not enough; in approaching God and holding fellowship with him there must be some congeniality of soul, a fellow-feeling between God and the worshipper; this is effected through the same Spirit. Some render "in the same spirit, or disposition of mind." This is true, but not all the truth; for the question arises—How do we get this suitable disposition? And the answer is—It is wrought by the Holy Spirit. As the state of the soul in true intercourse with God is substantially the same in all, so it is brought by the same Holy Spirit. In fact, this verse is one of the characteristic texts of Ephesians, in which Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are brought together.

Ver. 19.—*So then ye are no more strangers and foreigners.* "Sojourners" is nearer ἄρπουκοι than "foreigners;" it denotes persons dwelling in a place, but without citizen rights and privileges; but as such persons are usually foreigners, it is immaterial which term is used. But ye are fellow-citizens with the saints. The saints are the chosen ones of all time (comp. Heb. xii. 22, "But

ye are come unto Mount Zion," etc.). "Their names are engraven on the same civic roll with all whom 'the Lord shall count when he reckoneth up the people.' It is as if they who had dwelt in the waste and howling wilderness, scattered defenceless and in melancholy isolation, had been transplanted, not only into Palestine, but had been appointed to domiciles on Mount Zion, and were located in the metropolis, not to admire its architecture, or gaze upon its battlements, or envy the tribes who had come up to worship in the city which is compact together; but to claim its municipal immunities, experience its protection, obey its laws, live and love in its happy society, and hold communion with its glorious Founder and Guardian" (Eadie). And (members) of the household of God. A nearer relation to God and a higher privilege is denoted here. You are not guests or occasional visitors, but permanent dwellers in the house and members of the family. Compare the Queen of Sheba's words to Solomon (1 Kings x. 8).

Ver. 20.—Being built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets. A new figure, the third here introduced to denote the change—that of a temple, of which Christians are stones. There is no contrast in form in this figure, as in the other two; it just expresses directly the privilege attained. There is a real contrast, however, between the first three and the last three verses of the chapter—the lowest degradation expressed in the one, the highest elevation in the other. Observe, the apostle passes, by association of ideas, from the household (ver. 19) to the house (ver. 20), from the domestics to the stones; but by a bold figure he gives life to the stones, otherwise we might be in the same region of lifelessness as in vers. 1—3. Two questions arise here. 1. About this foundation.—In what sense is it "of the apostles and prophets"? Certainly not in the sense that they constituted the foundation; for, though this might be warranted grammatically, it would be untrue: "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. iii. 11). The best meaning seems to be, the foundation which the apostles and prophets laid, which they used for themselves and announced for others. But what was this foundation? Substantially that of 1 Cor. iii. 11; but the mention of Christ as chief Corner-stone at the end of the verse might at first seem to indicate that something different was meant by the foundation. But it is impossible to propose any suitable interpretation which would not make Christ the Foundation too. 2. Who are the prophets? We might naturally suppose the Old Testament prophets, but in that case they would probably have been mentioned

before the apostles. In other passages of this Epistle "apostles and prophets" denote New Testament officers (ch. iii. 5; iv. 11), and it is most suitable to regard that as the meaning. It was the privilege of the Ephesians to use the foundation on which stood the two highest bodies of officers in the new dispensation—the apostles and prophets; nothing better could be found. Jesus Christ himself being the chief Corner-stone. Not as opposed to the foundation, but in addition thereto. Jesus is really both, but there is a reason for specifying him as the chief Corner-stone; comp. Ps. cxviii. 21, "The stone which the builders rejected is become the headstone of the corner;" i.e. the stone which, being placed in the corner, determined the lines of the whole building. The idea of foundation is that of support; the idea of the chief corner-stone is that of regulation, patternhood, producing assimilation. Jesus is not only the Origin, Foundation, Support of the Church, but he gives it its shape and form, he determines the place and the office of each stone, he gives life and character to each member.

Ver. 21.—In whom all the building. Not even the figure of a building can keep the apostle from his favourite idea of vital fellowship with Christ as the soul of all Christianity—"in whom." *Πᾶσα οἰκοδομή* is rendered in R.V. "each several building." But surely the want of the article does not make imperative a rendering which is out of keeping with the apostle's object, viz. to illustrate the organic unity of believers, Jewish and Gentile, as one great body (comp. ch. iv. 4, "There is one body"). If there had been many several or separate buildings in the apostle's view, why not a Jewish building and a Gentile building? Or how could the separate buildings have their lines directed by the one chief Corner-stone? In Acts ii. 36 *τῆς οἰκῆς Ἰσραὴλ* is not "every house of Israel," but "all the house of Israel." Fitly framed together. There is a jointing and joining of the various parts to each other, forming a symmetrical, compact, well-ordered building. The Church has many members in one body, and all members have not the same office. It is a co-operative body, each aiding in his own way and with his own talent. The Church is not a collection of loose stones and timbers; its members are in vital union with Christ, and ought to be in living and loving and considerate fellowship with each other. Groweth into a holy temple in the Lord. Increase is an essential property of the Church; wherever there is life there is growth. But the growth of the Church is not mere increase of members or size; the growth is towards a temple, of which the character is holy, and it is in the Lord. The world-famed temple of

Diana at Ephesus may have been in the apostle's mind—its symmetry, its glory, the relation of each several part to the rest and to the whole, as a suitable external emblem of the spiritual body which is being built up in Christ; but the Christian Church is a *holy* temple, dedicated to God, purified by his Spirit, entirely foreign to those defilements which disgraced the temple of Diana. The *ἐν* at the beginning of the verse is followed by *ἐν* *Κυρίῳ* at the end, as if the union of the Church to Christ could not be too often brought out. In him we are born into it; in him we grow in it; in him the whole temple grows towards the final consummation, when the *topstone* shall be brought out with shouts of "Grace, grace unto it."

Ver. 22.—In whom ye also are builded together. Once more the vitalizing element—"in whom;" for this is better than "in which," inasmuch as this verse is substantially a reduplication of the preceding one, making special application of the same subject to the Ephesians. The person changes from the third to the second, to make emphatic that the Ephesians shared this great privilege. Their relations towards believing

Jews and other believers in the Church were not accidental; they were "builded together," compacted into each other, and ought to work together towards God's great ends. For a habitation of God in the Spirit. Not many habitations, but one. The Church as a temple is the dwelling-place of God. Here he bestows his fulness, so that when the temple is completed it will exhibit, as fully as a created thing can, the manifold glory of God. "In the Spirit" in this verse corresponds to "in the Lord" in the previous one. The actual communication of Divine properties to finite beings is the work of the Third Person. In this verse, again, we find the three Persons of the Trinity: the temple is the habitation of the First Person; the source of its life and growth and symmetry is the Son; the actual up-building and glorifying of it is by the Spirit. This is the climax of privilege, and no contrast could be greater than that between the death in trespasses and sins with which the chapter begins, and this sublime temple, where God dwells and bestows his fulness, with which it ends.

HOMILETICS.

Vers 1—10.—Spiritual history of Ephesians. I. THE CHAOS, or original state. 1. It is a state of *death*, implying previous life, but present insensibility and helplessness. The element of death is "trespasses and sins"—their killing power. 2. Yet a state of *unholy activity*, (1) in respect of the objects pursued—"the course of this world;" (2) the authority obeyed—"prince of the power of the air;" (3) the companions accepted—"the sons of disobedience." 3. A state of *unholy indulgence*; seeking the fulfilment (1) of the lusts of the flesh, the lowest part of our nature; (2) the lusts of the mind, a little higher, but still most unworthy to be the chief aim. 4. A state of *condemnation*; "by nature," by our very constitution, we are children of wrath. And this true of all.

II. THE DAWN. "But." Force of contrast. "The darkest hour precedes the dawn." 1. *God's work*. God says, "Let there be light, and there is light." (1) The source of light and order—God, not man. (2) The attributes giving birth to the new creation: (a) his mercy; (b) his love. (3) The fulness and intensity of these attributes: he is "rich" in mercy and his love is "great." (4) Our condition when visited by mercy and love: "even when dead in sins." 2. *Results of God's interposition*. (1) "He hath quickened us with Christ." (2) "Raised us up together." (3) Seated us with Christ in heavenly places. 3. *Purpose of God* in this process—to "show the exceeding riches of his grace."

III. THE NEW CREATION, or salvation by grace. 1. *The great change*. "Ye are saved." 2. *How effected*. (1) On the part of God, salvation is "by grace." (2) On the part of man, salvation is "through faith." God offers it, and faith receives it, as a free gift. 3. *Relation of salvation to works*. (1) Works do not procure salvation; for then boasting would come in. (2) Works are the product of God working in us; "We are his workmanship." (3) Works are the result of a Divine foreordination. (4) We are not only to do good works, but walk (habitually) in them. 4. *Grandeur of this work*. Creation was grand; new creation is grander. To bring a world out of nothing was great; to restore a world from chaos is greater. At the first creation, God saw all that he had made, and it was good. At the new creation, he experiences even a deeper emotion of joy. Imperfection of the new creation in this life in human souls. Let us seek that in us it may become continually more complete and

more glorious. It is not that we are called to work, but rather to allow God to work—to have all within us open and unobstructed for the full and free exercise of God's almighty renewing power.

Vers. 11—13.—*Contrast between the past and the present.* The Ephesians are here called to look back, to remember what they were; not, however, with the feeling of a man *who has raised himself in the world*, and whom such retrospect usually fills with pride, but with the feeling of those whom God has raised, a feeling that ought to produce the deepest humility and gratitude.

I. THE PAST is presented under two aspects—one having respect chiefly to their outward condition, the other chiefly to their inward. 1. Outward condition. They were Gentiles—"the Uncircumcision" (ver. 11). 2. Inward condition, denoted by five negatives: (1) without Christ; (2) without a country; (3) without promises; (4) without hope; (5) without God (ver. 12). What an accumulation of miseries! Yet men often ignorant of their misery and without desire for change. Need of Holy Spirit to convince us of our sin and misery.

II. THE CHANGE. (Ver. 13.) This is one of the brightest verses in the Bible, as ver. 12 is one of the darkest. From being "far off," they are "brought nigh." (1) Brought nigh in justification; (2) in adoption; (3) in sanctification; (4) to be finally brought nigh in glory. To be nigh or near to God is to be in a blessed relation to him, to be restored to an orbit in which we get all the blessed influences of his presence, so that the light of his countenance falls richly upon us, and we become changed into the same image, from glory to glory.

III. THE GROUND AND MEDIUM OF THE CHANGE. "In Christ Jesus." "By the blood of Christ." Great difference between God's dealings with us in nature and in grace. The blood of Jesus omnipotent to save. "All hail the power of Jesus' Name!"

Vers. 14—19.—*Christ and his work of reconciliation.* Here we have three topics: (1) *Christ our Peace*; (2) *thereby bringing us nigh*; (3) *the subject summed up*.

I. CHRIST OUR PEACE. Observe the several statements (vers. 14—17). 1. He made both Jew and Gentile one (see Exposition). 2. He broke down the middle wall of partition. 3. He abolished the cause of enmity between Jew and Gentile—the Law of commandments in ordinances. 4. He constituted himself a new Man, to which both Jew and Gentile belong. 5. He thereby reconciled both to God. 6. All this he effected by his cross. 7. He not only effected it, but came and preached peace to the far off and the nigh. The idea conveyed is that no single thing was left undone that could contribute to the great double result of reconciling Jew and Gentile, first to God, and thereby to each other. Thus reconciliation to God effects reconciliation between man and man, as sometimes a child, mutually beloved, may effect reconciliation of parents after a difference.

II. CHRIST AS OUR PEACE BRINGING US NIGH. (Ver. 18.) 1. True Christians have access to the Father. 2. This is secured meritoriously "through Christ." 3. And efficaciously "by the one Spirit." How much is implied in having access to the Father! Access to his love, his wisdom, his transforming influence, his capacity of satisfying the soul in all its lawful propensities, and blessing it for ever!

III. SUMMING UP. (Ver. 19.) The relation established with God is not a temporary or occasional one, but close, abiding, indestructible. The reconciliation is effected, not for a day, but for evermore (Rom. viii. 35—39).

Vers. 20—22.—*The Christian temple.* This the climax of the comparison between past and present pursued in this chapter. Temple of Diana at Ephesus may have suggested the figure. The three persons of the Godhead are concerned in this work of building. (1) The temple is the habitation of God the Father; (2) its Foundation and Cornerstone are the Son; (3) the lustre and glory of the temple are due to the Holy Spirit. The three are brought together in ver. 22. Glorious threefold cord, securing the salvation and final glory of the Church! The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost are with her for ever. While all the three are connected with the building, Christ is so pre-eminently. This connection appars in five particulars. 1. Christ is the *Foundation* of the temple; his Name, the only

name given under heaven whereby we must be saved; he the tried and sure Foundation-stone, elect, precious. Are we resting on him? 2. He is the *chief Corner-stone*, determines the lie and direction of other stones. We must be in harmony with Christ, our wills, notions, taste, habits. There may be secondary corner-stones; comp. Ps. cxliv. 12, "That our daughters may be as corner-stones, polished after the similitude of a palace." Reference here to the *high polish* as well as true position of a temple corner-stone. Records of Christian Church present many such women. From the Marys of the Gospels, the Priscillas and Lydias of the Acts, the Phœbes and elect ladies of the Epistles, through all the trials and struggles of the Church, down to the present day, in all which none have shown more of the true polish of corner-stones, more sympathy for the lost, more zeal and self-denial and devotion to God and man, than earnest Christian women. Blessed ambition for all young women, to be placed in such a relation to Christ, and vital communion with him, as to help to square and polish others, and thus make their lives likewise beautiful and blessed! 3. In Christ, the whole building is *fitly framed together*. Every one gets stability and adaptation to his neighbours—angles rubbed off; each gets and gives support. Stones are not all alike; not a *brick* building. Different talents, gifts, and graces: some Christians excel as speakers, some in prayer, some in praise, others in visiting sick, or in teaching the young, or in collecting contributions, or in speaking to strangers; some can write books, others can translate; some can guide the Church at home, others go to the heathen. In Christ, all work together to a common end. Out of Christ, strifes and divisions arise, ending in schisms and ruptures. Let each try to ascertain his part, and patiently and conscientiously to fulfil it. 4. In the Lord, the building grows to a holy temple. Two ideas. (1) *Growth*. Christian Church a growing Church. Where there is life there is growth. (2) Towards a *temple which is holy*, or consecrated to God. All its members are thus consecrated; let each realize this. It is by each carrying out his own consecration that the building grows toward the dimensions of a complete temple. 5. It is a *habitation of God through the Spirit*. Its collective qualities serve to indicate the presence of the living Spirit; it is a kind of incarnation. Historically this is a delightful view. Bring together all the holy qualities of the Church from first to last—the simple trust of the hundred and twenty in the upper chamber; the warm brotherly love of the Pentecostal converts; the missionary ardour of Paul and his companions; the faith and constancy of the noble army of the martyrs; the seraphic spirit of many a man and woman who has dwelt at the gate of heaven; the steadfast devotion of Waldenses and Cuddees, of Lollards and Wickliffites and Hussites, of reformers and Huguenots and confessors of every clime; the consistent godliness of many a humble cottager; the brilliant service of the Christian philanthropists and the glorious struggles of all the champions of freedom who have fought the battle of the cross in evil times;—in all this we have a vision of the glory of the Church as the habitation of God through the Spirit. Alas! there have been so many corruptions that this glory has been sadly tarnished. Let each one resolve by God's grace to fulfil his part, and so to live that, so far as his life and character are concerned, they may show the result of God dwelling in them through the Spirit.

HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Ver. 1.—*Spiritual death*. The apostle sets forth the greatness of Divine power in man's salvation by setting forth the greatness of his sin and misery, represented under the aspect of spiritual death. Let us understand the nature of this death.

I. MARK THE EXPRESSIVENESS OF THE TERM. It is strange to find it applied to living men. But there are certain suggestive points of similarity between natural and spiritual death. 1. *The dead have all the organs of sense, but no sensibility*. As the psalmist said of the idols of the heathen, so are the dead: "Eyes have they, but they see not: they have ears, but they hear not" (Ps. cxv. 5, 6). So the spiritually dead have no susceptibility in regard to the things of God; they see not the beauties of holiness; they see not God or Christ. 2. *The dead have all the machinery of motion, but the machine is at rest*. So the spiritually dead have all the natural faculties of life—judgment, memory, imagination, feeling, conscience—but they are unable to renew

themselves into spiritual life. The inability is not natural, but moral, and therefore sinners are responsible for it. They cannot, because they will not. "Ye will not come unto me, that ye may have life" (John v. 40). 3. *The dead are cold to the touch.* The living body retains its heat very much in the same manner as a fire retains its heat, and, in a very true sense, we are all literally burning out like the fuel that is consumed in our fires. The dead are cold as the grave that covers them. So are the spiritually dead; they have no warmth of Christian love going out either to God or man. Though intellectually alive to all purely worldly interests, they are coldly indifferent, or even hostile, to the interests of the kingdom of grace. 4. *The dead go onward to corruption.* The process of corruption may be arrested for a time by the skill of man, but it will prevail in the end, and man returns to the dust whence he came, as the spirit has returned to the God who gave it. So the spiritually dead are corrupt, constitutionally, in virtue of the sin of Adam, and they are still more corrupt through temptation to actual transgression. The absence of love to God interposes no check to the progress of corruption in a human heart. What a terrific picture is that of a dead soul!

II. **THE CIRCUMSTANCES OR CONDITIONS OF SPIRITUAL DEATH.** We see our dead surrounded successively by the shroud, the coffin, the hearse, the grave. So likewise the spiritually dead are surrounded by "*trespasses and sins*." These two expressive terms indicate, not simply the cause of death, but its conditions and circumstances. 1. *Trespasses.* This term is exceedingly expressive as embodying what is involved in the original term. (1) It suggests the idea of a landmark fixed by God, which he has commanded us not to pass. Yet who can say that he has not passed the landmark? Who can say that he has not trespassed upon God's preserves? For what God had reserved for himself out of all the trees of the garden of Eden, our first parents trespassed upon; and who among ourselves has not again and again trespassed upon that reserved territory of love wherewith God has surrounded himself and surrounded each one of our neighbours? (2) The word suggests the further idea of a barrier which God has placed in our way, and told us that we are not to force it or pass it. There is the barrier of *his Law*, which he has strengthened by terrible penalties, and upon which he has inscribed his own fearful curse: "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the Law to do them" (Gal. iii. 10). Yet who can say that he has not passed this barrier, though God's curse was inscribed upon it? There is the barrier of *conscience* which God has built up strongly in every man; and who can say that he has not again and again passed this barrier, often bringing the artillery of worldly advantage or pleasure to bear against it and break it down? 2. *Sins.* This term points to the sinful movements of the soul—sins of thought and purpose, as trespasses seem to point to the various developments of a sinful nature. The sins are the fruit of a moral corruption which has its seat in the heart, and radiates thence to every department of human conduct. The principle of sin is not merely negative, for it is a positive negation of the Divine will, putting something else in its place. The term "*sins*" would, more exactly than the other, include sins of omission, which are necessarily much more numerous than sins of commission. It is a solemn thought that men are "dead in sin" by every duty they omit, by every opportunity they neglect, by every blessing they despise, as well as by every positive transgression of the Divine Law. The radical significance of both terms implies a real hostility to God, which is only brought into prominence the moment the sinful spirit comes into sharp and painful collision with the pure Law of God. This dark picture of the sinner's state suggests that (1) we ought to mourn for the dead, as we mourn for our dear ones who are carried forth to burial; (2) that we ought to pray for the dead, that God may grant them "a quickening together with Christ;" (3) that we ought to warn the dead that, if they die in their trespasses and sins, they will be buried in their trespasses and sins.—T. C.

Ver. 2.—*The walk of the dead.* The expression is very significant, "In which ye walked." Superstition tells us that the dead walk in the shades of night. This is mere folly. Yet, day by day, we are really surrounded by the dead—not by spirits of the dead, walking their hour in the darkness of night, but by living men like ourselves, pursuing their courses of worldly activity with all their wonted energy and

zeal, yet "dead while they live," and unconscious of their death. The term "walking" implies the habitual course and tendency of life. Men were dead in sin just as they lived in sin, for the apostle says of the same sins, "In the which ye also walked some time, when ye lived in them" (Col. iii. 7). The direction of their walking is—away from God, with their backs turned upon him, for unbelief is a departure from the living God; and the end of their walking is death, as it is all through, for "it is the way of death" (Prov. ii. 18), and "their steps take hold on death" (Prov. v. 5). Well may we pray with David, "Lord, search me and know my heart: . . . see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting" (Ps. cxxxix. 23).—T. C.

Ver. 2.—*Three fatal guides in this walk.* They are represented as the world, the flesh, and the devil. These are inextricably linked in the common death of men, for "the whole world lieth in the wicked one," and it includes, as its totality of possession, "the lust of the eye, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life." There is no schism in this dread conspiracy against man's life.

I. THE WORLD. Sinners walk "according to the course of this world." 1. *The world is here to be distinguished from worldly objects and pleasures, or mere "things of the world,"* which are more definitely included in "the lusts of the flesh" (ver. 3). It refers to men of the world, as where it is said, "The whole world lieth in the wicked one" (1 John v. 19), and, "The world will love its own" (John xv. 19). These are "the children of the world," who are "wiser in their generation than the children of light" (Luke xvi. 16). The world is a great creator of opinion, sentiment, and habit, and thus becomes an immense obstacle to the Church of God. 2. *The course of the world.* "Every age hath almost a new dress, though it is the same world, and still carnal men live according to it." Though no age is independent of the ages which go before it, each age has its own peculiar drift or tendency, which makes it influential for good or evil. We hear of the spirit of the age—the *zeitgeist*—which is supposed to shape the thought and the action of men; but it cannot command Christian homage, except so far as it works in the line of truth and righteousness. The Ephesians were neither before their time nor after their time, but in their time, living like other Gentiles, in the same errors, delusions, and idolatries; above all, being specially attached to the worship of Diana. 3. *It is the duty of Christian people to oppose the course of this world.* The apostle solemnly commands us, "Be ye not conformed to this world" (Rom. xii. 2), and the reason is because "we have not received the spirit of this world, but we have received the Spirit which is of God" (1 Cor. ii. 12). Let the world be ever so refined, it cannot divest itself of carnal principles and ideas, and the saying of our Lord will always be true, "The things that are in great esteem with men are an abomination unto God" (Luke xvi. 15). His own mission was "to deliver us from this present evil world" (Gal. i. 4). Therefore, while we use this world, with all its lawful callings and occupations, so as not to abuse it, and honour every true principle that is held by "them that are without," let us resolutely stem the tide of the world's evil tendencies in the strength of that faith which will yet give us the complete conquest of the world (1 John v. 4).

II. THE DEVIL. This enemy, older than the world, has a vast influence in controlling its tendencies and movements. 1. *He is described by two names*—"the prince of the power of the air," which seems to point to his headship over the fallen angels; and "the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience," in relation to his power as the "prince of this world." The moral nature of his influence may be inferred from the character ascribed to him in Scripture: as a sinner from the beginning; as a homicide from the beginning; as an arch-liar—"the father of liars"—as a renegade, who, with the angels under him, fell from his first estate, probably through pride, as the principal cause of his fatal fall. His name is expressly identified with the sin of Adam, the murder of Abel, the treachery of Judas, and with a constant opposition to the kingdom of God. He is accuser, tempter, corrupter, and has, in virtue of sin, a certain power even in death (Heb. ii. 14). The existence of such a being is no more a difficulty than the existence of wicked men, who live to corrupt and destroy their fellow-men. 2. *It is not easy to understand the mode in which he acts upon the minds and hearts of men,* nor to distinguish a direct temptation of Satan from those which spring from the world or from our own hearts. He works in and through these two

things. An evil man or an evil woman can inject an evil thought and suggestion into the nature of another, either by word or by glance. If God, who is a Spirit, can have access to our minds so as to influence us supremely for good, why may not Satan, as an evil spirit, have a similar access for evil? Accordingly he is represented as putting it "into the heart of Judas to betray Christ" (John xiii. 2). He can, like a bird, pick up the good seed out of the heart (Luke viii. 12); he can fill a man's heart so as to instigate falsehood (Acts v. 3); and he can dwell in a man's heart, like a strong man in a castle (Luke xi.). His action is, indeed, "with all deceivableness of unrighteousness" (2 Thess. ii. 10), as if he were bent upon destroying the moral order of the universe. 3. *Though Satan is the tempter of men, the sins of men are not the less their own sins.* If the tempter were human, there would be no question about responsibility. They are called "the children of disobedience," because they refuse to obey God, and therefore "the wrath of God" is said to come upon them (ch. v. 6). These are they who are "carried away captive by the devil at his will" (1 Tim. ii. 26). Believers are therefore warned not "to give place to the devil" (ch. iv. 27); "to resist the devil" (Jas. iv. 7), as they are led to glorify that grace which originally translated them out of the kingdom of Satan into the kingdom of God's dear Son (Col. i. 13).

III. THE FLESH. The spiritually dead find an instigation to sin in "the lusts of the flesh," as well as in the suggestions of Satan and the temptations of the world. The flesh is a large term, which covers more than mere sins of the body, for it includes "hatred, variance, emulation, wrath, strifes, seditions, heresies," as well as "adultery, fornication, murder, drunkenness, and revellings" (Gal. v. 19, 20). There is a "spiritual wickedness" that cannot be traced to the body of man. The reason of the term being thus applied is probably, first, to distinguish it from the spirit; then because "the things of the flesh" are the supreme objects of desire to worldly men, or, as they are differently phrased, "earthly things" (Col. iii. 2); and, thirdly, because it comes by birth: "That which is born of the flesh is flesh" (John iii. 6). Thus the lusts of the flesh have their outlet in the desires at once of the flesh and of the mind. They are described as "ungodly lusts" (Jude 18), because they are based on a disregard for or on an enmity to God; "worldly lusts" (Titus ii. 12), because, in the absence of God, they "run out to all things in the world;" "foolish and hurtful lusts" (1 Tim. vi. 9), because they end in shame, disappointment, and ruin; "deceitful lusts" (ch. iv. 22), because they fail to answer all a sinner's expectations. Therefore we see the glory and fitness of the gospel, which leads us "to cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God" (2 Cor. vii. 1). The Apostle Paul suggests the danger of the flesh in setting forth the grand principle of his life—"The life I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God." All life is in this world exposed to risk of some sort. Spiritual life exists in a body with passions prone to evil, as well as in a world with many seductions and cares. Christians must strike the true mean between the sensualism which dishonours the body, and the asceticism which, regarding it as an enemy, denies it those innocent enjoyments which Scripture and nature equally sanction. It is not the body of flesh, but the body of sin in the flesh, that is the real trouble of the Christian. We must learn, by God's grace, to honour the body as the temple of the Holy Ghost; to make it the servant, not the master, of the soul; to dedicate it as a vessel unto honour sanctified and "meet for the Master's use."—T. C.

Ver. 3.—*The true fountain of spiritual death.* "And were by nature children of wrath, even as others." The apostle traces the pedigree of all the elements that enter into this spiritual death up to our birth itself. He does not say that it is on account of "nature" or natural depravity that we are children of wrath, but "by nature;" that is, we are simply born in a state of condemnation. There is no express reference here to Adam or to our relation to his sin, though it is certainly implied that we had our probation in Adam, and are therefore born in a state of condemnation. To say that we are condemned on account of our hereditary depravity is to say that we are condemned without a probation. The doctrine of original sin is one of the "deep things of God." Pascal well says, "Original sin is folly in the sight of man, but this folly is wiser than all the wisdom of man. For without it who could have said what man is? His whole condition depends upon this imperceptible point." The recognition

of the doctrine is the starting-point of the doctrines of special revelation, of redemption through Christ's blood, of regeneration through the Holy Spirit. This passage implies—

I. THAT WE NEED REDEMPTION FROM THE MOMENT OF OUR BIRTH. The sacrament of baptism is meaningless on any other theory. "The wicked are estranged from the womb." Why do all men certainly sin from the beginning?

II. THAT ALL MEN, JEWS AND GENTILES, ARE BORN IN THIS STATE OF CONDEMNATION. Because "all in Adam die" (1 Cor. xv. 22).

III. THAT GOD'S WRATH IS A REALITY. It is grounded in his essential holiness, as appears from the fact that God swears in his wrath (Heb. iii. 11), and it belongs to the idea of the personal God as he acts in history, who cannot look with equal indifference or equal satisfaction upon virtue and vice, piety and impiety, wisdom and folly. It is not to be regarded as a mere modification of Divine love, as either love-sorrow or the anger of love. It is not Biblical to say that a God who has wrath is not a God of love. The objective reality of Divine wrath on account of sin is an axiom of natural theology (Rom. i. 32) as well as of revealed; it is presupposed in the atonement, and must be carried into any conception we may form of future retribution.—T. C.

Ver. 4.—*The true origin of salvation.* It is interesting to observe the variety of terms here employed to describe the source of all the blessings of salvation. It is no longer a question of power, as it was in the first chapter (ch. i. 19, 20), but of love, mercy, grace, and kindness.

I. OUR SALVATION IS OF GOD'S MERCY. "God who is rich in mercy." There is a distinction between mercy and love, for love is the foundation of mercy. God is called the "Father of mercies" (2 Cor. i. 3); mercy is his delight, for "he delighteth in mercy" (Micah vii. 18); he betrotheth us to himself in mercies (Hos. ii. 19); he begets us again "according to his abundant mercy" (1 Pet. i. 3); and we are led to pray, "Lord, according to the multitude of thy tender mercies, blot out my transgressions" (Ps. li. 1). Believers are therefore well described as "vessels of mercy" (Rom. ix. 23).

II. OUR SALVATION IS OF LOVE. "According to the great love wherewith he hath loved us." The apostolic saying, "God is love," supplies us with the best Christian idea of God, as well as with the right key to explain all his actions. God's love is more than kindness, which is, indeed, one of his attributes, but love is, properly speaking, the nature of him who unites all these attributes in himself. The incarnation of the only begotten Son is the greatest fact of the Divine love, but is not disjoined from the deep humiliation and suffering to which it enabled him to descend. The love of God to sinners is (1) a great love (ch. ii. 4), "a love strong as death" (Cant. viii. 6, 7); (2) an everlasting love (Jer. xxxi. 3); (3) an unchanging love (Mal. iii. 6); (4) an invincible love (Rom. viii. 39); (5) it is like the Father's love to the Son, "As thou hast loved me" (John xvii. 23).

III. OUR SALVATION IS OF GRACE. "By grace ye are saved." 1. It is not of works, but of grace (ch. ii. 8). It is "of faith, that it might be of grace" (Rom. iv. 16). 2. We are accepted by grace (ch. i. 6); our calling is by grace (2 Tim. i. 9). 3. We have a good hope through grace. 4. Our election is of grace (Rom. xi. 5). 5. The grace of God abounds in faith and love (1 Tim. i. 14). 6. We are under a reign of grace (Rom. vi. 14); we have our standing in grace (Rom. v. 2). 7. It is the greatest of all concerns to establish men's hearts in "the true grace of God" (1 Pet. v. 12).

IV. OUR SALVATION IS OF GOD'S KINDNESS. (Ver. 7.) "The word here," says an old writer, "implies all sweetness, and all candidness, and all friendliness, and all heartiness, and all goodness, and goodness of nature." Scripture speaks of God as kind (Ps. xxxvi. 5; Luke vi. 35), and of his "loving-kindnesses" (Isa. lxiv. 7). It is made the root of mercy in God (Titus iii. 4); for the apostle here speaks of his kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. Thus our salvation, first and last, is attributed to nothing in ourselves, but to love, mercy, grace, and kindness in God.—T. C.

Ver. 5.—*The believer's union with Christ.* The apostle teaches that, in virtue of the union between Christ and his people, his death was their death, his life their life, his exaltation their exaltation. It is the familiar doctrine of Rom. vi. 4, "Therefore we

are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." These words indicate a bond of connection between the spiritual life of the believer and the resurrection of Christ. The new life is, in fact, a participation in the risen life of the Saviour.

I. QUICKENED TOGETHER WITH CHRIST. 1. *Consider the nature of this quickening.* It implies a previous identification with Christ in his death. "We are buried with Christ by baptism into death." We have, in fact, died unto sin exactly as Christ died unto sin; for "in that he died, he died unto sin once" (Rom. vi. 10). Christ died unto sin when he underwent death as the wages of sin and exhausted all the woe that sin entails as its punishment. He died for sin that he might become dead to sin; the parties having become dead to each other, taking their own path henceforth, never to meet or cross each other unto eternity again. And we are dead unto sin in precisely the same sense in which Christ is dead unto sin; for the apostle says, "Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin," because we are exempted from all its curse on the ground of its curse being already executed. How can this be, as we never suffered the curse of sin? Because we have been baptized into Christ. Mere water-baptism cannot accomplish this blessed result. It is the Holy Spirit who is the Baptist, for he engrafs us into Christ and makes us one body with him (1 Cor. xii. 12, 13). We are united to Christ by faith. 2. *Consider the effects of this quickening.* This new position involves our seeing what the dead can never see. When we are quickened by the Spirit of God: (1) We see God: "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God." We see him as a Father, because we have seen Christ, for "he that hath seen me hath seen the Father." We see a Father's power, love, and compassion. (2) We see Christ in his person and in his work, as a sufficient Saviour, as a willing Saviour, as a loving Saviour, with a work accomplished on the ground of which we shall be accepted and saved. (3) We see the sin that is in ourselves and the sin that is in the world. The dead see nothing. "They have no speculation in their eyes." Men of the world do not see sin as sin, but often as a source of profit or amusement. "Fools make a mock at sin." But the quickened sinner sees the sin of the world as he sees the sin of his own heart, and mourns over it. (4) He sees heaven and hell. The eye of man sees many stars in the sky on a dark night, but there are many blank spaces in which no twinkling glories can be seen. Men of the world see heaven and hell as blank spaces, or, at best, as dim and shadowy. But the quickened see them as supreme and transcendent realities. They see heaven as the home of Jesus and the saints; they see hell as the place prepared for the devil and his angels. (5) He sees the world in its true character. How different the view of the same city from two opposite standpoints! Not more different is the view of the world from the standpoint of eternity, for the saint sees it as a doomed world at enmity with God, and is thus led to place his citizenship on high, "setting his affections on things above, not on things on the earth" (Col. iii. 2).

II. RAISED TOGETHER WITH CHRIST. For as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we also should walk in newness of life. The connection between the believer's life and the Redeemer's resurrection is one not merely of certainty and similarity, but of participation, and thus we come to know the power of his resurrection (Phil. iii. 10). There was a change in Christ's own relation to God established by his resurrection; "for in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God"—in an entirely new relation to God, which shall endure for ever, for when he shall appear the second time, it will be without sin unto salvation. Formerly he was condemned, now is he justified in the Spirit; he liveth now to God with no curse to bear, no sacrifice to offer, no suffering to endure, no service to achieve; and therefore the God of peace, in token of the acceptance of the Surety, brings again from the dead that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant. So likewise we are to count ourselves "alive unto God through Jesus Christ," in that same relation of irreversible acceptance into which Jesus has entered. The apostle here not only represents believers as ideally raised in Christ, but as actually raised just as Christ actually came forth from his sepulchre, leaving his grave-clothes behind him. Similarly we are not to be as "the living among the dead;" we are to cast from us our grave-clothes, which only impede the free movements of our spiritual life.

III. THE SESSION WITH CHRIST IN THE HEAVENLY PLACES. We are enthroned with Christ. Christ is already represented as "set at God's own right hand in the heavenly places" (ch. i. 20). We sit there representatively, because our Head is there, and therefore we are, though still on earth as to our practical calling and life, citizens of heaven (Phil. iii. 20). We are guided by the laws of heaven; our hearts are cheered by the hope which, as an anchor, is fastened within the veil, and we now by faith enter the holiest of all by the blood of Jesus. We are even now "kings and priests" (Rev. i. 6). We are justified in regarding our future glorification as only a continuation of our present spiritual life. The guarantee of both is alike in Christ. Meanwhile, though representatively in heaven, we are personally and actually here. Sin is here; we are to watch and fight against it; but "our life is hid with Christ in God," only hereafter to be manifested in full glory.—T. C.

Ver. 7.—The design of the dispensation of mercy. The salvation of these Ephesians was to stand out as a remarkable monument of "the exceeding riches of God's grace" to all succeeding generations. It was in this sense that the apostle regarded himself "as a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting" (1 Tim. i. 16).

I. IT WAS TO ENCOURAGE THE GREATEST SINNERS TO HOPE IN GOD'S MERCY THROUGH CHRIST. Sinners often, when pressed with the urgent calls of the gospel, plead that they are too wicked to be reached by it. The examples of salvation in the Scriptures—those of the Ephesians, the dying thief, Lydia, the Philippian jailor, the Apostle Paul himself—are all designed to meet the difficulties that men interpose in the way of their receiving Christ, as if any worthiness could attach to the persons thus described. It is a great comfort that what God did then he does now and will do till the end of the world. His mercy and grace are not exhausted.

II. IT IS IMPLIED THAT SALVATION IS NOT OF WORKS, BUT BY GRACE. This fact cuts up by the roots all theological systems which imply that man has any power to save himself.

III. IT IS IMPLIED THAT THERE WILL BE A CHURCH ON EARTH THROUGH "ALL THE AGES TO COME," in spite of all the malignity, the ungodliness, the unbelief of men.

IV. IT IS IMPLIED THAT THE SCRIPTURES ARE TO CONVEY THE RECORDS OF GOD'S GRACE DOWN TO THE LATEST GENERATIONS. We could not know of God's gracious work at Ephesus but by the Scriptures. How much we ought to prize such records!

V. THE HISTORY OF THE CHURCH SINCE THE DAYS OF THE APOSTLES proves how God has fulfilled the design involved in the dispensation of mercy. The stream of grace has flowed more or less freely and fully in every age.

VI. MARK THE TRUE SUBJECT OF PREACHING. Not mere moral counsels, not mere philosophizings, but "the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness to us in Jesus Christ." A noble text for the pulpit of all ages!

VII. THE ULTIMATE DESIGN OF GOD IS TO MANIFEST HIS OWN GLORY. Not the mere glory of his power and wisdom, but of his abounding grace and mercy.

VIII. IT IS IMPLIED IN THE TEXT THAT THE APOSTLE DID NOT EXPECT, AS SOME AFFIRM, THAT THE END OF THE WORLD WAS AT HAND. There were ages to come in which the exceeding riches of his grace could be shown forth in the salvation of sinners.—T. C.

Vers. 8-10.—Salvation in its completeness: the place of faith and works. One thought runs through these two verses like a thread of gold. We are not saved by works, but unto works.

I. THE PRIVILEGE OF BELIEVERS. "Ye are saved." 1. It is implied that the salvation is a present reality. It is not, "Ye shall be saved." They were already in an actual state of salvation; they had passed from death unto life; and the life was everlasting. 2. The salvation was more than a deliverance from the guilt of sin, so as to exempt sinners from future punishment. This is, indeed, the first step in salvation. There must be likewise a deliverance from the power of sin. To be saved from sin is the climax, the consummation, the essence of salvation. Holiness is the most essential thing in salvation. Therefore, while believers may rejoice that they have received

pardon through the blood of Christ, let them still more rejoice that Jesus "saves them from their sins" by a continuous supply of his living grace.

II. POWER FOR GOOD WORKS IS INCLUDED IN SALVATION. "We are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works." We are saved because we are thus created. This was the Divine purpose in the mission of the Son; God sent Christ to bless us "by turning every one of us away from our iniquities" (Acts iii. 26). We have learnt to believe that our works have nothing to do with our pardon—our evil works have not hindered it, our good works have not helped it; our pardon is of pure grace. But the apostle teaches, in the tenth verse, that what is true of pardon through the death of Christ is equally true of power by his life—that if we are delivered from the punishment of sin by the atoning death of Christ, we are also delivered from the power of sin by the loving grace that streams from the fountain of the cross. Salvation, if it be salvation at all, is "unto good works;" good works not being the root on which salvation grows, but the fruit which grows upon the tree of life.

III. HOW IS THIS FULL SALVATION TO BE OBTAINED? "By grace are ye saved, through faith." You are "God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works." 1. *Grace is the fountain at once of pardon and of holiness.* The purpose of God is of grace, for "he hath saved us according to his own purpose and grace" (2 Tim. i. 9); the atonement is of grace, for "ye know the grace of . . . Christ, that, though he was rich, for your sakes he became poor" (2 Cor. viii. 9); the application of it is of grace, for it is "grace that bringeth salvation" (Titus ii. 11); and it is according to this grace "we are called with an holy calling" (2 Tim. i. 9). Now, we have learned to say of pardon that it is "not of works;" equally true is it of our purification that it is not of works—that is, not of our working—for we are "his workmanship, created . . . unto good works." The old man cannot work. The new man receives the power in the very structure of his spiritual being; for, having died with Christ, he is risen with him that he should walk in newness of life. 2. *Faith is the instrumental cause of our salvation.* "By grace are ye saved, through faith;" and thus the gospel becomes "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." Power as well as pardon flows forth from Christ to every one that believeth. We are not to suppose, however, that salvation is given as a kind of reward of faith, for, in a true sense, faith is part of the salvation itself. But the apostle uniformly represents faith as that which apprehends the salvation. It is in no sense the ground of salvation; "the righteousness of God which is by faith of Christ Jesus" is the only ground of it, and it is therefore called "the gift of righteousness" (Rom. v. 17); but faith is the hand by which it is received. There is thus no merit in faith any more than there is in the hand of the beggar who receives an alms. 3. *Good works are the predestined way along which the saved walk.* "Which God hath before prepared that we should walk in them." This might be true in a double sense: either that, by the revelation of the moral law, he has fixed the firm and unalterable pathway of the believer's obedience—prepared, as it were, the sphere of our moral action; or that, by creating us in Christ Jesus, he has preordained our disposition and aptitude for this obedience. It is evident from the apostle's doctrine that (1) good works are not necessary to qualify us for believing in Christ, (2) or are the ground of our expecting a future inheritance in glory. But they are necessary, notwithstanding, on the following grounds:—(1) We are elected unto holiness (ch. i. 4); and we are "called unto holiness" (1 Thess. iv. 7). (2) They are necessary as acts of obedience to the Lord's commands (John xiv. 15); (3) as acts of gratitude for all his goodness to us; (4) as evidences of the sincerity of our faith in Christ; (5) as tending to adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour, and to glorify his Name; (6) as contributory to our inward peace and comfort.—T. C.

Ver. 11.—*The uses of remembrance.* "Wherefore remember." The present is built upon the past, and the memory of the past has much to do with the joys and sorrows of the present, as well as with the hopes and achievements of the future. It is well for believers to remember what they have been in view of their present mercies. Remembrance may thus become a means of grace.

I. IT TENDS TO DEEPEN THE HUMILITY OF SAINTS AS WELL AS TO INCREASE THEIR GODLY SORROW FOR SIN.

II. IT TENDS TO MAKE US GRATEFUL FOR OUR MERCIES AND TO MAKE US MAGNIFY THE

GREATNESS AND FREEDOM OF DIVINE LOVE. Where sin did much abound, we have found that grace did much more abound.

III. IT TENDS TO INSPIRE US WITH A STRONGER LOVE FOR CHRIST, WHO HAS PLACED US SO HIGH IN HEAVENLY PLACES. The woman in the gospel loved much when she remembered how much was forgiven her. "The grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant in faith and love" (1 Tim. i. 14) to the Apostle Paul in the remembrance of his old blasphemies and injuries to the gospel.

IV. IT TENDS TO QUICKEN US TO GREATER ZEAL AND ACTIVITY IN THE LORD'S SERVICE. We think sadly of our lost time in the service of sin, and are led now to work with increased energy for the cause of our Redeemer.

V. IT TENDS TO MAKE US MORE HOPEFUL OF THE CONVERSION OF OTHERS WHO ARE NOW WHAT WE ONCE WERE AS SINNERS. Yet this remembrance of our past condition is not to be a rueful, self-accusing thing that will kill hope and heart, but rather that which leads onward to a higher joy and a more complete consecration to the Lord's work.—T. C.

Ver. 12.—*The religious position of the heathen.* The apostle does not speak of the distinguished place of the heathen as to art and science, culture, and worldly civilization—in which they far surpassed Israel—but he describes the utter destitution of their religious life by contrast mainly with the privileged superiority of Judaism. The points of contrast are six in number.

I. THEY WERE UNCIRCUMCISED—were "Gentiles in the flesh." Circumcision, according to the apostle, might mean very little or very much. It might mean very much, in so far as it was a "seal of the righteousness of faith" (Rom. iv. 11) and was a spiritual thing—"the circumcision of the heart" (Rom. ii. 29), involving "the worship of God in the Spirit, rejoicing in Christ Jesus, and having no confidence in the flesh" (Phil. iii. 3). But it might mean "the circumcision in the letter," after the habit of those Jews who ascribed objective power to the mere external rite, regarding it as a channel of grace, irrespective of the subjective condition of the recipient. It was only in the spiritual sense of the rite that the Gentiles were disadvantaged by their want of it, not only because it meant the obligation of withdrawing all the relations of life from the dominion of nature, but because it implied a covenant union with God, involving the blessings of redemption itself.

II. THEY WERE WITHOUT CHRIST. The Jews were not without him; for "salvation was of the Jews;" Abraham, the first Jew, saw the day of Christ afar off, "and was glad" (John viii. 56); the Jews drank, in the wilderness, of the "Rock which was Christ" (1 Cor. x. 4). But the Gentiles were without him, because (1) they had no knowledge of him; (2) they had no faith in him; (3) they had no union with him; (4) they were therefore without pardon, life, grace, hope, and comfort. How dark and cheerless was heathenism even under its reign of culture! It had no experience of the threefold blessing of the gospel—"Christ for us, Christ in us, Christ with us"—the grand totality of Christianity.

III. THEY WERE ALIENS FROM THE COMMONWEALTH OF ISRAEL. They were so civilly as well as spiritually, for the Jews had no dealings with Gentiles. 1. The word "aliens" points in the original to a lapse from a former unity or fellowship. Universalism characterized the first dispensation of the race of man: deliverance was to come through the Seed of the woman; but when the race took a direction contrary to the will of God and fundamentally wrong, the circle was narrowed into particularism, which in its turn tended toward a universalistic goal, for all nations of the earth are to be blessed in Abraham's seed. Jew and Gentile thus stood apart for ages, till, "in the fulness of times," they met at last round the cross of Christ in an act of supreme rebellion, only to be united in Christ for ever in the future development of the kingdom of God. 2. Their estrangement from the Israelitish commonwealth was an immense spiritual loss; for to it belonged the oracles of God (Rom. iii. 2), and "the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the Law, and the service of God, and the promises" (Rom. ix. 4). It was a privilege to belong to a people expecting nothing from their own power or wisdom, but everything from the interposition of their God. It is a great blessing to be born within the pale of the visible Church, so as to partake of her privileges. The Gentiles were outside the whole apparatus of religious instruction provided for the special guidance of the Jews.

IV. **THEY WERE STRANGERS TO THE COVENANTS OF PROMISE.** 1. The plural reference is to the successive renewals of the covenant with the patriarchs. It was but the one covenant of promise—"the promise made to the fathers" which God fulfilled in "raising up Jesus" (Acts xiii. 32). The word "covenant" occurs two hundred and thirty-six times in our English Bible, and in more than two hundred instances it is a Divine covenant. The covenant with Abraham was the Magna Charta of Israel; the covenant with David rests upon this earlier covenant, marking out more clearly the line in which the Divine purpose of blessing would be fulfilled to Jews and eventually to all nations. The new covenant of the New Testament, which has in Christ a Mediator greater than Moses and is "established upon better promises," is no other than the ancient covenant made with Abraham (Gal. iii. 14). 2. Thus we can see how the Gentiles were strangers to the covenant in all its historic developments. They had no national covenant with God, and no land of promise in the present world. As Gentiles, the covenant had never been revealed to them, and, except so far as they may have been included in the Israelitish commonwealth, it could bring them no blessing.

V. **THEY WERE WITHOUT HOPE.** They had no covenanted hope—no hope of the Messiah and of salvation by him, or a future state of eternal life. "Such as are Christless must be hopeless; such as are without faith must needs be without hope; and such as are without the promise must necessarily be without faith; for the promise is the ground of faith, and faith is the ground of hope." It is a miserable state to be without hope. "If in this life only we have hope, we are of all men most miserable." The future to the heathen was a night without a star. In the Roman catacombs hope is the commonest inscription. There is no such word on the tombs of the heathen dead.

VI. **THEY WERE WITHOUT GOD IN THE WORLD.** This marks the climax of their misery. They were without God, though they were not atheists, for they had a thousand gods that were no gods. And they were not bold deniers of God, for many of them were "feeling after the Lord." But (1) they were without the knowledge of the true God; (2) they had no faith in him; (3) they lived without relation to him; and (4) they had no consciousness of his presence to bless and guide and comfort them. They were without God "in the world"—in contrast with the position of the Jews entrenched within their commonwealth privileges—and were thus homeless and forsaken in that world which had Satan for its prince. This is the picture of the heathen world given by the apostle—without Christ, without Church, without covenant, without hope, without God. At the period to which he refers, religion had outlived itself, unbelief mocked at the superstitions of the vulgar, and scepticism gradually became the sole wisdom of the cultured classes. Along with the power of truth the power of morality was irrecoverably lost; and yet there was a deep yearning at the heart of paganism for the God unknown whom it was the high destiny of Christianity to make known to the Gentiles. They were without God, yet were not outcast from his favour, for these Ephesian Gentiles were in due time called by his grace.—T. C.

Ver. 13.—*Nearness to God in the blood of Christ.* This chapter speaks of a double alienation and of a double reconciliation: on the one hand, a deep alienation of mankind from God, dating from birth, subsisting along with a moral separation between Jews and Gentiles; on the other hand, it points to the historic fact of Christ's atonement as the divinely instituted method by which both alienations were to be extinguished, and man united to God and to man in a higher unity, so that the two separated elements should henceforth become one new man, one city of God, one temple or habitation of God.

I. **THE GENTILES REMOTE FROM GOD.** "You that were afar off." They were in a geographical sense far off from Palestine, the centre of the true religion. This land was, with a truly providential design, selected as the home of God's chosen people, because it held a central place between Europe, Asia, and Africa. But the nations were still more apart from Palestine, so as to have no share in its theocratic life. In this case, the expression "far from God," or "far off," was a phrase in common use to designate the Gentiles (Isa. xlix. 1; Acts ii. 39). But there was a moral distance—an alienation of the Gentile heart from God—which was more serious than any geographical remoteness from the seat of theocratic institutions. It is both the sinfulness and the misery of sin that men are at a distance from God. Unbelief is a "departure from the

living God." The Gentiles were far from Christ, from the Church, from the covenant, from hope, from God. There is no divider like sin.

II. THE GENTILES MADE NIGH IN THE BLOOD OF CHRIST. Just as Israel at Sinai was by the sprinkling of blood made to be the people of God, brought near to him, kept year by year in covenant, so the blood of Christ was the element or sphere in which the new covenant took its shape with its all-inclusive relations both to Jew and to Gentile. It was the blood that obliterated the interval between the Gentiles and God. They have now communion with God, and are established in their nearness to him. It is not merely in Christ Jesus, but in the blood of Christ, that our nearness is established. It was not the incarnation but the death of the Son of God—the designed complement and issue of the incarnation—that has secured our privilege of access to God. It often happens in the history of grace that those very far from God in character and hope are made nigh by the blood of the cross. There is a marvellous power in the blood of the lifted-up Redeemer: "And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me" (John xii. 32), irrespective of national distinctions.—T. C.

Vers. 14—16.—*Christ our Peace.* He is so by effecting two reconciliations, and thus obliterating two deep and long-standing alienations. He "hath made both one"—Jew and Gentile—and "he hath reconciled both unto God in one body by the cross." Christ is our Peace, not simply as our Peacemaker, but as our Peace objectively considered and with regard to our relation to God; for the apostle represents our nearness to God as grounded in Christ as our Peace. He is therefore our Peace, as he is called our Righteousness and our Redemption (1 Cor. i. 30), and while thus he is our Peace toward God, he is the ground of peace in every other relation, and especially between man and man. Thus he abides our continual Peace, for he did not make peace and end his relation toward us, but is the Source of our abiding reconciliation with God as well as of the continuous enjoyment of peace. Thus the Old Testament prophecies which connect peace with the Messiah find their just fulfilment (Isa. ix. 5, 6; lvii. 2, 7). Peace was the legacy which he left to his disciples (John xiv. 27). It is "the peace to which we are called in one body" (Col. iii. 15). It is that which "keeps our hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Phil. iv. 7). Consider—

I. HOW HE HAS MADE PEACE BETWEEN JEW AND GENTILE. 1. *He did so by levelling in the dust the middle wall of partition that separated them widely for ages*, in a word, by abolishing the narrow particularism of Judaism. The wall in question was the ceremonial law—"the law of commandments contained in ordinances"—given to Israel as a separate people and of positive appointment. The moral law was no part of the partition wall, and contains in itself nothing either to excite enmity or to establish separation between man and man. The death of Christ did not abolish it; it was the law of ceremonies only that was abolished in the cross, for when he died, it disappeared like a shadow when the substance was come. The moral law, as embodied in the Decalogue, was older than the Mosaic institute, and therefore survived its fall. The partition wall that kept Jew and Gentile apart was (1) an ancient barrier of separation. It lasted sixteen hundred or two thousand years, according as we date its origin from Abraham or Moses. A Puritan Father says, "The foundation of the wall of separation was laid in Abraham's time when circumcision was first given, for that began the quarrel; reared up higher by Moses' rites; further lengthened and stretched out in all times of the prophets, throughout all ages, till Christ, who came to abolish it and break it down." (2) It was a high barrier. It kept the Jew effectively apart for more than a millennium and a half, that he might be trained for the universalist dispensation that was to be established in the fulness of times. (3) It engendered a deep hostility on both sides. It was this "enmity" that made the barrier so serious an element of separation. The Jew regarded the Gentile with a proud and supercilious superiority, and the Gentile regarded the Jew as an enemy of the human race. Literature is full of the evidences of this continuous hostility. The Gentiles were called in contempt "the uncircumcised" and "sinners of the Gentiles." Juvenal, Tacitus, Martial, Horace, repay the debt in the language of bitter and contemptuous sarcasm. 2. *Consider the grand instrument of reconciliation between Jew and Gentile.* "In his flesh." The language refers expressly to the condition of penal curse-bearing to which the atoning Saviour spontaneously subjected himself. As the apostle once represents sin

as being condemned in Christ's flesh (Rom. viii. 3), so here our Lord is regarded as having in his flesh taken upon him the sins of his people, as the great cause of enmity and disunion, and having exhausted at once the sin of man and the wrath of God on the cross, he thus at once abolished the law of ceremonies and annihilated the enmity which found its occasion in it. The cross is still the instrument of reconciling man to man. The world has made many efforts to unite men on a basis of liberty, equality, fraternity—often trying to bring about a union even by the most terrible bloodshed; but no principle has yet been discovered to unite man to man save the gospel of Christ, with its doctrine of atonement through the blood of the cross. 3. *Consider the ultimate result of the death of Christ.* "To make of twain one new man, so making peace." Those previously sundered were by the cross lifted into a higher unity, and placed upon a platform of equal privilege that obliterated all the old causes of division. The reconciling power of the cross ran through all the relations of men and all the relations of life. The person of Christ crucified became henceforth the great Centre of unity.

II. **HOW CHRIST IS OUR PEACE IN EFFECTING RECONCILIATION BETWEEN GOD AND MAN.** "That he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby." Nothing can be more explicit than the declaration that Christ's mission was intended to reconcile God and man, who were previously alienated by sin. It is often contended that, as God is essentially a God of love, it becomes us to think only of reconciliation on man's side. There are, in fact, two reconciliations, the one based on the other—a reconciliation of God to man, and a reconciliation of man to God. The apostle says elsewhere that "God has reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ" (2 Cor. v. 18), and that it pleased "the Father, having made peace through the blood of the cross, to reconcile all things unto himself" (Col. i. 20). The scheme of salvation, whether we take account of the incarnation or the atonement, emanated from the Divine good pleasure as the supreme source of all blessings. It is always important to emphasize the fact that the atonement is the effect, not the cause, of God's love. The peace here spoken of is peace on a basis of law and justice; for the offering up of Christ so magnified the Law and exhausted all its demands, that, on the ground of that propitiation, God could be at once just and the Justifier of the ungodly. This is according to another passage: "God hath sent forth his Son to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness" (Rom. iii. 25). If this be so, it is an error to hold that the only purpose of Christ's death was the manifestation of Divine love. It was, in fact, a manifestation of Divine justice as well as of Divine love; and if it was not a manifestation of Divine justice, that is, if there was no righteousness making that death necessary, it is difficult to see how there could be a manifestation of love in his dying. It follows also that it is an error to depreciate the importance of Christ's death, and to lay the main emphasis of his mission upon the virtues of his life. The Bible knows nothing of a gospel without a cross, or of a gospel which makes the cross a mere affecting incident at the close of a sublime career; it rather exhibits the cross as the grand procuring cause of life and redemption to man. If you take away the cross, you dry up the stream of blessing which has flowed down through all Christian ages, you put an end to the abiding peace of God's people, and you paralyze the right arm of the ministry. Therefore we are justified in regarding the reconciliation between God and man as resting on Christ's work, and this work as charged with reconciling power, not as it moved the human heart or led to a new conduct in man, but as it introduced a new relation in which men were placed before God.—T. C.

Ver. 17.—*The proclamation of peace.* I. **HE WHO IS OUR PEACE IS THE PUBLISHER OF PEACE.** "And came and preached peace." He came as the Prince of peace, spoke of peace before his death as his parting legacy to the Church, and after his ascension to heaven sent forth his ambassadors with the gospel of peace to say, "We pray you in Christ's stead be ye reconciled to God" (2 Cor. v. 20). What Christ does by the apostles he does by himself.

II. **THE BURDEN OF THE GOSPEL—PEACE.** The first word of the angelic annunciation was, "Peace on earth." 1. It is peace through the blood of Christ, which thus "speaketh better things than that of Abel." 2. It is peace through the righteousness of Christ: "Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God

through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. v. 1). 3. It is the staple of the gospel, which is a gospel of peace proclaimed by ministers who are the publishers of peace. 4. It introduces sinners into the covenant of peace, which cannot be removed. 5. It has peace for its fruits, for believers have "joy and peace in believing;" "Great peace have they that love thy Law;" "To be spiritually minded is life and peace;" "They that trust in the Lord are kept in perfect peace;" "They dwell in peaceable habitations, in quiet resting-places."

III. THE PERSONS TO WHOM PEACE IS PREACHED. "To you that are afar off and to them that are nigh." There was peace for both Jew and Gentile. It was peace for the world. There is no restriction upon the message of peace. "The Lord shall bless his people with peace" (Ps. xxix. 11). "Great shall be the peace of thy children." The proof that the peace has this wide and blessed efficacy is our free access to the Father by Jesus Christ.—T. C.

Ver. 18.—*Our access to the Father.* "For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father." If the enmity had not been slain there could not have been access to the Divine presence. Both Jews and Gentiles enjoy this access on a footing of grace and mercy to the throne of God.

I. THE APPROACH IS TO THE FATHER. It is not to a stern Judge or a God wielding terrible power against us, but to a gracious Father, we have access in virtue of Christ's atoning work. It is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who is represented in this Epistle as having blessed us with all spiritual blessings; it is the Father who has made known to us his purpose to reconcile all things to himself in Christ; it is the Father who has made peace through the blood of the cross. We must ever seek the true origin of our salvation, not in the suffering of the cross, but in the bosom of the eternal Father.

II. OUR ACCESS TO HIM IS THROUGH CHRIST. 1. We are brought near to God through his blood (ver. 13). 2. Through his intercession. Jesus, as Mediator, Advocate, Forerunner, takes us, as it were, by the hand, and presents us to God. This is the doctrine of the Epistle to the Hebrews, which introduces the era of the better hope, under which we draw nigh to God with true heart, in full assurance of faith, because we have such an High Priest over the house of God. But our Saviour is more than High Priest; he is Forerunner; he is not merely Representative of believers, as the high priest of Judaism was representative of the theocratic people, but he is Forerunner, entered within the veil, whither his people can follow him to the very place which he has gone before to prepare for them. There is no longer a restriction upon our access to God. It is a free access, an open access, an access that may well inspire confidence, because it is in Christ: "We have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him" (ch. iii. 12).

III. THE ACCESS IS BY ONE SPIRIT. 1. It is by his influence we are first brought home to the Father. It is by him we are baptized into one body. 2. The indwelling of the Spirit is necessary to the perpetuation and power of "our fellowship with the Father and the Son." 3. It is the Spirit especially who helps our infirmities in prayer (Rom. viii. 26). Thus we see how the three Persons of the Trinity are concerned in our salvation.—T. C.

Ver. 19.—*The Church a city.* The Gentiles were now no longer strangers, but fellow-citizens with the saints.

I. THE CITY MAY BE REGARDED EITHER AS THE CHURCH ON EARTH OR THE CHURCH IN HEAVEN. They are equally the city of God "which hath foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God." It is a city strongly fortified with the walls and bulwarks of salvation, and is surrounded by a river of love, which ministers to the wants of its citizens. There God dwells in the midst of them. It is a city possessing glorious franchises and ordered government. It is not limited, like the Jewish theocracy, to one nation; it is not bounded by the frontiers of any land; it is the kingdom which is not of this world, and destined ultimately to triumph over all other kingdoms.

II. THE GENTILES ARE NO LONGER STRANGERS IN IT, like those who have no home, no property, no privileges, no interests, in common with its inhabitants. They are now naturalized citizens of the Christian commonwealth, living on terms of perfect

equality with all the other members, as to privilege, protection, and government. They are thus brought into relation, not with the Jews either of the present or the past, but with saints of all dispensations and all times; for the Church of God which Jesus "purchased with his own blood" does not date from the day of Pentecost, but covers the whole period of human history since the beginning of time. The abrogation of old theocratic distinctions leaves a new community in which "there is neither Jew nor Greek, circumcision nor uncircumcision."

III. THE HEAVENLY CITIZENSHIP HAS IMPORTANT ETHICAL BEARINGS. Those whose "citizenship is in heaven" are not to "mind earthly things" (Phil. iii. 20), but to think of the Saviour who is to be revealed with transforming power in the final resurrection. The laws of heaven are to be our guide on earth. Our calling is, therefore, a "high calling."—T. C.

Ver. 19.—*The Church a family.* The Gentiles were no longer mere inmates of the family without domestic rights, like the guests of the priests in ancient times (Lev. xxii. 10), but "members of the household of God."

I. THE CHURCH IS OFTEN LIKENED TO A FAMILY OR HOUSE, which is a much more intimate brotherhood than the city with all its precious franchises. The Church, which is the pillar and ground of the truth, is the house of God (1 Tim. iii. 15); we are Christ's house (Heb. iii. 6), and it is at this house of God that judgment often begins in the dispensations of Divine providence (1 Pet. iv. 17). This is the house of which Moses was a servant (Heb. iii. 5); therefore it was in existence before Pentecost. This is the true "household of faith" (Gal. vi. 5). 1. It has God for a Father. This relation is more tender than that of a civil ruler. And therefore we are more than fellow-citizens of the saints; we are children of God by faith in Christ Jesus (Gal. iii. 26). 2. Christ is the Firstborn and elder Brother, "a brother born for adversity," allied to us by the dearest ties of sacrifice and sympathy. 3. It is a large family, for it includes "the whole family in heaven and in earth" (ch. iii. 15)—saints old and young, of all lands, of all times. 4. We enter this family, not by birth, but by adopting grace. 5. It is a separated family, its members divided by time and space, opinion and feeling; but all the members will be at last brought home to "the house of many mansions," the "holy place not made with hands," which our Saviour has gone before to prepare.

II. THE GENTILES ARE NO LONGER SOJOURNERS, BUT MEMBERS OF THIS HOUSEHOLD OF GOD. They are not like guests, abiding for a time, but eventually going forth again. The blessing of Abraham "having come upon the Gentiles" (Gal. iii. 14), they have been born again; they have become children of God by faith (Gal. iii. 26); they have become heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ; they are "clothed with the beautiful garments of salvation;" they shall go no more out, for they have received an eternal inheritance.

III. THIS POSITION OF PRIVILEGE ought to make us jealous of our Father's honour, mindful of our Father's guidance, loving in all our relations to the members of the great household, and studiously careful to promote its harmony and prosperity.—T. C.

Vers. 21, 22.—*The Church a holy temple.* It is elsewhere called "a spiritual house," composed of "living stones," built upon him who is a living Stone laid in Zion, elect, precious, though rejected of men (1 Pet. ii. 4, 5). Each believer is a living stone, dug out of the quarry of nature, hewn by the Word and ministry, laid in the foundation, and built into the heavenly structure. The Church is God's building, not man's. There are four things observable in the apostle's account of this blessed structure.

I. IT HAS A GOOD FOUNDATION. Built on the foundation of "apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief Corner-stone." It is built on the foundation that apostles and prophets laid, namely, on Jesus Christ himself, who is at once Foundation and Corner-stone: "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Christ Jesus" (1 Cor. iii. 11). This was the Foundation which the apostle was always laying: "I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon" (1 Cor. iii. 10). But it was God himself who laid this stone in Zion: "Behold, I lay in Zion a chief Corner-stone, elect, precious" (1 Pet. ii. 6). The foundation is not, therefore, in man, but in

God, not in Rome, but in heaven. Therefore it is an indestructible building. Jesus Christ is called "the chief Corner-stone," which has its true supporting-place in the foundation, because it is the binding-stone of the building, holding two walls because it is built into both. Perhaps there is a reference to the union of Jews and Gentiles in Christ, who has made both one, and thus builds the whole number of believers into the glorious temple, and bears the weight of the whole structure.

II. IT IS FITLY FRAMED TOGETHER. It is not a mere heap or mass of heterogeneous materials. 1. The materials must be prepared for their place in the building so as to promote its unity and compactness. All the members of the Church must first be joined to Christ as the Foundation, and then cemented to one another by love. Thus their unity gives beauty as well as strength to the structure. "Happy, indeed, the stones that God chooses to be living stones in this spiritual temple; though they be hammered and hewed to be polished for it by afflictions and the inward work of mortification and repentance." 2. The members are to have each their proper place in the building. Thus only can it become a compact structure. Some have a higher, some a lower place; some are appointed to teach, others to be taught; some to lead, others to be led; some to counsel, some to execute; but all the stones are to keep their due place, and thus grow up into a holy temple, "edifying itself in love" (ch. iv. 16). The Lord requires stones of all sorts and sizes, the smallest as well as the largest, for his temple; and it ought to reconcile us to our respective positions, that it is the Lord's own hand which not only fits us into our place, but keeps us there.

III. IT IS IMPERFECT BUT STILL GROWING. "It groweth into an holy temple." It is growing by the accession of new stones, or by the addition of new members, and by the addition of new graces in the individual members. Provision is made for a vast increase in its size and height, but as it is fitly framed together in its growing dimensions, it will lose nothing in symmetry and strength by its continuous elevation.

IV. THE END OR DESIGN OF THE BUILDING. "For a habitation of God." When we build houses, it is that men may dwell in them. Thus the Church is the temple of God. "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" (1 Cor. iii. 16). "I will dwell in them, and walk in them" (2 Cor. vi. 16). Thus "we will be filled with all the fulness of God" (ch. iii. 19). Thus we have the true temple of the Father, built in the Son, inhabited in the Spirit, the offices of the three blessed Persons being distinctly pointed out: God the Father in all his fulness dwells in, fills the Church; that Church is constituted to him a holy temple in the Son; is inhabited by him in the ever-present indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

PRACTICAL LESSONS. 1. Think of the safety and glory of the church. Christ is its Foundation. All the stones are knit to the Corner-stone. It is well proportioned, because the Holy Spirit is the Architect; it is vast in its proportions, for it is spread over the earth; and it is inviolable, for it is devoted to the Lord. 2. Think of God dwelling in the Church. The Christian is an epitome of the Church. He is himself a temple of the Holy Ghost. (1) What condescension in God to dwell in human hearts! "It is a marvel that the habitation he has chosen for himself is an impure one." (2) What a fearful thing it would be to be in collision with such a God! (3) How careful we ought to be not to defile this temple! We ought to live purer lives, to breathe a sweeter air, to open our hearts to all that is heavenly. (4) What an awful thought, that the holy God dwells in our unholy hearts, watching us in our secret moments, and reading our very thoughts! (5) Yet let us remember with gratitude and love that "the high and lofty One who inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy," selects his dwelling-place "with him that is of a contrite and humble spirit."—T. C.

Vers. 1—7.—*The resurrection and ascension of the soul.* Paul's prayer for the Ephesians was, as we have seen, that they might appreciate the mighty power of God to us-ward who believe. This power was first manifested in the person and experience of Christ in raising him from the dead, in exalting him to the Father's right hand, in putting all things under his feet, and in constituting him Head of his Church. We are now to notice a parallel experience of power in the case of the believer.

I. CONSIDER THE RESURRECTION OF THE SOUL. (Vers. 1—5.) In these verses the

apostle represents our souls as by nature dead like Christ's body in the tomb. They are not sick through sin, but dead. And the death of the soul is manifested in the corruption of the nature, so that we live as the world lives, according to the devil's desires, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and becoming most deservedly the "children of wrath" like others. All this corruption of the nature is the manifestation of the death in sin. But the Spirit, who raised up Christ's body from the tomb, comes to quicken our dead souls. We are quickened together with Christ. The Father in his wondrous love works this miracle within us, so that we are raised out of death into a new life. Now, just as Jesus entered by resurrection into a new because immortal life, so we by resurrection enter into a new and immortal existence. We feel assured that we cannot die, since we have been raised into the new life with Christ. This idea of the death of the soul is found in the ancient and in the modern classics. In such authors as Plutarch, Cicero, Heraclitus, and Persius, as well as in such a modern as the poet Gautier, it may be found; but in them it is an utterance of despair. It is only Paul who can take it and show how the death can be terminated in the victory of resurrection.

II. CONSIDER THE ASCENSION OF THE SOUL. (Ver. 6.) Not only is the soul raised together with Christ, but it is "made to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." In other words, we are made to have an ascension experience as well as a resurrection experience. Now, when Christ ascended far above all principality and power, he must have entered a joyful experience such as this world could never afford. He would never have enjoyed such a delight had he lingered in a limited world like this. In the same way the risen soul is enabled to ascend into a seraphic experience, a joy in the Lord such as was never dreamed of. It is to be feared that many have experienced the spiritual resurrection who have not gone on to the experience of the ascension; in other words, they are living lives comparatively joyless. They do not live as if they were already within the golden gates and rejoicing always in the Lord. But the thing is not only possible, it is pre-eminently desirable. The world would be vastly the better of souls that had realized the ascension.

III. CONSIDER THE BELIEVER'S CONSEQUENT REIGN. (Ver. 6.) For Jesus ascended that he might occupy a throne. And we ascend in spirit that we may be kings of men. It is Christ's purpose that we should be kings and priests unto God and his Father (Rev. i. 5, 6). Now, joyful Christians cannot but influence others for good. They come to their kingdom, and others are glad to submit to their sway. They hold men by the heart and assert a proper sovereignty over others. The reign of Christ is carried out in some measure when we have learned lovingly to reign.

IV. THE PURPOSE OF SUCH SPIRITUAL GIFTS IS THAT THE EXCEEDING RICHES OF GOD'S GRACE MIGHT BE REVEALED. (Ver. 7.) For if we had never died in sin, God's mighty power in raising us would never have been appreciated. If the creatures had never fallen, who would have known the wealth of God's love and power in lifting them up again? The physical universe can only illustrate a small part of the power and love of God. It requires the moral universe as a background to set off the brightness of his redeeming mercy. It is out of a sinful world the greatest examples of Divine power shall be forthcoming. God is rich in mercy; how rich only sinners can illustrate and with some fulness appreciate. Every risen, ascended, and reigning soul is intended to be a fresh example of the exceeding riches of God's grace.—R. M. E.

Vers. 8—10.—*Salvation, its root and its fruit.* Paul now proceeds to put the gospel in a nutshell when he tells us that we are saved by grace, through faith, and unto good works. We have in these three terms the whole plan brought out. Let us look at them in their order.

I. GRACE IS THE ROOT OR CAUSE OF SALVATION. (Ver. 8.) By "grace" is meant the free, undeserved favour of God. It is etymologically the same as "gratis" and "gratuitous;" it occurs in the business phrase, "three days of grace" given in connection with the payment of a bill; it signifies therefore a Divine manifestation to which man has no title. In other words, we do not deserve salvation. We can never deserve it. No works of ours could entitle us to it. Yet we are saved by grace, by the free and sovereign favour of the Lord. It is most important that we should have clear views of the cause of salvation. Its cause is the gracious love of God. Its

cause is outside of us, and we have no part or lot in causing salvation. It is entirely of grace.

II. FAITH IS THE HAND OF THE HEART WHICH RECEIVES SALVATION. (Ver. 8.) God might conceivably save men without asking us to trust him. But would it be worth our while to get emancipated from deserved punishment to live on in perpetual suspicion? The fact is that to have any comfort in our relations with God, we must trust him. But there is no merit in trusting him. If we refuse him our trust we do him grievous wrong. This shows that trusting God is only giving him his due. Besides, the more we know ourselves the more we realize that faith just as well as salvation is his gift. Had not the Spirit come and transformed our suspicion into trust, we should not have ceased suspecting him. It is a blessed change, but the change is God's gift through the Spirit.

III. GOOD WORKS ARE THE FOREORDAINED FRUITS OF SALVATION. (Ver. 10.) A free and gratuitous salvation is supposed by some to be a dangerous and immoral doctrine. But the consequences of salvation have been all provided for. God saves men that we may serve him. Good works constitute the outcome, the dividend, the fruit which God gets from the salvation. "We are his workmanship." Just as a mechanic constructs a machine that he may get a certain amount and kind of work out of it, so God saves us that he may get a certain amount and kind of work out of us. Nor has he left it to any hap-hazard. He has foreordained the good works in which we ought to walk. He has planned our lives as believers. Bushnell wrote a famous sermon in which he tried to show that "every man's life is a plan of God." We modify the thought and recognize in every *believer's* life a plan of God. Every good work is down in God's design, it has its place, and it will exercise its influence. While, therefore, God will save no man for his good works, he saves every soul *unto* good works. They are the *fruit*, though they cannot be the *root* of salvation. Foreordination covers the effects of salvation as well as salvation itself. God's plan embraces the whole problem, and it is thoughtless to rob him of a single element in the glorious result.—R. M. E.

Vers. 11—22.—*The spiritual temple.* In the apostle's prayer for the Ephesians the power of God to us-ward who believe was illustrated first in the experience of our risen and reigning Head, and secondly in the experience of us as risen and reigning members of his mystical body. The unity of the members, however, has not been as fully brought out in the preceding verses as Paul desired, and so we have in the section now before us the subject amplified and completed mainly round the figure of a "spiritual temple." It is this main figure which we shall now keep before us. And—

I. CONSIDER THE RAW MATERIAL OUT OF WHICH THE SPIRITUAL TEMPLE IS TO BE BUILT. (Vers. 11—17.) This is Gentiles and Jews, the Uncircumcision and the Circumcision, those far off from God and those that were nigh. The Gentiles were "without God" (*ἔθνη ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ*), by which we are not to understand "atheists" in the sense of disbelieving the Divine existence, but simply "without God in the world," as men who cling to the world in its corporate capacity, wherein it ignores the Divine sovereignty and lives an alien citizenship. The Jews, on the other hand, were nominally citizens of the sacred commonwealth, and the covenants of promise were in their hands, and they had hope in consequence. Yet the raw material in both cases was rough and unsightly until the Lord undertook its preparation for the temple wall. Both were under sin, both had to be redeemed from evil, taken out of the quarry of nature and fitted by Divine grace for their place in the building.

II. THE FOUNDATION OF THE TEMPLE. (Ver. 20.) The spiritual temple is here said to be built on the "foundation of the apostles and prophets." This, of course, signifies that it is upon the *revelation* God made through apostles and prophets that the edifice is erected. It is not upon speculations or dreams, but upon "the sure Word of prophecy," that the structure rests. Without the witnesses in the inspired Word, we should have no basis for spiritual unity and no foundation for edification. Hence our deep indebtedness to the sacred writers. We cannot do without "the Book;" we should only be building on the sand.

III. THE CORNER-STONES. (Ver. 20.) The next consideration here is the corner-stones. Now, Christ is called here the "chief Corner-stone," that without which the

two walls could not be bound into one. He lies at the foundation of the structure, the massive stone, so to speak, which unites the two great walls. Above him and upon him are laid other but minor corner-stones; for every Christian soul who longs to promote unity among men is so far a corner-stone in the great building. Hence the minor honour of being elements of union is given unto Christ-like souls. But Jesus is the indispensable Corner-stone. And the apostle shows how Jesus is the bond of union between Jew and Gentile. Both as under sin needed an atoning Saviour; but only one Saviour and one blood were provided. The Saviour of the Jews was the Saviour of the Gentiles also. Thus both Jews and Gentiles were brought of necessity to the one Saviour; the one sacrifice on Calvary atoned for both; the one blood blotted out the transgression of both; the one crucifixion reconciled both to God, and peace produced between both and God secured at the same time peace with each other. Jew and Gentile are united and brought nigh to God by the one blessed Saviour.

IV. THE UNITY OF THE TEMPLE. (Vers. 18, 19.) The seemingly discordant elements are reduced to real harmony, and the unity of the whole is realized in the Spirit which pervades all hearts. For when the Gentiles and the Jews realize access unto the Father by one Spirit, then the alienation has passed away, and citizenship and the family feeling have supervened. It thus appears that "Christian prayer is a witness of Christian citizenship." We squabble about differences until we are united at the throne. It is the united prayer which really is felt to unite believers. Alienation cannot survive union at the throne of the heavenly grace.

V. THE AUGUST GUEST WHO INHABITS THE TEMPLE. (Vers. 21, 22.) Every temple is erected for some god as guest. It may only enshrine a phantom or an idol, which is nothing in the world, and yet the idea in temple-building always is the enshrining of a god. Now, this temple, whose stones are the souls of religious men, and whose unity is realized in religious exercises, is meant to be the dwelling-place of the Holy Ghost. He does not dwell in temples made with hands, but he dwells in those temples which are made without hands. The personalities of saintly men become his glorious home, and he condescends to dwell within us richly and to fill us with his fullness. It is the unifying power of his presence that moulds all into one. The temple *grows from within*, like every growth in nature. The guest determines the character of the temple. The Holy Ghost secures a holy temple. To this unity Paul desires the Ephesians to come.—R. M. E.

Vers. 1—10.—*Association with Christ.* The concluding thought of the first chapter was the resurrection and exaltation of Christ. In order now to bring out how they were benefited thereby, he calls up to them their *original condition*. He shows them the pit out of which they have been dug, the rock out of which they have been hewn. In the first and second verses he has special reference to Gentile Christians, in the third verse he includes Jewish Christians in his description.

I. GENTILE CHRISTIANS. 1. *They were dead.* "And you did he quicken, when ye were dead." It is a comprehensive word for the evil of their condition. There is a natural condition for plants, which they lose in their decay. There is a natural condition for animals, which they lose in their death. So there is a natural condition for rational beings, which they lose in what we call *spiritual death*. And, as there is nothing higher in kind than spiritual life, so there is nothing more dreadful than spiritual death. It is not extinction, but it is a condition against nature, on the ground of an immortal existence. It is not loving God with our whole soul and strength and mind, but living at enmity with him; and how wearing out to contend with our Maker! It is not loving our neighbour as ourselves, but seeking our own selfish ends; and how narrowing is this to our souls! 2. *Their deadness was caused by themselves.* "Through your trespasses and sins." If there is any difference between these two words, it is that the former refers more to overt transgressions, while the latter is inclusive of evil thoughts that have only been entertained in the heart. When Adam and Eve overtly transgressed in eating of the fruit, death at once passed upon them in the loss of confidence in God, of unconsciousness, of ingenuousness, of devotedness to each other. And the act was not long in bearing bitter fruit in the hate which led Cain to take a brother's life. Overt transgression makes matters worse, in the evil that is wrought on others, in the entanglements to which it leads. At the same time, it is true that evil

imaginations that never find expression in words or acts have a deadening effect on the soul. They may indicate daring rebellion against God; and, even though they are only vain thoughts that lodge in the mind, they are not there without the spreading of a baneful influence over the life. 3. *They were only causes of deadness.* "Wherein aforetime ye walked." In trespasses and sins they walked. Their life was one continual trespassing and sinning. Their fountain was constantly sending forth bitter water. Their tree only brought forth evil fruit. And how could it be otherwise, seeing that they were corrupted at the very centre of their being? There were some of their acts that were better than others, but none that were thoroughly right in principle or motive. All their acts had a fatal defect, and many of them, as the first of Romans shows, had a positive vileness. 4. *They stood related to this world.* "According to the course of this world." This world is opposed to the world as it should be, or the kingdom of God among men. It is the world content with itself, and seeking to be independent of God. And as the kingdom of God has an age or ages for its holy development, so this world, it is implied here, has an age for its unholy development. For the word translated "course" is properly "age." In the mysterious providence of God evil has scope for its development. "The mystery of iniquity doth work." And when it is said here that they once walked according to the course of this world, the meaning is that their characters had not the normal form of the kingdom, but had one or other of those abnormal forms which belong to the world. 5. *They stood related to the head of evil.* "According to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that now worketh in the sons of disobedience." He is here called *the prince of the power of the air*. He is a prince with other evil spirits under him. *Evil is divisive*; his then must be a mighty, prince-like influence that he keeps them united under him for evil ends. He is dependent on God, a mere instrument in his hand, at his absolute disposal, as it is with every creature; but he is allowed, through his emissaries, to have great power upon earth. The singular epithet is applied to him here in allusion to his surrounding us with temptation as the atmosphere surrounds the earth. As the air borders on the earth, so there is a sphere bordering on our spirits, subtle, invisible like air, through which evil suggestions can readily be conveyed to us. Or it may be that the evil spirits have an affinity to air which they do not have to grosser matter, so that it is their *haunt* within this region. There is here what we cannot understand; but we can understand this—temptation being skilfully presented to our minds, against which we must invoke the skill of another, else we are taken in the tempter's meshes. He is further called *the prince of the spirit that now worketh in the sons of disobedience*. It is not usual to connect a spirit, or principle, with its prince. But he is undoubtedly the principal representative of the spirit of disobedience. In him disobedience takes its most virulent form. The object on which he is bent is to spite God, to thwart his holy ends. This is the spirit which he as its original source breathes into his subordinates, and which they in turn under his direction seek to breathe into men. And those in whom it finds a sphere of operation are called *the children of disobedience*. They stand related to the evil principle as its unclean progeny. It was from *heathendom* that the description here was taken. It was very much man left to himself. It was the truest representation of what "this world" is. It was Satan having his own way. It was rampant disobedience. For though the heathen world was under the Divine providence, yet it was without special *helps*, without special *checks*. Depraved human nature was allowed to bring out its own ignorance of God, its own profanity, its own licentiousness. It was from that heathen world that these Gentile Christians had been taken. There they could see what they once had been. But, lest the Jewish Christians might think that it had been better with them, he proceeds to bring them under the same description in respect of their original condition.

II. JEWISH CHRISTIANS ALSO. (Ver. 3.) "Among whom we also all once lived in the lusts of our flesh, doing the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest." Especially are they classed with Gentile Christians, as having originally been children of disobedience. *Among whom we also all once lived.* Their disobedience appeared in their living in the lusts of the flesh. Those lusts that had their root in the flesh, or unrenewed nature, they ought to have brought into subjection to reason or the will of God; but, instead of that, they lived in them. This is further described as "doing the desires of the flesh and of the mind." Evil wishes

spring from the flesh; but in order to be gratified they require the consent of the mind, and so they become desires, not only of the flesh, but of the mind. *And were by nature the children of wrath, even as the rest.* "By nature" is a qualifying clause. The Jews could not be spoken of in the same terms as the Gentiles without qualification. For they were different in having a covenant position, in having Divine helps vouchsafed to them, in being placed under special training. And though they did testify to depravity in their frequent rebellions, yet was there alongside a work of grace, which showed itself conspicuously in some. It could only be said, then, that by nature, that is, apart from covenant grace, they were the children of wrath, even as the rest. What a testimony is there here to universal depravity! All have the Divine displeasure imprinted on their nature. In the condemning voice of conscience there is an echo, often very faint, of the condemnation of God. Our evil tendencies, which we so soon exhibit, are tokens that God is angry with us. His righteous sentence has gone forth upon us, even in our present condition. This is unpalatable truth, but it agrees with the facts. It is well that we should keep it in mind, in order that we may be humbled by it, and in order that we may realize the forces against which we have to struggle.

III. OUR SALVATION. 1. *Its explanation.* "But God, being rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead through our trespasses." The *mercy* is mentioned first, as standing in closest connection with the miserable state which has been described. And as their former state was described in strong terms, so now is there set over against it the superlative quality of the mercy. He is not content with the expression, "God in his mercy." That language is too bare in view of what they once were. So he applies his common epithet, "rich." "God, being rich in mercy." The mercy is a particular outgo of the Divine love, viz. toward sinners. So he traces it up to the more general feeling, which leads him to seek the good, and nothing but the good, of all his creatures whatsoever. And to this in turn he applies another common epithet, "great." "The great love wherewith he loved us." And the greatness of the Divine love is here presented under a special aspect. In the fifth of Romans it is said, "God commendeth his love towards us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." The thought is very similar here. "Even when we were dead through our trespasses he quickened us." Stress is laid upon the *moment* of the Divine movement. When we were dead and could do nothing for ourselves, that was the time for the going forth of the great love of God in rich mercy toward us. And it is in this connection that we are to bring in the words within brackets, "By grace have ye been saved." For, though he has it in his mind to magnify the Divine grace further on, yet now, having the opportunity to make a point, he cannot let it pass. And the incidental way in which he brings it in shows the great importance which he attached to that doctrine. 2. *Its nature.* "Quickened us together, with Christ (by grace have ye been saved), and raised us up with him, and made us to sit with him in the heavenly places, in Christ Jesus." It is set forth in relation to our previous deadness. And it will be observed that the description here is connected with a certain historical point. The idea is that we were dead up to the time when Christ was quickened. We were dead, even as Christ was dead in the tomb. Nay, more, we were dead *with Christ* in the tomb. For it was as our Representative that he was lying there. And when he was quickened, it was as our Representative too. He was quickened, not for himself, but for us whom he represented. And therefore it can be said that, when the life-giving power went forth upon him in the grave, we were quickened with him. And it did not stop there; but when he was raised up we were raised up with him, in the whole breadth that language can bear. And not only so, but the consummation applies to us too. It is not indeed said that we were made to sit at the right hand of God, as is said of Christ in the first chapter and twentieth verse. But it is said that we were made to sit with Christ in the heavenly places. Even here on earth we are sitting with Christ in the heavenly places. We are sitting there in him as our Head. That is no fancy, but the actual language which is applied to us by an inspired apostle. Oh, what a glorious privilege is conferred on us! How does it become us to be thankful, and to be humbled! Let us, in our life, rise to the height of our position. Let us not be as creeping on the earth, but as sitters with Christ in the heavenly places. 3. *A purpose served by our salvation.* "That in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus." The language is applicable

to after ages on earth. There is encouragement to us, even now, in the fact that such kindness was shown to Ephesians who had been dead through trespasses and sins. But the language is also applicable to the eons of which the Scripture speaks beyond this life. For if there is not room there for sinners being encouraged, there certainly is room for the demonstration, the more complete realization, of the Divine grace. It will be one of the lessons of those ages to learn how much in our history on earth we were individually indebted to grace. Here again, in the fulness of emotion, he gives an ample characterization of the grace, the exceeding riches of his grace, in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. The latter expression has reference to benefits conferred, viz. our quickening. (1) *The exceeding riches of his grace appears in the complete exclusion of human merit.* "For by grace have ye been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, that no man should glory." Our salvation is given to the subjective disposition of faith. It is when we believe, that the union between our souls and Christ takes place, and the first, not the completed, quickening goes forth upon us. But this believing does not make us the authors, or give us the merit, of our salvation. It, that is to say, our salvation, is the gift of God. And believing is just taking it as a Divine gift, taking it as that for which we have given nothing. Christ has paid the full price for it; he has paid the uttermost farthing, and so we can receive it as a free gift. But works are out of the question; for it is just as impossible for a dead man to rise and do the works which he was wont to do, as it is for the dead through trespasses and sins to work out their salvation. Divine help is the plainest necessity, and to such an extent that there is no room for boasting. (2) *The exceeding riches of his grace appears in good works following on the Divine workmanship.* "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God afore prepared that we should walk in them." "An honest man's the noblest work of God." A Christian is certainly the noblest work of God. "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus." We are the result of all the means that God has used. It may be seen in us, as saved persons, what Christ has done by his blood. And we are not his workmanship *because of* works which we were afterwards to do; but we were created "for good works, which God afore prepared that we should walk in them." It may be said of a tree that it is afore prepared for the fruit which it is to bear. It may be said of a vessel that it is afore prepared for the uses which it is to serve. But as the fruit is not the cause of the tree, nor the uses served by a vessel the cause of the vessel, so neither can it be said that the works we perform are the cause of the Divine workmanship that has gone before. Our salvation, then, is wholly of grace. — R. F.

Vers. 11—22.—*Union of Jews and Gentiles in the Christian Church.* "Wherefore remember, that aforetime." The Ephesian Christians are reminded of what they were "aforetime," that is, before they received the gospel. It is a good exercise of memory for us all to go back on what we once were. For we did not all receive the gospel when it was first presented to us. Many of us who now believe were for years in a state of indifference. How well, then, does it become us to "remember" our former unconverted condition! The memory of what we were aforetime should make us humble and thoughtful, and quicken us in present duty.

I. *THOSE THAT WERE GENTILES BY NAME.* "Ye, the Gentiles in the flesh." The name "Gentiles," both in the Hebrew and in the Greek, is "nations." It was applied by the Jews to all nations except their own, just as we distinguish Christians and heathen. The Jews were one nation over against many; and though Christians are relatively more numerous than were the Jews, still they are the few and the heathen the multitudinous. But the apostle has reference to what the Gentiles were "in the flesh," and so he applies a second name to them.

II. *THOSE THAT WERE THE UNCIRCUMCISION.* "Who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called Circumcision, in the flesh, made by hands." The Jews were distinguished by a bodily mark. It is referred to in the language "in the flesh, made by hands." By this surgical mark on them, they were known as God's. They were therefore properly called "the Circumcision," as all others who had not the mark were properly called "the Uncircumcision." And when the apostle uses the noticeable language here, "Who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called Circumcision,"

he is not to be regarded as reflecting on the distinction, or on the names founded on it. He is simply exercising a little caution. Those who called themselves Circumcision, as superior to those whom they called Uncircumcision, should have answered to the name. But he will not say that circumcision in the flesh was also circumcision in the spirit. There is often this distinction to be drawn between what we are called and what we are. We are Christians in name; but are we also Christians in truth? We have many honourable names applied to us as Christians; but do we answer to them? Is there a broad line of distinction between us and men of the world in our characters?

III. THEIR BEARING THE NAME OF THE UNCIRCUMCISION IMPLIED MUCH. 1. *Separate from Christ.* "That ye were at that time separate from Christ." They were not, indeed, without some connection with Christ. For it is only on the ground of his suretyship and work that men have a lifetime on earth, brief as it is. There was, therefore, indebtedness to Christ, even on the part of the uncircumcised; but they were separate from him in that they did not have him as their Messiah. There were Greeks and Romans that had more culture than Jews; where they came behind was in their having no Messianic privilege. There was no intimation to them of a Saviour who was to come into the world. There was no presentation in type to them of the atonement that was to be made for sin. They were, therefore, excluded from such saving relation to Christ as was open to the Jews. The want of Christ is still the greatest want of the heathen world. He is not made known to them for their salvation. The radical defect in an unconverted man's position is that he is out of Christ, and so has none to give him shelter and help. 2. *Separate from the Church.* "Alienated from the commonwealth of Israel." Israel was a commonwealth, as constituted, not for the good of a section, but for the good of all alike. It was constituted, not for mere political purposes, but for religious purposes principally. It was the Church more than the state. And the great privilege which every member of the commonwealth enjoyed was nearness to God. He was allowed to draw near to him and worship him in his temple. Now, when the Jews were thus constituted into a Divine commonwealth, the Gentiles were kept at an outside. The arrangement we know was for the ultimate benefit of the whole race; but none the less deplorable was their condition as aliens, or persons out of privilege. There is no arrangement now by which any are excluded from the Church of God, and yet it is with many as though such an arrangement existed. There are some, in Christian lands, who are alienated from the Christian Church, it may be, to a certain extent owing to the faults of its members; but can it be wholly put down to that, when there is in the gospel such a representation of goodness as ought to attract all who are not prejudiced against goodness? "Strangers from the covenants of the promise." There were promises to the Gentiles, but they did not pertain to them who lived before the coming of the Messiah. The Jews had the covenants of promise, viz. the covenants made to the patriarchs, founded, not on what had been effected for them, but on what was to be effected for them in the future, and which was promised. These covenants were their charter as a Church, what they could fall back upon as the reason for their existence. To these covenants the Gentiles were strangers; they had no share in them; theirs was an uncovenanted position. The covenant is not founded now on promise; it is founded on accomplished fact, it has been sealed with Christ's blood. None now occupy an uncovenanted position, such as the old heathen world did; and yet it is with many as though no change had taken place. 3. *Miserable condition in the world.* "Having no hope." Not having the "covenants" to go upon, they had no hope at all. Reason did not suffice to give them a hope beyond the grave. The hereafter was not a certainty, but only a vague conjecture. It was not lightened up as it was to Old Testament saints. We Christians have a rich hope. It is the hope of a glorious resurrection, and of a perfected and endless life with Christ as our risen Saviour. When such a hope has been brought to the world, how sad that there are so many in heathen lands who are looking forward into a dark and cheerless future! And sadder far it is that there are those in Christian lands who place no value on the life and immortality that have been brought to light by the gospel. "Without God in the world." Out of the Church, they were in the world. And the great evil of their being in the self-seeking, God-forgetting world was that there they were unbefriended by God. They could not live in the sunshine of his love, for they did not know him to be the God of love. It was a loss for which nothing could compensate. What a gain would it be to the heathen of our day to conceive of God as

having given his Son for them ! And yet, of those who have the opportunity, how few enter into the felicity of the enjoyment of God's love !

IV. *THEIR ALTERED POSITION.* "But now in Christ Jesus ye that once were far off are made nigh in the blood of Christ." God had his earthly dwelling-place in the temple at Jerusalem. The Gentiles were literally far off from this centre, compared with the Jews. But the distance in space was only emblematic of the moral distance at which they stood from God. They were at a distance, in their being out of harmony with his character. They were at a distance, in the displeasure with which he regarded their actions. But in Christ, in his becoming the personal historical Jesus, all this was altered. They were brought into a position of nearness to God. Christ effected this by his blood. The blood which was shed on Jewish altars was only for Jews. The Jewish high priest represented the twelve tribes, but no more. The blood of Christ had a wider reference. It was for Gentiles as well as for Jews. And that being the case, Gentiles were kept no longer at a distance.

V. *JEWS AND GENTILES BROUGHT INTO AMICABLE RELATIONS.* "For he is our Peace, who made both one, and brake down the middle wall of partition, having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; that he might create in himself of the twain one new man, so making peace." There is a change from "ye" to "our." There is a difference of opinion as to the extent of meaning belonging to the words, "he is our Peace." It is admitted that, in the two verses here, the idea of *peace between both* receives decided expression. But some think that there is also to be brought in, though subordinately, the idea of the *peace of both toward God*. The objection to that is, that it is superfluous. For already it has been said of the Gentiles that obstacles have been removed out of their way, and afterward there is the thought of both being reconciled to God, and also of peace, *i.e.* reconciliation to God, being preached to both. It seems much simpler, then, here to confine the thought to *peace between both*. Christ is this Peace in his own person. In him there is neither Jew nor Gentile. His work is described as making both (parts) one; and the manner of his doing it as *breaking down the middle wall of partition*. It seems warrantable to explain this by an intended reference to the arrangement in the temple. There was there a separating of Jews from Gentiles. There was a wall or boundary beyond which Gentiles were forbidden to advance. As by the rending of the veil was signified the opening of the way into the holiest of all, so by what is described as the breaking down of the middle wall of partition we are to understand that Jews and Gentiles are brought into the same nearness to God. The middle wall of partition is explained to be *the law of commandments contained in ordinances*. The Mosaic Law was, on one side, a system of separation. It was like a wall enclosing the Jews and shutting off the Gentiles. It forbade all familiar intercourse with the Gentiles. As Christ was called Peace, so the Mosaic system is here made synonymous with enmity or estrangement. The Jews were not to hate other nations (for Jehovah was the God of all the earth, and they were told of a time when all nations were to be blessed); but, as things were, they were necessarily separated in feeling from them. And the Gentiles, on their side, were not slow to hate the Jews for their exclusiveness. The Mosaic system, then, in its incidence especially on the Gentiles, was enmity. And this enmity, we are told here, Christ abolished in his flesh. The Jewish Law he fulfilled, and, by fulfilling, abolished, so that it was no more a separation, or cause of estrangement. The rending of the veil pointed to a rending of his flesh. So the breaking down of the wall suggests a breaking in his flesh. It was a breaking, it is further suggested, that, Jew and Gentile perishing, there might rise out of both a new creation, *viz.* *Christian*. "That he might create in himself of the twain one new man." The breaking thus resulted in a peacemaking: "So making peace."

VI. *HOW THIS WAS SHOWN.* 1. *In their being placed in one Church as reconciled to God by the same means.* "And might reconcile them both in one body unto God through the cross, having slain the enmity thereby." There is an advance from "one new man" to "one body." "Christian" was created; but it was in order that a *body* of Christians might be formed. In this body Jews and Gentiles might very well be together; for they had the deepest ground of union in their both being reconciled to God. This equality extended even to the instrument of reconciliation, *viz.* the Cross. When they were thus reconciled to God by the same means, "the enmity was slain;"

and there was no need for *two Churches*—the Jewish Church continuing, and a Gentile Church forming a separate community. But there was the clearest case for one Church, viz. the Christian Church, containing both. 2. *In their having the same gospel of peace preached to them.* “And he came and preached peace to you that were far off, and peace to them that were nigh.” When it is said that Christ came and preached peace, we are to understand that it was under his authority and through his instruments. In comparison with what he himself had to do with it, others might very well be left out of account. There were obvious reasons for the clause in the parting command, “beginning from Jerusalem.” But that only, as is implied, indicated the point of departure. And it was the same gospel that was to be proclaimed to all alike: “And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his Name unto all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem.” So here, with a certain emphasis in the repetition of the word “peace,” as the purport of the message (to be understood in its God-ward sense)—“peace to you that were far off, and peace to them that were nigh.” If, then, the gospel was preached to them in the same Name and in the same terms, they might well be “one body.” 3. *In their having, as reconciled, the same spiritual privileges.* (Ver. 18.) (1) *Access unto the Father.* “For through him we both have our access in one Spirit unto the Father.” To Old Testament saints God was not unknown as Father. “I said, Thou shalt call me, My Father.” But it is true that this is the distinction and favourite designation of God in the New Testament. And the Messiah is correspondingly the Son of God. The relationship stands out as it did not do before, and gives peculiar pathos to the whole story of redemption. Sonship too becomes a more blessed reality, as it was a new-gained right. The idea here is that both could exercise the right of sonship in going to the Father and asking his blessing. Why, then, should they be apart? (2) *Same Introducer.* In Eastern courts there was one who acted the part of introducer into the presence of royalty. This part Christ performs for us. He not only acted for us on the cross, but, on the ground of his sacrifice, he still intercedes for us. And every time we go into the presence of God we need his services, if we are to be acceptable. This part Christ performed for both alike. (3) *Assistance of the same Spirit.* There is not one Spirit with Jewish proclivities, and another Spirit with Gentile proclivities. But there is the one Spirit, making their interests one, and putting common desires into their hearts when approaching God. The equality thus extends along the whole line.

VII. PRACTICAL CONCLUSION, IN WHICH THE EPHESIAN CHRISTIANS ARE ADDRESSED IN A THREEFOLD CHARACTER. 1. *They are members of the spiritual commonwealth.*

“So then ye are no more strangers and sojourners, but ye are fellow-citizens with the saints.” “Fellow-citizens with the saints.” They are citizens in relation to God as Head of the commonwealth. “They are no more strangers and sojourners.” There were those who stood in this relation to the Grecian states. They did not live on Grecian soil, or they lived on it without possessing the rights of “citizens.” Such had been the relation of the Ephesians to the Jewish commonwealth. But now they were fully enrolled and recognized as citizens in that commonwealth in which were incorporated both Jews and Gentiles. The members of this commonwealth are designated “saints,” as were the Ephesians in the opening of the Epistle. It points to their bearing a certain character, and having certain duties to perform. But the leading idea is the *privileges of citizens*. And these may be particularized. (1) *There is the privilege of good laws.* In a civil community, laws are good where as much liberty of the subject is secured as is consistent with the public good, and where the interests of all classes are equally regarded. In this land we have been blessed in large measure with good laws. And our legislators are always trying to work out more perfectly the idea of justice. In the spiritual community, we do not need to concern ourselves about the improvement of the laws. They have had the character of *finality* from the beginning. We never need to distinguish here between law and equity. We can feel that the whole Divine dealing is characterized by the utmost fairness, reasonableness. “I know the thoughts which I think concerning you.” (2) *There is the privilege of protection.* A British subject, so long as he keeps within the laws, has really the whole British power at his back. If a foreign state allows him to be trampled upon, he can claim protection from home. Such cases not unfrequently have arisen, and, where redress has not been given, there has been resort to punishment. A member of the Divine commonwealth who is possessed with its

spirit has the theocratic power at his back—has, it may be said, ten legions of angels at his command, as the Master had. “Whoso toucheth you toucheth the apple of mine eye.” There was this protection enjoyed by the Israelites very remarkably in connection with their going up to their feasts. And, in the Christian commonwealth, we can feel there is a wall of protection round about us. We can boldly say, “If the Lord is on our side, who are all they that can be against us?” (3) *There is the privilege of petitioning.* It is a fundamental principle of the British constitution that every British subject has the right of petitioning the sovereign or Houses of Parliament. There is the same right vested in those who belong to the commonwealth of God. This right Daniel exercised when he made his petition three times a day. 2. *They are members of the household of God.* “And of the household of God.” The relation in the family is closer than in the state. The theocracy was as a house in relation to which they had been strangers or sojourners; but now they had the full rights of members of the family. (1) *There is the right of a place in the household.* “The servant abideth not in the house for ever; but the son abideth ever.” There is no breaking up of the household of God, such as is witnessed in earthly families. There is no banishment, such as there was from the household of David. (2) *There is the right of intercourse.* Not the right of interview, let it be noticed, but the right of living in the Father’s presence, and, in communion with him, entering into his thoughts and plans. “The servant” knoweth not what his master doeth. But of this intercourse we have not yet the full manifestation. (3) *There is the right of being provided for.* “If any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.” God holds himself bound by covenant to make all suitable provision for us, here and hereafter. And in our Father’s house there is enough and to spare. 3. *They are part of the temple of God.* We are really subjects and really sons, but we are only compared to stones. It is a comparison by which are brought out some important truths. (1) *Apostles and prophets are foundation-stones.* “Being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets.” The latter, in accordance with ch. iii. 5 and ch. iv. 11, are regarded as New Testament prophets. It is supposed that the meaning of the language, “the foundation of the apostles and prophets,” must be ruled by 1 Cor. iii. 10, where Christ is called the only Foundation. But, apart from the consideration that a figure does not always need to be used in the same way, the sense in which the apostles and prophets are the foundation is supported by Peter being called the Rock, and also by the twelve foundations being identified with the twelve apostles. There is nothing derogatory in such an interpretation to Christ, to whom in the connected clause is given the place of pre-eminence in the foundation. All that we are to understand is that, in what they had of Christ in their life and teaching, they were stones on which others were laid, and they were not stones far up in the building, but were at the very foundation of the Ephesian Church. Nay, they were foundation-men for the Christian Church as a whole, and it can be said that we are *builted on them*. And they were men that subserved the Divine purpose well. (2) *Christ Jesus himself is the chief Corner-stone.* “Christ Jesus himself being the chief Corner-stone.” Having said so much of the subordinates, he could not omit saying this of the Master. They were only ordinary stones of the foundation; but Christ was the chief Stone of the corner, not only supporting, but combining. He was a Stone disallowed by the Jewish builders. He was to be of no use in the Church or theocracy with which they had to do. And yet it was, in the wonderful working of God, in the very disallowing of him by these builders that he became the chief Stone of the corner. It is entirely owing to him as cause that a temple of God is being erected, each stone a saved soul. (3) *There are many buildings, but only one temple.* “In whom each several building, fitly framed together, groweth into a holy temple in the Lord.” It will be seen that, in the Revised translation, there is a change from “all the building” to “each several building.” It is admitted that for the latter there is a necessity of scholarship; but for the former there is supposed to be a necessity of thought. It does not appear, however, that the naturalness and beauty of thought suffer by the translation which the Revisers have adopted. The key to the understanding of it seems to be Matt. xxiv. 1. His disciples came to him to show him *the buildings of the temple*. Here the very word is used in the plural. There were parts that might have formed buildings by themselves. And

if we think of the time when these buildings were going up together, extending in all directions, different sets of builders being employed at different points, would there not have been appropriateness in saying that the buildings were growing into, or toward, a holy temple? These Ephesians knew what a massive imposing structure was, in their temple which covered an immense area. And such is the Church of God, as it is now going forward in the world. Buildings, each with its set of builders, and they are growing, not into separate temples, but into one holy temple. Let us go out with the Master and view them, and form some idea of the imposing structure it is to be.

(4) *The temple takes its whole conformation from Christ.* "In whom ye also are builded together." (a) *Each several building in its parts.* The idea of regulation is brought out in the word which is translated "fitly framed together." "Joint" and "reason" both go into the word. There is not a mere putting of parts together, but there is a jointing as in the human body, and a jointing moreover that displays reason. It is in Christ as Corner-stone that this is done. He, then, is the reason or thought of God (Logos he is called), according to which the various parts of the building are put together. It is on this thoughtful connecting of the parts that the stability of a building, which is a main excellence, depends. "A noble craft is that of mason: a good building will last longer than most books, than one book out of a million" (Carlyle).

(b) *The several buildings as a whole.* Regulation here also is pointed to in the word "grows." For there is a type according to which every living thing grows (which is from the Logos, by whom all things are made). So also is there a plan or distinct thought (in the mind of the Architect) according to which the buildings, separately proceeding, are made to "grow" into a holy temple. This also is in the *Lord*. The whole connecting of the spiritual structure belongs to him, and is shadowed forth by his being Corner-stone.

(5) *The temple is for the habitation of God.* "For a habitation of God in the Spirit." In the Revised translation there is an easy transition from the twenty-first verse to the twenty-second verse, from "each several building" to the Ephesian Church. That Church was one of the buildings. It was designed with a view to a habitation of God. But any one Church is too narrow for the dwelling-place of God. And so the Ephesians are reminded in the word which is employed that they were only a building along with other buildings—all of which are needed to make up *the habitation of God*. How intimate the union between God and his people that they are as a house in which he dwells! We are the habitation of God in the Spirit who puts all holy thoughts within us. "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?"—R. F.

Vers. 1—10.—*Gospel reformation great and gracious.* "And you hath he quickened," etc. This passage, though its language is somewhat obscure, sets forth most manifestly *the greatness and graciousness of gospel reformation*. The gospel is a reformatory system; it is revolutionary in its spirit and its aim. It uproots the noxious in life, and plants the wholesome. It pulls down the corrupt and builds up the holy. It burns up man's old moral heavens and creates new ones, "wherein dwelleth righteousness." It reforms society by reforming the individual man; it reforms the individual by regenerating his spirit, and making him a new creature in Christ Jesus. It works from the centre to the circumference. Observe—

I. *THE GREATNESS OF GOSPEL REFORMATION.* The greatness of the change it effects in mankind will be seen if we consider two things which are so prominently set forth in this passage. 1. *The state of man preceding its work.* There are several striking expressions in this passage indicating the original depraved condition of sinners, their condition before the gospel touches them. (1) They are *morally dead*. "Dead in [through] trespasses and sins." What is moral death? Not insensibility, for sinners feel; not inactivity, for sinners act. What, then? Destitution of the *true* principle of moral life. What is that? *Supreme love to God*. He is the true Life of the soul. Humanity has lost it, and it is dead. Corporeal death is a separation of the soul from the body, moral death is the separation of the soul from godly love. (2) They are *practically worldly*. "They walked according to the course of this world." What is the "course of this world"? Carnal, selfish, devilish. The spirit of the world is their inspiration, the maxims of the world their law. (3) They are *Satanically ruled*. "The prince of the power of the air" works in them. He rules and fashions them to

his purpose. (4) They are *wickedly associated*. "Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past." Their social natures are so perverted that they are linked with the corrupt; all their social alliances are false and impure. (5) They are *carnally debased*. "In the lusts of the flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh." The body with its gross impulses dominates over the soul; they are "carnally sold under sin." Their souls are animalized. (6) They are *perilously situated*. "Children of wrath." Where is the wrath? It is of their own creation. "They treasure up wrath." From the eternal law of retribution their sins must bring on their ruin. 2. *The state of man succeeding its work*. The passage teaches that they are brought by the gospel into the most vital connection with him who is the embodiment, the standard, and the medium of all human excellence, "the Lord Jesus Christ." (1) *His life is theirs*. "Quickened us together with Christ." That love which is the life of the soul has been imparted. This life is his life. "Together with him." They are quickened by his ideas, with his Spirit, with his aim. (2) *His resurrection is theirs*. They are "raised"—raised from the grave of carnality, worldliness, and moral corruption, and their resurrection is with him. "Raised us up together." Christ's resurrection is not merely the instrumental cause of their spiritual resurrection, but its inspiration and its type. (3) *His exaltation is theirs*. They are made to "sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." They are morally exalted—exalted in their power over themselves and over circumstances; exalted in their sympathies, ideas, and aims; exalted in their fellowship. They are in "heavenly places" now, their "citizenship is in heaven." All this exaltation is enjoyed together with Christ. (4) *His character is theirs*. "They are created in Christ Jesus unto good works." God has recast their character; he has moulded it after the ideal embodied in Jesus Christ. The general meaning of all these expressions is thorough *Christianization*. Man, after the gospel reformation has been effected, is like Christ in spirit and character. "He is conformed to the image of Christ." How *great* the change! how thorough! how sublime! How infinitely transcending all the reformations of men! This is the reformation that is wanted; this is the reformation that every true philanthropist should strenuously advocate and zealously promote.

II. *THE GRACIOUSNESS OF GOSPEL REFORMATION*. What is the great, originating, efficient cause of this glorious moral reformation? The text answers the question. "God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ." Instrumental causes, such as the Word of God, gospel ministry, Christian example and influence, are many, but eternal grace is the cause which originates all and blesses all. The passage indicates four things concerning this Divine grace. 1. *It is great*. It is ascribed to the richness of mercy and the greatness of love. "God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love," etc. God's love is the spring of all his activities; it is as deep as his own heart; it is as infinite as himself. "It passeth knowledge."

"O Love! the one sun! O Love! the one sea!
What life has begun that breathes not in thee?
Thy rays have no limit, thy waves have no shore;
Thou giv'st without merit to worlds evermore."

2. *It is mighty*. It quickens, raises, exalts, recreates human souls. It is as mighty as the power that raised Christ from the dead. How mighty is that power that thoroughly Christianizes even one soul! No power but the power of God can do that. "Not by might, nor by power." 3. *It is manifestable*. "In the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus." The conversion of every one is *designed* to manifest it. The conversion of the sinner, though a good in itself, is not an ultimate end; the event has remote issues, ulterior points, bearings and relations interminable. "Ages to come;" intelligences that will rise thousands of years in the future will study and adore the infinite grace of God in the spiritual reformation of mankind. "Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show forth all long-suffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting" (1 Tim. i. 16). 4. *It is unmeritorious*. "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works." The expression, "not of works," does not mean, of course, that men are to do nothing. This would be contrary to the general teaching of Scrip-

ture, contrary also to the constitution of the soul and the nature of the work. Man is so constituted that no moral change can be effected in him irrespective of his own efforts. He must work. All that the expression means is that man's works are not the *cause*. "By grace are ye saved through faith." But if faith is required, and it is an undoubted necessity, where is the freeness of the grace? Elsewhere Paul says that "it is of faith, that it may be of grace." Two remarks will explain this. (1) *Faith is essentially an unmeritorious act*. Because it is the simplest act of the mind, and an act for which man has a strong propensity; he has never taken credit for it; he never can. There is no virtue in believing. (2) *This essentially unmeritorious act is itself the gift of God*. Not a gift in the sense in which existence is a gift, but in the sense in which knowledge is a gift. It is a gift, because God gives the mental capacity for it, reveals the true objects for it, and furnishes the opportunities for studying the evidence essential to produce it.—D. T.

Vers. 11—22.—*Gospel reconciliation—its subjects, agency, and results*. "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: but now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our Peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; 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 therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief Corner-stone; in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit." Reconciliation is the grand idea of this passage, and it sets before us the *condition of its subjects*, the *nature of its agency*, and the *blessedness of its achievement*.

I. **THE CONDITION OF ITS SUBJECTS.** They are here presented in two aspects—*aspects in which all men in their unregenerated state are found*. 1. *As socially disharmonized*. Between the Jews and the Gentiles there was no accord; on the contrary, there was a deep, mutual variance in sympathy and soul. There was a "middle wall of partition between them." That wall was built by political prejudices and religious differences, and was cemented by a mutual "enmity." So that they were "aliens," and "strangers," and morally "far off" from each other. There are these social differences between unregenerate men now, the world over. Instead of union, there is division—harmony, there is discord—love, there is enmity. Hence the eternal feuds, domestic, social, ecclesiastical, political. Some "middle wall of partition" divides family from family, class from class, nation from nation, man from man. 2. *As religiously disharmonized*. There was not only a mutual variance between Jew and Gentile, but there was a variance between both and God. Religiously the Jew is represented here as being "without Christ," ignorant of him, and uninterested in him; "without hope," without any well-founded hope of future good; "without God"—practical atheists. Living every day as if no God existed. Does not this describe the religious condition of all unregenerate men in every part of the world? What a picture of the moral world! Hideous, yet life-like!

II. **THE NATURE OF ITS AGENCY.** Who is the great Reconciler? Who is he that reconciles men to men, and all to God? There is One, and only One. "Now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh." The passage gives three ideas about this reconciling. 1. *It is the work of self-sacrifice*. Christ does it by his "blood," by his "cross." What is the blood of Christ? Not, of course, the vital fluid which flowed through his corporeal veins—not his mere existence, but the governing moral spirit of his life. The real life of a man is his governing disposition. This is

the moral blood that circulates through all his activities. What is the governing spirit of Christ? Self-sacrificing love. "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ," etc. It is by that self-sacrificing spirit of his in teaching, working, praying, and dying, that he does the work of the world's reconciliation. Love alone can kill enmity. Christ's moral blood is the atoning power. 2. *It is the work of abolishment.* Christ's mission is destructive as well as constructive. He pulls down as well as builds up. He came to destroy the works of the devil. (1) He abolishes dividing forms. He breaks down the "middle wall of partition." When he died upon the cross, not only was the veil in the great temple of life, which divided men from God, rent asunder, but the wall that divided man from man was broken down. "The whole law of commandments contained in ordinances" was abolished. "Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to the cross" (Col. ii. 14). He gave man one system of worship. "God is a Spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." (2) He abolishes the dividing spirit. "The enmity." The abolishment of the mere separating forms would still leave souls asunder if enmity existed. He slays the enmity. 3. *It is the work of preaching.* "Preaching peace." "And came and preached peace to you." Christ preached peace himself both before and after his death. His personal ministry was emphatically a ministry of peace in spirit and in doctrine—in example and in aim. He preached by his servants. This was the grand subject of the apostolic ministry. This is the grand subject of all ministers. The gospel is a gospel of peace; Christ was the Prince of peace.

III. THE BLESSEDNESS OF ITS ACHIEVEMENT. What is the grand result of his reconciling agency? 1. *Union of man to man.* "To make in himself of twain one new man." Giving all men, however diverse in temperament, circumstances, and education, *one moral soul.* This is the true union, the union of heart, making men one—one in sympathy, one in purpose, one in Christ. 2. *Union of man to God.* "And that he might reconcile both unto God." In truth, man can only become truly united to his brother man, by first becoming united to God. He must love the great Father supremely before he will love his race with the affection of a genuine brotherhood. True philanthropy grows out of piety. Men thus united to God, the passage suggests, are united together: (1) As citizens of the same spiritual state. They are "fellow-citizens with the saints." The common "citizenship" of all is in heaven. All are alike loyal to the same authority, obedient to the same laws, inheritors of the same rights. (2) As members of the same spiritual family. They are of the "household of God." They are united not by mutual interests or covenant arrangements, but by the clinging instincts of family affection. They are of the family of God. (3) As parts of the same spiritual temple. "And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets," etc. In some respects the parts of a building are more united even than the members of a family. In a well-constructed edifice one part is so dependent on another, that to disturb a portion would be to injure the whole. All whom Christ reconciles are parts of a grand temple. (a) Beautifully united, "framed together." (b) Gradually advancing: "groweth," the growth of a living organism, not the mere growth of a building. (c) Religiously consecrated: "a holy temple." What a glorious temple is this! The temple of Diana these Ephesians originally considered a the glory of the world, but it would appear to them contemptible by the grand spiritual temple that Paul here pictures to their imagination.—D. T.

VERB. 1—7.—*From death to life.* 1. *The process.* This is a history of spiritual life. It reverses the order of natural history. Instead of "funeral marches to the grave," we have a resurrection gladness, as the soul grows upward from death to life eternal.

I. THE PROCESS BEGINS WITH DEATH. The death here referred to is not a future penalty, but the past condition of many men and the present state of all others. 1. *There is a spiritual death in the midst of natural life.* The body is flushed with the glow of health; the intellect is keen in worldly affairs; but the spirit is dead. The busy life of the lower nature may hide the scene of death, but it cannot destroy it, and to right-minded observers this noisy energy is painful and revolting like the jervery of a wake. Spiritual death bears all the hideous marks of real death: (1) a *loss of spiritual strength*; (2) a *loss of faculties of spiritual discernment*—Divine

truth fades from the darkened vision, the ear of conscience grows deaf to the voices of heaven; (3) an unconsciousness of its own mournful condition—the spiritually dead give no more evidence of realizing their condition than we can see in the mute, immobile countenance of a corpse; (4) the commencement of corruption—the dead soul rots and spreads a miasma of sin. 2. Spiritual death is *caused by sin*. There are positive “trespasses,” in which men go beyond the bounds of the lawful and commit what is forbidden; and negative “sins,” in which people miss the mark, fail of their duty, and omit what they ought to do. Both have fatal consequences—the one killing with the poison of bad thoughts, imaginations, and affections; and the other with an atrophy of spiritual organs that waste away for want of exercise. 3. *Innumerable influences provoke to sin*: (1) from without, in the general customs of the times, “the course of this world,” and indirect temptations, “the prince of the power of the air;” (2) from within, in bodily appetites, “lusts of the flesh,” and in mental propensities, “desires of the mind.” The resulting condition of death becomes a second nature, normal and chronic; yet it is not the less odious in the sight of God, but rather the more so, treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath.

II. THE PROCESS RESULTS IN LIFE. The life is described in three stages. 1. *A past quickening*. “He quickened us.” This is accomplished in the Christian. It is what Christ calls being “born from above” (John iii. 3), and St. Paul, a “new creation” (2 Cor. v. 17). (1) It is not an external change, such as the removal of penalties, the gift of blessings, and the entrance to a place called heaven, but an internal change in the soul of the redeemed. (2) It is not the soothing of a troubled conscience nor the endowment of mere comfort and happiness, but life—energy, power, activity—life that begins with painful cries and the awakening of sad repentance rather than with peace and comfort. The other blessings may be added, but this is first and most essential. It is useless to load the grave with treasures. The dead soul must come out of the tomb before it can be loosed from its cerements and enjoy its inheritance. 2. *A present exaltation*. “Raised us up;” “Made us sit with him in heavenly places.” Lazarus comes forth from the tomb. The Christian does not linger long among the scenes of his miserable past. He is not for ever sitting on the stool of the penitents. In his new life he walks in God’s sunlight, he breathes the free air of heaven, he is called to a high vocation and endued with glorious privileges. 3. *A future blessedness*. The Divine life is but in the germ on earth. Its fairest flowers will bloom on a happier shore and its sweetest fruits ripen in a sunnier climate. There are “exceeding riches” of grace to be revealed in “the ages to come.” The life for which they are preparing is eternal. No disease will blight it, no age bring it decrepitude, no death lay it low. As it develops eternally, so will the riches of Divine love fill it in an ever-increasing abundance.—W. F. A.

Vers. 1—7.—*From death to life*. 2. *The secret*. What is the secret of the wonderful reversal of the order of nature that is seen in the spiritual transformation from death to life? The power is put forth by the grace of God, and the method of its influence is through union with Christ.

I. THE POWER THAT TRANSFORMS FROM DEATH TO LIFE IS THE GRACE OF GOD. 1. The power is *Divine*. (1) Men cannot quicken themselves. The dead can never rise from their graves. Silent, stiff, and cold, dead souls will never shake off their lethargy and begin a new spiritual life. (2) Men cannot quicken one another. Before life is extinct, by chafing the chill limbs, by giving cordials and other remedies, the fast-ebbing vitality may be restored to the dying man. But when the last breath is breathed, and the heart has ceased to beat, and the patient is really dead, science and love are both baffled. We can galvanize the corpse into a shocking mockery of life, but that is worse than useless. Now, nothing short of death has come upon those who are under the power of sin. They are too far gone for human restoratives such as education, social influence, reward and punishment, exhortation and rebuke. (3) God alone can and does effect the great transformation, because he is the Source of all life, and because this return from death to life is a pure miracle. 2. The power is put forth by the *grace of God*. He might leave the dead to bury their dead, and concern himself only with fresh new lives. But he has infinite pity even for the dead. Nothing but grace could inspire such pity. For we have no claim upon God after we have become “by nature children

of wrath." We must look for the motive in the love of God alone. But that love is so great that it is a very treasure-house of mercy. God is "rich in mercy." Then our very helplessness appeals to his compassion. The more dead we are the more will God desire to quicken us.

II. THE MEANS THROUGH WHICH THE GRACE OF GOD TRANSFORMS FROM DEATH TO LIFE IS UNION WITH CHRIST. 1. All through the history of the wonderful process, St. Paul traces, step by step, the *progress of the Christian in the very experience through which Christ went*. (1) We begin in death as Christ stooped to die for us. (2) We are "quickened together with Christ," and have fellowship with the resurrection of Christ. (3) We are exalted in the likeness of Christ's ascension (ver. 5). (4) And we look forward to sharing in his future glory. Thus we are not merely to receive the benefits of the death and resurrection of our Lord; we have to enter into his very experience and pass through it ourselves spiritually. Then his life and his victory become ours. 2. This experience is realized by our *union with Christ in faith*. It is vain and hopeless to attempt to follow Christ by painfully attempting an exact imitation while we are going alone and in our own strength. The way is too dark, too steep, too rough. And this is not what is expected of us. But if we trust Christ our faith unites us to him, and by the influence he puts forth over us he carries us along with him; so that through him we receive the gift of life from the grace of God.—W. F. A.

Ver. 8.—*Grace and faith*. These two, grace and faith, are the sheet anchors of the Pauline gospel. The former was preserved in the Augustinian theology, and the latter restored to the Church by the Reformation. In his earlier Epistles, St. Paul establishes their claims by argument. Now, he considers those claims to be settled, and appeals to the doctrines of faith and grace as axioms, quoting the phrase, "By grace have ye been saved," as a sort of proverb. It is plain that the apostle regarded the truths as practically self-evident, though it was not long since they were the mysteries of a new revelation and the conclusions of an original argument. There is no paradox in this changed position, for it is the function of revelation so to open our eyes that we may see for ourselves what was before hidden. Then, having once thus beheld the truth, we may retain it on its own account. So that revelation is most successful when it teaches us how to dispense with itself. But this is only possible on the condition that there is an inherent fitness and reasonableness in the truths it declares. If, therefore, we are to see the axiomatic truth of the doctrines of grace and faith, they must not be an arbitrary association of ideas; they must be truths of inherent reasonableness. In other words, the relation of salvation to grace and faith must not be treated as accidental, and fixed only by the sovereign will of God, but as natural and necessary.

I. SALVATION IS GIVEN BY GRACE. To see the natural reasonableness of this axiom, we must first understand in what salvation consists. In the Bible the word "salvation" is not a technical theological term. It means deliverance generally. Any special import in a particular passage must depend on the context. In the present instance the context clearly shows what kind of salvation St. Paul is thinking of. This is not rescue from earthly poverty and pain—the lower old Jewish salvation, nor escape from future torment—the lower Christian salvation. It is deliverance from a present spiritual death (vers. 4, 5). The soul is saved from itself. Such a salvation must be by grace, because we cannot escape from ourselves; because the evil of spiritual death involves the loss of power in spiritual things; because God only can create life; and because the death results from sin, and therefore implies an ill desert that can only appeal to the mercy of God. The facts of the work of Christ and the recovery of dead souls to life by the gospel prove that this salvation exists and is accomplished by grace.

II. GRACE WORKS THROUGH FAITH. This principle, if axiomatic, must be also natural and reasonable. We must not think of faith as a mere assent to the doctrine of grace. Faith is the soul opening out to God. As the flower cannot be quickened into fertility while the bud is closed, the soul that is self-contained can by no means receive the grace of God. The door is barred, and Christ will not force an entrance. Faith is a capitulation of the proud soul. It means flinging wide the gates in submissive receptivity, and yielding to the voice of Divine love in obedient activity. When the soul has faith in God, the grace of God streams in with life and healing. As distrust severs souls, faith unites them. Thus faith is like the wire joining earth to heaven,

while grace is like the electric current which waits, but only waits, such a connection to hasten to us with light and fire and life.

III. FAITH COMES FROM GRACE. Even faith itself is "the gift of God." Faith is a spiritual act and habit, and therefore it would be impossible in a soul quite dead spiritually. But he who provides the salvation provides the means wherewith to enjoy it. If faith be ever so feeble we may cry, "Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief," with the assurance that there is no prayer more certain of an answer.—W. F. A.

Ver. 10.—*God's workmanship.* I. AS CHRISTIANS, CREATED IN CHRIST, WE ARE GOD'S WORKMANSHIP. It cannot be that our salvation comes by our works, because it is such a quickening from death to life as amounts to nothing short of a new creation, and because God is the only Creator. We only become new creatures through union with Christ, and by the grace of God that is in him. To know if this is our condition, we must see if we bear the traces of the great Worker upon our persons. God's work must have the characteristics of good work. 1. *Fitness.* God finds us out of joint. He shapes us suitably for our vocation. A house without adaptation to its ends may look handsome, but it is a failure. A true Christian will not only have a saintly bearing, he will have a practical suitability for his mission. 2. *Thoroughness.* How thorough is God's work in nature as seen in the microscopic organs of the smallest insects! The new creation is as thorough as the old creation. Down to every thought and fancy God shapes the character of his redeemed. 3. *Beauty.* The best work is graceful and fair to look upon. God's spiritual work is adorned with the beauty of holiness.

II. WE ARE THUS CREATED FOR THE PURPOSE OF DOING GOOD WORKS. Good works are more honoured by the doctrine of grace than they are by the scheme of salvation by works; for in the latter they appeal only as means to an end, as stepping-stones to be left behind when the salvation is reached; but in the former they are themselves the ends, and are valued on their own account. Thus we are taught not to perform good works as an only or necessary means for securing some ulterior boon, but are invited to accept that boon just because it will enable us to do our work better. Instead of regarding the gospel as a pleasant message to show us how we may save ourselves the trouble of work, we must hear it as a trumpet-call to service. The Christian is the servant of Christ. In spiritual death we can do nothing. Salvation is quickening to a new life. The object of this life is not bare existence. All life ministers to some other life. Spiritual life is given directly with the object of enabling us to do our work. It fails of its object if it is infertile. The barren tree must wither, the fruitless branch must be pruned away. Purity and harmlessness are but negative graces, and are not sufficient justification for existence. The great end of being is the doing of positive good. The judgment will turn on the use we have made of our talents.

III. THE WORKS FOR WHICH WE ARE CREATED HAVE BEEN PREARRANGED BY GOD. The road has been made before we have been ready to walk on it. And there is a road for every soul. Each of us has his vocation marked out for him and fixed in the ancient counsels of God. No life need be aimless since every life is provided with a mission. How may we know the mission? 1. From our *talents*. Men do not gather grapes of thorns, nor poetry of commonplace minds, nor heroism of feeble souls. The nature of the tool proclaims its use. The hammer cannot be made to cut, nor the saw to drive nails. God's workmanship bears on its special form the indications of its purpose. To know our work we must pray for light that we may know ourselves, or we shall fall into the common error of mistaking our inclination for our capacity and our ambition for our ability. 2. From our *circumstances*. God opens providential doors. Let us not refuse to enter them because they are often low and lead to humble paths. If they face us they indicate the work for which we are created, and that should suffice obedient servants.—W. F. A.

Ver. 12.—*Dark depths.* Step by step descending into darker and darker depths, St. Paul describes the awful condition out of which heathens had been rescued when they became Christians. Regarded from a Jewish point of view, this condition is seen to consist in the loss of all the high privileges of Israel, and the salvation of the Gentiles appears as an adoption into the circle of those privileges. But larger things of more general import are covered by the description, so that it applies virtually to

all who are outside the pale of the gospel. Let us go through the descending and darkening series and observe the several woeful characteristics.

I. CHRISTLESS. The Gentile world had no Messiah. Worldly interests—business, pleasure, culture—have their advantages; but they bring no Saviour, no Physician of sick souls. As Christ is the Foundation-stone of the new temple, to be without Christ is to have nothing on which to erect subsequent Christian blessings. If we have the doctrine and discipline of the New Testament without the Christ, we have nothing of real profit. The dumb, pathetic helplessness of spiritual hunger in the finer inquiring and doubting minds of our day is a proof that to be without the light and life and love of Christ is as great a loss to us as it was to any in old times.

II. CHURCHLESS. "Alienated from the commonwealth of Israel." The Church is now what Israel was in pre-Christian times—the home and family of the people of God. Only it is not marked by the visible boundaries of any "Holy Land." The true Church, the fellowship of kindred followers of Christ, contains many a choice soul that has been accounted a schismatic and cut off from the organized communities of Christendom. Real excommunication comes not by the fulmination of an anathema, but by the breach of spiritual sympathy. Without the union that comes through our relation to Christ we voyage in solitude over lonely seas of thought.

III. UNEVANGELIZED. "Strangers from the covenants of the promise." The Jew had a gospel in Messianic prophecy. The Christian has his in New Testament history. What covenant is there in science? What promise in art? What gospel in commerce? We may discover laws and facts of the universe, and create works of skill and beauty, and accumulate treasures of wealth. But still stricken souls cry, "Is there no balm in Gilead?" for all this brings no peace to the weary and the broken-hearted.

IV. PESSIMIST. "Having no hope." Pagan Rome and Greece were verging towards pessimism in the days of St. Paul, when philosophers advised suicide and historians taught contempt of mankind. Pagan Europe now manifests the same tendency. Culture fails to convert the Philistine. Science dwarfs humanity before nature, and discovers no soul and no heaven. Business, politics, and society drive man to a weariness that sees no rest.

V. ATHEISTIC. Speculative atheism is rare, if it ever exists. Practical atheism is more common and more disastrous. It is worse to believe in God and to live as if there were no God, than to doubt his existence. To be without God is not to look for his help nor to obey his will. This is death, since in God we live and move and have our being. Glorious must be the gospel that redeems us from such a depth of ruin.—W. F. A.

Vers. 13—18.—*Christ our Peace.* I. CHRIST MAKES PEACE. He was predicted as the Prince of peace. His birth was heralded by the good news, "On earth peace." 1. Peace between *man and man*. In Christ the enmity between Jew and Gentile ceases. Christianity forbids all envy, jealousy, hatred, and strife. It is cosmopolitan, and will not sanction national selfishness cloaked by the sacred name of patriotism. It is brotherly, and will not favour sectarian animosity sheltering under the mask of loyalty to truth. 2. Peace between *man and God*. Both Jew and Gentile are reconciled "unto God" (ver. 16). The discord between man and man is but a symptom and after consequence of the deeper quarrel between man and God, just as the unrestrained war of factions is a result of the overthrow of the central authority in a state.

II. CHRIST'S PEACE IS STABLE. A hollow peace which like an unstable equilibrium is liable to be upset at any moment, and is little better than an armed truce, is only a deception and a snare. But Christ's peace is solid and secure, involving two great safeguards. 1. *Reconciliation*. A duel may be interrupted by the police, and yet the combatants may still cherish mortal hatred to one another. The forced agreement of Jew with Gentile under the Roman empire was no real peace. The order of a state in which criminals are curbed but not reformed, and the decorum of a society in which only social fear prevents outrageous insults to purity and godliness, are no proof of real peace with God and man. But Christ reconciles, takes away all disposition for quarrelling, and establishes peaceable affections between man and man and between man and God. 2. *Union*. The old feuds between Norman and Saxon can never be

revived, simply because the two races have been blended together. So Christ would blend Jew and Gentile, and establish a common family union between Christians and also between the whole Christian brotherhood and our one Father in heaven.

III. CHRIST'S PEACE DEPENDS ON THE DESTRUCTION OF THE CAUSES OF DISCORD. It does not merely heal the surface-symptoms, but it goes to the root of the evil and cuts this out. The Law, which was the middle wall of partition between Jew and Gentile, is abolished. The religion of Law, which provoked constant enmity between man and God, is done away. In the place of rigid, painful exactions, never by any possibility fully satisfied, we have the service of the Spirit, which is the same for all and which is possible to all.

IV. CHRIST'S PEACE IS BROUGHT ABOUT BY THE SACRIFICE OF HIMSELF. 1. *In relation to God.* Christ makes reconciliation by his great propitiatory offering of himself. As we look at the cross our enmity to God dies down, and we learn in humble penitence to seek for forgiveness. 2. *In relation to man.* Christ has died for every man. Before that awful tragic event all mutual enmity should be hushed. In the love of our Peacemaker, which is shown in his dying for us, we have the strongest possible motive for a common fervour of love to him that should quench and drown all petty animosities and unite all Christians into one body.—W. F. A.

Vers. 19—22.—*The Christian temple.* The pride of Ephesus was her world-famed temple, in which the religion, the art, and even the commerce of the city centred and flourished. What the temple of Diana was materially in its visible pomp and power, the Church of Christ is to be spiritually, but with a higher splendour and a wider influence. More than once has St. Paul described the Church as a temple. The truths shadowed forth by this name press upon us with weighty importance.

I. THE MATERIALS WITH WHICH THE TEMPLE IS BUILT. 1. *The foundation.* "The foundation of the apostles and prophets" must be the work of the earliest and leading Christian teachers who laid the first stones of the Church. They preached the fundamental truths on which the Church stands—primarily Christ crucified, for Christ is the real Foundation—and they gathered in the first converts. The Church receives its Divine recognition in being apostolic and in being founded by inspired men—"prophets." 2. *The stones.* These are the men and women who compose the Church. A building cannot be all foundation. The Church must be the union of individual Christians. It is not the teachers and authorities, but the several members who constitute the Church. These, therefore, are the rich gifts and the honourable mission of the Church. All classes are here united, and those who were once furthest from God—publicans, Samaritans, Gentiles, heathen, corrupt judicials, the neglected, the ignorant, and the base—are brought in. 3. *The Corner-stone.* Christ crucified is the foundation laid by apostles and prophets in their preaching; Christ glorified is the crowning completion of the whole structure. We begin with Christ; we end in Christ. The temple starts with Christ, and as it rises tier by tier it is growing up to Christ. Christ, the Head of the body and the chief Corner-stone of the Church, is both the supreme authority and the perfect glory of his people.

II. THE PLAN ON WHICH THE TEMPLE IS DESIGNED. 1. *The adjustment of a variety of separate parts.* "Each several building" is "fitly framed together." It is as though the vast temple were begun in several distinct centres, and, as the building progressed, these approached one another till they met and combined in one vast harmonious structure. There is variety all through, for the "frozen music," architecture, is a blending of many different notes. In the Church there are necessary differences. The hot imagination of the South must produce a different type of Christianity from that moulded by the cool, practical temperament of the North. All parts of the temple are not for the same ends. One is to take a lowly place in the monotonous run of stones in a wall; another, to be carved into the delicate grace of a capital, conspicuous to all eyes. But every one has its place, and the union is dependent on variety. There is no unity in a heap of cannon-balls. The fitting together of the various parts of an elaborate structure constitutes the highest unity. 2. *Ultimate unity.* To this the harmonizing of the several parts is tending. Do we not see the work progressing now in the cooling of ancient ecclesiastical feuds side by side with an enlarging liberty of thought? The true unity will be oneness of sympathy, brotherly love, and mutual

helpfulness. Every Christian should strive to realize his share of this and beware of the selfishness of individualism. Christianity begins with individual faith, but it grows into an enlarged brotherhood and the formation of one temple.

III. THE USE TO WHICH THE TEMPLE IS DEDICATED. A temple is a house in which a god dwells. The spiritual temple is "a habitation of God." "God dwelleth not in temples made with hands." He inhabits the humble and contrite spirit. The real presence of God is in the Church. He does not only bless his children, he visits them and abides with them. He does not confine his presence to a select few—inspired prophets, ordained priests, etc. He fills the whole Church with his presence as the incense spreads through every quarter of the temple. 1. Herein is the *true glory* of the Church—not in outward magnificence, but in the spiritual presence. 2. From this arises the *responsibility* of the Church, not to defile the temple of the Holy Ghost, but to let the glory of God shine out through every door and window unsullied by any cloud of sin.—W. F. A.

EXPOSITION.

CHAPTER III.

Vers. 1—13.—DIGRESSION ON THE ADMISSION OF THE GENTILES TO THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

Ver. 1.—For this cause. The reference is not merely to the last statement or illustration, but to the whole view of the purpose of God toward the Gentiles unfolded in ch. ii. The apodosis does not come in till ver. 14, at the beginning of which this conjunctive clause is repeated. I Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for you Gentiles. He introduces himself in order to make known the feelings which were roused in his soul towards them by the consideration of the privileges just enlarged on—especially to acquaint them with the *prayers* he offered for them (see vers. 14—19), and apparently with the indirect object of getting them to offer similar prayers for themselves. To justify this introduction of himself, he delicately introduces the fact of his being a prisoner on their behalf. What had brought him to Rome, what had made him appeal to Cæsar, was his preaching the gospel to the *Gentiles*; indeed, the immediate occasion of his arrest at Jerusalem was the suspicion that he had taken Trophimus, an Ephesian, one of themselves, into the temple (Acts xxi. 29). By this allusion to the condition into which his regard for them had brought him, he conciliates sympathetic consideration of what is to follow.

Ver. 2.—If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God. Here begins the digression. The words, "if ye have heard," etc., do not denote an uncertainty, but are a delicate reminder. Doubtless they had heard of the matter when he was at Ephesus, and, as he remarks in ver. 3, he had already written briefly on it. Grace is here used in a more restricted sense than in ch. i. 2—in the sense of Divine favour, honour, privilege—the same as in ver. 8, "To me . . . is this favour given." Which is given me to you-

ward. The grace or favour meant is that whereby Paul was constituted the apostle of the Gentiles. Deeply though he felt his being sent away from preaching to his countrymen (Acts xxii. 18), he took kindly to the new sphere allotted to him, and magnified his office (Rom. xi. 13).

Ver. 3.—How that, by revelation, was made known unto me the mystery. The mystery, as is explained afterwards (ver. 6), was not the gospel itself, but its destination to the Gentiles as much as to the Jews; although, as appears afterwards, this fullness of blessing is really the great glory of the gospel. Mystery, that which is known only to the initiated, does not denote here a thing obscure in its own nature, but only something that had been concealed from view. It was only the initiated that now knew that God designed the gospel for Gentile and Jew alike. Paul had been initiated "by revelation"—not by his own reflecting power, not by his study of Scripture, not by communication from other men, but by a special communication from God (Gal. i. 12). As I wrote before in few words. Where? In another Epistle? No; but in the earlier part of this Epistle (see ch. i. 9; ii. 18, etc.). If it be said the allusions in these places to the topic in question are rather vague and general, the apostle virtually admits it—he wrote of it "in few words;" but, as it is a great and glorious truth, he returns to it to amplify it and place it in a brighter light.

Ver. 4.—In accordance with which, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ. *Ἰπὸς δ*, with reference to which, i.e. to what I wrote afore: to make that more intelligible I write on the subject more fully now, so that you shall see that your instructor is thoroughly informed in this matter of the mystery in Christ—this once concealed but now revealed purpose of his grace.

Ver. 5.—Which was not made known to the sons of men in other generations. Though not a new purpose, the knowledge of it is new. Abraham, David, and the prophets, however much they knew of Christ and the fullness of blessing in him for all the families of the earth, did not know the full extent of God's grace to the Gentiles—did not know that the middle wall was to be wholly broken down, and all inequality removed. This might seem to throw some doubt on the reality of this doctrine; but it was on purpose that God kept it secret, and those by whom he has now revealed it are worthy of all regard. As it has now been revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit. It is not revealed to Paul only, although he has got the privilege of announcing it to the Gentiles, but to the whole body of "holy apostles and prophets." The designation, "holy apostles," is rare; it is used here to magnify the office, to show that those whom the Head of the Church had set apart for himself were fit instruments to receive so important a revelation. "Prophets" here are undoubtedly New Testament prophets (see ch. ii. 20), the contrast being with "sons of men in other generations." Reference may be made to the experience and decree of the Council of Jerusalem, guided by the Holy Spirit (see Acts xv. 28).

Ver. 6.—That the Gentiles are fellow-heirs—*heirs* with the Jews of the same inheritance (see ch. i. 11)—and fellow-members of the body (this figure is repeated and applied in ch. iv. 4, 16, 25), and fellow-partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel—the promise to Abraham, "In thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed." They do not get this blessing indirectly through the Jews, or by becoming Jews, but directly, as Gentiles; and they become fellow-heirs, fellow-members, and fellow-partakers "in Christ Jesus," enjoying all privileges in him, in a state of union and fellowship with him. To this state they are invited and admitted *through the gospel*; by receiving the glad tidings they enter on these blessings (comp. Rom. x. 15, 18). This statement of religious equality between Jews and Gentiles is strong, clear, complete; the more remarkable that Paul himself had had so strong Jewish prejudices; only one of clearest insight and highest courage could proclaim the truth so emphatically; it is little wonder if many believing Jews, less enlightened and less courageous, shrank from his statements as too strong.

Ver. 7.—Of which I became a minister; did not gradually grow up to the office, but became, at a given time and place, a minister, a *διδάκων*, a servant. According to the gift of the grace of God. The office of serving Christ was a gift, most undeserved on Paul's

part, who had been a persecutor and injurious, but flowing from the free grace of God, his sovereign, unmerited mercy. Which was given me according to the working of his power. This denotes the manner of the gift; the gift itself, apostleship to the Gentiles, would have been little had it not been accompanied with Divine power. Spiritual office without spiritual power is miserable; but in Paul's case there was the power as well as the office; not merely the power of working miracles, as some have held, but besides this, the power of spiritual insight into the meaning of Scripture—power of exposition, power of demonstration, power of persuasion (comp. 1 Thess. i. 5; Acts xiv. 1; 1 Cor. iv. 7, etc.). Paul gratefully acknowledged that all the power of his ministry was God's, not his own (1 Cor. iii. 6, 7).

Ver. 8.—Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints; not only of apostles and prophets, but even of all believers—a profound expression of humility, founded not only on his persecuting career, but on his consciousness of sin, of inborn rebellion against God's Law, of fountains of unlawful desire in his flesh (Rom. vii. 18; 1 Tim. i. 13-15), making him feel himself to be, in heart and essence, the chief of sinners. The sense of sin is not usually in proportion to the acts of outward transgression, but to the insight into the springs of evil in one's heart, and the true nature of sin as direct antagonism to the holy God. Was this grace given. The third time in this chapter that he speaks of his office as a fruit of grace, showing that, notwithstanding his being a prisoner on account of it, and all the perils it involved (2 Cor. xi. 24-27), he was overwhelmed with God's unmerited goodness in conferring it on him. It was substantially the post of a foreign missionary, with hardly one human comfort! To preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; *εὐαγγελισσάσθαι*, to evangelize, to proclaim good tidings. The force of the *εὐ* is not given in "preach," but the idea is amply conveyed by the words that follow. The balance of authority for *τοῖς ἔθνεσιν*, "to the Gentiles," and *ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν*, "among the Gentiles," is about equal; the meaning really the same. "ἔθνος, heathen, was almost an offensive name; yet with that name the apostle associates the highest blessings of God. The unsearchable riches of Christ, two attractive words, *riches* and *unsearchable*, conveying the idea of the things that are most precious being infinitely abundant. Usually precious things are rare; but here that which is most precious is also boundless—riches of compassion and love, of merit, of sanctifying, comforting, and trans-

forming power, all without limit, and capable of satisfying every want, craving, and yearning of the heart, now and evermore. The thought of his having such riches to offer to all made him regard his office as most glorious, raised him far above the point of view from which the world would despise it, and filled him with adoring gratitude to God for having conferred it on him.

Ver. 9.—And to make all men see what is the dispensation of the mystery. Another branch of his office, and another fruit of God's grace in conferring it. He was not only to benefit man, but also to vindicate God. For "fellowship of the mystery" (A.V.), the R.V. has "dispensation of the mystery," founded on the preference of the reading *oikonomia*, for which there is a great preponderance of authority over *koinonia*. It was the apostle's function to show how this mystery had been dispensed—concealed for a long time and at last revealed. Which from the beginning of the ages hath been hid in God. The counsel itself was *πρὸ τῶν αἰώνων*, before the foundation of the world; the concealment of it *ἀπὸ τῶν αἰώνων*, from the beginning of the ages, when there were intelligent beings capable of understanding it—whether angels or men. Whatever the angels may have known of the Divine plans, this feature of them was not known till revealed to the New Testament Church. Who created all things. The reason for adding this particular designation of God is not obvious; probably it is to indicate the relation of the matter in hand to the mightiest works of God. This is no trifling matter; it connects itself with God's grandest operations; it has supremely glorious bearings. It might be supposed to have relations only to one race and to one period of time; but it has relations to "all things;" it is an integral element in God's plan. The words, by Jesus Christ (A.V.), are not found in a great preponderance of textual authorities.

Ver. 10.—To the intent—indicative of the purpose of the remarkable arrangement or dispensation according to which the eternal Divine purpose, which had been concealed from the beginning of the ages, was now made known—that there might be made known to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places; that a lesson might be given to the unfallen angels. Their interest in the scheme of man's redemption is often referred to (1 Pet. i. 12). Even the highest powers of heaven have yet much to learn respecting God. The dispensation of God's grace to man is one of their lesson-books. Dr. Chalmers shows ('Astronomical Discourses') how this meets the objection that so dread a sacrifice as the life of God's Son

could not have been made for one poor planet; in its indirect bearings we do not know what other orders of beings have derived most vital lessons from this manifestation of the attributes of God. However men may scorn the salvation of Christ and all that belongs to it, the highest intelligences regard it with profound interest. By the Church the manifold wisdom of God. Through the Church, now constituted, according to the revealed mystery, of Jew and Gentile, all redeemed by Christ's blood and renewed by his Spirit, there is exhibited to the angels the manifold wisdom of God. The precise line of thought is this: God, from eternity, had a purpose to put Jew and Gentile on precisely the same footing, but concealed it for many ages, until he revealed it in the apostolic age, when he appointed Paul his minister to announce it. The purpose of this whole arrangement was to enlighten the principalities and powers of heaven in the manifold wisdom of God. How in his manifold wisdom? In this way. During these preparatory ages, when God's gracious dealings were with the Jews only, all kinds of false religions were developing among the heathen, and their diversified influence and effects were becoming apparent in many ways—the divergent tendencies of men, especially in religious matters, were being developed; but in the new turn given to things by the breaking down of the middle wall in Christ, the manifold wisdom of God was shown in transforming many of these most diverse elements, unifying them, building them up into a great spiritual body, into a holy, most beautiful, most symmetrical temple. When all things seem to be flying asunder into the most diverse and antagonistic elements, God gives a new turn, as it were, to providence, and lo! a glorious symmetrical and harmonious structure begins to rise.

Ver. 11.—According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord. The apostle is ever anxious that we should connect these operations of God with the profundity, deliberation, and awfulness of an eternal decree, and that we should thus contrast them in our minds with many even of the most important works of man which are often determined, on his part, by a passing event or other trivial cause. The verb in this clause is *ἐποίησε*, which he made, and it has been debated whether it denotes the original formation of the purpose, or the execution of it under Christ. With A.V. and R.V., we prefer the former. The object of the apostle is to indicate that the purpose existed from eternity; but, besides, the meaning of "fulfilled" or "executed" can hardly be sustained by *ἐποίησε*. The closing formula, "in Christ

Jesus," is perfectly applicable to the eternal formation of the purpose; it is the constantly returning indication of the element in which the whole scheme of grace had its beginning, its progress, and its end.

Ver. 12.—**In whom we have our boldness and access.** Παρρησία literally means "boldness" or "freedom of speech," but is used here in a more ample sense for want of restraint, ease of feeling, comfortable self-possession, in our access to God. Contrast with Adam hiding himself among the trees of the garden, and the lost calling on the mountains to fall on them, and the rocks to cover them. The "we" in this verse includes both Jews and Gentiles. The "access," or introduction (see ch. ii. 18), is like that of the high priest into the holy of holies—we have boldness to enter into the holiest of all (Heb. x. 19). In confidence through the faith of him. The confidence of being welcomed and accepted when we go into God's presence springs from our faith in him. We believe in him as the Propitiator, as our Peace, as the Reconciler, and we go before God with confidence. The clause, "through faith in him," influences the whole verse. And, as before, we have at the beginning of the verse, "in whom"—an expression denoting generally our union with Christ, and at the end, "through the faith of him"—a specification of the instrument by which that union is formed and by which it operates.

Ver. 13.—**Wherefore I beg that ye faint not at my tribulations for you.** A very delicate and touching request, that they would not be too much distressed by what he was suffering for them (comp. Epaphroditus, Phil. ii. 26). Paul knew that the sympathy was so strong that what was suffered by him was endured sympathetically by them. Two expressions denote that the sufferings were great: "My tribulations for you"—a word expressing intense and protracted suffering; "that ye faint not," or that ye do not lose heart, as if the power of evil had got the upper hand. Which is your glory. That is, the character or capacity of the apostle of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, in which I suffer tribulation, is one of such exalted dignity as to reflect glory on you. Take that view of my sufferings; I suffer because I hold so glorious an office, and the glory of that office is reflected on you.

Ver. 14-21.—**PRAYER FOR THEIR SPIRITUAL ENRICHMENT.**

Ver. 14.—**For this cause.** The digression being ended, the apostle takes up the thread broken at ver. 1. We must seek the "cause" in ch. ii. Seeing that the Gentiles have now equal privileges with the Jews; seeing that by faith in Christ Gentile Christians have been brought as near to God, and have

as good a right to the good things of the covenant;—I take the steps now to be specified for enabling them actually to possess these good things. On the one hand, the apostle saw the believing Ephesians still comparatively poor and needy; on the other hand, he saw all spiritual stores provided for them: the question was how to get the one into contact with the other. For this cause, he says, I bow my knees unto the Father. An emphatic way of denoting prayer; but not incidental, occasional prayer, inspired by some passing feeling; the attitude "bow my knees" denotes *deliberate* prayer (comp. Dan. vi. 10), making a business of it, approaching God with reverence and holy fear, with all the solemnities suitable to the occasion of making a specific and important request. In the A.V. it is "unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." The R.V., some of the oldest manuscripts, and most recent commentators omit the latter words, which are supposed to have been taken from ch. i. 3. On internal grounds, the omission of the words seems to yield the best sense, for in ch. ii. 18 our having access to "the Father" is spoken of, and when the apostle proceeded to show how he availed himself of that privilege, he is not likely to have used more than that expression. Further, there is such a close connection between *πατέρα* and *πατρί* in ver. 15, that they are not likely to have been far separated as the apostle used them.

Ver. 15.—**From whom the whole family in heaven and on earth is named.** So A.V., but R.V. has "every family," holding, doubtless, that the want of the article—*πάσα πατρία*, not *πάσα ἡ πατρία*—requires this sense. But as in Matt. ii. 3; Luke iv. 13; Acts ii. 36; vii. 22, and ch. ii. 21; so here, *πάσα* without the article may denote the totality of the thing; *πάσα πατρία* corresponding to *πάσα οἰκουμένη*. And this seems more in accord with the scope of the passage, for here the apostle is not distributing into groups, but gathering into one. But what is the precise import of the statement, and for what reason is it introduced? The apostle recognizes all saints, whether in heaven or on earth, as forming one family, and as the whole family derives its name from God, so God may be expected and appealed to to make full and corresponding provision for the wants of its various sections. The implied appeal is not to the fact that the family is God's family, but to the fact, less important in itself but really including the other, that it is named after him. Among men, one would be held emphatically bound to take an interest in those who are not only his relations but bear his very name. Now, that part of the family which is housed in heaven is gloriously provided for; the apostle pro-

ceeds to intercede for the portion still on earth. As the whole family is named after the same Father, is conspicuous before the eyes of all as God's, so it may well be expected that the more needy, feeble, exposed, and tempted part of the family will be treated in every way worthy of its Father.

"Let saints on earth unite to sing

With those to glory gone;

For all the servants of our King,

In earth and heaven, are one.

"One family we dwell in him,

One Church above, beneath;

Though now divided by the stream,

The narrow stream, of death."

Ver. 16.—That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory. The standard or measure of the Divine giving is brought into view. "Riches of his glory" is a more emphatic expression than "glorious riches," though substantially the same in meaning. God's standard of giving is liberal, bountiful, overflowing. An image of the riches of his glory is seen in the starry heavens, which proclaim at once the vast riches and surpassing glory of God. Or in the beautiful appearance of an autumn sunset, where the whole sky is flecked with clouds brightened into a sea of glory. In prayer, it is both useful for ourselves and glorifying to God to recognize his bountifulness—to remember that he gives us a King (2 Sam. xxiv. 23). To be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man. The inner man is the seat of influence, but with us it is the seat of spiritual feebleness. Most men may contrive to order their outward conduct suitably; but who has control of the inner man? Faith, trust, humility, love, patience, and the like graces which belong to the inner man, are what we are weakest in, and what we have least power to make strong. In this very region it is sought that the Ephesians might be strengthened with might by the Spirit. The gift of the Spirit is available for this very purpose for all that ask him.

Ver. 17.—That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith. Reversing the usual order, the prayer begins (ver. 16) by asking the blessing of the Third Person of the Godhead; now we have a cluster of petitions connected with the Second Person. The first of these is for the indwelling of Christ in their hearts, as opposed to mere occasional visits or influences from Christ; the instrument by which this blessing is attained being their faith. Christ exercising a constant power within them, both in the active and passive movements of the heart, giving the sense of pardon and acceptance, moulding the will, sweetening the emotions, enlightening and confirming the conscience, purifying the whole springs and principles of action.

This to be secured by their faith, opening the door, receiving Christ in all his fullness, resting and living on him, believing his promises, and longing for his appearing the second time. In order that ye, having been rooted and grounded in love. Two images are combined to make the idea emphatic—that of a tree and that of a building; denoting what is both the starting-point and the support of the Christian's life, viz. love. In what sense? The love of Christ is specified afterwards (ver. 19), but this may be as a pre-eminent branch of that manifold love which bears on the Christian life—the love of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; the love of the brethren to one another; and the reciprocal love evoked from the believer by the reception of this love. Evidently it is implied that the Christian life can begin and flourish only in such an atmosphere of love; as warm sunshine is needed to start and advance the life of a plant, so love is needed to start and carry on the life of the soul. Experience of Divine love is a great quickening and propelling power. "One glance of God, a touch of his love, will free and enlarge the heart, so that it can deny all and part with all and make an entire renunciation of all to follow him" (Archbishop Leighton).

Ver. 18.—May be made strong to comprehend with all the saints. The subject to be comprehended is not only beyond man's natural capacity, but beyond the ordinary force of his spiritual capacity. The thing to be grasped needs a special strength of heart and soul; the heart needs to be enlarged, the mental "hands of the arms" need to be made strong (Gen. xlix. 24). But the attainment is not impossible—it is the experience of "all the saints;" all God's children are enabled to grasp something of this (comp. 2 Cor. iv. 3—6). What is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height. No genitive being given, it has been a difficult point to settle to what these dimensions must be held to be applicable. Some think that the love of Christ in the following clause must be meant; but surely when that is made the subject of a separate part of the prayer, and is not in the genitive but the objective case, governed by a verb of its own, this explanation is not to be entertained. Others, with more reason, think that the idea of a temple was in the mind of the writer, as it certainly was in ch. ii. 21, 22, and that it is the dimensions of the temple he had here in his eye, the prayer being that the Ephesians might comprehend the vastness and glory of that spiritual temple which is constituted by all believers, and in which God dwells by the Spirit. Even this, however, would not divest the construction of abruptness, and it would fit

in but poorly with the context, in which the tenor of the apostle's prayer is that a profusion of Divine blessing might be enjoyed by the Ephesians. If a genitive must be supplied, may we not conceive the apostle to have had in his view the entire provision God has made in Christ for the good of his people, so that the dimensions would be those of the gospel storehouse, the vast reservoir out of which the Church is filled? "Breadth" might denote the manifoldness of that provision; "length," its eternal duration; its "depth" might be represented by the profundity of Christ's humiliation; and its "height" by the loftiness of the condition to which his people are to be raised. To comprehend this, to understand its existence and its richness, is to get our faith enlarged, our expectations expanded; it is through this comprehension that "all the saints" have got their wants supplied, and their souls filled as with marrow and fatness.

Ver. 19.—And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge. The love here is evidently the love of Christ to us, and this may well be specified as a special matter of prayer. Knowledge of Christ's love, in the sense of an inward personal experience of it—its freeness, its tenderness, its depth, its patience—is the great dynamio of the gospel. This love is transmuted into spiritual force. As the breeze fills the sails and bears forward the ship, so the love of Christ fills the soul and moves it in the direction of God's will. But in its fulness it passeth knowledge; it is infinite, not to be grasped by mortal man, and therefore always presenting new fields to be explored, new depths to be fathomed. That ye may be filled with all the fulness of God; that is, that ye may be filled with spiritual grace and blessing to an extent corresponding to all the fulness of God. Though the finite cannot compare with the infinite, there may be a correspondence between them according to the capacity of each. There is a fulness of gracious attainment in every advanced believer that corresponds to all the fulness of God; every part of his nature is supplied from the Divine fountain, and, so far as a creature can, he presents the image of the Divine fulness. In the human nature of Christ this correspondence was perfect: "In him dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily;" in the soul of the believer there may be a progressive movement towards this fulness. No higher view can be conceived of the dignity of man's nature, and the glorious privileges

conferred on him by the gospel, than that he is susceptible of such conformity to God. Who can conceive that man should have attained to such a capacity by a mere process of evolution? "So God made man in his own image;" and in Christ man is "renewed in righteousness and holiness after the image of him who created him."

Vers. 20, 21.—DOXOLOGY. The study and exposition of the amazing riches of the grace of God gives birth to an outburst of praise toward the Divine Source of all this mercy, past, present, and to come. Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or think. In thinking of God it is as if we thought of space—however far our conceptions may travel, there is still infinity beyond. Paul had asked much in this prayer, and thoughts can always travel beyond words, yet the excess of God's power beyond both was infinite. This excess is denoted by a double term of abundance (*πολλοῦ ἐνὶ πάντα καὶ ὑπερεκπερισσῶν*), as if the apostle wished to fill our minds with the idea of absolute infinity of gracious power in God. According to the power that worketh in us, which is none other than the power "which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead" (ch. i. 20). The power that is actually at work in us has only to be exerted a little more to accomplish wonders of sanctification, and confer on us immense spiritual strength. Unto him be the glory in the Church in Christ Jesus, world without end. Amen. To God the whole credit of the scheme of grace and the work of grace as carried out in his people is due ("Not of works, lest any man should boast"); therefore let the Church acknowledge this, and cordially and openly ascribe to God his due. Let this feeling be universally encouraged and cherished in the Church, and let it find in the Church services suitable occasions of breaking forth in song and prayer. Again the apostle's favourite formula comes in—"in Christ Jesus," to denote that this act of adoration is to be done in immediate connection with the work and person of Christ; for it is he who has brought about the whole condition of things from which the act of adoration springs. And this ascription of praise is not transitory; this view of the Divine character and actions will never become obsolete or be superseded by other views; it will claim their cordial ascriptions for ever—literally, to all the generations of the age of the ages.

HOMILETICS.

Vers. 1—13.—*God's purpose as to the Gentiles.* This passage a parenthesis after ver. 1—a reference to Paul's personal history. It contains the explanation of his

whole career, the secret of his wonderful zeal. Why was he a prisoner? Generally, for the Gentiles. Why for them? Because the Divine purpose regarding them had been revealed to him, and through him to the world, and the enmity of the Jews to that purpose had brought Paul into captivity. Looking at the passage as a whole, it may show us how Paul found compensation for his captivity in the privileges connected with his office as apostle of the Gentiles. This compensation lay chiefly in three things.

I. The precious insight he obtained into the glory of the Divine purpose in reference to the Gentiles, giving him a high conception of the far-reaching generosity of God. 1. There is a high intellectual pleasure in the discovery of any great truth. 2. A profound emotional pleasure in discovering a truth of vast benefit to mankind. 3. A still higher pleasure in receiving such a truth direct from God. This truth did not involve a case of levelling down, but of levelling up. Though the Jews, as a nation, were no longer to occupy a higher platform than the Gentiles, yet all were to be invited to equal nearness to God, and if any should reject the invitation, the blame and the loss would be all their own.

II. The remarkably high qualifications given to him for his office (see ver. 7)—great love, faith, courage, perseverance, hope; great intellectual insight; great spiritual power. Others got frightened (Mark, Demas, etc.); Paul went on. The human spirit was often depressed, but God comforted him. The thorn in the side was annoying, but "my grace is sufficient for thee."

III. The great honour and privilege of being called to so blessed a work. The work had a glory on earth and a glory in heaven. 1. *On earth.* He preached to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ. He proclaimed his riches of grace, and showed them to be unsearchable. He not only proclaimed them, but in a sense imparted them—brought them into contact with the Ephesians, so that they got the good of them, through the blessing of the Holy Spirit. 2. *In heaven.* The gospel has aspects of blessing beyond this world. It carries important lessons to the principalities and powers. It shows the manifold wisdom of God, shows how all classes and varieties of mankind are brought to God by the cross of Christ, assimilating all characters, overcoming all alienations, demolishing all walls of separation, and building up all together in Christ Jesus.

One great conclusion. In every sense the success of the gospel is very glorifying to God; it illustrates his perfections; it glorifies his Son; it educates the very angels; and thus it carries forward the grand purpose of God in the creation of the worlds. "To him be glory for ever. Amen."

Ver. 8.—*The unsearchable riches of Christ.* "Riches" an attractive word. Human heart leaps towards them. Ceaseless disappointments of most who follow after them. Here the riches that moth and rust do not corrupt, nor thieves break through to steal. 1. There are in Christ unsearchable riches of *compassion*. Case of the lost, proper object of pity. Christ's pity boundless. Human pity often quenched by great wickedness, troublesomeness, loathsomeness. Not so Christ's! Pity for thief on cross, Saul, Corinthians, and other gross sinners. 2. Unsearchable riches of *merit*. His blood cleanseth us from all sin. He is "able to save to the uttermost all that come to God by him"—Augustine, Bunyan, Lord Rochester, John Newton, and such like. 3. Unsearchable riches of *sanctifying grace*. Great change needed to make men meet for kingdom of heaven. This includes grace to enlighten, guide, strengthen, and to restore from declension. 4. Unsearchable riches of *comforting grace*. No sorrow to which we are liable for which the gospel has not a comfort; no wound for which there is no balm. The Third Person, "*the Comforter*," is sent by Christ. 5. Unsearchable riches of *glorifying grace*. Can make provision for the full satisfaction and infinite enjoyment of every soul for ever and ever. "They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; . . . for the Lamb in the midst of the throne shall feed them;" "He that hath the Son hath life;" "He that overcometh shall inherit all things, and I will be his God, and he shall be my son."

Vers. 14—21.—*Prayer for spiritual enrichment.* This prayer remarkable for qualities already noted as belonging to Paul's prayer. Three parts in this prayer—(1) *introduction*; (2) *petitions*; (3) *doxology*.

I. INTRODUCTION. 1. The attitude: "I bow my knees;" humility, earnestness. 2. The designation of God: "the Father;" the character in which Christ taught us to approach God in prayer, and which gives us most encouragement. 3. The name of the family is derived from God, constituting an additional plea. That which bears God's Name must be an object of special interest to him.

II. THE PETITIONS. Three centres of petition, according as the grace (1) of the Spirit, (2) of the Son, or (3) of the Father is specially invoked. 1. Ver. 16: connected with *the Spirit*. (1) *The petition*: to "be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man"—the region where we are weakest, and where the might of the Spirit is most needed. (2) *The measure* or standard of the gift: "according to the riches of his glory;" as, for example, that riches as exhibited in the starry firmament, or in any other scene that exhibits the boundless profusion of God. 2. Vers. 17—19: connected with *the Son*. (1) *Indwelling*. "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith;" denoting permanent residence and interest, to be secured by a faith ever looking to him and resting on him. (2) *Stability and force*. "That being rooted and grounded in love;" having the stability and force of Christian character which comes from love; i.e. the love of Christ received and enjoyed, and a loving spirit toward him and his people exercised. (3) *Comprehension*, with all saints, of the manifold dimensions of Christ's capacity to bless (see Exposition). (4) *Knowledge* of "the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge;" for the inward, experimental knowledge of that love is the strongest of all spiritual dynamics. 3. Ver. 19: connected with *the Father*. "Filled with all the fulness of God." The renewed heart has a capacity to receive the things of God—to be plunged, as it were, into his fulness and filled therefrom. This can never be fully reached; as our capacities increase there is more to be enjoyed.

III. THE DOXOLOGY. 1. *The Being praised*. "Him that is able," etc. View of Divine infinity, for much has been asked and more thought about; yet, like space and time, God's ability to bless extends infinitely beyond. The blessing is in the direction of what has been already conferred: "According to the power that worketh in us." 2. *The ascription offered*. (1) The offering: "glory"—the praise, credit, glory of the whole work of grace, with all its blessings and its final consummation. (2) The sphere: "in the Church"—something different from the glory of creation and providence; the glory connected with the history of the Church—the glory of redemption. (3) The medium: "in Christ Jesus," in vital union to whom the Church has got all her blessings. (4) The duration: "world without end;" for the story of redemption will never become obsolete, and the songs of redemption will be for ever fresh and living. "Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of our God!" "How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, and thy dwelling-places, O Israel! Blessed is he that blesseth thee, and cursed is he that curseth thee!"

HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Ver. 1.—"*The prisoner of Jesus Christ*." The apostle often refers to his prison-life, and here presents himself to the Churches as "an ambassador in bonds" (ch. vi. 20).

I. HE WAS A MOST CELEBRATED PRISONER. Perhaps he was regarded as of no great account by his Roman jailors, who could have known nothing of the secret of his greatness; but viewed in the light of Christian history, Paul is the most distinguished of men. He did more than any other apostle to shape the theology of Western Christendom, which, in its turn, has left the deepest imprint on the civilization of the world. The world would not be to-day what it is if Paul of Tarsus had not lived. His influence has long survived the empire of Rome, which held him captive. We sympathize with the prison-sorrows of the great. Alas! that the best of men, "of whom the world was not worthy," have spent so many weary days and years in prison!

II. HE WAS NOT A PRISONER FOR CRIME OR FOR THE BREACH OF THE ROMAN LAWS, BUT AS THE EFFECT OF THE UNSLEEPING HATRED OF THE JEWS. It was his ministry to the Gentiles which brought down upon him the vindictive anger of his countrymen, and led them to accuse him before the Roman magistrates. The suspicion that he had taken Trophimus, an Ephesian, into the temple at Jerusalem had, indeed, an immediate connection with his first arrest. "He was at once Christ's prisoner, the Jews' prisoner, the

Romans' prisoner, the Gentiles' prisoner: Christ's prisoner, as suffering for his gospel; the Jews' prisoner, as suffering by their accusation; the Romans' prisoner, as suffering by their sentence; the Gentiles' prisoner, as suffering for his labours unto their salvation." His imprisonment was thus a higher honour than his rapture into the third heavens.

III. HIS IMPRISONMENT HAD ITS PROVIDENTIAL ADVANTAGES. Just as John Huss had leisure during his imprisonment in the fortress on the Rhine to write words that fired the hearts of his countrymen ages after his martyrdom at Constance, and as Martin Luther's one year's imprisonment in the Wartburg enabled him to give the Scriptures to Germany in the tongue of the people, so the Apostle Paul was enabled in the leisure of his Roman imprisonment to throw off those beautiful Epistles of the captivity—to the Philippians, to the Ephesians, to the Colossians, to Philemon—which have so largely contributed to the edification and comfort of the Church. He still held the threads of a hundred interests in his hands, and felt in his prison at Rome the throbbing of thousands of Christian hearts in all parts of Asia and Europe.

IV. PRISON-LIFE IS ALMOST NECESSARILY SAD, BECAUSE OF ITS ISOLATION FROM HUMAN RELATIONS, ITS SOLITUDE, ITS SUSPENSION OF ACTIVE AND ACCUSTOMED LABOUR, AND ITS USUALLY HARD CONDITIONS. It must have been a sore trial to the apostle to submit to an enforced inactivity, while the world was everywhere, in so sad a sense, "ripe for the harvest." It would seem as if, at a certain point, the sympathy of Asiatic Christians failed him (2 Tim. i. 15); and there was an unaccountable indifference to his wants marking the relations of the Roman Christians themselves, which argued that much was not to be expected from their affection. So his prison-experience must have had its dark moments.

V. MAKE THE SPIRIT IN WHICH THE APOSTLE LIVED THROUGH THIS PRISON-EXPERIENCE. The solitude of such a life often breeds a morbid spirit, which throws a darker colouring into the thoughts of the prisoner. Yet the Epistles of the captivity breathe a beautiful spirit of Christian courage and resignation, not to speak of absolute rejoicing. Compare the letters of the apostle with those of Cicero, Seneca, and Ovid in their exile, and we see at a glance the different effects of Christianity and paganism upon the happiness of man. As the prisoner of Jesus Christ, he abounded in the consolations of his Divine Master, while he must have been greatly encouraged by the visits of disciples like Epaphroditus, Epaphras, and others, who carried to him the prayers and benefactions of the Churches.

VI. WE OUGHT TO REMEMBER PRISONERS IN OUR PRAYERS, AS "BOUND WITH THEM." Most prisoners in our day are in jail for crime, but we ought to remember that they are men, that they are our brothers, that they must feel their separation from wife and children and home as keenly as we should. Perhaps, but for restraining grace, we should have been in their position. But we are bound specially to remember in our prayers those suffering for the cause of Christ, and especially those occupied with great service for the Lord.—T. C.

Vers. 2—5.—*Dispensational privileges of the Gentiles.* The apostle recurs to a subject already treated in "few words" in the first chapter—words which he requests them to read, that they may fully understand his meaning—respecting the new position of the Gentiles in the kingdom of God. Their position was determined by a dispensation, that is, by an arrangement organized in all its parts in relation to space and time; for God works by order in grace as well as in nature. Consider—

I. THE ORIGIN OF THIS DISPENSATION. "The grace of God given to me to you-ward." It was an act of Divine favour to select the apostle as the person through whom "the mystery" of the dispensation was to be, not only revealed, but applied in its redeeming effects to the Ephesian heathens. It was not the honour or the authority involved in it that made it precious in his eyes; it was the privilege of making known the unsearchable riches of Christ. Thus, as a good steward of the mysteries of God, it was the delight of his life to dispense them in all their gracious manifoldness to the family of God.

II. THE MYSTERY THAT SHROUDED THE DISPENSATION FOR AGES. 1. *It is called "the mystery of Christ," not because he is its Author, but because he is the Centre or Subject of it;* for it included far more than the truth that the Gentiles were fellow-

citizens of the saints. Christ is the Mystery of godliness, as he is God manifest in the flesh, but he is emphatically so as "Christ the Hope of glory" for the Gentiles (Col. i. 27). 2. *It was hidden for ages from the sons of men, both Jew and Gentile.* A mystery is either something which has been concealed, perhaps for ages, and which probably would never have been discovered unless the voice of revelation had proclaimed it; or something which, even when revealed, transcends the power of the human faculties to comprehend it. Now, the Incarnation is a mystery in this double sense; but the call of the Gentiles, as part of "the mystery of Christ," is a mystery only in the first-named sense. It was known to the Jews for ages that the Gentiles would share in the blessings of the Messiah's kingdom—and the Apostle Paul quotes Old Testament predictions to prove the fact (Rom. ix. 25—33); but it was not known that the Gentiles would be included within the circle of religious privilege by the complete sacrifice of the Hebrew theocracy and the reconstitution of religion on a perfectly new basis, designed equally for all mankind, under which the old distinctions of Jew and Gentile would be done away. There was to be no further room for Jewish particularism. The dispensation which was to carry the world to its last destinies was to be as universal as that embodied in the first promise made to our first parents. 3. *The revelation of the mystery.* So far as it involved a mission to the Gentiles, it was revealed first to the Apostle Paul at his conversion; for when Christ appeared to him on his journey to Damascus, he said, "I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness . . . delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God" (Acts xxvi. 16—18). But the fuller exhibition of Gentile privilege is made in this glorious Epistle as well as elsewhere. It was a revelation made by the Lord himself (Gal. i. 12). But it was made especially to "apostles and prophets," both of them belonging to the new dispensation—the only class of inspired men connected with it who received special information from the Holy Spirit, who searches the deep things of God, respecting the new development of the kingdom. The revelation was, indeed, one of facts as well as of truths. The calling of the Gentiles was made manifest in the Spirit's falling upon Cornelius, and in the widespread success of the gospel among the Gentiles, so that the logic of facts beautifully reinforced the more formal revelations of "apostles and prophets." 4. *The substance of the revelation.* "That the Gentiles are fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel." These are the three points of Gentile privilege. They were not to receive the blessings of the Messiah's kingdom by being merged as proselytes into the old theocracy, which was to abide in all its narrow ritualism. (1) *The Gentiles are fellow-heirs.* Possession by inheritance involves the ideas of right, certainty, and inalienableness. All that is involved in the benefits of the covenant of grace is our inheritance. Now, the Gentiles are "heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ" as well as the Jews, just because they are "children of God by faith in Christ Jesus." They cannot be heirs unless they are children; they cannot be children unless they have faith. And because they have faith, they are Abraham's seed. "And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise" (Gal. iii. 29). The Gentile interest in the inheritance may be recent, but it is entire and beyond cavil. Jews and Gentiles have an equal share in all the blessings of the inheritance. (2) *The Gentiles are of the same body.* This marks a more intimate relationship. They were all Jews and Gentiles alike, baptized into one body by one Spirit, and thus coalesced into one Church-state, with Christ as the Head of both. But while they were thus, as members of one body, partakers of a common life, the Gentile was not there by the permission of the Jew, or the Jew by the permission of the Gentile. They were both equally baptized into it by the Spirit. The union in one body obliterates all previous distinctions of character or culture, and all varieties in dispensational privilege; for there is no schism in the body. The Judaistic section of the Church in the apostle's day fought strenuously against the doctrine of the one body. (3) *The Gentiles are fellow-partakers of the promise.* This refers, not so much to the promise of redemption made first to Adam, repeated to Abraham, and embodied in many Old Testament predictions, as to the promise of the Spirit, who enables us to realize all the blessings involved in

this first promise. This was, indeed, the blessing of Abraham which came upon the Gentiles (Gal. iii. 14). It was conspicuously realized when, in the words of the Apostle Peter, "the Holy Ghost fell upon them as on us." There is no promise of the new covenant that is not equally sure to Gentile and to Jew. All the three points of Gentile privilege, setting forth apparently the relation to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and represented in a sort of spiritual climax, are realized by union with Christ, made known to us in the gospel. Salvation centres, as its objective ground, in Christ Jesus, and the gospel is the medium by which it is subjectively applied to sinners of mankind.—T. C.

Vers. 8, 9.—*The apostle's high privilege.* Very often does he refer, with a sort of grateful humility, to the Divine favour in attaching him to the service of the gospel.

I. MARK THE CONTRAST BETWEEN HIS CALL AND HIS SENSE OF PERSONAL NOTHINGNESS. "Less than the least of all saints." The expression is exceedingly emphatic, being a comparative formed upon a superlative. He could never forget his share in the death of Stephen, and his fierce persecutions of the Church of God. This was the sin which though forgiven by God, could never be forgiven by himself. But he was likewise conscious of his own weakness and sinfulness, as we know by the very forcible phrase, "of sinners I am chief," which he uses as a presently believing man. Such language of self-abasement is a mark of true saintship. The highest saints are usually the most distinguished by their humility. The term by which he describes himself implies that there are saints in Christ's kingdom—little, less, least; not that there is any difference in their title, but a difference at once in their realization of their own unworthiness and in the degree of their conformity to him who was at once "meek and lowly." Now, while the consciousness of his own unworthiness stood out in marked contrast to the high function to which he was called in God's grace, he does not shrink from asserting his authority as an ambassador of Christ in the strongest terms, but always with the conviction of one who ascribes all his success, not to his own merits, but to "the gift of the grace of God." His call to the apostleship involved his conversion, and his conversion was "by the effectual working of God's power."

II. CONSIDER HIS MESSAGE TO THE GENTILES. "The unsearchable riches of Christ." We read of riches of grace and riches of glory, but the plenitude of all Divine blessings is in him. 1. *The apostle does not specify what is included in the "riches of Christ."* He who was rich for our sakes became poor that "ye through his poverty might be made rich" (2 Cor. viii. 9). We see the source of all the riches—it is in himself. But Scripture shows that, while in him there was all the fulness of the God-head bodily, with the real design of his filling us eventually with all the fulness of God, "the riches of Christ" are scattered over the whole path of a believer, from its starting-point in conversion till it is lost in the glories of the eternal inheritance. He is rich in love, rich in compassion, rich in mercy, rich in grace, rich in peace, rich in promise, rich in reward, rich in all the blessings of the new and better covenant, as he must be because he is "made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, redemption." 2. *The riches of Christ are "unsearchable."* The word suggests the idea of the difficulty of tracing footsteps. Who can trace the footsteps of God? Whatever of power is infinite power; whatever of wisdom is infinite wisdom; whatever of love is infinite love. (1) We cannot trace the extent of the "riches of Christ." We may apply a double standard of measurement, taking account of the infinite altitude of the sources whence his salvation has flowed, and of the depths of sin and misery to which salvation had to descend in order to reach its objects. Yet we have not searched out the riches of Christ. He put forth upon our salvation all the invention of his omniscient wisdom, applied to it the utmost energies of his omnipotent power, and lavished upon it the exceeding riches of his infinite goodness—neither mercy conflicting with justice, nor love with righteousness, nor compassion for the sinner with hatred of his sins. (2) The riches of Christ are unsearchable so far they are undiminished with use or time. Who can trace the limits of their application? Millions have drunk of the "water of the wells of salvation," but these wells are still unexhausted and inexhaustible. The rivers of the earth may fail; there may be dry wastes where now there are running streams; but the riches of Christ can never fail, though thousands of needy souls have drawn from them and twice ten thousand more will yet come to

draw. The fountain of supply is full as it is free, and free as it is full. 3. *Consider his larger message to the whole world of man.* "And to make all men see the dispensation of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God." The apostle's object was to enlighten the Jew as well as the Gentile upon the true nature of the dispensation which displaced so much that was dear to the Jewish heart in order that the true glory of the Lord might shine forth, not as a mere minister of the circumcision, but as the uniter of Jew and Gentile, bond and free, male and female, in his own body. The mystery was hid for ages, but was now made known by apostles and prophets. We see how revelation was an historical movement, subject to the usual laws of historical development; for the redemptive purpose, "hid for ages," was evolved by a gradual process of growth, till in Christianity it became a full-grown fact. It was part of the discipline of man to go through all these stages of imperfect knowledge till "the perfect day" dawned upon the world. But it was through all the ages "the mystery of redemption," going back to the ages that date from creation—"creation building the platform on which the strange mystery of redemption was disclosed."—T. C.

Vers. 10, 11.—*The Church the means of angelic enlightenment.* The Divine purpose in the dispensation already described was to make known to the angels the manifold wisdom of God.

I. **THE ANGELS RECEIVE INSTRUCTION THROUGH THE CHURCH.** This implies: 1. That the angels are not omniscient, for they have something still to learn. 2. That the angels are in communication with the Church on earth as well as in heaven. They rejoice over the conversion of sinners; they minister to those who shall be heirs of salvation (Heb. i. 14); they stand in immediate relation to the individual man (Matt. xviii. 10; Luke xv. 10; xvi. 22). The apostles regard themselves as "spectacles to angels" as well as men, in the insults heaped upon them by an ungrateful world (1 Cor. iv. 9). The Apostle Peter was liberated from prison by an angel. Angels are present in the assembly of the saints (1 Cor. xi. 10). They are associated with the redeemed in heaven (Heb. xii. 22), so as to derive much information concerning the kingdom of God. 3. The angels desire increased knowledge of the ways of God with man. This might be inferred from the fact that they come specially into the foreground at great turning-points in the history of the kingdom of God, such as the founding of the old and new covenants, and the humiliation and exaltation of Christ. But they are expressly represented as desiring "to look into" the great realities of redemption (1 Pet. i. 12), and here they are instructed in the manifold wisdom of God by means of the Church.

II. **THE INSTRUCTION CONVEYED BY THE CHURCH IS "THE GREATLY DIVERSIFIED WISDOM OF GOD."** It is a curious fact that the interest of the angels is not in the power or the goodness of God, but in his wisdom, as if to imply that the work of redemption represents the highest order of intelligence. It is also a high honour to man that he should first receive the knowledge which the angels are to receive through man. But the angels, by their great age—for they may be thousands of years old—have advantages that short-lived man does not possess for comparing the wisdom of God as manifest in widely distant ages. But the wisdom here referred to centres in the Church—the spiritual body constituted in Christ, and its variety is manifest in the original plan of salvation, in the selection of a Redeemer, in the incarnation, in the atonement, in the application of salvation to Gentile and Jew, in the spread of the Greek language, in the triumph of the Roman law, and in all the dispensations by which the Church has been led onward to her final destiny. Thus our earth, though a mere speck in space, becomes, in the eyes of angels, the brightest of stars; for it is the platform of that Church which mirrors forth "the manifold wisdom of God."

III. **IT IS THE CHURCH WHICH IS THE MEDIUM OF ANGELIC INSTRUCTION.** Not specifically the preaching of apostles, nor human preaching, but the Church as the exhibition in its long and checkered history of the wisdom of God.

IV. **THIS EXHIBITION OF THE MANIFOLD WISDOM WAS INVOLVED IN THE ORIGINAL PLAN OF SALVATION.** "According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord." The scheme was fixed in the counsel of peace; it was executed in all its parts in and through Jesus Christ, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom

and knowledge; and it found historical realization in the progress and kingdom of God, apart from all dispensational limitations.—T. C.

Ver. 12.—*The new spirit of approach to God.* As the effect of the work of redemption, we stand in a new relation to God, which entitles us to a continuous access to him, free, unrestricted, and confiding.

I. WE HAVE BOLDNESS AND ACCESS TO GOD. There is an open, intrepid speaking which springs from a mind confident in itself and strong in the justice of the cause it espouses; but the freedom of speech here referred to is based upon a true appreciation of our relation to Christ and the security enjoyed by the believer in the midst of all his tremors and dubieties. Our God is indeed a consuming fire, yet the believer can approach him without servile fear, simply because Christ is the way of access, and the heart has been sprinkled from an evil conscience through his blood.

II. IT IS IN CHRIST WE HAVE THIS CHANGED DISPOSITION IN PRAYER. He died that we might have "boldness to enter into the holiest." We see in his atonement, not a means of deliverance out of the hands of God, but the strongest of all reasons for casting ourselves into the hands of God as the very best Friend we have in all the universe. Our security from the wrath of God is in the bosom of God. It is Jesus who gives us audience with God, dispelling at the same time from the mind of the worshipper those suggestions which would restrict or narrow the riches of God's love.

III. IT IS BY FAITH IN CHRIST WE REACH THIS NEW TEMPER OF BOLDNESS. It is by the faith of which Christ is both the Object and the Author, discovering to us the dignity of his person, the efficacy of his work, the security of his love, that we are enabled joyfully to approach God. It is thus we have confidence in our approaches to God. Christ's sacrifice, as it has given infinite satisfaction to God, is fitted to inspire the soul of the believer with perfect confidence. He sees that nothing more is needed to ensure his everlasting acceptance, and is thus led to tread with boldness the entrance into the sanctuary of God's presence. He has peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. He has confidence in regard to his interest in God's love, in regard to the power and faithfulness of God to fulfil his promises, and in regard to the continuousness of the supply of grace necessary to his final salvation.

IV. THE EFFECTS OF THIS BOLDNESS AND ACCESS TO GOD ARE TO MAKE US SUPERIOR TO ALL THE AFFLICTIONS OF LIFE. The apostle beseeches the Ephesians, on this ground, not to lose heart on account of the afflictions that had come to himself on their account. The cynical philosopher represents most men as easily reconciled to the misfortunes of their friends, but Christianity not only enjoins but sustains a nobler temper. So close was the relationship that existed between the apostle and the saints at Ephesus, that his afflictions had fallen upon them like almost the reality of a personal experience. They were not to be discouraged by his tribulations, which were, after all, the price paid for his uncompromising assertion of their rights as Gentiles.—T. C.

Ver. 15.—*The family in heaven and in earth.* The prayer of the apostle, which includes a reference to the whole family interest of the universe under the blessed Father, is one of the most fervent, comprehensive, and sublime to be found in al. Scripture. Let us consider the force and beauty of the expression, "the family in heaven and in earth." The primary reference is to the Church of God, but it likewise includes the angels, who merge with the saints into one family; for "all they are brethren." The Church is the family of God in many respects.

I. IT IS SO IN THE TIE THAT BINDS ALL THE MEMBERS TOGETHER. A family has its constitution in nature, not in similarity of opinion, or interest, or taste. We cannot choose who shall be our brothers or sisters. There are relationships in human life into which we can enter or not enter at will, such as political associations, literary fellowships, social bonds of various kinds. The family is not of this character. Now, the Church is a family unlike these merely voluntary associations, for it is founded by God himself, in which we have our place by his own adopting grace, and once we are there, our relations to everything internal and external are determined, not by ourselves, but by the laws of family life. We become "children of God by faith in Christ Jesus" (Gal. iii. 26). There may be members in this family who may not recognize

us as fellow-members at all, but we are members notwithstanding, by ties which they have done nothing to create and which they cannot undo by their exclusiveness or their bigotry. Yet all the members are really bound to each other by the tie of a common life, for they live by faith in Christ Jesus, and of a common love; for faith worketh by love, and never works without it. Jesus says, "Love one another, as I have loved you." That is, we are to love with a love practical, humble, bountiful, patient, gentle, all-embracing, and lasting as Christ's own love.

II. **THE CHURCH IS A FAMILY BY ITS UNITY.** There is but one Father in the Divine family, who unites in himself the perfection of fatherly and motherly affection. There is but one Church on earth, "one body," as there is but one faith, one baptism, one hope. Wherever there is union with Christ, there is membership in his body the Church. The indwelling of the Holy Spirit is the bond of unity in the Church. It follows, therefore, that believers must be one in faith, love, and obedience.

III. **THE CHURCH AS A FAMILY ADMITS OF GREAT DIVERSITIES.** There are great diversities of affection, of temperament, of character, in the same family, contributing, indeed, to the fulness and happiness of its life. The completeness of the family depends, indeed, on the beautiful fusion of its masculine and feminine elements. Now, the Church similarly, though one, exists under great diversities of form and condition. There are, first, the two great divisions of the Church into the heavenly and the earthly membership. It is a mistake to say, as some do, that the Church consists only of living saints, as if the dead ceased to be in its unity. God does not set members in the body that they may die out of it again; he is the God, not of the dead, but of the living; and if such members are not in the body, they are without a Head, that is, without Jesus Christ, who is the only Head of the body. Can "the whole body" grow to the measure of the stature of a perfect man without including the growth of the entire Church of God? Then, again, there are the diversities of dispensations. Believers of every age, no matter under what dispensation they lived, are members of the Divine family. The way of salvation was always the same (Rom. iv.). The one Lamb of God who took away the sin of man was "slain from the foundation of the world" (Rev. viii. 8). The variety of dispensations marks the onward stages of the family life. Then, again, there are the diversities of opinion which have existed within the Church of God without destroying its unity; and endless diversities of character and temperament, all governed more or less by the subduing grace of God; and the diversities of lot, service, and event, illustrated in the career of the members of this family.

IV. **THE CHURCH IS A FAMILY WITH A FINAL GATHERING AND A HOME FOR ALL ITS SEPARATED MEMBERS.** There is a house of "many mansions," which our Saviour has gone before to prepare (John xiv. 2)—"the holy places made without hands;" the grand metropolis of God's moral rule, "whither the tribes go up, the tribes of the Lord," from every realm of earth, from every age of time. There angels will mingle with saints, and interchange experiences of the love of God. The fatherhood of God is thus seen to connect different orders of beings by a new and loving tie. Happy family, whose names are written in heaven! Happy family, whose ranks are unbroken, whose hearts are one! Gathered home at last, to be for ever with the Lord, and for ever with one another!—T. C.

Ver. 16.—*A prayer for spiritual strength.* This beautiful supplication suggests several interesting points.

I. **IT IS A PRAYER FOR THE SAINTS.** It is not for their conversion, but that they might have life still more abundantly. The apostle's desire was to make men eminent Christians, to quicken them in the heavenly race, to promote in them a growth in grace and knowledge which would contribute to their spiritual robustness.

II. **THE BLESSING SOUGHT IS REGARDED AS A FREE GIFT.** "That he would grant you . . . to be strengthened." All true prayer proceeds upon the supposition that we can expect nothing from God but as a free gift through Jesus Christ. There must be a sense of want along with a spirit of entire dependence on the Lord, so that the believer may realize the sweetness of the promise, "My God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus" (Phil. iv. 19).

III. **THE BLESSING IS SPIRITUAL STRENGTH.** "Strengthened with might . . . in the

inner man." It is not a prayer for physical strength, which is a matter of slight moment in God's sight, though it is often made the subject of foolish boasting among men; nor for intellectual strength, which is a much more important factor in human life; but for "strength in the inner man." This is not to be confounded with "the new man." It is rather "the hidden man of the heart" (1 Pet. iii. 4); the man "created after God" (ch. iv. 24) in righteousness and holiness; the interior principle of spiritual life; the personification of our intellectual and spiritual life, with its impulses, its feelings, its struggles. This is the sphere, the direction, the destination, of the strength prayed for. It is a prayer that God would make us eminent in grace and goodness, that our souls may prosper and be in health like our bodies, that we may be able to grapple with all our spiritual enemies, to resist temptation, to endure afflictions, to perform the duties of our Christian calling. If we have strength, we shall be able to run in the way of God's commandments (Isa. xl. 31). Our physical strength is renewed from day to day by food and rest. So is our spiritual strength daily renewed by the Bread of life; and thus the apostle could say of himself, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."

IV. THE SOURCE OF THIS STRENGTH IS THE SPIRIT OF GOD. "By the Spirit." Here is the Fountain of spiritual energy. The Spirit strengthens the believer by leading him to the fulness of grace that is in Christ, by shedding abroad the love of God in his heart, by applying the promises of the gospel, by making the Scriptures sources of that "joy of the Lord which is our strength," and thus causing us to go from strength to strength till at last we stand before God in Zion. It is easy to see, indeed, that the Fountain of strength is in the Spirit; for all the nine graces of the Spirit—love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance (Gal. v. 22)—are so many factors of this inward power. They promote the freedom and efficiency of life.

V. THE MEASURE OF THIS STRENGTH. "According to the riches of his glory." The apostle asks it in no limited measures; he asks it in the measure of the riches of that glory which is seen in his blended and harmonious attributes. God will act up to the dignity of his infinite perfections. "Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it, saith the Lord;" "Ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full." There is an inexhaustible source of mercy upon which we may draw at pleasure in the supreme exigencies of our life.

VI. CONSIDER THE IMPORTANCE OF THE BLESSING ASKED FOR. There is happiness in strength, there is misery in weakness; there is efficiency in strength, there is futility in weakness. 1. *Our usefulness depends on large supplies of spiritual strength.* If we are weak, what good can we do in the world? "Ye are the salt of the earth; but if the salt have lost its savour, wherewith shall it be salted? It is thenceforth good for nothing." 2. *We glorify God by this fuller strength.* It is not enough to have grace enough to carry us to heaven; we must abound in the fruits of righteousness to the praise and glory of God. Let us, then, pray earnestly that we may become "strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might," and that our inward man may be renewed day by day, even though our outward man show signs of weakness and decay.—T. C.

Ver. 17.—*The indwelling of Christ in believers.* "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith." Whether we regard this clause of the prayer as representing the result, or the purpose, or the source of the spiritual strength spoken of in the previous clause, it is in very close relationship with it. Its own meaning is perfectly clear.

I. THE INDWELLER—CHRIST. There is a threefold idea suggested by the term. 1. *The believer is regarded as a temple or house to be divinely inhabited.* It is originally a house in ruins, to be restored as a beautiful temple of the Lord. Judging by the analogy of restoring a ruined house, the first operation is a cleansing out of the rubbish; the second, an opening of the windows to admit the pure air of heaven, and a kindling of a fire on the hearth; the third is a closing up of all the cracks or openings in the walls by which the wind or air finds access; and the fourth is the furnishing of the rooms with such articles of convenience as our taste and our means may enable us to procure. Similarly, when the Lord takes up his abode in the sinner's heart, the process, though not successive in point of time, includes, first, the application of the blood of

Christ to "the heart sprinkled from an evil conscience;" second, the opening of the windows of the understanding to displace the tainted atmosphere of man's thoughts, and the kindling of the fire of love Divine in the heart; third, the watchful closing up of those avenues in the soul through which sin so easily finds access; and fourth, the furnishing of the soul with the needed graces of the Spirit. 2. *The indwelling is here ascribed to Christ.* It is elsewhere ascribed to the Holy Spirit: "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" (1 Cor. iii. 16). It is likewise ascribed to the Father: "He that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him" (1 John iv. 16). These varying forms of expression find their solution in the doctrine of the Trinity. He that hath seen the Son hath seen the Father, and he that hath the Son hath the Father; then, again, he that hath the Son hath the Spirit of Christ: "The Spirit of God dwelleth in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. And if Christ be in you . . . the Spirit is life because of righteousness" (Rom. viii. 9, 10). Therefore, when the apostle speaks of Christ dwelling in our hearts, he refers to the Spirit's indwelling, for Christ dwells in his people by his Spirit. But there is a distinction in the modes of this indwelling: the Father dwells in us by love (1 John iv. 16); the Son by faith (ch. iii. 17); the Spirit lies hid in the heart, working the faith in the one case and the love in the other. 3. *It implies an abiding habit of life.* Christ does not come as a sojourner or as a wayfaring man, that turneth aside to tarry for the night, but as a constant dweller. Herein lies our security for the continuance, the power, the comfort, of this life.

II. *THE SEAT OF INDWELLING—THE HEART.* This is the true shrine. The word signifies the seat of religious knowledge as well as feeling. Thus Christ sits at the very centre of spiritual life, himself the very Life of that life (Gal. ii. 20), controlling all its impulses and movements. The objects we most desire we treasure in the heart. The heart wearies of many things, but can never weary of this Divine Visitant, who can speak with commanding voice when the soul is disturbed by suggestions of sin. "If our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart" (1 John iii. 20). The Lord is the supreme Possessor of the heart "now sprinkled from an evil conscience."

III. *THE SUBJECTIVE MEANS OF THE INDWELLING—FAITH.* This is not to be regarded merely as the means of our justification, or as the root of our spiritual life, but as its continuously sustaining principle, according to the apostle's teaching: "I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God" (Gal. ii. 20). This is the faith that worketh by love, that purifies the heart, that overcometh the world. It is the principle of spiritual communion; it is that by which we realize the presence, the excellence, the power, of Christ in us; it is that which radiates all grace and peace through the believer's heart.—T. C.

Ver. 18.—Love, the root and foundation of spiritual knowledge. "That ye, being rooted and grounded in love," may comprehend and know the love of Christ. The effect of Christ's indwelling in believers is to root them and found them deeply in love—love being the root of the tree of life in the one case, and the foundation of the temple or house in the other; for the soul, ever contemplating Christ within it, is changed into his very likeness. The apostle means that the Ephesian saints would grow in the knowledge of that love by growing into the likeness of that love. "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God;" "The meek will be guide in judgment, the meek will he teach his way." The truths of God are by them spiritually discerned. There is a deep philosophy in this matter. Men cannot understand each other except so far as they have the radical elements of the same experiences in themselves. I understand what you mean when you say you are hot or cold, because I have had sensations of heat and cold in myself. Thus people of dissimilar tempers, or culture, or opportunities are apt to misunderstand each other. A vulgar man cannot understand a man of high refinement. A practical man of the world, who is to-day what he was yesterday, and will be to-morrow what he is to-day, can never understand the man of poetic genius, whose spirits come and go like the tides, to-day in the height of sentimental ecstasy, to-morrow in the depths of despair. There must, therefore, be similarity of temper or experience to promote a real understanding. Thus we can see how only love can understand love. Even in our worldly intimacies, it is not quickness of per-

ception but the force of sympathy or affection that enables us to understand our friends. "Love's quick eye can pierce through disguises impenetrable to a colder scrutiny." Thus it is that the knowledge of God is not to be compassed by a mere exercise of the intellect; it is to be attained through love: "He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love" (1 John iv. 8). Thus it comes to pass that we can know the love of Christ realisingly just in proportion as we have that which resembles it in our own hearts, and that love is there in virtue of his own indwelling by the Spirit. "The Christ of the Bible manifests himself, and, by the laws of human nature, can manifest himself only to his own image formed in the heart." Thus it is possible to read a new meaning into the beautiful sentence of inspiration, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him" (1 Cor. ii. 9). Our Lord has suggestively said, "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God." There are moral as well as intellectual conditions in the pathway of all extended knowledge.—T. C.

Vers. 18, 19.—*The comprehension of the love of Christ. The true science for saints is "Christ's love."*

I. CONSIDER **THIS LOVE AS REPRESENTED IN THE PASSAGE** as to length, breadth, height, and depth. 1. *These dimensions seem to imply infinity.* It has been suggested that the apostle speaks as if standing in a centre, himself the object of this love, enveloped by an atmosphere of love which stretches away illimitably above, beneath, around. He prays that all saints may stand, as it were, in the focus of the same enveloping love. What is that which has thus its centre wherever a saint is to be found? The centre of infinite space is wherever we stand; for we carry this centre with us, no matter where we go. So it is with the infinite love of Christ, which surrounds the saints with its vast and limitless expanse. Each saint ought to feel that he is in the very centre of that love, as if the sole object of its guiding, purifying, comforting care. Human affection has its limits, for it cannot lavish its richest treasures upon several beings at the same time. Not so the heart of Jesus, which has room for millions upon millions of saints. 2. *But the love of Christ may be seen in its pre-eminence from the standpoint of time.* Not only does he love millions, but there is a wonderful duration in his affection for us. We think gratefully of the parental affection that shone upon our life before any time that our memory can recall, and long before we were conscious of its existence. We value most the friendships that have lasted longest. But what is all earthly love to the everlasting love of Christ, which had us in his heart ages before our birth, and had a kingdom prepared for us before the foundation of the world? But his love is as lasting as it is ancient. Human affection often fails through misunderstandings, collisions of interests, variations of pursuit, so that there is often a painful sense of uncertainty as to the future; but even that affection can hardly follow us, as to any real succour or comfort, throughout the unknown life that awaits us beyond the grave. There is One, however, who is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever; on the continuance of whose love we can securely count in time and throughout eternity. If he love us now, he will love us to the end. What, then, shall separate us from such a love? 3. *But this love might be regarded from another standpoint: think of its intensity.* We measure its intensity by its sacrifices, its sufferings, its burdens; yet we must remember that there was more than a mere human sensibility beating in the heart of Christ. He plants himself in the very heart of this world's ingratitude and rebellion and unbelief, exposed to all its hatred, revenge, impurity, profanity; and dies for this very world, "the Just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God."

II. **IT IS A LOVE DESIGNED TO BE THE OBJECT ALIKE OF COMPREHENSION AND OF KNOWLEDGE.** The apostle prays that the Ephesian saints may comprehend the dimensions of it and "know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge." There is a difference between the two terms. We do not want simply to know about Christ's love, of which the absolute understanding is beyond our reach, but to know it, to realize it as a possession of our own, to have an experimental knowledge of its preciousness. Such love may be darkness to the intellect, but it is sunshine to the heart; too marvellous for us to comprehend, but not too rich for us to enjoy. "In a word, to know the love of Christ—it is might in weakness; it is patience in tribulation; it is strength for

living; it is hope in **dying**; it is heaven brought down to earth; it is heaven dwelling within the soul."

III. THE GRAND PURPOSE AND RESULT OF THIS REALIZED LOVE. "That ye may be filled with all the fulness of God." 1. *The fulness of God is the fulness which God possesses*, and therefore incapable of being contracted to the dimensions of a human heart. Yet that fulness—the plenitude of the Divine perfection, which is said to dwell in Christ bodily—is the very measure unto which we are to be filled. We are to be perfect as our Father in heaven is perfect; we are to come "to the perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ;" we are actually predestinated to be conformed to the image of that Son of God who is the Brightness of the Father's glory, and the express Image of his person. 2. *We are to be filled unto that fulness.* The apostle does not say that we shall reach it in this life, or that, if we reach it in the life beyond, the distance between God and us will not still be less than infinite. Plunge an empty vessel into the ocean, it is filled out of and filled with the fulness of the waters that surround it on every side. That empty vessel is our soul. It can take in the fulness of God in its own measure of self-containment. The comparison, to be more exact, demands that the vessel in question should be of expansible material, like a sponge, which, lying withered upon the rock, becomes larger and larger as it is sunk in the deep, till it is merged in the very fulness of the sea. Thus our dry and withered souls, filled with the love of Christ, expand gradually into the very fulness of God. 3. *Effects of this filling unto God's fulness.* One is that, with a well so full and overflowing, our vessels need never be empty. You may ask too little; you cannot ask too much: for the very fulness of God is ever flowing into you. You cannot exhaust it by any frequency of resort to it. Study ever more and more the love of Christ, which, like an arch, stands all the firmer from every additional stone with which it is weighted. Another effect is that, in proportion as you are being filled with God's fulness, there is less room in the heart for sin, or fear, or doubt, or pain. The fulness, like the perfect love, "casteth out fear." As in an exhausted receiver, the more the air is drawn off the more firmly will the machine clasp the surface upon which it stands, so the more that guilt and fear are drawn off from the believer's heart, the more will it cleave to the almighty strength on which it rests. Let our hearts rejoice, therefore, in the fulness of God.—T. C.

Vers. 20, 21.—*A great doxology.* The apostle had exhausted all the forms of supplication, and now he casts himself upon the very infinitude of God, which was able to supply more than the thoughts or desires of men could suggest in the sphere of prayer.

I. THE THEME OF THE DOXOLOGY. It is no abstract ascription of glory to God; it is one full of hope and cheer to the Church—the ability of God to do great things for his people. There is a sort of climax in the language employed: God is able to do what we ask or think; he is able to do above all we ask or think; nay, abundantly above it; nay, exceeding abundantly above all we ask or think; and our thinking is very much wider than our asking. Two things make us strong in prayer—a deep sense of need and a strong hope of supply. Perhaps we shall hardly venture to ask some blessings, but we ought to consider that we are either to approach God on our own merits or on the merits of Christ. If we pray for blessing on our own merits, we can hardly be too stinted in our asking; but if on the merits of Christ, we ought not to disgrace God by asking little things on such a wide basis of encouragement. We have, in fact, got a *carte-blanche* put into our hands by Christ, saying, "Ask what you will, and it shall be done unto you." We are to ask up to our power of thinking, and far beyond it; for "God giveth liberally and upbraideth not." "Prove me now, . . . if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing that there shall not be room enough to receive it." But Paul says merely that God is "able" to do so; what about his will to do so? We remember, when speaking of God's ultimate restoration of the Jews, Paul says, "And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in; for God is able to graft them in again." That is, they shall be, because God is able to do it. 'Therefore, we shall never have asked too much till we have asked beyond God's ability.

II. THE MEASURE OF THE POWER REFERRED TO. "According to the power that worketh in us." It is not abstract or intrinsic omnipotence, such as merely suggests

a possibility that may never pass into a reality. It is a power in actual exercise for the benefit of the Church of God. It is in actual operation even before we have begun to ask or think; it is "the exceeding greatness of his power to usward who believe;" it is the glorious and surpassing power of God, not only irreversibly pledged, but irrevocably in operation. The principal thing that God does for us is what he does in us. "According to the power that worketh in us." There is a power that worketh for us, in virtue of whose supreme disposal "all things work together for good to them that love God;" but there is a power that worketh in us, to will and to do of his good pleasure, that perfecteth that which concerneth us, keeping us from falling, so that we may be presented blameless before the presence of his glory.

III. THE DEBT OF GLORY DUE TO SUCH A GOD. "Unto him . . . be the glory." What shall we not render unto him? Is it not a glorious work he has done? We cannot make him glorious, but we can tell how glorious he is in his gracious and mighty administration. "Thine is the glory," said Christ. All glory belongs to him. Many glorious things exist in creation. The sun is glorious, the stars are glorious, even one star differing from another star in glory; but it is God who feeds their wonderful fires. They belong unto Jehovah. "No flesh must glory in his presence;" and the only way not to glory before him is to glory in him. "He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord."

IV. THE SPHERE OR SCENE OF THIS GLORY. "Unto him be the glory in the Church and in Christ Jesus." "The locality or sphere is the Church, the outward theatre on which this glory is manifested before men;" and "Christ Jesus is" the Minister of this glory to God, the Minister of the true tabernacle which the Lord pitched, and not man, by whom the glory in question is presented with acceptance. In fact, it is in him God manifests the glory of his perfections as the God of grace and salvation; it is through him he shines into our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God. Thus the blessings descend through Christ to the Church, just as all the Church's service goes up to God through the hands of Jesus Christ.

V. THE PERIOD OF THIS GLORY. "To all the generations of the age of the ages." A cumulative expression of great force. This glory is to be given to God during all the ages of time. "His Name shall endure for ever; men shall be blessed in him; all nations shall call him blessed;" "I will make thy Name to be remembered in all generations." The stream of time rolls on world without end, but the glory is to continue through all the ages of eternity. "Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be to him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever. Amen."

VI. LESSONS TO BE DRAWN FROM THIS DOXOLOGY. Let us not be poor any more in our supplications; let us not be stinted in asking to the dishonour of his abounding grace. Let us be encouraged to ask by the recollection of the blessings we have already received. Let us show a more signal gratitude for all our mercies. Are not the extent of our obligations and the perfection of the holiness to which they bind us, far beyond our powers of apprehending or appreciating them? and ought they not to leave us with the similar question of bewildered gratitude, "What manner of persons ought we to be?"—T. C.

Vers. 1—13.—*The death of the tribal spirit.* The apostle, having stated the unity between Jews and Gentiles in the one spiritual temple, proceeds in this parenthesis to state the aspect of the gospel which is thus presented. It amounts, in fact, to the death of the tribal feeling, and to the encouragement of that broad cosmopolitanism which has been fostered by the Christian system. Paul, of course, rejoiced in his Jewish origin and in all the privileges which he had thus inherited. But since his conversion unto Christ, the narrowness had disappeared, and he took his stand before the world as the apostle and apologist of the Gentiles, hoping for the same elevation of character for them as for himself.

I. LET US NOTICE HOW PAUL WAS PREPARED FOR THIS CHAMPIONSHIP OF THE GENTILES. (Ver. 8.) He had come to entertain a deep humility of spirit. He deemed himself "less than the least of all saints." In Paul's experience it has been observed there is a progress. First he speaks of himself as "the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the Church of God" (1 Cor. xv. 9).

Secondly, as in this passage before us, he regards himself not only as hardly worthy of the name of an apostle, but as less than the least of all saints. Having ranked all apostles above himself in the first instance, he now ranks all the saints above him. Then, thirdly, he puts himself below all other sinners, and declares, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief" (1 Tim. i. 15). Now, this expresses a complete revolution in Pharisaic thought. Unquestionably Paul had learned to judge himself severely when he comes to conclusions such as these. Now, Christianity secures this apparent moral paradox of esteeming each the other better than himself (Phil. ii. 3). "By humility," as A. Monod has said in his 'Explication,' "the Christian is led to judge himself severely, while charity comes to his aid in making him judge favourably of another. Each one, besides, reading in his own heart and not that of others, perceives only in himself that depth of sin which is the worst aspect of it, although least visible, and he can always hope that with others, whatever the appearances may be, this depth, hidden from his eyes, is better than with him." This personal humiliation, then, is the preparation Paul receives for his great *rôle* as elevator of the Gentiles. It is when personally abased that we are exalted in heart and hope, and become the willing servants of mankind.

II. PAUL'S ESTIMATE OF HIS OFFICE. (Ver. 8.) It was a "grace" given to him to be allowed by God to preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ. His notion was that it was the crown and summit of human privilege to be thus placed in charge of such a commission. He magnified his office. He saw nothing to be compared with it in the privileges of men. He would have endorsed the words of a great modern preacher when he declared to students for the ministerial office, "There is no career that can compare with it for a moment in the rich and satisfying relations into which it brings a man with his fellow-men, in the deep and interesting insight which it gives him into human nature, and in the chance of the best culture for his own character. . . . Let us rejoice with one another that in a world where there are a great many good and happy things for men to do, God has given us the best and happiest, and made us preachers of his truth."

III. THE MORAL ELEVATION WHICH THE GOSPEL PROPOSES TO DESTOW UPON THE GENTILES. (Ver. 6.) Up to our Lord's time the tribal idea prevailed. The Jews were a tribe, and their policy was, as their policy would still be, the supremacy of the tribe. But Christ proposed not to carry the Jewish tribe up to proud supremacy, but, on the contrary, to bring all other tribes up to their level of privilege, and to weld the world's peoples into one. It was he who first touched the key of cosmopolitan comprehensiveness and bade the narrow tribal spirit to cease. He talked of many coming from east and west to sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven (Matt. viii. 11). He talked of drawing "all men" unto himself once he was lifted on the cross (John xii. 32). He spoke of Jerusalem ceasing to be the single centre of true worship, and of true worshippers worshipping the Father anywhere (John iv. 21—24). All nations were to be discipled by his servants (Matt. xxviii. 20). Into these broad and noble views for mankind the eleven did not very rapidly or fully enter. Doubtless Peter had inaugurated the Gentile Pentecost in the house of Cornelius; but he relapsed into narrowness a few years later at Antioch. It was reserved, therefore, for Paul, the most powerful mind of the apostolic band, to catch the cosmopolitan spirit of his Master, and to champion the Gentile against all the prejudice of the Jewish world. It has been suggested that he would not have chosen the appointment had it been left to himself. But, as far as we can judge, he showed no narrowness once he had humbled himself at Christ's feet on the way to Damascus. He there ceased to be the patriot of a tribe, and became, in the widest and worthiest sense, a citizen of the world and a champion of the rights of universal man. There is surely something grand in this idea of lifting outcast communities into the highest and holiest associations. There is no casting of contempt on any tribe, but extending pity and compassion unto all. The golden gate of privilege is opened wide for every one. The missionary enterprise is the best and noblest policy which men have set themselves in earnest to carry through!

IV. THE LESSON THUS AFFORDED TO THE HEAVENLY WORLD. (Vers. 10—12.) The idea of Paul is that the angels on high look down with rapt interest and profit upon what is taking place in the Church. The movements of men outside the Church have,

of course, their interest; but it is the bringing of the different peoples of the earth into the glorious unity of the Church of God which so strikes the attention of the heavenly world. The Divine society which is gathering round Jesus is the most instructive exhibition of God's purposes which the heavenly world can contemplate. As Jonathan Edwards put it in his sermon upon ver. 10, the angels are benefited by the salvation of men, (1) by seeing therein a great and wonderful manifestation of the glory of God; (2) by Jesus Christ, as God-Man, becoming their Head. We may be sure that the history of the world looks very differently to the immortals from what it does in the pages of mortal history. We see the tramp of armies and of battles upon the graphic page, and an account more or less intelligent of the different and concurrent causes; but with what fuller insight and appreciation must the heavenly world look down upon the vicissitudes of time! Amid the conflicting policies of different states and nations, the missionary enterprise appears as the one consistent and uniting policy. The elevation of the world's peoples into one consecrated whole, into one mighty family, into one organic whole, is surely worthy of a God. And this is what the Church exhibits; it was for this Paul suffered, it is for this we in our respective spheres must struggle too.—R. M. E.

Vers. 14-21.—*The Christian brotherhood—Paul's second prayer.* From the noble idea of the elevation of the heathen to equal privileges with the Jews, the apostle proceeds to a second prayer for the Ephesian converts, in which he rises to still greater elevation of thought. Prostrating himself before the Father of all, he contemplates a family unity embracing both heaven and earth, and he prays that his friends at Ephesus may experience such inward illumination and strength as to be fitting members of the mighty family. The leading thought is, then, Christian brotherhood, which embraces angels as well as men. The following thoughts are suggested by the prayer:—

I. CHRISTIAN BROTHERHOOD IS TO BE REALIZED IN DEVOTION BEFORE A COMMON FATHER. (Ver. 14.) The words "of our Lord Jesus Christ" are not in the most ancient manuscripts, and are rightly omitted in the Revised Version. This clears the ground for the understanding of the family name. The word for "family" (*πατριὰ*) is etymologically connected with *πατήρ*, so that it is God the Father who supplies the patronymic to "every family in heaven and on earth." All gather round the feet of a common Father, and realize in their devotion the true brotherhood. We do not sufficiently think of how much is accomplished when we get men everywhere on their knees with the Lord's Prayer upon their lips. As we say from the heart, "Our Father, which art in heaven," our hearts have become really one. However much we may squabble before we proceed to prayer, if our prayer to the infinite Father be true, we have entered by it into real brotherhood. Contention cannot stand "the light of the countenance" of the great "Peace-maker."

II. CHRISTIAN BROTHERHOOD IS SECURED THROUGH THE INDWELLING OF A COMMON SAVIOUR. (Vers. 16, 17.) For the Holy Spirit, entering into the hearts of God's children, enables them to entertain the elder Brother as a Guest. Christ dwells within each of us. He comes to sup with us and to enable us to sup with him (John xiv. 21; Rev. iii. 20). Christ within us becomes the unifying element. He is the Guest of each and of all. As a Divine Being, he can pervade all the hearts and ensure the brotherhood. The brotherhood is brought about and sustained by an indwelling Christ. Taking possession of our natures, Jesus moulds them to his own gracious purposes and secures the essential brotherhood all round.

III. CHRISTIAN BROTHERHOOD IS INTENSIFIED THROUGH THE GRADUAL COMPREHENSION OF CHRIST'S WONDROUS LOVE. (Vers. 18, 19.) Jesus by his indwelling becomes the object as well as instigator of our love. We get "rooted and grounded in love." The selfish, loveless life has ceased, and the loving and devoted life has begun. This is essential to the comprehension of another's love. As Robertson says, "You must love in order to understand love. . . . One act of charity will teach us more of the love of God than a thousand sermons." Only loving hearts, then, can appreciate the wondrous love of Christ. It passeth the knowledge of natural and unloving men. Love is a revelation only unto love. But now, supposing that the love of Christ has begun within us, then his wondrous love becomes a subject of endless contemplation. Its breadth and length, its depth and height, present a problem for

our holy comprehension, which can never be exhausted. "The believer," says A. Monod, "who has been represented just now as rooted and grounded in the love of the Lord, is here represented as enveloped on all sides by this love, which extends itself in all directions around him beyond the limits of vision. Suspended in the very bosom of the infinite love, like the earth in the bosom of space, he looks before him, behind him, above him, below him, to seize the just measure of this love which has saved him, but all ends in demonstrating the impossibility of measuring it. The breadth? On his right and on his left, immensity. The length? Before him and behind him, immensity. The depth? Under his feet, immensity. The height? Over his head, still immensity." Here, then, in the infinite love of Christ there is material for eternal study, and the brotherhood realizes that it has begun an everlasting progress towards "the fulness of God." As we comprehend Christ's love, we find ourselves proportionally "partakers of the Divine nature" and filled with the Divine fulness. This is the infinitely distant goal; this is the straight line to which our hyperbolic orbit is continually making approach, though destined never actually to reach it. And as we approach the perfection and fulness of God, we become the more united in Christian brotherhood.

IV. CHRISTIAN BROTHERHOOD REMAINS UNBROKEN BY THE CHANGE OF WORLDS. (Ver. 15.) The family of love, who are gathering regularly round the feet of the heavenly Father, cannot be broken up by death or change of worlds. Heaven with its saints and angels, earth with its suffering and saintly souls, these constitute but one family circle, and are pervaded by the one Christ and the one Christian spirit. It is this thought which robs death of its sting and makes it appear but a sublime emigration. The majority are in the Father's house above; it is the minority that are left on earth; and our sainted dead have simply passed over to the majority and are awaiting us amid more perfect associations. "Death, in short," says Martineau, "under the Christian aspect, is but God's method of colonization; the transition from this mother-country of our race to the fairer and newer world of our emigration. What though no other passage thither is permitted to all the living, and by neither eye nor ear we can discover any trace of that unknown receptacle of vivid and more glorious life? So might the dwellers in any other sphere make complaint respecting our poor world. Intensely as it burns with life, dizzy as our thought becomes with the din of its eager passions and the cries of its many woes, yet from the nearest station that God's universe affords—nay, at a few miles beyond its own confines, all its strong force, its crowded cities, the breathless hurry and ferment of its nations, the whole apparition and chorus of humanity, is still and motionless as death; gathered all and lost within the circumference of a dark or illumined disc. And silent as those midnight heavens appear, well may there be, among their points of light, some one that thrills with the glow of our lost and immortal generations; busy with the fleet movements and happy energies of existence more vivid than our own; where, as we approach, we might catch the awful voices of the mighty dead, and the sweeter tones, lately heard in the last pain and sorrow, of our own departed ones."

V. THE CHRISTIAN BROTHERHOOD IS SUSTAINED BY THE ASSURANCE OF GOD'S SURPASSING POWER. (Vers. 20, 21.) In the doxology the apostle adds one other thought to round and complete his glorious theme. He wishes to ascribe glory unto God; but what attribute shall form the substance of the doxology? The attribute of *power*. Not, however, the physical power which obtains in the universe of sense, but the spiritual power which obtains in the "world of mind." And so he looks upward and pronounces the mighty God as "able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us." In the world of sense he does not work up to his full strength, nor is there any reason why he should. The physical universe speaks of his "eternal," but not necessarily of his "infinite" power (Rom. i. 20). It is in the domain of the spirit that he performs his *chefs-d'œuvre*. And such a thought is surely fitted to sustain the aspirations of the Christian brotherhood!—R. M. E.

Vers. 1—13.—*Paul's apostleship to the Gentiles: introduction.* The apostle has it in his mind to pray for the Ephesian Christians. There is a twofold ground upon which he proceeds. 1. *What has been said about them.* "For this cause." He has described them in three ways as incorporated in the Church. His last statement

pointed to their being *built in*. They were, therefore, objects for intercession, such as their heathen ancestors had not been. 2. *His relation to them*. He did not stand at an outside, but in the closest relation to them, such as brought with it the obligation on his part to pray for them. (1) *He had a relation to them through the common Master, being the prisoner of Christ Jesus*. "I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus." He was not the only one of whom that could be said, but "Paul the prisoner" was well known to them. Indeed, it was an Ephesian named Trophimus who innocently brought him into trouble. He was the prisoner of Cæsar; but who was Cæsar but the *hand of Christ* in the matter? He recognized the fact that it was by *Christ's will* primarily that he was a prisoner. Christ being above Cæsar in power, and therefore able to order it otherwise, it was to human appearance strange that a worker like Paul should at this time have been so restricted in his energies. But he who has eyes like unto a flame of fire saw deeper into it than any other could. One good result which flowed from his imprisonment was that he was able to give himself more to *composition*. See here how there rose before the mind of the prisoner of Christ a glorious conception of his Church, by which there will be greatest benefit to the end of time. (2) *He was the prisoner of Christ Jesus on behalf of them, the Gentiles*. "In behalf of you Gentiles." His unbelieving countrymen (who in their spiritual pride were for the exclusion of the Gentiles) had been his bitterest foes, and were, indeed, chargeable (more than the Roman authorities) with his imprisonment. He was suffering for his *liberality* in seeking to include them, as was the will of Christ, within the pale of the Church. He might well, then, claim to write to them, as well as be expected to offer prayers on their behalf. But, having mentioned this ground of his praying for them, he goes aside from his prayer, and does not proceed with the sentence which he has commenced until the fourteenth verse, giving us a parenthesis which, for length and weight together, is not surpassed. *Transition to the subject of his apostleship*. "If so be that ye have heard." Gentiles, for whom he was suffering, could scarcely have been ignorant, whether they had enjoyed his ministrations or not, of the fact of his being apostle of the Gentiles. And if the Ephesian Christians had heard more particularly of the matter of the *revelation*, as probably they had done, for Paul laboured two years among them, yet it would not be inconsistent with usage to say, "If so be that ye have heard," as referring to a *well-known fact*, and as referring to it in the way of calling them to self-scrutiny as to the time when they heard it and the *person from whom they heard it*.

I. *HIS APOSTLESHIP WAS OF DIVINE ARRANGEMENT*. "Of the dispensation." It was not of his own ordering, but was the dispensation of God. It was arranged that he should be a minister to preach unto the Gentiles (vers. 7, 8). This is in accordance with his manner of viewing things in the first chapter. He who has the administration of the æons has also the appointment of all who serve in his house, whether ordinary or extraordinary.

II. *FOR HIS APOSTLESHIP HE WAS FAVOURED WITH THE KNOWLEDGE OF A MYSTERY*. "Of that grace of God which was given me to you-ward." He had no reason to look for such a thing, but with a view to his acting as their apostle he was so favoured. 1. *It was a mystery which was communicated to him by revelation*. "How that by revelation was made known unto me the mystery." He did not receive it at second-hand, nor was it a discovery of his own; but it was immediately and supernaturally communicated to him. That was guarantee for the knowledge being certain and thorough. The fact revealed to him at his conversion, that he was to bear Christ's Name before the Gentiles, may only have given rise to perplexities as to the *mode*. We can think of the revelation referred to here as coming to him, not without preparation of reflection on his part, during his retirement in Arabia. And it must have been a great help to him in his perplexities to know confidently and timeously the principles on which God was to proceed with the Gentiles. 2. *It was a mystery of his knowledge of which he had already given them evidence*. "As I wrote afore in few words." The reference is evidently to this same Epistle, especially to the first chapter, in which it is part of the "mystery" of summing up all things in Christ, that Gentiles are put on an equality with Jews in being made "heirs" on trusting in Christ. It was the mystery of Christ, viz. as the great Reconciler. He had written in brief; but their interest would make up for his brevity, and he claims that, in what he had said, he had

given them the opportunity, when they should "read," of perceiving his understanding of the mystery. And thus, through his communication to them of what he had got immediately from God, they would have the satisfaction of *seeing for themselves* what the truth was. 3. *It was a time when others were favoured with revelation of the mystery as well as he.* "Which in other generations was not made known unto the sons of men, as it hath now been revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit." "Sons of men" has a certain association of *incapacity*. Being only sons of men, they could not be expected to know the mystery of themselves. And the former generations of them had stood at a disadvantage. They had not been absolutely excluded from the benefit of revelation. But still, in all that they had been favoured with, in promises connected with the admission of the Gentiles, it had remained very much of a mystery, until the then Christian period. And the Apostle Paul, with an evident enthusiasm, thinks of himself as in the company of apostles and prophets, upon whom in that age the influx of the Spirit had come, and who were privileged to make communications of blessed import to the Gentiles. 4. *What the contents of the mystery were.* "To wit, that the Gentiles are fellow-heirs, and fellow-members of the body, and fellow-partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel." There is a catching up of a previous thread here, for which we were prepared by his reference to what he had written before. "They were made a heritage." They had the "earnest" of an "inheritance." They were "God's own possession." There was something *new* (or matter for revelation) in their thus being *fellow-heirs*. For this was something beyond the extension of grace to them. It indicated their relation to *ancient Israel*. The Jews (or believers among them) were not the only successors of Israel. But the Gentile believers were served heirs as well. They were in the true theocratic line. The prestige of that people, the great things the Lord had done for them, were theirs. And theirs, too, were even the lessons of their apostasies. Theirs were their Scriptures. "Fellow-members of the body" is also a catching up of a previous thread. For he has before written of the "one body" (ch. ii. 16). This had not been clear to the former generations. They had not contemplated such a close commingling of Gentile and Jewish elements. Was there to be no partition wall whatever? Was their identity as Jews completely to be lost? Yes, that was the *form* that mercy to the Gentiles was to take. And there were they in the Ephesian Church, some of them Jews and some of them Gentiles, but all members of the body of Christ. "And fellow-partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel." "Fellow-partakers of the promise" is properly the parallel phrase. But there is a reason for connecting the remaining words specially, if not exclusively, with this. For the promise (that is, to former generations) refers to the same blessings offered (since the coming of Christ) in the gospel. There is thus a catching up of a previous thread from the second chapter, where it is said that Christ came and preached the gospel (of peace) to Gentiles as well as to Jews. And there was much for apostles and prophets to reveal of the mystery here. For it was by so completely "filling up" the types, and presenting the real all-sufficient sacrifice for sin, that all former restrictions could be done away. Men no longer needed to be circumcised or to go up to Jerusalem, but could freely participate in the blessings of salvation simply as believing on Christ.

III. *HIS BEING A MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL TO THE GENTILES FILLED HIM WITH A SENSE OF HIS OWN UNWORTHINESS.* "Whereof I was made a minister according to the gift of that grace of God which was given me according to the working of his power. Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, was this grace given, to preach unto the Gentiles." Paul takes the lowly title of "minister" (literally, "one who runs at the call of another," but used generally of a servant). He was a servant in a *particular order*. *Grace was given* him to preach unto the Gentiles. That was where he found his work, where he was appointed to follow the Master. And *the gift of this grace* (thus defined) was given him in a particular way—"according to the working of his power." "The mention of the *power* of God is founded on the circumstance that Paul sees in his change of heart, from a foe to a friend of Christ, an act of omnipotence." It is an exercise of power that calls for our adoration. Grandeur than the flash of the lightning, the roll of the thunder, was the power which turned Saul into Paul, the persecutor into the preacher. It is power which has been exercised after the same example, notably in the case of Bunyan. It is power to which the Church can con-

stantly look for the raising up of men to do its work. It is power to which the greatest sinners may be pointed for their conversion to God. In magnifying the Divine power, Paul humbles himself. But not thus does his feeling of humility (which none need to cultivate more than ministers) find adequate expression. But in view of the greatness of his calling he humbles himself still further. "*Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints.*" There is employed, to express his meaning, what is both a comparative and a superlative. There was no exaggeration in this to the apostle who, though he could warmly vindicate his apostolic position when there was occasion, yet had a feeling of his own nothingness (2 Cor. xii. 11). It belongs to a shallower Christian experience than his was, to make such comparisons. To one who has felt his own utter villainess before God, to think of instituting a comparison in personal worth, in spiritual standing between himself and his fellow-Christians, is utterly abhorrent to him. He repudiates the thought; *he is less than the least of all saints*. There can be no doubt that those who have (without feigning) the deepest feeling of humility are really the best saints and the best champions of the faith. It is not the case that a career of wandering such as the apostle had (in his case it was wandering in self-righteousness for thirty years) is necessary to the deepest feeling of humility. For we have all enough of evil in our hearts to lead to humiliation. But it may be said that those who have had such wanderings and subsequent struggles are the most likely (in respect of their opportunity) to excel in a knowledge of the corruption of their hearts. The apostle supplies us with a rich expression here, "*all saints.*" Who are they that form this order? Certainly none of mankind who have not the blood of Christ sprinkled upon them. Certainly more than those who have been specially "sainted" of men. They include many "hidden ones" on earth.

"But sure from many a hidden dell,
From many a rural nook unthought of, there
Rises for that proud world the saints' prevailing prayer."

They include the "elder saints" in heaven, both angels and men. They have all their circle of influence in the universe of God. We are to look unto "Jesus, the Author and Perfecter of our faith;" but we are also to get strengthening, incitement, catholicity, from "the communion of saints."

IV. THE SUBJECT OF HIS PREACHING TO THE GENTILES WAS THE UNSEARCHABLE RICHES OF CHRIST. The blessings of the gospel are compared by our Lord to gold: "I counsel thee to buy of me gold." And, in agreement with that, is this description of these blessings as "the unsearchable riches of Christ." There are none higher (as there is nothing higher in metals than gold), and, if we count them as men count gold, they are inestimably precious. What are the blessings of the gospel? There is first of all *peace*, not the peace of unfallen beings, but the peace of those who have been sinners and are now reconciled—the sweet sense of sin forgiven, the blessed feeling that the guilt which was resting on us is removed, and that there is now nothing between us and a holy God. And who can tell the preciousness of this blessing? The man who has this peace can feel richer than Cræsus. It is a peace which makes us independent of the world, which the world cannot give and which the world cannot take away. It is a peace which passeth all understanding, which has a mysterious, unspeakable sweetness about it, so that he who has once felt what it is would never like to lose it. Another blessing is *spiritual understanding*. The man who knows is on a different footing from the man who does not know. Think of one who has all the light of modern science, compared with the Chinaman who is only where his ancestors were two or three thousand years ago. Think of one who has all the light which Christianity has shed on the highest matters, compared with the feticist whose dim object of reverence is some unconscious stone. How dark the world would have been at this day but for the dayspring from on high which hath visited us! But, along with that outward light which shines widely, there is to all who seek and embrace it an inward light of the Holy Ghost. Blind Bartimæuses, we believe in Christ, and we receive our sight. And what riches it is to have spiritual insight, to have the veil taken off God and truth, to be under no delusion, to be delivered from every error, and to see things clearly in the light of God! A third blessing, but a very comprehensive one, is *holy feeling*. What a cage of unclean birds does sin make of our hearts! But

the gospel introduces a radical change of feeling. "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." And is it not golden to have fine feeling—feeling in which there is no sinful element, but only the fine grain of holiness; to have devoutest reverence and tenderest love towards God; to have due respect and tender love toward our fellow-men? The man who feels aright all round has his wealth in his soul, there a perpetual feast. These blessings we may regard as summed up in Christ. For as Christ is said not only to have the bread of life, but to be himself the Bread of life, so we may say he *has* not only unsearchable riches to bestow, but *he* is himself the unsearchable Riches. He is the true Gold, he is precious in every quality of his being as gold, and, in having him as the Portion of our souls, we must needs have unsearchable riches.

V. AN OBJECT AIMED AT BY THE APOSTLE IN HIS PREACHING TO THE GENTILES. "And to make all men see what is the dispensation of the mystery." He himself understood the mystery, having got it by revelation. And he had given them the means of perceiving his understanding of it, and therefore of understanding it for themselves. But so precious a truth was not to be confined within so narrow an area. He had a certain unbounded ambition in preaching the gospel. It was to make *all men* see the gracious arrangement which had been newly introduced, and see it so as to be induced to take advantage of it. On another occasion his language was, "That all the Gentiles might hear." In both cases it is the language of enthusiasm. It was the burning desire of his heart, to make all men see, that made him go (not without hardships) from land to land. He was not free to settle down in any one place. When he had established a centre of gospel light in Ephesus, he must go elsewhere. The world was a dark place, and he must establish as many centres of light at suitable points in it as God would enable him to establish during his appointed course.

VI. A TWOFOLD ULTERIOR OBJECT SERVED BY THE PREACHING OF THE GOSPEL TO THE GENTILES. 1. *More immediately men having demonstrated to them the Divine sovereignty.* "Which from all ages hath been hid in God who created all things." It is because he has created all things that he has the disposal of all things. There is nothing whatever which he cannot bend to his will. It was in the exercise of his sovereignty that, at the beginning of the ages, he did not reveal the whole breadth of his purpose. It lay hid in himself. And for ages his ways were dark, in the great majority of men being left to their own natural ignorance and inability. During these ages he rested in his own thoughts regarding men, in his own reasons of procedure, in his own ways of working. But there was *mystery*. The largeness of his purpose was sovereignly hid under a cloud until, with the coming of Christ and the preaching of the gospel to all men, it clearly burst forth. 2. *Angels seeing by the Church the manifold wisdom of God.* "To the intent that now unto the principalities and the powers in the heavenly places might be made known through the Church the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord." The Church is the community of which, as is said in the first chapter, Christ is the Head. The interest in this community is here represented as extending to the angels. They are here designated on the side of their power and rank as the principalities and the powers. In the hundred and third psalm it is said, "Ye his angels, that excel in strength." In what relation rank or dominion is ascribed to them, we have not the means of knowing, as we have not the survey of the heavenly world which they, it is here implied, have of the earthly world. But we are to understand the apostle, in the loftiness of his thought, seizing upon this as being to the honour of the Church, that it attracts the attention of the inhabitants of "the heavenly places"—those who have never known any other habitation, who, from the first moment of their being, have lived in the presence of God. They have been contemporaries of man during all his history. For when the earth was framed "the morning stars sang together, and the sons of God shouted for joy." We are to think of them as witnessing man's innocence and fall, and as being made acquainted with the introduction of grace in the promise. And the Law (which had a separating side) was by the "disposition of angels." And angels very signally heralded the Saviour's birth. But it was not for our sakes alone that they were thus connected with our history. It would seem that, though in the heavenly places, they had but a limited knowledge of redemption. They had not foreknowledge; they had to wait like us for the evolution of events. What was mystery

to us (as to the including of the Gentiles) was mystery to them also, being hidden to both in God. They were at a loss to understand what the development of things under the gospel was to be. But they were taught by the events. *Now* through the Church was made known the manifold wisdom of God. The Church was not to be instructress, but rather material for instruction by God in the subject of his manifold wisdom. There was material to be found elsewhere, in which the angels delighted to study the manifold wisdom of God. It was when the worlds were brought forth into space that they shouted for joy. What a field was that opened up for their contemplation! "O Lord, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all." The simple idea of a house is that which has walls, and door, and windows, and roof; but into what manifoldness, what richness of structure, may that be drawn out by the creative mind of the architect! An architect's work is manifold in proportion to the multiplicity of the parts, and to the variety he can introduce into these; and his skill is seen in his combining these parts, in all their multiplicity and variety, into a unity. What multiplicity of parts has God to deal with in the material structure of things! and what variety he introduces, so that no leaf is exactly like another! and how there are not only adaptations which can be made a study of by themselves (as a column, or bit of tracery on it, may be made a study of), but these are comprehended in wider adaptations, and so all-comprehensive is the Divine thought that there is in the result no confusion but the highest simplicity! That is one sphere for the display of *manifold wisdom*. We may expect greater manifoldness as we rise higher. What a manifoldness in the life of rational beings! "And God," says Leibnitz, "has the qualities of a good Governor as well as of a great Architect." It may be supposed that the angels will first contemplate the manifold wisdom of God in themselves, in their high and varied endowments, in the way in which their eternal well-being has been secured to them without their having to pass through the experience of sin, and in the part assigned to each and to all in the great plan. Is he not called the Lord of hosts, as marshalling the innumerable army of angels? They have a manifoldness far beyond our conception, and yet he can dispose of them as easily as an officer can do with a small section of an army. He calls them, as he calls the stars, by their names; not one is overlooked, not one out of place. The manifold wisdom of God is also to be seen in the way in which the twelve hundred millions of men on the earth are dealt with at one moment. The problem here has been complicated by the entrance of sin. Manifold are the phases of sin, and manifold are the methods by which he seeks to dislodge men out of their sin. But this manifold problem of the world of mankind is mastered by him more easily than the problem of a single household is mastered by us. But it is in the Church that there is to be seen conspicuously the manifold wisdom of God. And, in the first place, it is to be seen in that general point regarding the Church which the apostle has been considering, viz. the including of the Gentiles after they had been so long excluded. It may seem that the exclusion of any from the privileges of the Church was a reflection on the Divine wisdom. Was it not sacrificing their interests that an effort was not made for their salvation along with that of others? But the problem was far more manifold than that. If there had been a comprehension of all nations all along, the result would probably have been the extinction of religion. We are not to think that Christ could have come, and his gospel be promulgated, at any time. If the gospel dispensation had been introduced at the time of the election of Abraham, we may suppose it would have been thrown away. He with whom a thousand years are as one day had to look to, not the greatest good of men then, but to the greatest good of men to all time. And so he ordained a long period of preparation, both negative in bringing out what men could not do, and positive in the way of teaching by type and providential dealing. And he did not bring Christ into the world until he saw how his truth could get a firm hold, and be proclaimed wide to the nations. And though the gospel has yet much to do, it is in such a position that it cannot now be lost. But this was only part of a wider purpose. "According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord." We have to bring in the whole purpose of God regarding the Church. This purpose he purposed in eternity. It was a purpose running through the ages. In Christ he saw the Church in the completeness of its idea, in the whole of its development. And, with this clear before his mind, he could patiently wait through the ages for the fuller unfolding of his purpose. As Christ is called the

Wisdom of God, so we may expect to see in his Church a wisdom manifold as himself. What an element in the scheme of redemption, that the Redeemer was a Divine Being in human nature! How justice and mercy are reconciled in his cross! How sin is forgiven while God at the same time manifests his detestation of it! How manifold are the ways by which men are brought into the Church! What the final adjustment of things is to be is very much a mystery to us, as it is doubtless to the angels. But we stand in this position that, in what has been exhibited to us already of the manifold wisdom of God, we can look hopefully forward to the final reconciliation.

VII. RETURN TO PRIVILEGE OF CHRISTIAN POSITION. "In whom we have boldness and access in confidence through our faith in him." Christ was the Object of their faith. Realizing by faith what he was, the provision made by him, the great love he bore to them, they had the spirit of sons. In Gal. iii. 26 it is said, "Ye are the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus." That is, we have the position of children. Here the thought is, we have the disposition of children. 1. The spirit of boldness. They had a free, joyous mood, as having an interest in Christ. They were delivered from the fear of wrath. They were not of the number of those who, through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage. 2. In nearness to God (in the God-Man) they had the spirit of confidence. They had that confidence restored to them which Adam lost. They had the confidence to which Paul elsewhere gives lofty expression: "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."

VIII. EXHORTATION LOOKING BACK TO FIRST VERSE. "Wherefore I ask that ye faint not at my tribulations for you, which are your glory." He supposes that they would be concerned for his tribulations, as endured for them. How was the cause of Christ to be carried forward, when so principal an instrument was lying a prisoner in Rome? But he would have them not to faint, bringing forward the consideration that these tribulations of his were their glory. If he had proved unfaithful to their interests, and withdrawn from persecutions, that would have been a discrediting of him as a discrediting of the Founder of the Church, and they might in that case have been tempted to despair of Christianity. But, as he had stood true to them in the face of persecutions, that brought them honour, and was fitted to have a confirming, elevating effect on them as a Church.—R. F.

Vers. 14—19.—*A prayer on behalf of the Ephesian Christians.* I. THE SUPPLIANT. "For this cause I bow my knees." He has explained who he, Paul, was, in the remarkable parenthesis which concludes with the thirteenth verse. In resuming his sentence, so long interrupted, he naturally falls back on the first words, "For this cause." Thus taken up, it has only the meaning which it had before, the thought in the parenthesis being carried forward into the word, "I." He describes himself as a suppliant from the natural posture in prayer. The only reason there can be for a standing posture in prayer has a narrow reference. There is justification in standing in prayer at a bedside or before a congregation, if kneeling interferes with edification (which is the higher consideration). Solomon was able to combine the kneeling posture with edification in his prayer of the dedication; for, placed on a brazen pulpit, "he kneeled down upon his knees before all the congregation of Israel, and spread forth his hands toward heaven." Kneeling is the posture of *humility*, and we have reason to humble ourselves before God as creatures before our Creator, as sinners before our Judge. It is the posture of *earnest entreaty*. "And his fellow-servant fell down at his feet and besought him." So should we, as though pleading for our life, bend the knee before God.

II. How GOD IS ADDRESSED. "Unto the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named." In the Greek there is a transition as from Father to fatherhood, only the transition in thought is not to the abstract idea of fatherhood, but to the concrete representation of it in a family. God has instituted the relationship of father and son among men. And though the angels neither marry nor are given in marriage, it would seem from the language here that there is a certain grouping of them in families too. How far this may descend we have not the means of knowing. But into

a family there enters the idea of a head with a certain subordination to the head. There also enters the idea of a special affection existing between the members of the same family. Now, the whole of this conception has its origination in Godhead. It is from God that every family in heaven and on earth is named. We find Father and Son existing from eternity. "I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. . . . When he appointed the foundations of the earth, then I was by him, as one brought up with him: and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him." And angels and men have been constituted after this pattern, in order that they may be familiarized with the truth of God's fatherhood, and in order that they may know in what close relationship he would have them stand to him. And where the family is thus "named" after God, how becoming to worship him as the God of families, and specially as the God of our family!

III. THE MEASURE ACCORDING TO WHICH BLESSING IS ASKED. "That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory." There is a certain expectation of favours and donations from people according to their rank and wealth. There is a style of giving which is known as *princely*. The apostle supposes that the glory of God, which infinitely transcends all human glory, which is infinitely rich in the meeting of all perfections,—that all this glory *means* infinite power to bless, to which his creatures may look. His conception of God is sublime, that he grants according to the riches of his glory. He grants, not like a being of limited powers, but like himself. He is glorified in bestowing large blessings upon his people. He who came forth from God and knew the glory of God, said, "Hitherto have ye asked nothing.

"Thou art coming to a King;
Large petitions with thee bring;
For his grace and power are such,
None can ever ask too much."

IV. THE PRAYER IN FIVE PETITIONS. These petitions follow each other in natural order, and we are carried forward from the point where our need *begins* to the point where it is *all filled up*. It is a suitable prayer for Christians, to be used often, even as the Lord's Prayer. *First petition*—"That ye may be strengthened with power through his Spirit in the inward man." The destination of the strength is the inward man. As it were, it goes past the outward man, and reaches to the inward man. The outward man "decays;" the inward man needs to be "renewed day by day." The apostle touches where our need begins, viz. in an inertness in the inward man. We are not disposed to exert ourselves spiritually. The outward has too much influence in our life, and works to our inward weakening. We need strength to counteract our inertness, and to deliver us from too outward a life. Now, there is all strength in God. This is part of the riches of his glory. And his Spirit is the mediating agent between his strength and our weakness. And what we have to ask God to do for us is, that, through his Spirit, he would infuse strength into our weak inner nature. *Second petition*—"That Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith." The supplies of strength which we get from God through the Spirit find their way into our faith to its greater activity. This faith is an exercise of the mind specially directed toward Christ for us—Christ in what he was and still is as our Surety. The result is the *indwelling of Christ in our hearts*. We dwell within (as is suggested by "inward man"); but within us (far in as we are) dwells Christ. He dwells in our hearts (the inward man viewed from the side of the affections), where he receives our love and adoration. As dwelling within, we are present in every outward motion; and so Christ, as dwelling within us, is at the very centre of our being, and becomes so interlaced with it as to be present in all our life, to think in our thoughts, to speak in our words, to act in our actions. "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." And we ask from God new supplies of strength that, with new faith, we may have new experience of Christ's indwelling in our hearts, and presence in our life. *Third petition*—"That ye, being rooted and grounded in love." If love is "creation's final law," it is also its first principle. If it is the end for which all things exist, it is also the principle from which all things have sprung. Love may be defined as *the desire to bestow*. It was in the desire to bestow that we were created, with all our capacity for enjoyment. If, then, our being is thus to be traced back to love, it is clearly necessary that we should be *rooted and*

grounded in love. And this, we are taught here, is only possible by our believing in Christ. For love is in Christ, as Christ in us. As believing, then, is rooting and grounding ourselves in Christ, so it must mean rooting and grounding in love—getting down into the eternal substratum of all being. And we ask for supplies of the Divine strength that, through a vigorous faith, this rooting and grounding in love may go forward in our life. *Fourth petition*—"May be strong to apprehend with all the saints what is the breadth, and length, and height, and depth, and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge." The rooting and grounding in love is our qualification for apprehending its greatest manifestation. Cold hearts can do nothing here. The apostle's own heart is in such a glow that the love of Christ rises before him as though it were a body in space having dimensions of breadth, and length, and height, and depth. We are not to suppose that he was so mathematical as to associate different ideas with these dimensions. The use that they serve is to fix and detain the mind over the magnitude of the love of Christ. The magnitude of the love of Christ appears in two things. 1. *It is bestowed on the undeserving.* How was it possible for Christ to love us? It was not that there was any goodness in us with which he could have sympathy. For we were the opposite of what he was. As described in this Epistle, we walked according to the course of this world; we lived in the lusts of our flesh, doing the desires of the flesh and of the mind. It was not that he underrated what we were; for he saw our depravity in all its breadth, and length, and height, and depth. It can only be stated as a great inexplicable fact that, in the full view of what we were, he was irresistibly drawn toward us in saving love. 2. *It is bestowed in the sacrifice of himself.* In order to gratify his love in our salvation, he had not only to lay aside his Divine glory, but to come down into our nature, and, in that nature, to suffer shame and death. It is no ordinary love that is needed to impel one to sacrifice his life for another. "Skin for skin," said the arch-deceiver, "yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life." "Love," said the Spouse to her Beloved, "love is strong as death, many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it; though a man would give all the substance of his house for love, it would utterly be contemned." And Christ falsified the base insinuation of his adversary, and verified the loving declaration of his Spouse. His love was proved stronger than death, though that death was ten thousand deaths in one, in having in it the curse of the broken Law. This is the love of our Beloved; and say not then any more, "What is thy Beloved more than any other beloved?"

"For fainter than the pale star's ray
Before the noontide blaze of day
Is all of love that man can know,—
All that in angel breast can glow,—
Compar'd, O blessed Lord, with thine,
Eternal, infinite, Divine."

We are to seek to apprehend *with all the saints* the magnitude of this love. For this is saintship, according to the apostle, to have the mind opened to some sense of its magnitude, and we must not make it narrower than that. We are to seek to "apprehend," along with others, the dimensions of this love; but we are also to seek to *know* it by ourselves, that is to say, to have it in our own experience. We can have a certain "apprehension" of its infinitude; but our experimental knowledge of it is necessarily finite. The reality, being infinite, always passeth our knowledge. But we are to ask of God, that, being rooted and grounded in love, we may know more of this wonderful love of Christ. *Fifth petition*—"That ye may be filled unto all the fulness of God." The apostle here indicates the goal toward which we are to be blessed. We have now *some* of the fulness of God. Through the agency of the Spirit, we have poured into us out of the Divine fulness, strength, light, purity, love, peace, joy; and these in us are the same in kind that they are in God. We look forward to the time when we shall be filled out of this fountain even up to our capacity. Meantime we would have more of the knowledge of Christ's love, which *unseals the fountain of the Divine fulness.*—R. F.

Vers. 20, 21.—*Doxology.* I. HOW GOD IS GLORIFIED. "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." We adore God as able to do for us in answer to our prayers. It is expected of us that we ask, that is, actually desire the blessing, and express the desire. But, beyond all that we ask, there is what we think, that is, what comes into our mind as to what we should desire and express. Now, God is able to do above all that we ask or think. And not only so, but the apostle is so struck with the disproportion between our asking and thinking, and the Divine ability, that he has to add the expression, "exceeding abundantly." And then he would have us look to our being answered, not according to our own poor asking and thinking, but according to the power that worketh in us, all our experience of which is fitted to raise our expectation.

II. IN WHAT SPHERE HE IS GLORIFIED. "Unto him be the glory in the Church and in Christ Jesus." We are to praise God for what has been done for the Church and for what is gifted to the Church. "And the glory which thou hast given me I have given unto them; that they may be one, even as we are one; I in them, and thou in me, that they may be perfected into one; that the world may know that thou didst send me, and lovedst them, even as thou lovedst me. Father, that which thou hast given me, I will that, where I am, they also may be with me; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world." It is only in Christ that there is the Church, and that it is what it is (being the receptacle of Christ's glory), and therefore it is only in him that we can praise God for the Church.

III. THE TIME DURING WHICH HE IS TO BE GLORIFIED. "Unto all generations for ever and ever." Literally it is, "unto all the generations of the age of the ages." There are generations which make up an age; then there are ages which make up the grand age. There is suggested the length of time (beyond our narrow conception) which God has for completing his purpose regarding the Church; and also the length of time thereafter, during which the full-volumed doxology will be chanted to God. It becomes us each to add our "Amen."

"Through all eternity to thee
A joyful song I'll raise;
For oh, eternity's too short
To utter all thy praise."

B. F.

VERA. 1—13.—Aspects of the true gospel ministry. "For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, if ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward: how that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) 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 the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel: 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. 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; 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: to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the Church the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord: in whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him. Wherefore I desire that ye faint not at my tribulations for you, which is your glory." Homiletically, this whole passage, in which there are many digressions and involved utterances, may be regarded as exhibiting a *true gospel minister in three aspects*—as the *subject of vicarious suffering*, the *recipient of Divine ideas*, and as the *messenger of redemptive mercy*.

I. THE SUBJECT OF VICARIOUS SUFFERING. Paul speaks of himself as a "prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles," and in the thirteenth verse he says, "my tribulations for you." As an apostle, Paul's sufferings were great; elsewhere he gives a brief catalogue of them (Corinthians, etc.); but all his great sufferings as an apostle were *vicarious*—they

were for the men he endeavoured to help. "All for you Gentiles." We offer three remarks concerning his *vicarious* sufferings, as a true gospel minister. 1. *They were intense.* What agony of mind is involved in the expression, "For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh"! According to Dean Alford, Dr. Wordsworth, Professor Plumptre, Jowett, and our best critics, this means such an agonizing desire for the salvation of men as would prompt the most terrible sacrifices to accomplish it. In another place he represents his state of mind as a *parturition* distress. "I travail in birth again." Again, "I suffer trouble, as an evil-doer, even unto bonds." And again he says, "I endure all things for the elect's sake, that they may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus" (2 Tim. ii. 9). Every true gospel minister knows something of this intense spiritual suffering for others. What solitudes, disappointments, wrestlings of soul has he! So intense was the desire even of Moses for the good of others, that he said, "If thou wilt forgive their sins—; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written" (Exod. xxxii. 32). 2. *They were voluntary.* Human society is so organized that a certain amount of *vicarious* suffering comes on all men, irrespective of their choice, and even contrary to their choice. The innocent suffer for the guilty, children suffer on account of the sins of their parents. The present generation groans under the burdens of the past. But the vicarious sufferings of Paul, as a minister, were *voluntary*, he entered into them freely. The love of Christ "constrained" him to put himself in the place of suffering men, and to feel with them and for them. Hence he says, "Who is weak, and I am not weak? who is offended, and I burn not?" (2 Cor. xi. 29). 3. *They were Christ-like.* Whilst there are points which mark the vicarious sufferings of Christ, both in their nature and amount, from the vicarious sufferings of those of his ministers, yet there are points of agreement which are worthy of our notice. That such correspondence exists is suggested by the similarity of Scripture-language by which both are set forth. Both are represented as *endured for sinners and in order to effect their salvation.* Indeed, Paul speaks of his whole life as a sacrifice (Phil. ii. 17). Two points of analogy are especially worthy of remark. (1) Both partook of intense *grief* on account of human sins. Christ's grief on account of sin was intense, agonizing, and fathomless in amount. "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem," etc. Paul participated to some extent in this feeling. "Of whom I tell you even weeping, they are enemies of the cross of Christ." In truth, the vicarious sufferings of all genuine ministers partake of this. Even those of the Old Testament felt it. Jeremiah says, "Oh that my eyes were fountains of waters," etc. and the psalmist, "I beheld the way of transgressors, and was grieved." (2) Both partook of an intense *anxiety* for man's salvation. To restore man to the knowledge, image, and fellowship of God was the one great object of Christ. For this he agonized; for this he agonized, bled, and died. This was Paul's great aim. "For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself a servant unto all, that I might gain the more. And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the Law, as under the Law, that I might gain them that are under the Law; to them that are without Law, as without Law (being not without Law to God, but under the Law to Christ), that I might gain them that are without Law. To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some" (1 Cor. ix. 19—22). And in another place he says, "I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved" (1 Cor. x. 33). Now, my position is that this *intense, voluntary, Christ-like, vicarious* suffering, not only ever characterizes the history of every genuine minister of Christ, but is an essential qualification for the office. Paul felt that his great efficiency in the work depended upon his *proximity* to Christ in the amount of his vicarious sufferings. What else did he mean when he said, "I Paul rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the Church" (Col. i. 24)?

II. THE RECIPIENT OF DIVINE IDEAS. "By *revelation* he hath made known to me the mystery," etc. The gospel truths which Paul had to proclaim to the Gentiles were not derived from any human source. They were not the deductions of his own reason or the intuitions of his own soul, but they were *revealed* to him by God. "I never received it of man," said he, "neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ" (see Acts xvi.). We have an account of this revelation given by Paul

himself. It is the glory of man that he can receive ideas from the great God himself. He has what no other creature under heaven has—the capacity to take in the thoughts of the Infinite. It is essential to a true minister that he does this. He cannot offer any spiritual help to humanity unless he does so. His own ideas have no power to help his race. The ideas to enlighten, elevate, and bless souls must come from God. Hence what Paul gave to the Gentiles, he tells us, came by revelation. Two remarks are suggested by the passage in relation to the idea. 1. *It had been long hidden.* He calls it the mystery: “The mystery which in other ages was not made known.” It was a mystery not in the sense of *incomprehensibility*, but in the sense of undiscoveredness. It had been unrevealed, and therefore unknown to past generations. The whole gospel was once a mystery; it was in the mind of God as an idea unrevealed to the universe. 2. *It was very grand.* The particular idea to which the apostle here refers is this, that the Gentiles were to partake of the salvation of the gospel, and to be united in one body with the Jews. “That the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel.” Grand idea this! That the poor Gentiles should become “heirs” of the same inheritance as the Jews—members of the same great spiritual “body” as the Jews—partakers of the same great “promise” as the Jews. The idea that Paul had from God was the uniting of all the races in the world in one great spiritual confederation. 3. *It was exceedingly ancient.* “From the beginning of the world it hath been hidden in God.” Such was the idea that Paul tells us had been revealed to him and to the holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit. Every true gospel minister is the *recipient of Divine ideas.*

III. THE MESSENGER OF REDEMTIVE MERCY. Paul speaks of himself here as the “minister” of the things that have been revealed to him. “Whereof I was made a minister,” etc. What he received he had to communicate. The passage indicates several things concerning a true messenger of redemptive mercy. 1. *The Divine designation to the office.* “I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power.” The office of a true minister is a gift of grace—a gift of grace which comes to the soul by the effectual working of God’s power. Paul felt that he became a messenger of these truths, not by his own seeking or merit, but by the grace of God. Nor by his own native inclination, but by the effectual working of God’s power, referring, undoubtedly, to the Divine energy in his conversion. Every man must experience this Divine energy before he can become a true messenger of redemptive mercy. God must work in him before he can work by him. 2. *The humble spirit of the office.* “Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given.” The expression means, who am incomparably the least of all the saints, who am not worthy to be reckoned amongst them. The memory of his past conduct and the solemn grandeur of the work to which he was called deeply impressed him with the sense of his own unworthiness. Humility is essential to this great work; it is when a man feels his weakness that he is truly strong in the ministry of truth. A deep sense of our own insufficiency is essential to make us sufficient for this of all offices the most grand and momentous. He who feels himself the “least of all saints” will become the greatest of all preachers. 3. *The grand subject of the office.* What is the great theme of the gospel preacher? Scientific facts, philosophic speculations, theological theories? No; “the unsearchable riches of Christ.” The word “unsearchable” occurs in only one other place in the New Testament (Rom. xi. 33), where it is rendered “*past finding out.*” Past finding out, not so much in the sense of mystery, as in the sense of inexhaustibleness. It is an ocean whose depths are unfathomable, and whose breadth and length stretch into the infinite. These “unsearchable riches” of Christ, unlike material riches, are *soul-satisfying, man-ennobling, ever-enduring.* 4. *The enlightening character of the office.* “To make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery.” The idea is to enlighten all in respect to God’s redemptive mercy, the Gentiles as well as the Jews. The work of a true gospel minister is to *make men see* Divine things, to bring them before their eyes, and to induce them to look earnestly and steadily upon them. 5. *The angelic bearing of the office.* “To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the Church the manifold wisdom of God.” Several thoughts are implied in this passage. (1) That there are in the universe a gradation of angelic intelligences. “Principalities and powers in heavenly places.” (2) That it is of great importance

that they should study the manifold wisdom of God. (3) That the Christian Church affords them a grand opportunity for studying this glorious subject. The Church is the effect, the manifestation, and the organ of God's manifold or diversified wisdom. (4) That the use of the Church for this object was according to the eternal plan of God. "According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord." 6. *The high privileges of the office.* "In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him." "The accumulation of substantives in this sentence," says Hodge, "*boldness, access, confidence*, shows that there was no word which could express what Paul felt in view of the complete reconciliation of men to God through the mediation of Jesus Christ." The privileges of a true gospel minister, as indicated in vers. 12, 13, are: (1) Free and fearless access to the great God. (2) Divine support under the various trials of life. "Wherefore I desire that ye faint not at my tribulations for you, which is your glory" Paul was now a prisoner at Rome, and yet he felt that inward support which enabled him to exhort the saints at Ephesus not to faint or be disheartened on his account.

Such in brief is the view which this passage presents of a true gospel minister. He is a man of vicarious suffering, a recipient of Divine ideas, a messenger of redemptive mercy. Where are the preachers that answer to this sketch? Let such men fill our pulpits, and the conversion of our England will not be far distant; and when all England becomes a true Church, the whole world will speedily be won to Christ.—D. T.

Vers. 14—19.—*Intercessory prayer.* "For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God." In the whole passage we have Christian philanthropy and prayer. The apostle, who was a philanthropist of the highest type, here prays, not for himself, but for others; and prays, not for mere secondary and non-essential blessings, but for blessings paramount and vital. Let us attend to this *intercessory prayer* of his. A true minister is a true philanthropist, and will, like Christ, not only *vicariously* suffer for others, as we have seen, but will ever make *intercessions* for others. Intercessory prayer is the rarest and highest type of prayer. In answer to objections that are raised against it, four facts are ever to be kept in view. 1. *It is an instinct of social love.* Self-love urges a man to pray for himself, social love prompts the soul to address Heaven on behalf of others. What more natural than for a loving mother to pray for a suffering child, a loving pastor for his people, a loving citizen for his country? What is natural is Divine. 2. *It is a soul discipline.* Nothing exerts a higher influence upon the soul than the realization of the Divine presence in prayer; this quickens and hallows it. In intercessory prayer, however, there is this, and something more; there is the taking of the soul out of the circle of itself, and expanding it with earnest, loving sympathies for others. Intercession lifts the spirit into fellowship with that God who careth for all. 3. *It is a manifest Christian duty.* We are not only commanded in Scripture to pray for others, but we have the highest examples—Moses, Abraham, Paul, Christ. 4. *It has been crowned with wonderful success.* The Bible abounds with examples. "Peter . . . was kept in prison: but prayer was made without ceasing of the Church unto God for him. . . . And when Peter was come to himself, he said, Now I know of a surety that the Lord hath sent his angel, and hath delivered me out of the hand of Herod: . . . And he came to the house of Mary, . . . where many were gathered together praying." This is only a specimen.

"For what are men better than sheep or goats,
That nourish a blind life within the brain,
If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer,
Both for themselves and those who call them friend?"

Observe in this intercession—

I. THE GOD INVOKED. Who is he? 1. *He is a Father.* "I bow my knees unto

the Father." In the New Testament the fatherhood of God is revealed. Christ speaks of him as the Father, and in his ideal prayer he is addressed as "Our Father." In this character Paul here addresses him. We see good reason for this. (1) It makes the Object of prayer *intelligible* to the mind. Infinite Creator, universal Sovereign, absolute Proprietor, and Disposer; what finite mind can understand these characters? But a Father all know; paternity engaged the first attention, excited the first feelings, started the first thoughts. A child understands what a father is. (2) It makes the Object of prayer *attractive* to the mind. Creator, Sovereign, Judge; are these attractive? By no means. They overawe, confound, repel. But fatherhood is attractive. The child joyously leaps into the arms of its father. Instead of cringing fear, there is filial love and boundless confidence. (3) It makes the object of prayer *transformative* to the mind. Who has such a transformative power as the parent? Fatherhood moulds all characters, fashions history. Children naturally imitate the father they love. Are not these good reasons why we should look to God as a Father, and address him as such? 2. *He is the Father of all holy intelligences.* "Of whom the whole family." Or every family, every race in heaven or on earth. The expression must be limited to the *intelligent* creation, for he could not with propriety be called the Father of the irrational; we must go further, and say that the expression must be limited to the *holy* races of his intelligent creation, for he would not be the Father of the rebellious and the profane. A family relationship exists between all the holy intelligences, and God is the Father of all—Father of all unfallen angels and redeemed men. And although "Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" may be out of its place in this passage, still it expresses a fact everywhere else revealed, that God is the Father of man's Redeemer, as well as of all other holy ones in the universe. What a family is God's!—*loving, immense, ever-multiplying, harmonious, and ever-blest.* 3. *He is the Father possessing boundless bounteousness.* Paul speaks of the "riches of his glory." What is the glory of God? Not his power, not his wisdom, not his wealth, not his dominion, but his *goodness*. When Moses prayed, "I beseech thee show me thy glory," what was the answer? "I will cause all my goodness to pass before thee," as if he had said, "My goodness is my glory." And this goodness of his is inexhaustible. "The riches." It is higher than all heavens; it is deeper than all hells. Its majestic billows roll under all Gehennas.

II. THE GOOD INVOKED. What blessings did he seek? 1. *Divine strength of soul.* "To be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man." (1) Every man has an "inner man"—the moral ego of his being. It is this inner man that interests humanity in God, duty, immortality. (2) This inner man wants moral strength. It is enfeebled, it is crushed by sin. It is the slave of the appetite; it is "carnally sold unto sin." It wants strength to rise to its true lordship over the body, and to its rightful relation to God and his universe. How morally weak is the "inner man"—the very stamina of humanity! (3) This moral strength must come from God. He who quickeneth all things must quicken this inner man, now dead in trespasses and sin. It can find help in no other way; its cry is, "O wretched man that I am! who can deliver from this bondage and death?" 2. *The indwelling of Christ.* "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith." There is no mystery about the indwelling of Christ. The heart that loves him supremely holds him as its constant Guest. As the author lives in the loving student, as the parent lives in the loving child, so in the same way, but in a higher degree, Christ lives in his loving disciples. His thoughts are their thoughts, his Spirit is their inspiration, his character is the very sun that quickens, lightens, and beautifies their being. 3. *Stability of love.* "That ye, being rooted and grounded in love." There is a love for Christ which is not rooted nor grounded; it is a passing sentiment, which, like a bubble, is thrown up on the stream of circumstances. The love of genuine Christianity is a *rooted* love. Rooted, not in something that can change and decay, but in the immutable excellence of God. Oh, to have all the fibres of the inner man struck into the Divine character, and rooted in God! Then, and not till then, will the soul be as the tree "planted by the rivers of water," etc. A religion whose love is not *rooted* is without (1) *life*, (2) *growth*, (3) *fruit*, (4) *permanence*. 4. *The comprehending of love.* "That ye may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge." Christ's love is intellectually

immeasurable; "Who by searching can find it out?" And yet, though it passeth the knowledge of the intellect, there is a sense in which it can and must be known—known as a matter of consciousness, known as an all-controlling power. "The love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge," etc. 5. *The reaching of Divine perfection.* "That ye might be filled with all the fulness of God"—that ye might be filled up with the fulness of God. The idea is that you may "be perfect even as God is perfect." This is the standard set before us; we are to be holy, even as God is holy. Infinitely high as this is, nothing lower will meet the cravings of our moral nature or the full unfoldment of our endlessly advancing being. Heaven has predestinated us to be conformed to the image of God (Rom. viii. 29).

Such was Paul's intercessory prayer. Let us seek that Divine philanthropy which made him such a mediator between God and man. The priesthood of this philanthropy is what we want. Avaunt to all others! They are impious impostors, profane intruders. The priesthood of Christian philanthropy is the only Divine priesthood in the universe.—D. T.

Vers. 20, 21.—*Exultant praise.* "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, unto him be glory in the Church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen." The passage leads us to consider the subject of *exultant praise*. Worship is *praise*; it is a higher service than prayer. It is in truth the highest end and the completest answer to prayer. In the preceding verses Paul *prays*; here he *praises*. He passes from asking to adoring. The passage leads us to consider religious praise in relation to the Object, the Church, the Redeemer, and the ages.

I. In relation to the OBJECT. He is here represented in his *absolute and relative* capacity for helping man. 1. In his *absolute* capacity. "He is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think." (1) Men can *ask* for much. They can ask for ages of blessedness, paradises of beauty and of bliss. (2) They can *think* of more. Imagination transcends desires. We only ask for what we desire; but we can conceive of a universe of things which it has never entered into the heart to crave for. But the Divine capacity to give is "exceeding abundantly" beyond the power of asking or of thinking. Nay, it is "*beyond all things*:" all things that *ever have been*. It is greater than the universe. All things that *ever will be*; the *possible* with God will always be greater than the *actual*. How great is God's capacity for helping! What a God does the gospel give us to love, worship, and adore! And yet, strange to say, finite though we be, no God of meaner type could match the measure of our souls. 2. In his *relative* capacity. "According to the power that worketh in us." Infinite as is his capability to help, his power to help *us* is determined by the nature and measure of those spiritual aspirations and cravings which the power of his grace within us has produced. Unless we desire knowledge, he cannot enlighten us; purity, he cannot purify us; pardon, he cannot pardon us; spiritual strength, he cannot strengthen us. Our moral contractedness limits his power to help us. His communications will be according to our receptivity. As the indolence of the farmer limits those fructifying influences of nature that would yield to him a golden harvest; as the stolid ignorance and base sensuality of the people limit the influence of the genuine reformer to raise the millions in the social and political scale; as the dulness or idleness of the pupil limits the power of a great teacher to enrich him with the treasures of knowledge; so the moral contractedness of the heart limits the power of the Holy One. He cannot do many mighty works for us, because of our unbelief. It is "according to the power that worketh in us" that God's power to help us is determined.

II. In relation to the CHURCH. "In the Church," etc. The Church is a company of redeemed men, part of which is in heaven and part in various portions of the earth. Why does Paul single out the Church to praise and adore the great God? Because the Church is under *special obligations to do so*. All things in heaven and on earth, from the lowest to the highest creature, should praise their Maker. "Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord." But the duty of *redeemed* souls to do so transcends in urgency that of all others. He has not only created them and preserved them, but he has *redeemed* them, and redeemed them not with "corruptible things"—such as silver and gold—but with the "precious blood of Jesus Christ." For them his only begotten Son became

incarnate, suffered, bled, and died. For them the Holy Spirit is in constant operation. "All things work together for *their* good." None have engaged so much of the Divine attention as they; none have been recipients of such Divine mercies as they; none are so deep in debt as they. Their hallelujahs ought to be more fervid, more enthusiastic, more incessant than any that echo through the hierarchies of heaven.

III. In relation to the REDEEMER. "By Christ Jesus." Why should Paul identify the work of the Church with Christ? Why does he ascribe glory to the Eternal by him or in him? Two reasons may be suggested. 1. *Through Christ man is made to see the glory of God.* He is the Revealer of the moral glory of God to the soul. "We beheld his glory," says the apostle, "the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." He himself is "the Brightness of the Father's glory." Where but in Christ can man see the moral glory of God; the glory not of mere intellect, power, or outward goodness which you have in nature, but the glory of tenderness, mercy, forbearance, purity, rectitude, faithfulness, boundless compassion? Where Christ is not, God's glory is not seen. 2. *Through Christ man is brought into sympathy with the glory of God.* "God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." He it is that inspires, enamours, and transports the soul with the glory of God. Human worship must ever be in connection with Christ. "He loved us, and gave himself for us."

IV. In relation to the AGES. "Throughout all ages, world without end. Amen." This implies: 1. *That God will be for ever.* Were he not to be for ever, worship would not be for ever. He is eternal. "From everlasting to everlasting thou art God." "He inhabiteth eternity." "One day with him is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." 2. *That the Church will be for ever.* The redeemed will never cease to exist. They are to live from generation to generation, through endless ages. 3. *That the reasons for praise will be for ever.* God's infinite excellence, his redemptive and fatherly relation to the Church, and the communications of his love are the grand reasons for praise, and these will be for ever.

CONCLUSION. What a sublime destiny is that of the redeemed! Genuine religious praise is the heaven of the soul. It is that in which all the "powers find sweet employ." It is that which brings the whole spiritual man within the glow and the sunshine of the fatherhood of God. Praise is not the "service of song," as it is called; it is the spirit of life. It is not until all the activities of our being chime in one triumphant and succeeding psalm that our destiny is realized.—D. T.

Ver. 1.—"The prisoner of Christ Jesus." St. Paul writes from his Roman dungeon, with the galling constraints of his confinement constantly about him. There is a pathos in the situation that must move the sympathy of the reader; and yet there is a dignity and even a glory in it that make us feel the apostle's occasional reference to his bonds chiefly a motive for giving the greater weight and solemnity to his persuasive exhortations.

I. THE FAITHFUL SERVANT OF CHRIST MAY BECOME A PRISONER IN HIS CAUSE. St. Paul was called into the apostleship from a worldly position of great influence and brilliant prospects. He was the most gifted and the most devoted man in the Christian Church. No one laboured more assiduously, and no one met with more marked success. Yet it has all come to this, that the great, honoured apostle lies chained in a Roman prison, his life at the mercy of the "mad boy" Nero. The end might have been expected in this form. "A disciple is not above his master, nor a servant above his lord." If the Lord was crucified, shall we be surprised that the servant is imprisoned? Still some are perplexed and disappointed, not at suffering these great hardships, but at having to bear any cross for Christ. Christianity is the religion of the cross for the Christian as truly as for Christ.

II. LIBERAL CHRISTIANITY MAY ENDANGER THE LIBERTY OF ITS ADVOCATE. St. Paul was a prisoner "in behalf of you Gentiles." We know, from the history in the Acts, that it was through the enmity of Jews that the apostle was accused before the Roman government, and that this enmity was roused by the jealousy they felt at his preaching the gospel to the Gentiles, and advocating the Gentile right to an equality with the Jew. St. Paul was the preacher of the more liberal Christianity of his day

and therefore he was most grievously misunderstood and most bitterly opposed. They who feel called to preach more liberal views than are sanctioned by the prevailing opinions of the age may expect opposition, but may learn the duty of courage and fidelity to truth, and may be cheered by thinking of the lonely sufferers in the same cause in bygone days, when the larger views and the freer doctrines were more vigorously opposed than they can be now. The noble champions of liberal Christianity, from St. Paul to Maurice, have won substantial victories from which we profit.

III. IT IS BETTER TO BE A PRISONER FOR CHRIST AND LIBERAL TRUTH THAN TO BE AT LIBERTY WITHOUT CHRIST AND IN UNCHARITABLE NARROWNESS. After all, the prisoner at Rome is more to be envied than pitied. He was the prisoner of Christ, and Christ was with him in his bondage. His was the real blessedness of those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake. St. Paul was the champion of freedom as opposed to the restraints of Judaism, and this real, spiritual freedom could not be destroyed by bolts and bars.

"Stone walls do not a prison make,
Nor iron bars a cage."

The immortal dreamer had large liberty in Bedford jail when he travelled to the Beulah heights and almost as far as the gates of the celestial city.

IV. THE PRISONER WHO SUFFERS FOR A GOOD CAUSE LAYS GREAT OBLIGATIONS UPON ALL WHO BENEFIT FROM IT. St. Paul quietly appeals to his imprisonment as a ground for prayer (ver. 14) and exhortation (ch. iv. 1). The sufferings of the great martyrs of liberty in the past urge us, who have entered into the heritage won by their toil and death, to be faithful to so great a trust, to walk worthy of it by using our liberty as an opportunity for the highest service of love, and to preserve it from all encroachments and hand it down to our children unfettered by new restraints of theological dogma or of official domination.—W. F. A.

Ver. 8.—"*Less than the least of all saints.*" I. HE WHO IS MOST HIGHLY GIFTED WITH DIVINE GRACE WILL THINK MOST LOWLY OF HIMSELF. St. Paul, the most gifted apostle, is most deeply conscious of his own unworthiness. We must distinguish between the endowment of grace and the acquisition of merit. To have much grace is only to be much favoured. As a man grows in grace he grows in power of spiritual insight; and the result is twofold—he has more knowledge of his own true state and a better understanding of the claims of righteousness. Thus the standard is ever rising above his head in greater heights of holiness, while he is constantly seeing more clearly, freed from all hypocrisy and self-deception, the miserable weakness and sinfulness of his own character.

II. HE WHO THINKS MOST LOWLY OF HIMSELF WILL BE MOST FITTED FOR THE SERVICE OF CHRIST. It is not that unworthiness is itself a fitness for service. Both to be unworthy and to think one's self worthy are to be doubly unfit. But as Socrates thought he might be accounted wise only because he knew he was ignorant while all other Athenians were unconscious of their ignorance, the true servant of Christ is aware of the sinfulness which is common to him and to all others, but others are not so deeply conscious of it. This humble consciousness of unworthiness is helpful for service, (1) because it makes us look for the indispensable grace of God; (2) because it saves us from preaching ourselves when we should be preaching Christ; and (3) because it compels us to give God all the glory of success.—W. F. A.

Ver. 8.—"*The unsearchable riches of Christ.*" Some riches are unsearchable because they are inaccessible, like jewels guarded by jealous sentinels, and pearls in sea-caves, and the gold-mines of remote stars. Some riches are unsearchable because they are secret, like treasure hid in a field, and ancient records in undeciphered hieroglyphics; in this sense an illiterate man finds the wealth of a library, and an unscientific man the stores of a museum, unsearchable. No doubt there are wonderful graces in Christ that are as yet above and beyond our grasp, and deep mysteries that we cannot fathom, and a spiritual worth in all his blessings that cannot be discovered by the unspiritual. But it is not in these senses that the riches of Christ are called unsearchable. The doors of his treasure-chamber are flung wide that the poorest may enter. There is no

veil of mystery to prevent a little child from seeing the beauty within. The riches of Christ are unsearchable simply because they are so abundant and so various that no man can ever measure the extent, or count the number, or distinguish all the forms of them. For near upon nineteen centuries this great treasury has been ransacked by friends and foes, by hungering inquirers and by keen-eyed critics, with the result that, like the infinite wealth of nature—which is felt to be more immeasurable in our own day, after the fruitful labours of the most indefatigable naturalists, than ever it was when not one-tenth of what we now know was discovered—these riches of Christ amaze and fascinate and overwhelm us with an ever-growing sense of their magnificent unsearchableness.

I. THE RICHES OF THE CHARACTER OF CHRIST ARE UNSEARCHABLE. 1. They have been searched into by *uncompromising foes*, at first by bitter Pharisees and scoffing Sadducees, later by clever philosophical opponents, such as Celsus and Porphyry, down to the times of Voltaire's sparkling sarcasm and Strauss's dry criticism. And the verdict of mankind is distinctly against the fault-finders, confessing with Pilate, "I find no fault in him." 2. These riches have also been searched into by *adoring disciples*, some with the profundity of St. Augustine, others with the simplicity of St. Frances; and all types of Christians in every succeeding age unhesitatingly declare that they never weary of worshipping fresh wonders in that life of unearthly loveliness. The more our eyes are opened to discern spiritual worth, and the more the character of Christ is studied, the more are we astonished and delighted by the vision of infinite perfection.

II. THE RICHES OF THE TRUTH OF CHRIST ARE UNSEARCHABLE. Christ is the Truth and the Light of the world. The ideas of Plato may be measured—the truth of Christ never. Yet two classes of people deny the unsearchable nature of the riches of this truth. 1. *Those who say the world has outgrown Christianity.* Perhaps they mistake the dogmas of the creeds for the truth as it is in Jesus. The former are necessarily limited, and some of them may have to break up and give place to larger ideas. But the latter is living, infinite, and eternal. 2. *Those who are satisfied that they know everything.* They are usually the people who know least. A smooth and rounded scheme of doctrine comprehends their universe. Because they have shaped it into logical consistency, they assume that no truth can lie outside it. They have yet to learn that the Word made flesh, like the Word in nature, is infinite.

III. THE RICHES OF THE LOVE OF CHRIST ARE UNSEARCHABLE. Human love commonly diminishes in intensity in proportion to the extent of the area over which it is spread; family affection being warmer than our interest in the wider circle of friends, and this than general philanthropy, just as the river is deep where it is narrow, but becomes shallow as its banks open out in width. But the grace of Christ, in depth and breadth like the sea, has a vast comprehensiveness for all, together with a strong intensity for each. So that in the last great assembly, when some come from distant isles and some from hidden valleys, some from populous cities and some from lonesome deserts, to confess that the grace of Christ has reached them in the fulness of its power, none will be found so remote as to have been beyond reach, so undeserving as to have been past mercy, or so needy as not to have been able to find the supply of every real want in his great riches of love.

IV. THE RICHES OF THE BLESSINGS GIVEN BY CHRIST ARE UNSEARCHABLE. There is still an unhappy habit among some of listening only to the evil report of the spies who tell of the giants, and turning a deaf ear to the spies who bring the grapes and pomegranates. No wonder that this habit leads to the painting of the blessings of Christianity with very dull shades. Rightly understood, the gospel offers a pearl of great price, reveals hidden treasures, strips off the rags and brings forth the best robe and the ring. From the first grace of forgiveness to the last grace of peace in death, Christ is breathing benedictions on the Christian's life, so that when he reflects, he is astonished at what he has already received, and yet learns to accept all this as only the earnest of the blessings of light, and strength, and purity, and peace, that are reserved for his future inheritance.—W. F. A.

Ver. 10.—*"The manifold wisdom of God."* I. THE MANIFOLD WISDOM OF GOD IS PUT FORTH IN THE REDEMPTION OF THE WORLD. God is the great Thinker. All our

philosophy is the attempt of man to spell out some of the ideas of God. What wisdom was requisite for the creation of the world and the ordering of all things, from the movements of a star down to the life of a cell! What wisdom is involved in the government of the world, maintaining life and gladness, developing the latent resources of the universe, making all things work together for good, ruling great kingdoms and individual lives in justice and mercy! But a higher wisdom is required for redemption. It is more difficult to regenerate than to create, to regain Paradise than to form it at the first. 1. Not only are the power and goodness of God needed for this work, but also his *wisdom*. Preaching may be foolish, but the gospel preached is the wisdom of God. The highest intellectuality has been exercised in working out the world's redemption. 2. St. Paul sees this especially in the *breadth* of the results—in the inclusion of Gentile with Jew. High wisdom is broad, and liberal charity requires much intelligence. Comprehensiveness should not be a matter of vague sentiment. To be effective it must be fortified by ripe wisdom. 3. This wisdom is *manifest*. God has many interests to consider, many conflicting forces to deal with, and many issues to provide for. Therefore (1) different men may have different views, and yet all be in the right. (2) Many purposes may be aimed at in redemption beyond what we can see, and thus many processes which to us look meaningless find their end. The water is not taken over the mill-wheel simply that it may find its nearest course to the river; nor is the Christian led over a broken path because that is the nearest way to heaven.

II. THE MANIFOLD WISDOM OF GOD IS MADE KNOWN THROUGH THE CHURCH TO THE HIGHEST INTELLIGENCES. The Church is the manifestation of a wisdom that was hidden before Christianity appeared. Truth is explained by illustration, and the Church is a concrete illustration of Divine wisdom. It is not in the thinking and teaching of Divine wisdom by Christians, but in their very existence as such, that the wisdom of God is revealed. To be a redeemed soul is to be a proof of that wisdom, just as for one who had been incurably sick to be a healthy man was to be a living proof of the healing power of Christ. This revelation was made to other worlds and higher intelligences. 1. *God cares for other worlds than our own*; elsewhere processes of education are being carried on with creatures in whom God takes interest. 2. *We are called to minister instruction to other worlds*. The service is mutual; angels are ministering spirits to men, men are instructive witnesses of redemptive wisdom to angels. Thus the lowest can help the highest. An angel can learn lessons from a man, as a man can find instruction in an insect. Our lives, then, are linked to other worlds. What happens to us has bearings elsewhere. This thought may help us to face some mystery of life. As in the case of Job, what is humanly unintelligible may be explained when it is seen that the beings of another sphere are being instructed through our experience. 3. If the highest intelligences "desire to look into" these things, and see the manifold wisdom of God in them, surely *we men should treat the works of redemption with profound reverence, and regard the study of them as worthy of our highest thought.*—W. F. A.

Ver. 12.—*Christian boldness*. I. BOLDNESS IS A CHRISTIAN GRACE. The gospel destroys the gloomy old religions of terror. It dispels even the natural fear of guilty souls in the presence of the holy God. It brings liberty and courage. It is essentially the manly faith of the world's adult age.

II. THIS BOLDNESS IS MANIFEST IN OUR CONFIDENT ACCESS TO GOD. The Christian is not to approach God under the circumstances which made the courageous entrance of Queen Esther into the presence of King Ahasuerus so nobly patriotic. We see God as our Father waiting to be gracious. It is unworthy to fear. Our prayer should not be the cry of the captive for mercy, but the glad request of the child. Note: 1. Christian boldness is wasted unless we use it in *coming nearer to God*. 2. This boldness is no excuse for irreverence.

III. CHRISTIAN BOLDNESS IS EXPLAINED BY OUR RELATION TO CHRIST. 1. Christ dispels our ignorant terrors by *revealing the fatherhood of God*. We have but to acquaint ourselves with him to be at peace (Job xxii. 21). 2. Christ gives to us the *perfect love* that casts out fear. 3. Christ *reconciles us with God*, and so removes all ground of reasonable alarm. For while we are unreconciled and unforgiven, courage is

madness, and the wildest terror the reasonable condition of those whose conscience is roused and who realize their frightful peril. But through Christ we are forgiven and reconciled to God. It is ungrateful, after being thus blessed, to cherish the old fears.

IV. CHRISTIAN BOLDNESS IS ENJOYED THROUGH FAITH IN CHRIST. 1. Faith is necessary in order to *bring us into those relations with Christ* which make our boldness right and justifiable. Without faith we are not redeemed, and while unredeemed we have no ground for being bold in Christ. 2. Faith is necessary in order to *enable us to realize our free and safe condition through Christ*. Until we trust Christ we shall not dare to approach God with a confidence that is grounded on our relations with Christ. Thus spiritual cowardice is a mark of unbelief. He who trusts most strongly will enjoy most freedom of access to God.—W. F. A.

Ver. 14.—*The universal fatherhood of God.* I. THE NATURE OF THE FATHERHOOD OF GOD. 1. God is the *Source of our being*. He has not only created us as he has created the rocks. We are not manufactured, but begotten by God. He has breathed his life into us. 2. God has formed us *in his own image*. There is a similarity of nature in child and parent. All spirits belong to the same family and have a common likeness to God. 3. God is *closely related to us*. Throughout life the father is most nearly connected with his children by nature and consequent claims and duties. God *is* our Father now; he has not merely called us into being in the past. He always and necessarily bears the fatherly relation to us.

II. THE EXTENT OF THE FATHERHOOD OF GOD. From God "every family in heaven and earth is named;" then God is the Father of every family. His fatherhood is universal. 1. It reaches to *all spiritual beings*. Of what orders, how many, and how various they are, are wholly beyond our speculation. But none are so remote, so peculiar, so lofty, or so low as not to come within God's fatherly relationship. 2. It is individually concerned with *each separate order of beings*. "Every family." The families are distinguished and so are their homes. God regards his children with personal interest. 3. It is *not destroyed by evil conduct*. There are fallen beings, orders, and families that are degraded in sin. But these make no exception to the universal fatherhood. In spite of the shameful corruption of some of the families, God is still Father of all. David did not cease to be the father of the rebel Absalom. The prodigal son could arise and go unto his father. The worst sinner, when he comes to himself, may say, "My Father." This necessarily results from the very nature of fatherhood. The three facts of origination of life, community of nature, and close relationship can never be annihilated. For a father to ignore them is for him to become an unnatural parent.

III. THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE FATHERHOOD OF GOD. 1. *In God.* (1) He will manifest a fatherly interest in every family. In choosing the Jew he cannot forget the Gentile. In blessing the Christian he cannot overlook the heathen. Christians, like the Jews, have foolishly thought to appropriate God to themselves. But less enlightened races have not been neglected by God. He has not left himself without witness in pagan lands. All religions, in so far as they contain any truth, are inspired and rest on Divine revelations. God visits all his children. The seeking after God in the dark of remote inquirers is a vague response to the voice of God heard by them in their consciences. (2) God has rights over all men, and no one has a right to disown his Father. God will judge all and justly chastise the disobedient children who refused to admit his claims. (3) God desires to bless all his children and will always welcome back the penitents. 2. *In us.* (1) We should remember that, as spiritual beings, we are related. If men are akin to the inhabitants of other worlds, much more are they very closely related to one another. Hence our duties of brotherhood to foreign nations and to savage races. (2) We should have boldness and confidence in our approach to God. St. Paul names the universal fatherhood of God in the preface of a prayer.—W. F. A.

Vers. 14—19.—*The great mystery of the love of Christ.* The special object of St. Paul's prayer for the Ephesians is that their knowledge may be enlarged, and the one direction in which he desires for them the increase of knowledge is in regard to the love of Christ. That is the most wonderful and the most vital theme of Christian meditation; it can

only be rightly contemplated under spiritual aid; but the true understanding of it will be fruitful in rich blessings.

I. THE GREAT MYSTERY OF THE LOVE OF CHRIST. Everything in Christ is wonderful, but nothing more so than his love. The multitude were astonished at his miraculous powers. Keen antagonists were confounded before his superlative wisdom; but his friends and disciples were above all and growingly touched by the gentleness, the goodness, the sympathy, the self-sacrifice, and the love which filled his life. This "passeth knowledge" in many respects. 1. *Character*. (1) *Disinterestedness* amounting to the extreme of self-denial. Christ never sought his own pleasure. He lived wholly for others. Measure his self-sacrifice by the depth of the descent from the glory of the only begotten Son to the agony and shame of the cross. (2) *Intensity*. The toil, suffering, and fruitful energy of Christ's love reveal this. (3) *Endurance*. It is sustained by an infinite patience, like God's long-suffering goodness, like "the mercy of the Lord" which "endureth for ever." Christ stands long at the door and knocks. 2. *Comprehensiveness*. (1) Extending to the *whole world*. The objects of our affection are necessarily limited in number. Who can understand a love that embraces Jew and Gentile, Greek and barbarian, and every man, woman, and child in the world? (2) Including the *most uninviting* subjects. We love those whom we admire or those to whom we are drawn by some attraction, sympathy, or relationship. Christ loves the base, despicable, and corrupt men, remote and obscure folk—"the dim multitude" and those who seem even less lovable—the great mass of dreary, uninteresting people. 3. *Objects*. These are the highest and purest. A low love indulges, pampers, and spoils in weakly trying to please its objects. Christ's love often gives pain, demands sacrifice, perplexes and troubles us. It seeks the redemption, the purification, and the highest glory of men.

II. THE WAY TO KNOW THE LOVE OF CHRIST. It "passeth knowledge." Nevertheless, though we cannot comprehend, we may apprehend it, as one who cannot see the mountain's cloud-capped towers may explore its base, as one who can never define an illimitable ocean may grow familiar with its home waters and neighbouring bays. Now, such knowledge as we may have of the supreme mystery of the love of Christ is not to be got by merely reading the New Testament history, nor by any amount of theological discussion. It is spiritual, sympathetic, inward, and attained through Divine grace. St. Paul prays for the means of acquiring it. They are three, in successive gradations—one leading on to the other. 1. *Spiritual strength*. This is to have life, vigour, and energy in the inner nature. For so long as the spiritual faculties are dead, or slumbering, or only move languidly, they cannot rise to grasp great, Divine things. An inspiration of God's Spirit, to be measured only "by the riches of his glory," will supply his strength. 2. *The indwelling Christ*. The first act of the awakened, energized spiritual nature is to receive Christ through faith. While he is only outside us we can neither know him nor love him. 3. *Our love to Christ*. When we by faith receive Christ into our hearts we learn to love him. Then only can we understand his love. It is true that "we love him because he first loved us;" still, the vague, wondering sense of Christ's love that wins our hearts to him is a poor perception compared with what we shall experience when we look at him with the enlightened eyes of love. Only love can understand love.

III. THE SPIRITUAL BLESSEDNESS THAT FLOWS FROM KNOWING THE LOVE OF CHRIST. This is to "be filled unto all the fulness of God." Men have sought union with God by ascetic devotion, by mystic contemplation, by sacramental grace; for all spiritually awakened souls have felt a void which only God can fill. The secret which priest and pietist have searched after in vain is here revealed. By understanding the love of Christ we are brought into sympathetic connection with him in whom dwelleth the fulness of the Godhead bodily, and through his mediation we receive the graces and glories of the Divine nature (John xvii. 21).—W. F. A.

Ver. 17.—*The real presence*. No great delusion could attain wide influence unless it were the counterfeit or perversion of a valuable truth, and unless it promised to satisfy some deep, natural desire. The doctrine of the real presence is a pathetic witness to the yearning of the soul for personal fellowship with Christ, and to the truth that he does come into the lives of his people.

I. CHRIST'S PRESENCE IS REAL. It is not enough that he should be with us only as "the choir invisible" of the departed great are near; i.e. in our memory and in his influence. We are not satisfied with having his spirit among us in the sense in which the spirit of Plato and the spirit of Shakespeare are still with those who read 'Phædo' and 'Hamlet.' Christ promised to be personally present with his disciples (Matt. xxviii. 20). He ascended up into heaven, not that he might be removed from us, but that, passing from the material to the spiritual world, he might come into the closer contact with our souls.

II. CHRIST'S PRESENCE IS IN OUR HEARTS. He touches us through our thoughts and affections. There lies our true self, and it is to our true self that he comes. He makes his presence felt by the truths he inspires, the love he rouses, and the strength he infuses, just as the sun's presence is felt in the seed when it begins to germinate in its dark tomb beneath the earth. In this way Christ is even more near to us than he was to Zacchæus when he sat at the publican's table, or to John when the beloved disciple leaned on his Master's bosom.

III. CHRIST'S PRESENCE IS ABIDING. He comes "not to sojourn;" he abides with us. He is with us when, busy in doing his will, we are not thinking of the Lord himself, as the master is among the workmen who for the moment are too diligent to look at him. He is with us in hours of spiritual night when we are not enjoying communion with him, as a friend may be by our side in the dark, near though undiscovered. He is with us in our weariness when we have not strength and heart to pray, as the mother watches her sick child while he lies moaning and quite unconscious of her gentle nursing.

IV. CHRIST'S PRESENCE IS ENJOYED THROUGH FAITH. He is not in every heart; for there are Christless souls. Nor is he fully present with each one of his own people; for it is on behalf of true Christians that St. Paul prays for the strength to receive Christ. He is near to us just in proportion as our faith is vigorous to lay hold of him. We cannot put our fingers in the nail-prints. We must trust the unseen presence. We must not look for any second sense, any mystical intuition; for that is as much walking by sight as if we saw our Lord with our bodily eyes. Faith is pure trust in that of which we have no direct apprehension. By this faith we receive Christ.—W. F. A.

EXPOSITION.

CHAPTER IV.

PRACTICAL PORTION OF THE EPISTLE.

VERS. 1—16.—CHURCH PRINCIPLE OF GROWTH AND PROGRESS; THE CHURCH A BODY.

Ver. 1.—I therefore. Inference not only from last chapter, but the whole Epistle. Paul's interest in the Ephesians led him to a double application of the great subject which he had expounded: (1) to ask God on their behalf that he would bestow on them the full measure of the blessing to which of his grace they were entitled (ch. iii. 14—21); and (2) to entreat them on God's behalf to live in a way befitting their high calling (ch. iv.—vi.). To this second application he proceeds now. The prisoner in the Lord. Not merely "of the Lord," but *ἐν Κυρίῳ*, the usual formula for vital communion with Christ, indicating that his captivity was the captivity of a part or member of the Lord. An exhortation from such a prisoner ought to fall with double weight. Beseech you to walk worthy of the calling

wherewith ye were called. Their call was to be God's people (comp. Rom. ix. 25); this not a mere speculative distinction, but one that must have practical form and that must lead to suitable fruit. True grace in the heart must show itself by true goodness in the life. They were not to conceal their religion, not to be ashamed of it, but to avow it and glory in it, and their lives were not to be disgraced by unworthy conduct, but to be brightened and elevated by their relation to Christ.

Ver. 2.—SOME POINTS OF A WORTHY WALK. With all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love. He begins his enumeration with passive graces—eminently those of Christ. Lowliness or humility may well be gendered by our remembering what we were when God's grace took hold of us (ch. ii. 1—3). Meekness is the natural expression of a lowly state of mind, opposed to boisterous self-assertion and rude striving with others; it genders a subdued manner and a peace-loving spirit that studies to give the soft

answer that turneth away wrath. Long-suffering and loving forbearance are phases of the same state of mind—denoting the absence of that irascibility and proneness to take offence which flares up at every provocation or fancied neglect, and strives to maintain self-control on every occasion. It is from such qualities in God that our redemption has come; it is miserable to accept the redemption and not try to attain and exhibit its true spirit. Neglect of this verse has produced untold evil in the Christian Church.

Ver. 3.—**Striving to keep the unity of the Spirit.** *Σπουδαζομεν* is stronger than the A.V. “endeavouring,” and denotes an object to be carefully and earnestly watched for and promoted. “The unity of the Spirit” is equivalent to the unity of which the Spirit is the Author. In all in whom he works savingly, the Spirit produces a certain oneness in faith, in repentance, in knowledge, in their views of sin, grace, Christ, the world, etc. This oneness exists, and cannot but exist, even when Christians are not careful of it, but the *manifestation* of it is lost; it seems to the world as if there were no such oneness. “Many men, many minds,” says the world, when believers differ much and contend much, and are at no pains to preserve and manifest the unity wrought by the Spirit. It is due to the Spirit, as well as to the interests of the kingdom of God, that the unity of the Spirit be maintained in the bond of peace. The genitive, *ειρήνης*, is commonly held to be that of apposition, the bond which consists of peace—a peace-loving spirit, a spirit laying more stress on the points in which Christians agree than those in which they differ. Those who are combative, censorious, careless of peace, do not walk worthy of their vocation.

Vers. 4—6.—**WHEREIN UNITY CONSISTS—SEVEN PARTICULARS.** There is one body (see ch. ii. 16). The Church is an organic whole, of which believers are the members, and Christ the Head, supplying the vitalizing power. The real body, being constituted by vital union with Christ, is not synonymous with any single outward society. One Spirit; viz. the Holy Spirit, who alone applies the redemption of Christ, and works in the members of the Church the graces of the new creation. As ye also were called in one hope of your calling. This is one of the results of the Spirit’s work; when the Spirit called you he inspired you all with one hope, and this one hope was involved in the verinessence of your calling (comp. Titus ii. 13, “Looking for the blessed hope, even the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ”). To all believers the Spirit imparted this one blessed hope. One Lord; Jesus Christ, unique and beyond com-

parison: as Teacher, all hang on his words; as Master, all own his supreme authority; to his example all refer as the standard; his likeness all covet as the highest excellence (where Mary is worshipped, though nominally you have but one Lord, virtually you have two). One faith; not objective in the sense of creed, but as denoting the one instrument of receiving salvation (ch. ii. 8), the one belief in the one Saviour by which we are justified, adopted, and in other ways blessed. One baptism. One initiatory rite admitting into the visible Church—baptism in name of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, symbolic of the washing of regeneration, the one way of entering the Church invisible. One God and Father of all. We rise now to the fountain of Godhead, the one supreme Being with whom all have to do, the only Being who is or can be the Father of us all; who can be to us what is implied in the name “Father,” whose love and grace can satisfy our hearts. Who is over all; the supreme and only Potentate, exercising undivided jurisdiction, “doing according to his will in the armies of heaven,” etc. And through all; pervading the whole universe, sustaining and ruling it, not dwelling apart from his works, but pervading them; not, however, in any pantheistical sense, but as a personal God, whose essence is separate from his works. And in all. A closer and more abiding influence; he dwells in them, and walks in them, moulding their inner being, and filling them with his own light and love. Some commentators of mark have tried to find a reference to each of the persons of the Godhead in the three prepositions *over*, *through*, and *by*, but this seems a strained view. The three persons, however, appear clearly in the seven elements of unity, but, as before (ch. iii. 16—19), in the reverse of the common order—first, the Spirit; second, the Son; and third, the Father. These seven elements constitute the true unity of the Church. It is out of the question to identify the Church which is thus one, with any external organization like the Roman Catholic Church. How many millions have been connected with it who have notoriously been destitute of the one hope, the one Spirit, the one Father! It is of the invisible Church the apostle speaks, and his exhortation is, seeing that this blessed sevenfold unity is the unity wrought by the Holy Spirit, maintain that unity; maintain the manifestation of it; give no occasion to any one to say that there is no such unity—that the Holy Ghost is a Spirit of confusion and not a Spirit of order and unity.

Vers. 7—16.—**VARIETY OF GIFTS IN CONNECTION WITH UNITY; USE TO BE MADE OF THEM.**

Ver. 7.—But to each one of us was grace given according to the measure of the gift of Christ. In the Church all do not get alike; grace is not given in equal measures as the manna in the wilderness; Christ, as the great Bestower, measures out his gifts, and each receives according to his measure. Compare parable of talents. "Grace" does not refer merely to supernatural gifts, but also to the ordinary spiritual gifts of men. These are varied, because what each gets he gets for the good of the rest; the Church is a fellowship or brotherhood, where each has an interest in all and all in each, and is bound to act accordingly.

Ver. 8.—Wherefore he saith, When he ascended on high he led captivity captive, and received gifts for men. The speaker is God, the author of Scripture, and the place is the sixty-eighth psalm. That psalm is a psalm of triumph, where the placing of the ark on Zion is celebrated as if it had been a great victory. As this quotation shows, the psalm in its deepest sense is Messianic, celebrating the victory of Christ. The substance rather than the words of the passage are given, for the second person ("*thou* hast ascended," etc.) is changed into the third; and whereas in the psalm it is said, "*gave gifts to men*," as modified by the apostle it is said, "*received gifts for men*." As in a literal triumph, the chiefs of the enemy's army are led captive, so the powers of darkness were led captive by Christ (captivity, *αἰχμαλωσία*, denotes prisoners); and as on occasion of a triumph the spoils of the enemy are made over to the conqueror, who again gives them away among the soldiers and people, so gifts were given to Christ after his triumph to be given by him to his Church. We must not force the analogy too far: the point is simply this—as a conqueror at a triumph gets gifts to distribute, so Christ, on his resurrection and ascension, got the Holy Spirit to bestow on his Church (comp. ch. i. 22).

Ver. 9.—Now (the fact) that he ascended, what does it imply but that he descended first? The ascent implied a previous descent; that is, the ascent of the Son of God—of one *who was himself in heaven*, who was in the bosom of the Father (comp. John iii. 13), implied that he had come down from heaven, a striking proof of his interest in and love for the children of men. And the descent was not merely to the ordinary condition of humanity, but to a more than ordinarily degraded condition, not merely to the surface of the earth, but to the lower parts of the earth. This has sometimes been interpreted of Hades, but surely without reason. If the expression denotes more than Christ's humble condition, it probably means *the grave*. This was the climax of Christ's humiliation; to be removed out of men's

sight, as too offensive for them to look on,—to be hidden away in the depths of the earth, in the grave, was indeed supremely humbling. The object is to show that, in bestowing gifts on men, Christ did not merely bring into play his inherent bountifulness as the Son of God, but acted as Mediator, by right of special purchase, through his work of humiliation on earth; and thus to lead us to think the more highly both of the Giver and of his gifts.

Ver. 10.—He that descended is the same also that ascended far above all the heavens. There was a proportion between the descent and the ascent. His descent was deep—into the lower parts of earth; but his ascent was more glorious than his descent had been humbling. The Hebrew idea of various heavens is brought in; the ascent was not merely to the third heaven, but far above all heavens. That he might fill all things. A very sublime view of the purpose for which Christ reigns on high. The specific idea with which the apostle started—to give gifts to men—is swallowed up for the moment by a view far grander and more comprehensive, "to fill all things." Jesus has gone on high to pour his glory and excellence over every creature in the universe who is the subject of grace, to be the Light of the world, the one Source of all good. As in the solar system it is from one sun that all the supplies of light and heat come, all the colours that beautify earth, sea, and sky, all the influences that ripen the grain and mature the fruit, all the chemical power that transforms and new-creates; so the ascended Jesus is the Sun of the universe; all healing, all life, all blessing are from him. It is quite in the manner of the apostle, when he introduces the mention of Christ, to be carried, in the contemplation of his person, far above the immediate occasion, and extol the infinite perfection and glory that distinguish him.

Ver. 11.—And he gave some (to be) apostles. Coming back to the diversity of gifts (ver. 7), he enumerates some of these, as Christ (*αὐτός, he*, emphatic) bestowed them. The organization of the Church is not a mere human arrangement; its officers are of Divine appointment. The first gift is, his apostles. It is not meant that he gave to some the gifts needed to constitute them apostles, though that is true; but that, having qualified some to be apostles, he gave them to the Church. An apostle had his commission direct from Christ (Matt. x. 5); he possessed supernatural gifts (Matt. x. 8); it was necessary for him to have seen the Lord (Acts i. 22); his diocese was the whole world (Matt. xxviii. 19; Mark xvi. 15). The apostles were the constituent body of the Church—they had all necessary gifts for

setting it up, and as all Christian history has testified, they were a marvellous gift of Christ to his Church. And some, prophets. Next to the apostles in point of value, as gifts to the Church, having supernatural knowledge of God's will present and future (Acts xxi. 11). Prophets were indispensable before the New Testament was given as the Church's infallible guide to the will of God, but not apparently necessary after the will of God was fully recorded. And some, evangelists. The nature of this office is known only from the meaning of the term and the work of those who bore the designation (Acts xxi. 8; 2 Tim. iv. 5)—persons not attached to a particular congregation, but who went about preaching the glad tidings, and otherwise building up the Church, but without the full powers of apostles. And some, pastors and teachers. The more ordinary settled ministers of congregations, called pastors, because they watched over the flock, trying to lead all in right ways; and teachers, because they communicated Divine knowledge. Some have thought that each expression denotes a separate office, but, coupled as they are together, it is better to regard them as indicating two functions of one office (see 1 Tim. v. 17; Acts xiii. 1).

Ver. 12.—In order to the perfecting of the saints. The ultimate end for which the gifts bestowed (comp. Heb. xii. 1). A work of completion is in hand, which must be fulfilled (see ver. 13): the saints, now compassed about with infirmity, have to be freed from all stain (ch. v. 26, 27), and as instruments towards this end, the ministers of the Church are given by Christ; they are not mere promoters of civilization, men of culture planted among the rude, but instruments for advancing men to complete holiness. For the work of the ministry. The preposition is changed from *πρὸς* to *εἰς*, *πρὸς* denoting the ultimate end, *εἰς* the immediate object (comp. Rom. xv. 2); the office of the Church officers is not lords, but *διακονοί*, servants, as Christ himself was (Matt. xx. 28). For the building up of the body of Christ. Bringing bone to its bone and sinew to its sinew, increasing the number of believers, and promoting the spiritual life of each; carrying on all their work as Christ's servants and with a definite eye to the promotion of the great work which he undertook when he came to seek and to save the lost.

Ver. 13.—Until we all come. This marks the duration of the office of the ministry. Some maintain that it implies that all these offices are to continue in the Church until the result specified is obtained (Catholic Apostolic or Irvingite Church): this is contradicted by Scripture and by experience, so far as apostles and prophets are concerned,

for the gifts for these offices were not continued, and without the gifts the offices are impossible. The meaning is that, till the event specified, there is to be a provision in the Church of the offices that are needed, and the apostle, in using "until," probably had in view the last office in his list—pastors and teachers. To the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God. Both genitives are governed by unity; already there is one faith (ver. 5), but we all, i.e. all who compose or are yet to compose the body of Christ, the totality of this body, have to be brought to this faith. As in ver. 5 "faith" is not equivalent to "creed," or truth believed, but the act of believing; so here the consummation which the ministers of the Church are given to bring about is a state in which faith in the Son of God shall characterize all, and that, not a blind faith, but a faith associated with knowledge. Usually faith and knowledge are opposed to each other; but here faith has more the meaning of trust than of mere belief—trust based on knowledge, trust in the Son of God based on knowledge of his Person, his work, and his relation to them that receive him. To bring all the elect to this faith is the object of the ministry; when they are all brought to it, the body of Christ will be complete, and the functions of the Christian ministry will cease. Unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ. The idea of organic completeness is more fully expressed by these two clauses; the consummation is the completeness of the whole body of Christ as such; but that involves the maturity of each individual who is a constituent part of that body; and the measure or sign of maturity, both for the individual and for the whole, is the stature of the fulness of Christ (comp. Rom. viii. 29, "Whom he did foreknow, them he also foredained to be conformed to the image of his Son"). The question has been put—Will this consummation be in this life or the next? The one seems to melt into the other; the idea of a complete Church and that of a new economy seem inseparable; as the coming of Christ will terminate the observance of the Lord's Supper, so it will terminate the ministries ordained by Christ for the completion of his Church.

Ver. 14.—That we be no more children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of teaching. The apostle goes back to illustrate in another way the purpose of the ministry; it is designed to remedy childish fickleness and the causes that lead to it. The ignorant and inexperienced lie at the mercy of abler persons, and, when there is no regular ministry provided by Christ, are liable to be swept along

by any plausible person that professes to be a Christian teacher, and such persons are often very dangerous, working by the sleight of *μαμ* i.e. the cunning legerdemain by which the teachings of men—teachings devised by the hearts of men—are made to appear to the uninitiated the same as Christ's teaching. In craftiness, tending to the scheme of error. Such teachers employ crafty methods, apparently harmless, but tending to further the method or scheme of error. The strong language here used corresponds with that in which, at Miletus, the apostle warned the elders of Ephesus of the "grievous wolves" that were to come in among them, and of the men "speaking perverse things" that were to arise among themselves, not sparing the flock (Acts xx. 29, 30).

Ver. 15.—But speaking the truth in love. *Ἀληθεύοντες* is hardly translatable in English—it implies being true as well as speaking the truth and following the truth. Truth is the element in which we are to live, move, and have our being; fidelity to truth is the backbone of the Christian ministry. But truth must be inseparably married to love; good tidings spoken harshly are no good tidings; the charm of the message is destroyed by the discordant spirit of the messenger. The more painful the first impression which a truth is fitted to produce (e.g. ch. ii. 1—3), the more need is there for dealing with it in love—a much-needed and much-neglected exhortation. May grow up into him in all things who is the Head, namely, Christ. Growing up into Christ is like baptizing into the Name of the Father, etc.; it implies that the growth tends to a closer union to Christ, as, on the other hand, union to Christ causes the growth: the two act and react on each other. This growth is to be "in all things"—in the whole man—in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness, in all the communicable properties of Christ. How great the work of growth is that should be sought in the case of every living believer, is evident from the enormous gulf there is between his spiritual and moral state and that of Christ. Yet such growth is reasonable, considering the relation of the body to him, its Head. The fact of this relation should encourage us to seek and expect the growth, and encourage ministers to labour hopefully towards promoting it.

Ver. 16.—From whom all the body fitly framed and knit together through that which every joint supplieth. The relation of *ἐκ* in this verse to *εἰς* in ver. 15 is to be noted—growing up vitally into him, the body derives vital substance from him. Not, however, in a mere individual sense, but as an organization, the parts being adapted and

articulated to one another (this process being continuous; see present participles, *συναρμολογούμενον* and *συνβιβασθόμενον*). In the Church there are babes in Christ, also young men and old men; some are clear in intellect, some strong in faith, some warm in love, some excel in passive virtues, some in active; but in a well-ordered Church these should be getting jointed together, and learning to work with and for one another, no one despising gifts which he has not but another has; in this sense, there ought to be a spiritual communism, for all are one spiritual body. But spiritual communism does not involve social communism or even social equality, nor will social distinctions be obliterated in a pure Church, except so far as they hinder spiritual communion. According to the energy in the measure (or, proportion) of each individual part. This clause seems to be most naturally connected with what follows. In the fit framing of the body, channels as it were are laid for the propagation and working of the vital force throughout the body; this force is not alike, but of various amount in the different parts; some members have much of it, some little, but the measure of this vital force regulates the growth. Carries on the growth of the body. The middle voice, *ποιεῖται*, indicates that it is a growth from within, while depending on the energy furnished by Christ. For building up of itself in love. This is the end, so far as the body itself is concerned, though, of course, the completed spiritual body, like the completed natural body, has work to do outside itself. In a healthy Church there is a continual work of building up: construction, not destruction, is its proper business—promoting peace, purity, prayerfulness, trust, activity in the work of the Lord, but all in love, the absence of which makes winter instead of summer, declension instead of progress, death instead of life. In illustration of the various measure of grace, and yet its real efficiency in all the members of the Church, Eadie says, "No member or ordinance is superfluous. The widow's mite was commended by him who sat over against the treasury. Solomon built a temple. Joseph provided a tomb. Mary the mother gave birth to the child, and the other Marys wrapped the corpse in spices. Lydia entertained the apostle, and Phœbe carried an Epistle of old, the princes and heroes went to the field, and wise-hearted women did spin. While Joshua fought, Moses prayed. The snuffers and trays were as necessary as the magnificent lampstand. . . . The result is that the Church is built up, for love is the element of spiritual progress. That love fills the renewed nature." The Church has been defined as an institution that has truth

for its nourishment, love for its atmosphere, and Christ for its Head.

Vers. 17-24.—CONTRASTED PRINCIPLES OF GENTILE AND CHRISTIAN CHARACTER.

Ver. 17.—This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord. There is no sign of the apostle, when he comes to the practical part of his Epistle, deeming it of less importance than the doctrinal. The formula is very expressive; the apostle sinks his personality, and brings forward Christ as the Exhorter. That ye no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk. First, he indicates what they are *not* to be. "Be not conformed to this world." In four particulars they are to be different from Gentiles. The first of these is in the vanity of their mind. The allusion is to their frivolous, empty aims in life, and their unfixed, unsettled impulses. The Gentiles were chasing shadows, blowing bubbles, doing anything to make time pass agreeably; not considering or knowing either what they were, or whence they came, or whither they were going.

Ver. 18.—Being darkened in their understanding (second point of difference), and thus blind to all that is most vital—ignorant of God, of the way of salvation, of the love of Christ. Even at best the natural understanding cannot discover these things, and when it is not only imperfect but darkened—made more obscure than ever by sin (see after)—its guidance is altogether defective. It has been said truly that the youngest scholar in a Sunday school that has been taught the elements of the gospel has more light than the wisest of the heathen. Alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart (third point of difference). Two causes are given for their alienation, viz. ignorance, and hardness of heart, this last being the *ultimate* cause. Through worldly living, their hearts have become hard, callous, insensible to spiritual influences, perceiving no beauty in Divine things, no preciousness in Divine promises, no excellence in the Divine image; this makes them ignorant, careless, foolish; and such being their state of heart, they are alienated from the life of God, can't bear vital religion, hate the very idea of spiritual and holy service.

Ver. 19.—Who being past feeling. Without sense of shame, without conscience, without fear of God or regard for man, without any perception of the dignity of human nature, the glory of the Divine image, or the degradation of sin. Have given themselves over to lasciviousness to work all uncleanness (fourth point of difference). This is the climax—heathenism in its worst and fullest development, yet by no means rare. The sensuality of the heathen

was and is something dreadful. Many of them gave themselves to it as a business, worked at it as at a trade or employment (see Uhlmann's 'Conflict of Christianity with Heathenism,' etc.). Details, such as even the walls of Pompeii furnish, are unfit for the public eye. With greediness. *Πλεονεξία* means the desire of having more, and has reference to the insatiable character of sensual sins. Sometimes it is translated (A.V.) "covetousness," as ch. v. 3.

Ver. 20.—But ye did not thus learn Christ. "But" emphatic—a great contrast, that must come home to the conscience of every Christian, and to his whole heart and soul. The expression, "learn Christ," is a pregnant one, corresponding to "preaching Christ" (Acts viii. 5)—all about Christ, Christ in all his offices, and in all his influence. He that learns Christ appropriates him in the efficacy of his atonement, in the power of his Spirit, in the force of his lessons, and in the spirit of his influence, and finds the whole to be diametrically opposite to the godless world.

Ver. 21.—If ye have heard him. A word of caution. We are not to assume too readily that we are in a right relation to Christ. We must look within and make sure of that. To hear him, here, is to hear him as his sheep hear his voice and follow him, recognizing the voice of the Shepherd, a voice to be implicitly obeyed. And were taught in him, as truth is in Jesus. The peculiar force of this clause is the double *ἐν*, not given in the first clause in A.V., thereby obscuring the sense, which is, that all teaching and all truth acquires a different hue and a different character when there is a personal relation to Jesus. Truth apart from the person of Christ has little power; abstract doctrines have little influence; the very atonement may be a barren dogma. But the atonement taught "in Jesus," in connection with the living, loving, dying, risen Saviour tells; the blood of redemption in connection with the Son of God incarnate thus loving us, and meekly, patiently suffering the agonies of the cross in our room, is not only a power, but the greatest moral power that can move the heart.

Ver. 22.—That ye put off, as concerning the former conversation, the old man. The sum of Christ's practical lessons is given in two particulars—putting off and putting on. The change is very decided and very complete. It is emphatically *personal*; not a mere change of opinions or of religious observances, but of life, habit, character; not altering a few things, but first putting off *the man* as we put off a garment. "It is a change which brings the mind under the government of truth, and gives to the life a new aspect of integrity and devout-

ness." Which is rotting according to the lusts of deceit. The present participle, *φθιπέμενος*, indicates continuance or progress in corruption. Sin is a disintegrating dissolving thing, causing putridity, and in all cases, when unchecked, tending towards it. Deceit is personified; it is an agent of evil, sending out lusts which seem harmless but are really ruinous—their real character is concealed; they come as ministers of pleasure, they end as destructive tyrants. Lust of power, lust of money, lust of pleasure, have all this character; they are the offspring of deceit, and always to be shunned.

Ver. 23.—And that ye be renewed in the spirit of your mind. Between the first and second practical change, derived from being taught by Christ, the apostle inserts this counsel applicable to both. This renewal is the work of the Holy Spirit; how, then, can it be the subject of an exhortation to us? In this sense, that we are to prize, long for, encourage, watch, this work of the Holy Spirit, feeling it to be most vital and essential, not to be neglected without awful sin and danger. Usually the Holy Spirit works in us by stirring up our spirit to desire and endeavour after holiness; to resist these strivings of the Spirit, or even to be indifferent to them, is a deadly and most dangerous sin.

Ver. 24.—And put on the new man. As the fruit of inward renewal, let there be outward renovation. A new object is clean, fresh, tidy; let your life have something of the same aspect—let your principles, aims, habits, be new, in the sense of being conformed to Christ, who is your life. Which after God has been created in righteousness and holiness of truth. "After God," equivalent to "after the image of him that created him" (Col. iii. 10). Some think "the new man" equivalent to "Christ" (Rom. xiii. 14), constituted the Head of renewed humanity, as Adam of depraved. But this would not correspond with the exhortation to put off the old man, nor should we be exhorted to put on Christ after being exhorted to be renewed in the spirit of our minds. In what sense, then, has the "new man" been created? The idea presented itself to the apostle in the abstract—there has been a creation of a new man; but concretely, we have to conform to the Divine creation, in respect of righteousness and holiness; righteousness denoting personal uprightness and fidelity to all social duties; holiness, the state of the spirit toward God. The last words, "of truth," denote the relation of righteousness and holiness to the truth. The words are opposed to "of deceit" in ver. 22. Lust is bred of deceit, but righteousness and holiness of truth. They never deceive, never disappoint, are solid to the end.

Ver. 25.—ch. v. 2.—Rags of the Old Man and Robes of the New.

Ver. 25.—Wherefore, putting away falsehood, speak every man truth with his neighbour. Lying or falsehood is pre-eminently a heathen vice, as missionaries in India and other countries abundantly testify. It is an attribute of fallen humanity: "They go astray from the womb, speaking lies;" and one of the earliest vices that appear in children is deceit. Not only is it God's will and command that we speak the truth, but it is peculiarly incumbent on Christians as children of the light, as followers of him who is the Truth, as having renounced the devil, who is the father of lies. Another reason is added. For ye are members one of another. Falsehood is always designed to mislead; but to deceive our own members is emphatically wicked. Says Chrysostom (quoted by Eadie), "Let not the eye lie to the foot, nor the foot to the eye. If there be a deep pit, and its mouth, covered with reeds, shall present to the eye the appearance of solid ground, will not the eye use the foot to ascertain whether it is hollow underneath or whether it is firm and resists? Will the foot tell a lie, and not the truth as it is? And what, again, if the eye were to spy a serpent or a wild beast, will it lie to the foot?"

Ver. 26.—Be ye angry, and sin not. Quotation from the Septuagint version of Ps. iv. 5. Anger, the feeling and expression of displeasure, is not wholly forbidden, but is guarded by two checks. Our Lord did not make anger a breach of the sixth commandment, but being angry with a brother *without cause*. The first check is to beware of sinning; to keep your anger clear of bitterness, spite, malevolence, and all such evil feelings. The second is, Let not the sun go down on your irritation; examine yourself in the evening, and see that you are tranquil. Eadie quotes Thomas Fuller: "St. Paul saith, 'Let not the sun go down upon your wrath,' to carry news to the antipodes in another world of thy revengeful nature. Yet let us take the apostle's meaning rather than his words—with all possible speed to depose our passion; not understanding him so literally that we may take leave to be angry till sunset; then might our wrath lengthen with the days, and moon in Greenland, where day lasts above a quarter of a year, have plentiful scope of revenge. And as the English, by command of William the Conqueror, always raked up their fire, and put out their candles when the curfew bell was rung, let us then also quench all sparks of anger and heat of passion." It is especially becoming in men, when about to sleep the sleep of death, to see that they are in peace and charity with all men: it were

seemly always to fall asleep in the same temper.

Ver. 27.—Neither give place to the devil. Place or room, opportunity and scope for noting in and through you. There seems no special reference to the last exhortation, but as that demands a special act of vigilance and self-control, so the activity of the devil demands vigilance and self-control on all occasions, and especially on those on which the devil is most apt to try to get a foothold. The reference to the devil is not a figure, but an obvious recognition of his personality, and of the liability of all Christians to fall under his influence.

Ver. 28.—Let the stealer steal no more. *Ὁ κλέπτης* may be translated either as a noun or as the present participle. In either case it implies that even Christians might continue to steal, and that they had to be warned against the habit. This may seem strange to us, but not to those who consider how little theft was thought of among the pagans, and how liable such habits are to remain among converts from heathenism. Where there is a low moral tone and an uneducated conscience, very great irregularities may be found. Dishonesty in trade, deceit in business, are just the same. Among the Ephesians, thieving was probably the result of idle habits and of dislike to hard work. Hence the apostle says, But rather let him labour, working with his hands the things that are good, that he may have to impart to him that hath need. Idleness is mean, labour is honourable; Christ calls us to work, not for this reason only, but in order that we may have something to give away. Paganism would rob others of what is rightfully their own; Christianity leads me to give to others what is rightfully my own. This different genius of the two systems appears here very clearly. Observe the true use of superfluities—look out for the needy, and give for their relief.

Ver. 29.—Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth. Not pagans only, but some of whom better things might be expected, need this charge. How revolting is the tendency in some circles to foul and blasphemous conversation; to profane and obscene jests, songs, and allusions; to feed as it were on moral garbage! From Christian mouths no such word should ever issue—it is simply abominable. But that which is good for improvement of the occasion, that it may give grace to them that hear. Speaking should ever bear on improvement or edification, especially on turning passing things to good account. This should be the aim; it does not require speaking to be uniformly grave, but to have an object. It may be quite right to have an enlivening object, but among Christians it

should always be such as befits their profession, and tends to help on the exalted objects at which they aim.

Ver. 30.—And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God. Very solemn and emphatic counsel. The name is given with unusual fullness, in order to show the magnitude of the sin—*τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον τοῦ Θεοῦ*, "The Spirit, the Holy Spirit of God." By an anthropopathy the Spirit is represented as grieved by such treatment as would grieve us—*e.g.* when his work is obstructed, when sin is trifled with, when Deity is treated carelessly, when place is given to the devil, when the spirit of the world is cherished. Those who act thus resemble the Sanballats and Tobiahs of the time of the restoration, who hindered the rebuilding of the temple and the restoration of order and prosperity. When the Holy Spirit would urge consecration, separation from the world, holy exercises, active service, our indolent and worldly hearts are liable to rebel and vex him. To grieve a parent heedlessly is a great sin; how much more to grieve the Spirit of God? In whom ye were sealed unto the day of redemption. The Spirit being rather the Seal than the Sealer, who is the Father (see ch. i. 13), it is better to translate *in* whom than *by* whom; besides, this preserves the force of the *ἐν*, which, whether used of Christ or of the other persons of the Godhead, is so characteristic of the Epistle. To grieve the Spirit is to help to obliterate the seal, and thus weaken the evidence of our redemption.

Ver. 31.—Let all bitterness; not only in speech, but in mind, disposition, habit. And wrath and anger; nearly synonymous, but perhaps "wrath" is equivalent to the tumultuous excited state of mind, out of which comes anger, the settled feeling of dislike and enmity. And clamour and evil-speaking be put away from you; "clamour," equivalent to the loud noise of strife, the excited shouting down of opponents; "evil-speaking," the more deliberate habit of running down their character, exciting an evil feeling against them in the minds of others. With all malice; equivalent to wishing evil, whether in a more pronounced or in a latent and half-conscious form, whether expressing itself in the way of coarse malediction or lurking in a corner of the heart, as an evil spirit of which we should be ashamed; all are rage of the old man, as disgraceful to Christians as literal rage to a man of position; utterly unworthy of the regenerated child of God. Chrysostom, rather fancifully, treats them as a genealogy: "Bitterness bred wrath, wrath anger, anger clamour, clamour evil-speaking, which is railing."

Ver. 32.—But be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another (op-

posed to bitterness, wrath, anger; Bengel). Kind (*χρηστοί*), sweet, amiable in disposition, subduing all that is harsh and hasty, encouraging all that is gentle and good; tender-hearted (*εὐσπλαγχνοί*), denoting a specially compassionate feeling, such as may arise from the thought of the infirmities, griefs, and miseries to which more or less all are subject; these emotional conditions to bear the practical fruit of forgiveness, and the forgiveness to be mutual (*χαριζόμενοι ἑαυτοῖς*), as if under the feeling that what you give to-day you require to ask to-morrow, not being too hard on the faults of others, remembering that you have your own. Even as God in Christ also forgave you. The A.V. rendering, "for Christ's sake," is objectionable every way: it is not literal; it omits the characteristic feature of the Epistle, "in Christ," losing the force of the consideration that the forgiveness was dispensed by the Father, acting with or wholly one with the Son; and it gives a shade of countenance

to the great error that the Father personally was not disposed to forgive till he was prevailed on to do so by the interposition of the Son. The acrist, "forgave," is more literal and better than the perfect, "hath forgiven;" it points to a definite time when forgiveness was bestowed, viz. the moment of real belief in Christ, and hearty acceptance of his grace. The vague atmosphere in which many envelop the question of their forgiveness is very hurtful; it checks their thanksgivings, dulls their joy, quenches hope, and dilutes the great dynamic power of the gospel—the power that impels us to forgive our brother, as well as to abound in the work of the Lord with a tender conscience, the sense of forgiveness urges to the most full and hearty doing of God's will; but when hypocrites, with seared consciences claim to be forgiven, they steal what is not their own, and become more abandoned to wickedness.

HOMILETICS.

Ver. 1.—*The Christian walk.* "Walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called." We now come to the practical part of the Epistle, and the first exhortation is a striking one. Paul attached great importance to the element of walk or character. He skilfully puts two things in connection with each other—*vocation* on the one hand, and *walk* on the other. The preceding chapters had shown the wonderful glory of the Christian vocation. The succeeding chapters are directed to secure a correspondingly elevated Christian walk. Two main topics present themselves. 1. Generally, the *value of the Christian walk or character*. 2. *The kind of walk required*—"worthy of the vocation," etc.

I. *VALUE OF CHRISTIAN WALK OR CHARACTER.* This may be shown in three aspects. As a plea for Christianity, or evidence of the reality of Christian faith; as a persuasive towards it, and as a pattern for imitation. 1. *A plea.* Sceptical tendencies of the present age; logic not sufficient to meet them. Strongest popular evidence of Christianity is its inherent truthfulness, its self-commanding power. But next in power is the consistent lives of earnest Christians. Men and women consistently following Christ, breathing his spirit, and moving heavenwards, show that his religion is not a sham or a deception, but a great reality. 2. *A persuasive.* Such lives appeal to the heart as well as to the head. They show religion to be, not only a reality, but a great obligation and a great blessing; appeal to the conscience and force it to say, "That is what we ought to be." Men feel they ought to live like such, and certainly they would fain die like them. 3. *A pattern.* Do we need it? Have we not other and more perfect patterns? Sermon on mount; life of Christ? Yes, but human nature desiderates something on its own level—something visible and tangible, a stepping-stone between heaven and earth. Hence Paul gave thanks that the Thessalonians became followers of him and of the Lord, and he told the Philippians that he and others were given them "for an ensample." Every Christian congregation should have a number of model Christians fitted to be examples to the rest—the elders and elderly people especially. Men may sneer at model Christians, but they do not sneer at model soldiers or model servants, and certainly every Christian worthy of the name should aim at being as near Christ as possible.

II. *THE KIND OF WALK.* "Worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called." We have all an idea of consistency; inconsistency should be the object of our abhorrence. The world has a keen eye for inconsistencies of Christians, and exposes them mercilessly. It takes comfort from them to continue in sin. Sins detestable in the godly are

thought nothing of in the worldly. If what David did *in re* Uriah had been done by Nebuchadnezzar, no one would have said anything. A consistent walk is, by God's help, within the reach of all. It is an impressive sermon to the world, a continual sermon, an unanswerable sermon. Let all preach this sermon, though it be their only one. The "walk worthy" is a walk of holiness, humility, forbearance, forgiveness, patience, charity. It is also a walk of brightness and beneficence. It seeks to make the world brighter and better. Let us be urged to it by the sins of the world, by the miseries of the world, by the dangers of the world, as regards the soul. In order to promote it, let us be much with Christ, and as far as we can, with those who are like Christ. Let us study the biographies of Christ-like men and aim at conformity to their example. Let us often pray the prayer of the third chapter of this book, and other prayers of the like tenor. Let us use earnestly our means of grace, praying that each sabbath, each sermon, each sacrament, may serve to make us more worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called.

Vers. 2—6.—*Details of a walk worthy of the vocation.* This walk demands—

I. THE PRESERVATION OF SOCIAL CONCORD, THROUGH THE QUIET OR PASSIVE VIRTUES, which, having been very characteristic of Christ, are eminently incumbent on all who bear his Name. 1. *Lowliness*, arising from a chastened sense of our sin and unworthiness. 2. *Meekness*, which is in speech what lowliness is in spirit. 3. *Long-suffering and forbearance in love*; in opposition to hastiness, irascibility, impatience, ill temper, which, though often little thought of, are eminently unworthy of the Christian calling. Christian victories are often gained by meekness and endurance—what Milton called "the invincible might of meekness." These graces have reference mainly to the ordinary intercourse of social life; what follows has to do more with the public life of the Church.

II. THE PRESERVATION OF ECCLESIASTICAL CONCORD THROUGH THE BOND OF PEACE. The concord to be preserved is the "unity of the Spirit"—the unity of which the Holy Spirit is the Author; not mere external uniformity, but inward agreement. It is a fact that there is much inward agreement wherever the Spirit of God works. It is our duty to preserve this—to keep it from being broken or even appearing as if broken. This unity is to be maintained by the bond which consists of "peace;" by a peace-loving and peace-seeking spirit, that spirit of which Christ said, "Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God." The danger of breaking the unity of the Spirit is great; readiness to take offence, pride, regardlessness of the welfare of others, forgetfulness of the vast Christian work and warfare committed to us, are temptations to this. On the other hand, the habitual striving after the graces enumerated above, and trying to exercise them habitually, tend to preserve the unity of the Spirit, and to a large extent, too, to preserve external agreement in the government and worship and work of the Church.

III. In connection with this subject, the apostle shows WHEREIN THE UNITY OF THE SPIRIT CONSISTS, AND WHEREIN IT IS TO BE PRESERVED. There is a *sevenfold* unity (see Exposition). That true believers are one in Christ is one of those truths which happily even controversy and sectarianism do not quite obliterate. But a more full, rich, and constant manifestation of this unity would make a great impression on the world; it would remove one of the most common excuses of scepticism; it would tend powerfully both to edify and to extend the cause of Christ; and it would make the fellowship of the Church much more delightful, spreading more of the atmosphere of heaven upon earth.

Vers. 7—11.—*Christ's gifts to his Church.* The grand object of the apostle in this section of his Epistle is to show the ample provision made by Christ for the welfare of his Church. The Church may sing as well as the individual, "The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want." The *particular* object is to indicate that the gifts conferred by him on the members individually (vers. 7—10), and especially the appointment of the several classes of office-bearers (ver. 10), show the Lord's earnest desire to raise his Church to the highest possible condition of grace and honour; to make her complete and glorious, as the one body of which he is the Head, the one vessel into which he is to pour all his fulness, the bride on whom he is to exhaust every ornament.

The marks of Christ's care for his Church are innumerable; they recede back through all eternity and forward for evermore (ch. iii. 18, 19). His death marked the climax of his self-sacrifice; but even that did not end Christ's service for his Church. For her he not only descended from heaven to earth, but for her too he reascended from earth to heaven; like the high priest, he went into the holiest of all with his Name on his breastplate, and he only changed the sphere in which his mediatorial office was exercised. But more; the good Shepherd is ever renewing the miracle of the five loaves and two fishes; ever saying with reference to his people, "Give ye them to eat;" and ever appointing and qualifying suitable officers to take care of his Church and break among them the bread of life. He is ever qualifying his ministers for ruling and feeding his flock, for filling the empty soul, speaking a word in season to the weary, guiding the perplexed, reclaiming the erring, strengthening the weak, supporting the feeble-minded, and sending on the ransomed of the Lord to Zion, with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads. The subject divides into two—the gift-giving (vers. 7—11), and the end or purpose for which the gifts are given (vers. 12—16). In the first part we find: 1. The source of the gifts and the principle of distribution (ver. 7). 2. Confirmation of this from the sixty-eighth psalm (ver. 8). 3. Commentary and inferences therefrom (vers. 9, 10). 4. The special gift of suitable officers.

I. 1. Christ is the great Source of grace, including ordinary and extraordinary gifts ("the gift of Christ"). 2. Christ leaves no one out; to every one of us is given grace. 3. The grace was not given in equal measures to all. 4. But according to the measure of the gift of Christ.

II. From the sixty-eighth psalm it appears that this proceeding was symbolized when the ark was placed on Mount Zion, when David's victories were celebrated, and a distribution of gifts took place.

III. The word "ascended," applied to the Son of God, implied a previous descent; for when he ascended, he went to his own home and seat; previous to this he came down, and the apostle dwells especially on his having come down to the lower parts of the earth, such as Gethsemane, Calvary, and the grave. His was no holiday visit to earth, to green fields, or golden palaces; "He was taken from prison and from judgment." Yet even there he triumphed over all his enemies, and now he is exalted "far above all heavens." This last expression is very remarkable, especially in the view of what modern astronomy teaches on the extent of the heavens. It is a marvellous testimony to the glory of the risen Lord. Still higher is the testimony to his glory in the purpose for which he has gone on high—"that he might fill all things." The sun, in the centre of the solar system, fills that system, spreading light and heat and manifold influences to its extremest limits. All the colours that beautify earth, sea, and sky; all the heat that fosters life and gladdens living creatures of every kind; all the chemical influences that are so manifold in their effects on the economy of nature, radiate from the sun. So Christ is Sun and Centre of the infinite universe, and the universe is filled by him with heavenly influences. There are many suns, but only one Saviour; there are many systems of worlds, according to our modern astronomy, and even firmaments of worlds, beyond the ken of our strongest instruments; but all are joined by one glorious bond; for not only have they been all formed by one Creator, but all have been "filled" by the one all-glorious Mediator-Lord. What resources does that expression, "that he might fill all things," ascribe to Christ! If he can fill all things, he can fill us; our hearts are not easily filled; but what can be wanting to us out of such fulness?

IV. But from the stars we come back to the Church, and consider Christ as exalted to fill his Church. With this view he has qualified and commissioned certain officers to minister to his Church. Of these it is generally allowed that apostles and prophets were special and temporary; while evangelists, pastors, and teachers are ordinary and permanent (see Exposition). Observe that such men are to be received (and when needed to be asked too) as *gifts of Christ* to his Church. It is the Lord of the harvest who equips and furnishes labourers for his harvest. We should not seek ministers of the gospel, as some do, for our own pleasure or credit, rejecting them if they do not quite answer our idea; but as *gifts of Christ*, in which their great object will be to build up his Church and promote the beauty of his bride.

Vers. 12—16.—*Christ's gifts to his Church: their end or purpose.* I. Generally,

Christ has a work of perfection on hand. This denoted by—"for the perfecting of the saints" (ver. 12), and "unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ" (ver. 13). What a high aim with reference to creatures so poor and needy as the members of his Church!

II. In order to this, the work of the ministry exists; and that work seeks (1) "the edifying the body of Christ;" (2) the promotion of unity of faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God (ver. 13); (3) protection of the Church from childish fickleness and the arts of men who seek to unsettle her (ver. 14). In order to accomplish these ends, the ministry is called to speak the truth in love (ver. 15), and especially truth "as it is in Jesus" (ver. 21). Truth, thus spoken, is the great means of spiritual edification and of progress towards perfection. External rites or ceremonies can profit nothing except in so far as they are Divine channels for conveying this truth.

III. While ministers are instruments, Jesus is himself the great Source of growth. 1. The growth to be promoted is growth "unto him who is the Head" (ver. 15). All vital, spiritual influence is in Christ. As the woman reasoned, "If I may but touch the hem of his garment, I shall be made whole;" so if we, by faith, shall come into contact with our living Head, his gracious influence will spread through our souls. 2. The whole Church is articulated with Christ; its parts are articulated with each other, but all are designed to communicate with the Head, and to assist in conveying vital influence from the Head to the members. So it is in the human body; it is all jointed and connected together; but the object of this is to facilitate the transmission of the vital force throughout the whole. All the members of the Church should realize their position as parts of a body connected with the head, and should regard the measure of energy received by them as designed for the general good (ver. 16). 3. While Christ is the sole Source of vital influence, and ministers are the main instruments of its transmission, the whole body is to be self-edifying, intelligently and consciously moving on towards the grand consummation (ver. 16). Ministers do not differ in kind from the members. They have got special gifts for the edifying of the body, but every part of the body has got some gift for the same end. All ought to conspire harmoniously together, keeping in view the grand consummation. Churches and members of Churches must not be content with any inferior aim, but habitually and earnestly move on toward perfection. And for this the Spirit of love is indispensable (ver. 16). The Church cannot edify itself except in love. Strife and division are sure to arise, and these are not edifying, but disintegrating. One great lesson here is that, as Christ is the Truth, so he also is the Life. The gospel as a system of truth has Christ in the centre; so the Church as a living agency has Christ in the centre. Take Christ from either, and "Ichabod" may be inscribed on the wall.

Vers. 17—24.—*Contrasted principles of Gentile and Christian character.* We now come more explicitly to the details of Christian duty. The apostle had presented a very high standard of Christian *privilege* in the preceding chapters, and now he presents an equally high standard of Christian *duty*. What God gives in the one form is to be given back in the other, and in corresponding proportion. The importance of the subject is indicated by the formula, "This I say, and testify in the Lord." The apostle contrasts the Christian with the Gentile walk, and indicates wherein the latter is to differ from the former, (1) in what the Christian is *not* to be, and (2) in what he is to be.

I. 1. In the vanity of their mind. 2. In the darkness of their understanding. 3. In their alienation from the life of God. 4. In their abandonment to lasciviousness. Thus even Christian converts! need to remember the duty to keep themselves unspotted by the world. There is a world of guilt and godlessness from which it is necessary for them to keep themselves unstained.

II. POSITIVE RULES OF CHRISTIAN LIFE. 1. Their Source. "Ye have not so learned Christ, if so be ye heard him," etc. (ver. 20). The whole tenor of Christ's teaching and influence is against these things. Only make sure that you have come under it. 2. What they are. (1) "Put off the old man," etc. Comprehensiveness of the word "man;" his tendency is to rottenness or corruption; the lusts of deceit which are connected with him are pernicious and ruinous. (2) "Be renewed in the spirit of your mind." Renewal begins within by the Holy Spirit rousing in you a desire for it, and

urging you to use the means towards it. Accept and improve these movements of the Spirit within you. (3) In this way, "put on the new man," and especially encourage and seek to have developed these two features of the new creation—righteousness and holiness. Righteousness, including integrity, honest, true, fair, open dealing; doing justly out and out, in every place and in every relation—in the house, the market, the counting-house, the shop, among neighbours, among strangers, everywhere and at all times. Holiness of truth, including high reverence for God and all that is Divine, sympathy and congeniality of heart with God, cleanness of nature, purity of soul, conformity to the image of Christ, who is the Image of the invisible God. No professing Christian can be exempted from this rule of life. Nor should any assume too readily that he is thoroughly conforming to it. "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." Christianity in its practical relations is very searching and thorough. It demands a high standard of life and practice. But no wonder, if Christ be the Head, the Source of all vital power, and if there be a complete provision by which the needed power may be communicated to all the members. Never let it be said to Christians, "What do ye more than others?"

Ver. 25—ch. v. 2.—*Rags of the old man and robes of the new.* The Christian Ephesians somewhat resembled Joshua the high priest, when standing before the angel of the Lord, and when Satan was standing at his right hand to resist him. Joshua was clothed with filthy garments, and the angel spake to those that stood before him, "Take away the filthy garments from him. And unto him he said, 'Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment.'" Rags of the old man still hang about these Ephesians, disfiguring their persons and giving them a very different appearance from that which befits the regenerated sons of God. The apostle is giving directions to take away each filthy rag and substitute for it the fair raiment of the new man. And he is doing this under a solemn sense of danger and responsibility, and with the feeling that two great spirits are also interested in the work and actively concerned in it—the one, the spirit of evil, who is trying cunningly but earnestly to spoil the process, and induce the Ephesians to cling to their own garments; the other, the blessed Spirit of God, who in his infinite love is seeking to clothe the Corinthians in the garments of purity, to seal them unto the day of redemption, so that by the brightness of their appearance they shall be known to be God's in the day when he makes up his jewels. And what makes the whole matter so solemn and momentous is that, unless they are ever on their guard, the subjects of this process are ever liable to give place to the one spirit and to grieve the other; the awful danger lying in this, that the spirit to whom they are prone to yield is the spirit of evil, and the Spirit they are apt to grieve is the Holy Spirit of God. 1. The rags of the old man to be put off are lying, anger, stealing, coarse language, bitterness, wrath, anger, clamour, evil-speaking, and malice (see Exposition). Three reasons are given, more or less explicitly, why such things should be put away. (1) We are members one of another (ver. 25), and ought to assist instead of injuring one another (ver. 28). (2) We ought not to give place to the devil (ver. 27). (3) We ought not to grieve the Holy Spirit of God. 2. The robes of the new man to be put on are truthfulness, honest industry, edifying speech, kindness, tenderness of heart, forgiveness, imitation of God, and the loving walk which becomes his followers. Three reasons are given likewise why these robes should be put on. (1) God in Christ forgave us (ver. 32). (2) Christ loved us. (3) Christ gave himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God of a sweet-smelling savour. This is one of the most comprehensive and beautiful summaries of the Christian life. It is the quintessence of practical Christianity. It furnishes an admirable rule for self-examination, and an admirable incentive to progress in the life of God. It is a passage, not only to be got by heart, but written on the heart. We may well say, as we read these verses, "This *is* Christianity; this is the walk worthy of our vocation." If the writer of the hundred and nineteenth psalm had such boundless delight in the Law of God, though it had not to him the delightful evangelical aroma it has to us, what ought our feelings to be? Under all dispensations of the covenant the Law is still the rule of our life, though salvation is of grace; and the prayer that continually becomes us is, "Incline my heart unto thy testimonies; quicken thou me, that I may keep thy Law." Rags or robes; why should any hesitate between them?

To most men rags are most repulsive. To wear literal rags—to appear shabby, dirty, untidy, is very unpleasant. How much more, in the eyes of God and the saints and angels, to wear moral rags! Many a one clothed in purple and fine linen wears the filthiest rags of the old man; and some, on the other hand, in the plainest and coarsest attire, have put on the beautiful robes of righteousness, and shall be crowns of glory in the hands of the Lord and royal diadems in the hands of their God.

HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Ver. 1.—*Ethics after theology.* The doctrinal part of the Epistle is now finished and the practical part begins. This is the true and natural order.

I. IT IS IN THE SPHERE OF THE DOCTRINAL THAT WE FIND THE POWER THAT CARRIES US THROUGH ALL PRACTICAL DUTIES. In all the Epistles the duties enforced are grounded in the doctrines declared or explained. The doctrines are the reservoir which sends its stream of power down over the human life. The engineer scoops out a hollow space to be filled with water, constructs his machinery, and then lifts the sluice that sets all the machinery in motion. When the doctrines of grace have been fully expounded, the apostle lifts the sluice and lets on the stream that sends life spinning round and round in a course of holy activity. “I beseech you therefore, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice” (Rom. xii. 1).

II. IT IS NECESSARY TO INCUPLICATE CHRISTIAN DUTIES EVEN IN THE CASE OF CHRISTIANS. If the apostles did it, we must do it. It is only Antinomianism—resting on the doctrines of grace without watchfulness of the walk before God—that contests this principle. An Antinomian Bible would have no place for duties. Christianity includes duties as well as doctrines. It does not merely hold out a refuge to the guilty, but takes all who accept Christ under its supreme and exclusive direction. It evangelizes human life by impregnating its minutest transactions with the spirit of the gospel. But we must be always careful, in preaching the necessity of good works and in enforcing Christian duties, to ground them, as the Scriptures ground them, in the doctrines of grace.—T. C.

Ver. 1.—*The obligations of the Christian calling.* “Walk worthy of the calling wherewith ye are called.”

I. THE NATURE OF THIS CALLING. It is the Christian vocation. We are called out of darkness into God’s marvellous light (1 Pet. ii. 9), into the grace of Christ (Gal. i. 6), into the fellowship of Christ (1 Cor. i. 9); unto holiness (1 Thess. ii. 7); unto glory and virtue (2 Pet. i. 3); unto peace (1 Cor. vii. 15), not only with God, but with our consciences and with one another (Acts xxiv. 16; ch. iv. 2). This calling is a high calling, a holy calling, a heavenly calling. We may well, therefore, walk worthy of it.

II. THE WALK IN HARMONY WITH OUR CALLING. It is emphatically “to walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing” (Col. i. 10); “to walk worthy of God who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory” (1 Thess. ii. 12); to have a conversation becoming the gospel of Christ (Phil. i. 27). In human society, men are often kept from unworthy courses by a feeling of honour, as gentlemen; how much more ought Christians, to cherish a sense of honour as disciples of the Saviour and joint-heirs with him of the kingdom of heaven! The feeling of family honour is often a powerful guard against mean or ungenerous actions. It is a profound disgrace to find the descendant of an ancient and noble family forswear all its best traditions. As members of the household of God, as brethren of Jesus Christ himself, shall we disgrace this sublime relationship? We cannot afford to bring shame upon our profession (Heb. vi. 6), to lose the comfort of our calling (Ps. xix. 11), or to lose its end (Heb. xii. 14). Let us not, therefore, affront our calling by inconsistencies, but walk in a way that will fully harmonize with its nature, glory, and end. It is all the more necessary to do so as the true walk of a saint tends so powerfully to promote the unity of the Church.—T. C.

Ver. 2.—*Graces that promote the harmony of the Church.* “All lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love.” These graces are

specially needful in the Church; for their opposites, pride, irascibility, and impatience do much to create heart-burning and division.

I. **LOWLINESS OF MIND.** 1. *Its nature.* It is that deep humility, as opposed to pride, arrogance, and conceit, which is produced by a right sense of our weakness, ignorance, and dependence, and by a due appreciation of the undeserved glory to which we are called in Christ Jesus. Men are made humble and self-distrustful less by the knowledge that they are weak, ignorant, and mortal, than by the fact that, while striving for a higher end, they are always coming short of it by their mistakes and their follies, and are in constant need of a strength greater than their own. It is thus possible to unite a high aim with a profound humility. 2. *Its importance.* It is necessary because God requires it (Micah vi. 8); because Christ exemplified it (Matt. xi. 29); because God dwells with the humble (Isa. lviii. 15); because it is the way to learn wisdom (Prov. xi. 2), to attain grace and holiness (Prov. iii. 5, 6; Jas. iv. 6), and to preserve unity in the Church (Jas. iv. 1). It has many promises made to it. God will respect the humble (Isa. lxvi. 2), he will give them grace (1 Pet. v. 6), he will exalt them (1 Pet. v. 6), and reward them with all good things. Its importance is specially manifest in Church relations. Believers are not to think of themselves more highly than they ought to think (Rom. xii. 3), nor exalt themselves above their degree (2 Cor. x. 13—15), but to esteem others better than themselves (Phil. ii. 3). Let believers, therefore, have a humble apprehension of their knowledge, for “knowledge puffeth up” (1 Cor. viii. 1); and humble thoughts of their goodness, for we cannot understand all our errors, and need to be cleansed from our secret faults (Ps. xix. 12). Let them “put on humbleness of mind,” as the brightest ornament of Christian character (Col. iii. 12).

II. **MEEKNESS.** There is a natural connection between meekness and humility, and therefore they are often joined together. 1. *Its nature.* It is that disposition which does not arraign God and does not avenge itself on man. As regards God, it implies a ready submission to the authority of his Word (Jas. i. 21), and a cheerful resignation to his providence, as opposed to murmuring and fretfulness (Ps. xxxix. 9). As regards man, the meek will have a calm temper under provocations; he will be “slow to wrath” (Jas. i. 19); he will give “the soft answer that turneth away wrath” (Prov. xv. 1); he will show that ornament of a meek and quiet spirit which adorns more than rubies (1 Pet. iii. 4). When joined with strength it makes one of the most effective characters. It is especially to be esteemed in a religious life. Therefore the apostle says, “Let him show out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom” (Jas. iii. 13). It is with meekness and fear that we are to give a reason of our hope (1 Pet. iii. 15), and it is in a spirit of meekness we are to recover the erring (Gal. vi. 1). It is one of the nine graces of the Spirit (Gal. v. 22). 2. *Its importance.* See how largely it contributes to the usefulness of Christian life. The meek man has great power with men. See how it contributes to the comfort of life; for it keeps him from the friction of temper that so often detracts from true repose; it brings us nearer and nearer to him who was pre-eminently “meek and lowly of spirit” (Matt. xi. 29); and it has the promise of the earth for an inheritance (Matt. v. 5). Let us, therefore, seek meekness (Zeph. ii. 3).

III. **LONG-SUFFERING.** 1. *Its nature.* It is the disposition that leads us to suppress our anger (2 Cor. vi. 6; Gal. v. 22); and is opposed to that irritability often expressively called shortness of temper, which is quick to show resentment. This spirit is of great moment in the Church, where there may be frequent collisions of opinion, or interest, or feeling, and it waits with patience till the passionate or obstinate see their way to more reasonable courses. 2. *Its importance.* God commands it (Rom. xii. 17). He exemplifies it (Matt. v. 44; Rom. v. 6—8), and his Son has left us a most impressive exhibition of it (1 Pet. ii. 21—23). We all fail in our duty and need to have due consideration made to our failings. We are above all to bear and forbear in matters of religious fellowship (Rom. xv. 1).

IV. **THE SPIRIT IN WHICH THIS LONG-SUFFERING IS TO BE EXERCISED.** “Forbearing one another in love.” Christians are not to resent injuries or retaliate for wrongs done to them, but are to bear with each other’s infirmities, to cover each other’s weaknesses, to pity each other’s frailties, and to forgive the provocations they inflict upon each other. This is to be done, not from a principle of merely worldly courtesy or from

contemptuous indifference, but from that love which “suffereth long, and is kind.” It is “charity which covereth a multitude of sins,” just as surely as “hatred stirreth up strife” (Prov. x. 12). It would be impossible to secure the equanimity of life if the principle of forbearance, prompted and guided by love, were not generally exercised. The counsel of the apostle in this whole passage pointedly condemns the proud, arrogant, censorious disposition, which tramples, not only on the rules of courtesy, but of Christian affection. We owe to others what they require at our hands. There is much in us they have to allow for, and therefore it becomes us to allow for much in them. Therefore our very manners ought to show true Christian consideration, for the poet has rightly said—

“And manners are not idle, but the fruit
Of loyal nature and of noble mind.”

T. C.

Ver. 3.—*The unity of the Spirit and the mode of its keeping.* “Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.”

I. CONSIDER THE NATURE OF THIS UNITY. 1. It is not the unity of the body, the Church. That is an immutable unity which man cannot keep. God alone keeps it. Neither are we commanded to make the unity of the Spirit, but simply to keep it—for it exists, in a sense, independently of man's fidelity; but in the degree in which it is kept in the bond of peace, it will eventually lead to visible oneness. 2. Much less is it a unity of external organization. That unity existed already at Ephesus. It is rather a unity in view of internal differences, which must have existed at Ephesus, as in other Churches which had a mixed membership of Jews and Gentiles. Christ did undoubtedly make both one on the cross, but the apostles allowed a considerable diversity of order and usage to exist in the Churches, according to the dominance of the Jewish or the Gentile element in them. There were Churches that followed the rule of Moses—the apostles themselves holding by the ceremonial law till the end of their lives (Acts xxi. 20—26). And there were Churches that did not observe days nor follow Jewish usage, but took a course authorized by apostolic command itself. If the differences that existed in the days of the apostles did not destroy the unity of the body, it is difficult to see how similar differences in order and worship can destroy it now. 3. The unity of the Spirit is that unity of which the Spirit is the Author. Its indwelling is the principle of unity in the body of Christ. Man, therefore, cannot make it, nor can he destroy it, though he can thwart or disturb its manifestations. The use of the word “endeavouring” implies that it may be kept with a greater or lesser degree of fidelity.

II. CONSIDER HOW THIS UNITY IS TO BE PRESERVED. “In the bond of peace.” That is, the bond which is peace, springing out of humility, meekness, and forbearance. Just as pride, arrogance, and contention are separating elements, the opposite dispositions are conducive to unity. The peace which is the element of Christian society is that to which we are called in one body; for we are called by the God of peace, redeemed by Christ who is our Peace, sanctified by the Spirit whose fruit is peace, and edified by the gospel of peace, that we may walk as sons of peace. Thus the unity is preserved and manifested by peace, as it is marred or lost sight of amidst conflicts and jars. The apostolic injunction is very inconsistent with the Darbyite principle that the unity of the Spirit is to be preserved by separation from evil, theological, ecclesiastical, or moral. It is strange that the apostle never hints at such a thing as separation, but speaks only of such graces as “lowliness, meekness, with long-suffering,” which are but little exemplified in many of the separations brought about by such a principle. The Darbyite principle is not a bond of peace. It multiplies separations and divides the saints of God. There is uniting power in a common belief or in a common affection, but there is none in mere separation from evil. The common rejection of Arianism can never become a centre of union for Protestants and Roman Catholics, because they are still so fundamentally apart in the whole spirit of their theology. The unity of the Spirit which we are enjoined to keep is, therefore, a unity compatible with minor differences, and ought to be the grand means of throwing the unity of the body into a more glorious distinctness before the world.—T. O.

Vers. 4—6.—*The sevenfold unity.* The apostle proceeds to state the nature and grounds of the unity which is to be so carefully guarded. It has its basis in the fact that the Church is one, and does not consist of two rival societies.

I. "THERE IS ONE BODY." The body with its many members and its many functions is yet one. Similarly, "we being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another" (Rom. xii. 5); so that believers, no matter how separated by race, colour, language, station, opinion, interest, circumstance, experience, are members of this one body. The body cannot, therefore, be an external visible society, but a spiritual body of which Christ is the Head. It may not be so easy to realize this unity in the midst of the multiplication of sects and denominations, each with its well-defined lines of doctrine and order, and each more or less sharply distinguished from its neighbour. Yet there is still but "one body"—there is amidst accidental diversities a substantial unity, a unity that covers all truly essential elements. The diversity arising from temperament, culture, habit, has had its due effect in the development of truth; for some parts of the Church have thus given prominence to some truth which other parts have allowed to fall into the background. The beauty of the Church is manifest in this very diversity, just as it requires all the hues of the rainbow to make the clear, white ray of colourless sunshine. The duty, therefore, of believers is to regard the differences that keep them apart, not as hindrances to loving intercourse, but as helps to the fuller development of Divine truth and the fuller manifestation of the mind of God to the Church.

II. "ONE SPIRIT." As in the human body there is but one spirit, with a single vivifying power, so in the Church there is but one Spirit, animating all its members, as the common principle of life. "By one Spirit were we all baptized into one body," and "were made to drink into one Spirit" (1 Cor. xii. 13). "We have access by one Spirit unto the Father." There is, therefore, no room for a conflicting administration. "There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit" (1 Cor. xii. 4); and therefore all sins against unity are sins against the indwelling Spirit. Sectarian or divisive courses have a tendency to grieve the Spirit. Indeed, it is a mark of a separating apostasy that it has not the Spirit (Jude 19). Let us remember that the one Spirit who animates the body of Christ produces as his own choicest fruits—"love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance" (Gal. v. 22). These are graces with a distinctly unifying tendency.

III. "ONE HOPE OF YOUR CALLING." 1. *Its nature.* Here it is not the thing "hoped for," as it is in Col. i. 5 and Titus ii. 13, but the emotion of hope, the expectation of future good. All believers have the same aspirations, the same anticipations of coming glory, as the effect of the Spirit's indwelling. The hope is subjective. 2. *Its origin.* The hope is "of your calling." It springs out of the effectual call of the Spirit, who begets us to "a lively hope" (1 Pet. i. 3), being himself the Earnest and Seal of the future inheritance. We naturally hope for what we are invited to receive. 3. *Its effect.* Just as two strangers meeting for the first time on the deck of an emigrant ship, both bound for the same new land, and purposing to pursue the same occupation, are united by a common interest of expectation, so believers are drawn together into unity by a consideration of their common hopes.

IV. "ONE LORD." As the Head of the Church, the supreme Object of faith, and into whose Name all saints are baptized. There are two ideas involved in this blessed lordship—ownership and authority. 1. *Ownership.* Jesus Christ is not only Lord of all, but especially Lord of his own people. We are not our own, for we have been redeemed and bought with a price (1 Cor. vi. 20), even with his precious blood. For this end he both died and rose and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and of the living (Rom. xix. 4). 2. *Authority.* Therefore we are subject to him, our reason to his guidance, our conscience to his precepts, our hearts to his constraining love. There is no part of our being, there is no event of our lives, that is not subject to this authority which brooks no rival. It is this subjection of all believers to one Lord that marks the inner unity of the Church; for loyalty to a common Lord makes them stand together in a common hope, a common life, a common love.

V. "ONE FAITH." Not one creed, though all believers do really hold all that is essential to salvation, but one faith in its subjective aspect, through which the one Lord is apprehended. It is one in all believers, for they are all justified in exactly the same

manner, and it is in all a faith that "purifieth the heart," "worketh by love," and "overcometh the world." It is not, therefore, an external unity that this faith builds up, but a union of a spiritual character, wrought by the grace of God. This principle or grace of faith has a thoroughly uniting tendency, because it brings us near to the Saviour, and the nearer we stand to him we stand the nearer to one another.

VI. "ONE BAPTISM." There is but one baptism, once administered, as the expression of our faith in Christ; one initiation into the one body by one Spirit (1 Cor. xii. 13); one dedication to the one Lord. All believers are baptized unto the Name of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. "As many as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal. iii. 27, 28). Christendom owns but one baptism. It has been remarked as strange that the Lord's Supper—"the one bread" (1 Cor. x. 17)—should not have a place among the unities, as it is essentially the symbol of union among believers. But it differs from baptism in two important respects: (1) baptism is individual, the Lord's Supper is social; (2) it is by baptism, spiritually regarded, we are carried into the unity of the one body (1 Cor. xii. 13); it is by the Lord's Supper we recognize continuously a unity already accomplished. Thus baptism is included among the seven unities, because it embodies the initial elements that enter into the unity.

VII. "ONE GOD AND FATHER OF ALL, who is above all, and through all, and in all." The unity of the Church finds its consummation at last in him, who originated the scheme of grace and from whom all the other unities are derived. If God be our Father, then are we members of one family, brothers and sisters in Christ Jesus, and are therefore bound to live together in unity. The counsel may well come to us, "See that ye fall not out by the way" (Gen. xlv. 24). All the unities are secured by the relation of God the Father to the Church. He is "over all" its members, and therefore there can be no rival sovereignty. The Church "is the habitation of God through the Spirit." He is "through all," in respect of pervading and supporting energy; he is "in all," as the Source and Spring of constant light and grace and goodness. There is here no pantheism. Thus there are seven unities, like so many distinct obligations, to incline believers to the unity of the Spirit, which can only be preserved in the bond of peace. Believers ought, indeed, to be of one heart and one soul.—T. C.

Ver. 7.—Diversity of gift in unity of body. There are three points suggested by this verse.

I. **THE UNITY OF THE CHURCH IS CONSISTENT WITH GREAT DIVERSITY OF GIFTS.** As in the human body there are many members with different functions, so the Church is "not one member, but many." Diversity of gift, so far from being inconsistent with unity, is really essential to it. "If all were one member, where were the body?" All the great purposes of life would be frustrated if every part of the organism did not find its due place.

II. **EACH MEMBER OF THE CHURCH HAS HIS SEPARATE GIFT.** This does not say that any one member has all gifts. Each has received his measure. There are those who would make the Church all "tongue," as if all were called to the gospel ministry. The gifts differ both in nature and in measure. One has the gift of speech, another the gift of sagacity, another the gift of enterprise, another the gift of sympathy, another the gift of wealth and influence. All ought to be contributory to the unity of the Church.

III. **THE ORIGIN AS WELL AS MEASURE OF THE GIFTS IS TO BE TRACED TO CHRIST.** The position of each member in the body is not determined by itself, but by God. The eye does not make itself the eye, nor the hand the hand. So the position of believers in the Church is determined, not by themselves, but by Christ. The grace "is given according to the measure of the gift of Christ." Christ is the Source of all spiritual gifts, and he determines their adjustment as well as their amount. He does not give according to our merit, or our capacity, or our desires, but according to his sovereign pleasure. There is, therefore, (1) no room for self-inflation if we have received the largest gifts; (2) there is no room for envy or jealousy because others have received more gifts than ourselves; (3) but rather an argument in the fact that one has a grace which another wants, for our helping each other in the Lord. Thus the true unity of the Church is promoted.—T. C.

Vers. 8—10.—*The Source of all the gifts.* It is Christ himself in virtue of his exaltation.

I. **THE ASCENSION THE GROUND ALIKE OF THE FOUNDING, THE PRESERVATION, AND THE PERFECTION OF THE CHURCH.** This historic circumstance is the sequel of our Lord's resurrection from the dead, and can only be rightly appreciated by marking its connection with the humiliation by which it was preceded. It was the Son of God who descended, and therefore it was the Son of God who ascended up far above all heavens, and who, like a conqueror, is here represented as dividing the spoils of conquest. He is exalted to give the Holy Ghost with all his gifts and graces. It is a very touching as well as inspiring thought that the humanity of our ascended Lord has not been so transmuted as to change his relation to us. We cannot doubt the identity of his person. The same Lord who went about every day doing good upon earth, is now doing good every day in the fulness of spiritual blessings which he is dispensing from the throne of his ascension-glory.

II. **THE GIFTS OF THE ASCENSION.** These stand in abiding connection with the peace, the sanctification, the hope, of believers. But the special reference is to the blessing of the Christian ministry. Ministers may be nothing in themselves, but as the gifts of Christ they ought to be highly esteemed. If we love Christ, we ought to set store by his servants, who shepherd the flock in the absence of the great Shepherd.

III. **THE UNWORTHY RECIPIENTS OF THESE GIFTS.** "Yea, for the rebellious also" (Ps. lxxiii. 18). They were for men, as the apostle asserts; for rebels, as the psalmist asserts. It is not usual for conquerors to divide their spoils among rebels, yet our conquering Lord gives gifts even to those who put him to death. The ministry is still the Lord's gift to a wicked world, for he is still the Source of the inward life of the Church and of its authority.—T. C.

Ver. 11.—*The variety of the gifts.* The Lord himself gave apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers. Provision is thus made for three great objects.

I. **THE FOUNDATION OF THE CHURCH.** It needed a special order of inspired men to lay the foundations. Hence believers are said "to be built upon the foundation of apostles and prophets" (ch. ii. 20). The foundation, however, had only to be laid once for all, and these apostles and prophets passed away in the first age of Christianity. There is no place, therefore, now in the Church for either class; for the "apostles" of the Irvingite sect possess no single qualification of the original apostles of Christ. As the apostles wrote nearly the whole of the New Testament Scriptures, which supply the literary foundation of Christianity, they may thus be regarded as still identified with the progress of the gospel in all lands and all ages.

II. **THE EXTENSION OF THE CHURCH.** Evangelists were specially designed to preach the gospel in districts where it had not been previously known. They are on this ground distinguished from pastors and teachers. They itinerated from place to place, carrying with them the wonderful story of the cross, and were quite exempt, as such, from the labours of organization or discipline. Our missionaries in modern times do the work of evangelists.

III. **THE CONTINUANCE OF THE CHURCH.** Pastors and teachers were stationary ministers appointed for the continuous edification of the flock. They represent, not two classes of office-bearers, but two aspects of one and the same office. They are distinguished alike from prophets and from evangelists, and had to do with the permanent instruction and guidance of the flock. The existence of such an order of teachers proves that the Christian Church was not to be propagated or maintained by mere gifted persons. Why, in that case, should the Lord have appointed such ordinary officers at all? The pastors of Ephesus and Corinth were distinct from the prophetically gifted persons in both Churches (1 Cor. xiv.; ch. iv. 11). Private persons, no matter how gifted, were not allowed to take the place of apostles and prophets at Corinth, and therefore not of pastors and teachers. If they could not take the place of the one, they could not take the place of the other. If all believers were to exercise the gift of ministry in the Christian dispensation, why should not the apostles have started with this arrangement from the first? Why should the Lord give pastors and teachers to one generation—and that a generation provided with at

least two inspired orders of teachers—and make no similar provision for all future generations?—T. C.

Ver. 12.—*The design of the ministry.* It is to perfect the saints for Christian service and for sharing in the edification of the Church. The ministry is intended to “equip or prepare for future enterprise by means of perfecting the power and adaptation of the man for his task.” It prepares the saints for two services.

I. THE WORK OF MINISTRY. It is maintained by some that this passage warrants all saints to preach the gospel, because the four classes of officers spoken of are said to prepare saints for the work of ministry. If so, then these officers, or some of them, are still needed for the purpose; yet this is expressly denied. The passage, however, implies that the preparation in question is to be continuous, for it is to last till the end of time. The word “ministry,” however, must be taken in a large sense to signify general spiritual service, that may assume a thousand different forms (Heb. vi. 10; Acts vi. 4; xi. 29; 1 Cor. xvi. 15; 2 Cor. ix. 12, 13; xi. 8; 2 Tim. iv. 11). Every believer is not only to be “fruitful in every good work,” but to “hold forth the Word of life,” though he should be neither trained nor called to the Christian pastorate.

II. THE EDIFICATION OF THE CHURCH. This is the second end included in the Christian pastorate. The action of the ministry upon the saints is blessed to the enlargement of the Church, both in numbers and in spirituality. A revival of religion is always accompanied or followed by “a building up of the body of Christ.”—T. C.

Ver. 13.—*The ministry not a temporary institution.* It is to continue till the Church shall have arrived at its completed unity. This does not imply that there are still apostles and prophets in the Church. It is the ministry, not these particular offices, that is to continue in the Church. The ministry is to continue till the Church reaches its destined goal, which is here described in three forms.

I. UNITY OF FAITH AND KNOWLEDGE OF THE SON OF GOD. This implies: 1. That faith and knowledge are distinct from each other in nature, though they are inseparable in the experience of Christian men. Faith is fed by knowledge, and knowledge, especially in the sphere of Divine realities, is based on faith. 2. That religion is not a mere matter of feeling, but intellectual as well, resting upon correct apprehensions of Divine truth. 3. That the central Object of religion is the Son of God, not only apprehended, but appropriated by faith. It is eternal life to know him. 4. That saints have yet to attain to a truer faith and a larger knowledge of the Son of God. All believers, it is true, have “one faith;” yet they are to attain to the unity of faith. Unity is a matter of degrees. The apostle does not, however, say that we are to begin with it, but to end with it. It is to be realized, not in the course of the dispensation, but as one of its blessed results. The unity of the faith includes more than the unity of the Spirit—that unity of mutual kindness and forbearance that will promote the other unity—for it points to the result of the Spirit’s continuous working in the Church. There is an absolute truth independent of all our opinions, and the same to every man, whether he believes it or not. We shall not here attain to it; but we shall reach it when we are at length set free from our imperfections and our infirmities. We shall then be of one mind, because we shall be conformed to one image.

II. A PERFECT MAN. This points to the full development of our manhood. We are fragmentary, one-sided, without a true adjustment of powers. The believer is imperfect both in faith and in knowledge, but he is growing into that unity of life which involves perfect knowledge and perfect holiness.

III. THE MEASURE OF THE STATURE OF THE FULLNESS OF CHRIST. The true standard is conformity to Christ. The stature of the Church is ever expanding, as it receives of Christ’s fullness, into that very fullness. The end of this growth cannot be seen in this life. The Bible nowhere represents the perfection of the Church as occurring on earth. It is to be without spot or wrinkle when the day of its glorious presentation comes. Thus the design of the Christian ministry is to labour for the perfection of the Church.—T. C.

Ver. 14.—*Warnings against instability and deception.* The ministry has been

appointed to bring the Church forward to maturity, and therefore it is concerned to carry it safely through the intermediate stages. We are consequently warned not to continue children, but to advance steadfastly towards manhood. There are two faults hinted at by the apostle.

I. CHILDREN ARE APT TO BE UNSTABLE. "Tossed to and fro and carried about by every wind of doctrine." They have not become so firmly rooted in the truth as to be proof against unsettling influences either within or without them. Consequently, they are like "a wave of the sea driven of the wind and tossed." 1. The warning implies that truth is a matter of supreme moment. Holiness of character is impossible without it. Believers ought to be well founded in the truth; not mere babes, but such as "are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil" (Heb. v. 14). 2. They are warned against the tendency to be blown about by the winds of doctrine that blow from every quarter. The counsel is much needed in this age of startling suggestion, radical denial, and deep unsettlement. There are men who go the rounds of all the sects, swinging from side to side with a movement which indicates that they are true to nothing but the love of change. It is hard for unstable natures to hold the poise of their judgment in the midst of such terrible cross-fires of theological and philosophical speculation.

II. CHILDREN ARE APT TO BE DECEIVED. Their want of knowledge leaves them open to imposition and deception. The apparatus of theological seduction is always at hand. The language of the apostle implies: 1. That there were errorists either at Ephesus or elsewhere, identified with the Christian communion, marked by "the sleight of men and cunning craftiness whereby they lie in wait to deceive." It is a mere dream to suppose that the primitive Church was perfectly pure either in doctrine or practice. The apostle's farewell address to the Ephesian elders at Miletus anticipated the rise of serious error (Acts xx. 29). 2. That such "false teachers" were marked by selfishness, deceit, and malignity. This is the character which the apostle usually ascribes to such men (Rom. xvi. 17, 18; Col. ii. 18; Gal. ii. 4; 2 Cor. ii. 17). Error is, therefore, not harmless, though it may appear to be the mere sword-play of a speculative temperament. False teachers are not innocent. Yet our judgment in all cases of this sort must be exercised with charity and meekness, because men may be better than their creed, and may be influenced by the sounder parts of it. 3. That Satan often succeeds in seducing the unwary by the dexterous tricks of such teachers, who cunningly mingle the truth with such error as robs it of its healing virtues.—T. C.

Vers. 15, 16.—*The true method and conditions of Christian growth.* The apostle sees the conditions of Christian stability in a faith that worketh by love—the love being at once the sphere and the means of our spiritual growth. The expressive figure used by the apostle sets forth several important truths concerning the Church and its development.

I. THE SOURCE OF ITS GROWTH—CHRIST THE HEAD. As the Church is a spiritual body, so the characteristics of the natural body are found in it. It is a body divinely framed as truly as the natural body, and designed to bring greater glory to God than the body which types it. Its Head is the Lord himself. It has its being and form in him, as well as all its nurture, such as its life and light, grace and joy, strength and fruitfulness; it depends upon the Head for subsistence and for safety; it is united to the Head by a bond that is both close and indissoluble.

II. THE AGENT OF ITS GROWTH—THE HOLY SPIRIT. For "by one Spirit were we all baptized into one body" (1 Cor. xii. 12). As the one spirit of man wields at will all the functions of the body, and concentrates the various members upon its purposes as they arise, so the Holy Spirit gives each member of the mystic body its peculiar action and power in the divinely appointed diversity which contributes to its eventual unity.

III. THE RELATION OF THE MEMBERS TO EACH OTHER. "The whole body is fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth." Each member is in relation with all other members as well as with the Head. Each is dependent upon the other. No member can dismiss another as useless; none is so great as not to be indebted to the least. "God has tempered the body together." Now, just as the parts of the human frame are necessarily of different functions, and set, some in superior, some in inferior, places, yet all act together in the fullest sympathy; so all the

members of Christ's body must keep rank and order, acting within their own sphere with due wisdom, harmony, and love, the eye not doing the work of the hand, nor the hand the work of the foot, but abiding each in his own calling.

IV. THERE IS AN INDIVIDUAL ACTION OF EACH MEMBER. "According to the effectual working in the measure of every part." Each must do its own proper work, according to its position. Just as a man is strong in the faculty which he most exercises, so the member who is strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus becomes individually efficient according to the operation of that grace. One member is thus apt to teach, another to convince, another to counsel, another to stimulate.

V. THE CHANNELS OF SUPPLY—"THE JOINTS AND BANDS"—ARE THE WORD AND ORDINANCES. They convey grace from the Head to the members. The Word of God is the grand means, in connection with baptism and the Lord's Supper. These two ordinances are, indeed, the two appointed symbols of the Church's unity—baptism representing the first action of the Holy Spirit in fitting the members for the body; the Lord's Supper, the drinking into one Spirit, who makes the table a visible centre of union to those brought out of the world.

VI. THE ELEMENT OR SPHERE IN WHICH THE GROWTH OF THE BODY IS EFFECTED. "Love." It is not asserted that we are to grow in love, but that in love, as the sphere of growth, we are to grow in all the elements of perfection. That love which follows the things which make for peace and edification, and bears the infirmities of others, has peculiar faculties for edifying the body of Christ.

VII. THE RESULT OF GROWTH. "It maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself." The increase is twofold—in the addition of members to the Church, and in the growth of the members in all the elements of spiritual perfection.—T. C.

Vers. 17—19.—*The moral characteristics of heathenism.* The apostle warns the saints of Ephesus not to walk in the ways of paganism. These ways are vividly described.

I. THE HEATHEN WALK IN THE VANITY OF THEIR MIND. This vanity has its intellectual and its moral side. 1. Intellectually, it represents the waste of speculative power upon questions of the profoundest importance, ending usually in pantheism, atheism, or polytheism. The pagan intellect groped in vain amidst the darkness for light upon duty, upon providence, upon the future life of man. The heathen became vain in their imaginations. 2. Morally, the heathen walked in a vain show, looked for happiness in riches, honours, and power, and pursued foolish or wicked courses in the effort to attain these objects of desire. The end of such a walk must always be disappointing.

II. EXPLANATION OF THIS VAIN LIFE. It is twofold. 1. It arises out of intellectual obscurity. "Having the understanding darkened." Not that the natural genius of the heathen was obscured, for the world must always admire the classics of Greece and Rome; but there was all but utter extinction of spiritual light in the heathen mind. There was no saving knowledge. The god of this world had blinded their minds, and their growing apostasy entailed a judicial blindness which issued in utter darkness. 2. It arises out of moral estrangement from God, "being alienated from the life of God." There could be no light in the mind, because there was no life in the heart. The life of God is not his own life, but the life he lives in his people, which is manifest in their faith and holiness; but the heathen were estranged from that life, so as to have no liking for it and no inclination to it, but rather a love for the life of sin. (1) This moral estrangement is caused by "the ignorance that is in them;" for where men are ignorant of God, they have no desire after him, no faith in him, no communion with him, no living according to his will. (2) And this ignorance, in turn, springs out of "the hardness of their hearts." The callous heart was proof against all impression from without, and thus kept the mind uninformed or apathetic, till heart and mind were both buried in the gloom of hopeless paganism.

III. ULTIMATE RESULTS OF THIS VAIN LIFE. "Who being past feeling, have given themselves over unto lasciviousness to work all uncleanness with greediness." When the hardness of the heart has followed close upon the steps of the darkened mind, conscience loses its power; it becomes seared as with a hot iron; the sense of sin is lost; the fear of guilt dies out; and now the way is open to measureless moral disorder. The sinner

plunges into all forms of impurity, with the spirit of covetousness, as if he could never be satisfied with sinning, but sought ever new enormities of lawless desire. This is, in brief, the tremendous picture of heathenism given by an inspired apostle.—T. C.

Vers. 20—24.—*In Christ the transition effected from the old man to the new man.* The apostle represents "believers" as having "learned Christ," not as having learned about him, but as having reached the true knowledge of him, having heard his voice and having been taught by him, as to "the truth as it is in Jesus"—a truth that carried them far apart from the frightful licence of the heathen. We now understand the exact import of this truth. It is to put off the old man and put on the new man. It is, in a word, sanctification.

I. THE NECESSITY OF THIS TRANSFORMATION. The question might naturally arise—Had not the saints at Ephesus already put off the old man and put on the new man? Were they not already true believers? Why should they be asked to do it again? We must keep in view the distinction that the apostle clearly maintains in this familiar figure between "the old man" and "the new man." Sometimes he refers to our legal condition, sometimes to our moral condition. "Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. xiii. 14). In this Epistle the apostle exhorts the Christians to put off the old man; but in the Epistle to the Colossians he says the old man has been already put off (Col. iii. 9). In this Epistle the exhortation is given, "Put on the new man" (ver. 24); but elsewhere that which is new has been already accomplished (2 Cor. v. 17). We are exhorted again to be "transformed" (Rom. xii. 2) and "renewed" (ver. 23); but we are elsewhere said to be already "transformed" and "renewed" (2 Cor. v. 17). It is necessary to mark this distinction, that we may not be led aside or into that mysticism which seems to confound justification with sanctification. It is the moral, not the legal, condition that is here in question. It is worse than a mistake to say that we ought not to trouble ourselves about sin, because the new man cannot sin, and all sin comes from the old man, who has been already crucified and put off. This theory makes the work of the Holy Spirit altogether unnecessary.

II. THE NATURE OF THIS TRANSFORMATION. This is evident from the contrast between the old man and the new man. 1. The old man represents corrupt nature, and is called "old" because it is original as opposed to what is new. It precedes what is new. Its character is vividly pictured by the apostle: "waxing corrupt according to the lusts of deceit." There is a progressive moral disintegration, which is inconsistent with the life of God or the happiness of man. The moral nature goes to pieces under the action of this corruption. Then it finds its natural development in "lusts of deceit." These lusts are deceitful, for they promise pleasure and bring pain; they promise liberty and bring bondage; they promise secrecy and bring shame; they promise impunity and bring retribution. Christians are well taught to put off this old man. 2. The new man represents the new nature, with its renewed intellect, its renewed affections, its renewed will. It has been "created after God in the righteousness and holiness of truth;" that is, in the righteousness and holiness which belong to the truth, or which are its essential products. Observe: (1) That the new man is a creation, as man was a creation at the beginning. "We are God's workmanship" (ch. ii. 10). (2) The new man is in God's image, as the first man was in God's image. The apostle says, "According to the image of him who created him" (Col. iii. 10). (3) The lineaments of the image of the new man are "righteousness"—that principle which guides him in all his relationships to God, man, and himself; and "holiness"—that principle of the spiritual life which has primary relation to God himself. Righteousness and piety, governed and guided by the truth, are the two great principles of spiritual perfection. The image of God is thus manifest in its intellectual and its moral side. All things, indeed, have become new to the believer—a new name, new relations, new honours, new possessions, new thoughts, new affections, new words, new actions—because he now acts from a new principle (Gal. ii. 20), and is governed by a new end in life (1 Cor. x. 31).—T. C.

Ver. 25.—*Warning against falsehood.* As the saints had put off lying at their conversion, it was their duty henceforth to speak truth with their neighbours. Consider the social duty prescribed and the motive to its faithful performance.

I. THE SOCIAL DUTY. "Speak every man truth with his neighbour." What is truth? There is truth as opposed to falsehood, which is an express intention to deceive. There is truth of character, which is opposed to insincerity. Both kinds of truth are manifest in three circumstances—in common conversation, in bearing testimony, in making and in keeping promises. (1) Christians ought to be truthful in ordinary conversation, on the most trivial as well as on the most solemn occasions, because if a strict veracity is not maintained in the unguarded moments of life, it seldom remains long unshaken under a stress of temptation. The slightest deviation from it, either in the way of exaggeration or distortion, is inconsistent with the candour and simplicity which ought to adorn a Christian. The prohibition of falsehood is absolute in Scripture. "Ye shall not lie to one another" (Lev. xix. 11); "Lie not one to another" (Col. iii. 9); "Speak every man truth with his neighbour" (Zech. viii. 16). (2) Truth must be maintained in bearing testimony. "A false witness speaketh lies" (Prov. vi. 19), and thus "soweth discord among brethren." It is the characteristic mark of a citizen of Zion that he will not take up a report against his neighbour (Ps. xv. 3). No affection, no prejudice, no fear of man, ought to lead to a false, or partial, or misleading representation of facts. Perjury undermines society more than murder. (3) Truth must be kept in the matter of promises. There must be a real intention to fulfil them when they are made. The citizen of Zion "speaketh the truth in his heart" (Ps. xv. 2). Promises to men stand on the same footing with vows to God. "Better it is that thou shouldst not vow, than that thou shouldst vow and not pay" (Eccles. v. 5). We must be as conscientious in performance as we are in promise. There may be cases, no doubt, in which the obligation is superseded by higher considerations. Herod was not bound by his oath to the daughter of Herodias. There may be cases likewise in which there is a providential disability to carry out a promise. But if we possess a full capacity of action, our duty is to fulfil our engagement. The citizen in Zion "sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not" (Ps. xv. 4).

II. THE MOTIVE TO THIS SOCIAL DUTY. "Because we are members one of another." This is a religious consideration that is not designed to exclude other grounds of obligation to truthfulness. 1. But the principle here laid down applies equally to mankind in general. (1) A lie is a breach of the social contract. It tends to make society impossible, for society only exists through the trust that man exercises in man. It turns that instrument of speech, which God has given us for our mutual comfort, into a means of estrangement. Therefore "the righteous man hateth lying" (Prov. xiii. 5). (2) It is a breach of the golden rule that we should do to others as we would have them do to us. Liars expect others to speak the truth to them, and complain when it is not done. Therefore truth is what every man has a right to expect and desire from another. We have no more right to deceive our neighbour than we have a right to defraud him. (3) It destroys the comfort and peace of society. What a picture of its effects is in Jer. ix. 4, 5!—"Take ye heed every one of his neighbour, and trust ye not in any brother: for every brother will utterly supplant, and every neighbour will walk with slanders. And they will deceive every one his neighbour, and will not speak the truth: they have taught their tongue to speak lies, and weary themselves to commit iniquity." (4) It prepares the way for further demoralization of character. 2. The principle here laid down specially applies to Christians. They are not only members of Christ, but of one another. Chrysostom supposes the impossibility of the eye lying to the foot or the foot to the eye, in the presence of danger. Thus it would be equally unnatural, by the very law of their union, as members one of another, that believers should deceive one another by falsehood. The consideration of this membership suggests a relation (1) to that God the Father who is "a God of truth" (Deut. xxxii. 4), who "is not a man that he should lie" (Numb. xxiii. 19), who gave oath and promise as "the two immutable things, in which it is impossible that God should lie" (Heb. vi. 18); (2) to that Saviour who is the Truth as well as the Life—"the faithful and true Witness"—having "no guile found in his mouth;" (3) and to that Holy Spirit who is the Spirit of truth (John xiv. 17), and has given us the Scriptures of truth.

INFERENCES. 1. Let believers be careful as to truth. "If any man seemeth to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue"—particularly from lying—"that man's religion is vain." Let them pray with the psalmist, "Remove far from me the way of lying."

Let them not tolerate liars in their society (Pa. ci. 7). 2. Mark how religion tends to promote the well-being and comfort of society. Truth is the cement of society. 3. Remember that the devil is the father of liars (John viii. 44), and that "whosoever loveth and maketh a lie" shall not enter the heavenly Jerusalem (Rev. xxii. 15).—T. C.

Vers. 26, 27.—Restraints upon anger. The apostle teaches that we are not to allow the irritations or exasperations of life to become the occasion of sin, that we are not to cherish anger, and that we are not to give scope to Satan by temper which may open the heart to those passions of hatred and revenge that are identified with his operations. The passage teaches—

I. THAT THERE IS AN ANGER THAT IS NOT SINFUL. This affection is, indeed, implanted in our nature for righteous ends. It arms the passions quickly against evil, and operates with the force and effectiveness of an instinct. If it is mingled with malice, it becomes sinful; but if it is associated with a holy disposition, it is safe and good. Jesus regarded the conduct of the Jews "with anger" (Mark iii. 5). Anger is often attributed to God himself (Ps. vii. 11), but it can have no sinful elements in the Divine mind. It is, in fact, with anger as it is with hatred. It is a shallow prejudice to shrink from the name and the thing which it signifies, as if it were all and only evil. Jesus hated as well as loved. The two emotions hang for their life upon each other. Love cannot be unless a hearty hate of evil lie beneath. They are but the two sides of one sublime emotion which turns life, so often insipid and dull, into a vivid, balanced, and joyful activity. So it is with anger. Under the inspiration of a holy nature, it may flash forth with a marvellous power against wickedness, untruth, and dishonour.

II. THAT THERE IS AN EASY PASSAGE FROM WHAT IS RIGHT TO WHAT IS WRONG IN THE INDULGENCE OF ANGER. "Be ye angry and sin not." This command implies that it is an easy matter to sin in our anger, and a hard thing to be angry and not to sin. The path of duty affords firm footing to those who keep it; but it is very narrow, and there are dangerous pitfalls on either side. Anger is, therefore, not an operation to be rashly or lightly performed, even when it is a very evil thing against which our displeasure is directed. If it comes often and comes easily, you may suspect the danger that lurks in it. Take care, above all things, that the zeal for righteousness may not plunge you into hatred of your neighbours. "If a glass bottle be full of clean water, though it be stirred there ariseth no mud; but if mud arise when it is stirred, the water was foul in the bottom: so is the spirit of a man foul within that, being stirred, sheweth distemper." "Be angry and sin not." You cannot be angry and suffer not. Just as a cannon when discharged recoils heated and begrimed within by the fiery blast that issued from its mouth, the spirit of man is similarly affected even by those discharges of anger that are directed against the most wicked deeds.

III. THAT IT IS HARD TO AVOID SIN IN OUR ANGER IF WE INDULGE IT FOR AN UNDUE LENGTH OF TIME. "Let not the sun go down upon your wrath." Anger may flash suddenly out from the lips of a good man, but "it resteth in the bosom of fools" (Eccles. vii. 9). There is a limit even to righteous anger; not that we are not to have a continual anger against sin; but we are not to carry our anger against a brother into the next day. We are not to harbour resentment or keep it rankling in our bosom, lest it should change into downright hatred or revenge.

IV. THAT SATAN TAKES ADVANTAGE OF OUR ANGER TO DO US GREAT HURT. There is an old Latin proverb, "He who goes angry to bed has the devil for a bedfellow." Anger, if cherished, supplies a motive to yield to his evil suggestions. The devil is in full sympathy with a resentful spirit. Yet, though he wields the resources of this world as its god; though he is incarnate in the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life; he has no power to enter any heart except with the will of its owner. Let not Christians, then, allow that heart, which is the temple of the Holy Ghost, to be opened, in a moment of holy anger, to the intrusive suggestions of the evil one. The counsel of the apostle is well calculated to promote the comfort and the usefulness of life. Let Christians take care that their anger is not without cause, or without measure, or without justice, and that it should not be so inconsistent with love that we cannot pray for those against whom it is directed.—T. C.

Ver. 28.—Warning against theft: a plea for honest work. It may seem strange

that such an admonition should be addressed to believers. It is no more strange than admonitions against fornication. "Flee fornication" (1 Cor. vi. 18). It is a warning against dishonesty, which often assumes insidious disguises that conceal the true character of the injury done to our neighbours.

I. **THEFT IS ONE OF THOSE SINS WHICH OUGHT NOT EVEN TO BE NAMED AMONG CHRISTIANS.** It springs out of the deep selfishness of the heart. It is a breach of the great commandment of love—that love "which worketh no ill to his neighbour"—and proves that the world has a great hold upon the heart that can plan the deed of dishonesty.

II. **THE REMEDY PRESCRIBED TO PREVENT THEFT IS HONEST WORK.** "Let him labour, working with his hands." 1. *God is our Employer.* He has appointed our work and he requires it at our hands (Acts xx. 34; 1 Thess. iv. 11). It ought to be part of our worship. The gospel does not forbid our making an honest gain, nor does it countenance any indifference to our mere earthly advantage. It gives no encouragement to asceticism. 2. *Idleness is inconsistent with Christian life and leads to many dangers.* "Idleness occasions poverty, brings men to want, increases their necessities; and then they betake themselves to indirect and unlawful means to supply them." There were persons at Thessalonica who were "working not at all, but were busybodies" (2 Thess. iii. 11). Christianity gives no encouragement to monkish idleness. It was designed for a busy world. 3. *It must be honest work.* "Working with his hands the thing which is good." We may not steal, either to enrich others or ourselves. We may not seek our own advantage by oppression or injury to others, or by the gain of callings dishonouring to our Christian profession. "The matter of our alms must be goods righteously gotten; otherwise it is robbery, not righteousness." 4. *It is work for the benefit of others as well as ourselves.* "That he may have to give to him that needeth." We are not to amass wealth for our own enjoyment, but that we may supply the necessities of others. There are some who cannot work. Their wants we are bound to supply, for no man liveth to himself. "The righteous man giveth and spareth not" (Prov. xxi. 26). "Who would not rather be a labourer than a loiterer, seeing the sluggard is so miserable a wretch, but the just man so happy and able to do good works?"—T. C.

Ver. 29.—*Two kinds of speech.* The apostle gives us a lesson on the use of the tongue.

I. **NEGATIVELY: WE ARE TO UTTER NO CORRUPT SPEECH.** 1. *It argues a corrupt heart;* for "out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, false witness, blasphemies" (Matt. xv. 19). It is thus the tongue "defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature" (Jas. iii. 6). It is "out of the abundance of the heart that the mouth speaketh" (Matt. xii. 34). 2. *Corrupt speech is a fearful perversion of the noble faculty of speech with which God has endowed us.* It is a melancholy fact that "out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing" (Jas. iii. 10). 3. *Corrupt speech has the power of destruction.* It takes root outside of us, perhaps in some young heart, which it "sets on fire of hell." How true it is that "death and life are in the power of the tongue" (Prov. xviii. 21)! 4. *Corrupt speech is irrevocable.* No words of ours may be able to undo the mischief caused by it. 5. *Corrupt speech is reserved for the fire of judgment.* (Matt. xii.)

II. **POSITIVELY: WE ARE TO USE EDIFYING SPEECH.** "That which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers." 1. *Edifying speech.* It must be speech that will tend to build up the hearers in faith, holiness, and wisdom. It must be salutary speech, calculated to improve both heart and mind, tending to make men wiser and better. 2. *It must, as the original words signify, be speech guided according to the needs of men.* We must consider the different dispositions, views, and wants of those we converse with, so as to speak with effect. We should not "cast our pearls before swine" (Matt. vii. 6), nor "speak in the ears of a fool who will despise the wisdom of our words" (Prov. xxiii. 9), but rather use a happy dexterity in accommodating religious discourse to different persons and occasions. A word in season may be blessed to the conversion of a soul. Milton says, "A word has changed a character, and a character has changed a kingdom." 3. *The design and effect of such discourse is* "that it may minister grace unto the hearers." It discovers the grace that is in our own hearts, and is the means of working it in the hearts of others. Therefore "our speech ought to be

always with grace, seasoned with salt, that we may know how to answer every man" (Col. iv. 6).—T. C.

Ver. 30.—*Sin and ingratitude of grieving the Spirit of God.* The apostle, as if to show the serious consequence of corrupt speech in a Christian, says, "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God." That would be a most deplorable result.

I. CONSIDER WHAT IS IMPLIED IN THIS ACT. 1. *It implies the holy personality of the Third Person of the Trinity.* He is a Person as much as the Father and the Son. 2. *It implies that the Holy Spirit is already a Dweller in the hearts of those who are capable of this act.* We grieve those we love or those who love us. A very different term than "grief" would be applied in the case of unbelievers who are said to resist him. 3. *The Holy Spirit represents himself as susceptible of grief or affront.* Not that there is any break in the calm of the Godhead, but to signify that "he carrieth himself toward us after the manner of a person grieved," as if he were a human being capable of grief. When we consider that it is he who applies to us the redemption procured by Christ; that it is he who, as the Spirit of holiness, works in us every pure thought, every chaste desire, every noble sentiment; that he dwells in our very bodies as his holy temple;—our unworthy conduct is manifest in its true light as a grieving of the Spirit. His love is wounded as well as his holiness offended. 4. *The effect of our "grieving" him is to lead to the suspension of his influences, to the withdrawal of his comforts, to the temporary loss of our assurance.* In a word, he will withhold the manifestations of his presence.

II. CONSIDER THE ARGUMENT BY WHICH THE APOSTLE ENFORCES THE EXHORTATION. "In whom ye have been sealed till the day of redemption." It is ingratitude on our part to grieve him upon whom our salvation depends. The apostle does not make an appeal to our fears as if the Spirit would leave us, but to our gratitude, as any corrupt speech or action on our part would wound the heart of our best friend. The passage implies our perfect security till the day of judgment. 1. There is no hint of apostasy in the passage, or of the Spirit's departure. 2. The term "sealing" implies security. "A security that may be broken at any time, or the value of which depends on man's own responsive fidelity, is no security at all." 3. The sealing is spoken of as a past act: "Ye have been sealed." Thus their perseverance in grace was secured. 4. The security lasted beyond death: "till the day of redemption." The apostle never regards the day of death as marking the day of final security, but rather fixes it for that day which completes the redemption in the rejoining of body and soul in their changeless incorruptibility.—T. C.

Ver. 31.—*Malicious and revengeful feeling.* The apostle commands us to put away five forms of it along with the temper out of which they spring.

I. BITTERNESS. This points, not to mordant speech merely, but to a sour, irritable, sphenetic temperament, which places a man in an attitude of constant antagonism with his fellow-men. It argues want of love and consideration for others. Its effects are (1) to spoil our own comfort; (2) to excite the hatred of others; (3) to destroy our influence for good.

II. WRATH. This suggests the fierce mental excitement that springs out of bitterness. It is "a fever in the heart, and a calenture in the head, and a fire in the face, and a sword in the hand, and a fury all over." Wrath is sinful because it springs from want of love, from misunderstanding, and from pride (Prov. xxi. 24).

III. ANGER. This is a more settled habit of the spirit. There is an anger that is lawful (ver. 26), so far as it proceeds from a lawful cause, is directed to a lawful object, and is guided to a lawful issue. But the anger here is altogether sinful. It is an anger (1) that is accompanied with hatred; (2) that breaks out into curses (Ps. cvi. 33); (3) that is excited by the wrong done to ourselves rather than by the dishonour done to God; (4) that is long cherished; (5) that unfits us for holy duties. We ought to put it away from us, because (1) God forbids it (Col. iii. 8); (2) because it disturbs both mind and body; (3) because it is folly as well as sin (Prov. xiv. 17, 29); (4) because it may lead to eternal ruin.

IV. CLAMOUR. This is the cry of strife; the noisy, impetuous brawling, which gives outlet to the dark hostility within.

V. EVIL-SPEAKING. This points to the licence of speech which wounds the reputation of others. It is an outrage alike upon truth and charity.

VI. MALICE. This marks the rooted enmity out of which all the five forms of evil naturally spring. It has been remarked that their genealogical relationship is manifest in the very order of their mention: "Acerbity of temper exciting passion, that passion matured into strong indignation, that indignation throwing itself off in indecent brawling, and that brawling darkening into libel and abuse, a malicious element lying all the while at the basis of these flagrant enormities." We are commanded to put them all away. 1. They find their true place among the works of the flesh (Gal. v. 19—21). 2. They are not only inconsistent with but opposite to the nine graces of the Spirit—love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance; and their indulgence in any degree by Christians has the effect of grieving the Spirit. 3. They are inconsistent with that worthy walk which belongs to the vocation with which we are called (ver. 1).—T. C.

Ver. 32.—The benevolent and forgiving temper. Instead of bitterness, there ought to be kindness; instead of wrath, anger, clamour, and evil-speaking, there ought to be tender-heartedness; instead of malice, a loving and hearty forgiveness.

I. KINDNESS. It is a suggestive idea that our English word "kind" is derived from *kin-ned*, as marking the affection of kindred. 1. Consider how it is to be manifested. (1) By desiring one another's good (1 Tim. ii. 1); (2) by rejoicing in one another's prosperity (Rom. xii. 15); (3) by pitying one another's miseries (Rom. xii. 15); (4) by helping one another's necessities (1 John iii. 17, 18). 2. The motives to kindness. (1) The example of God himself, who is said to be "kind to the unthankful and evil" (Luke vi. 35); (2) it is a commanded duty; (3) we are brethren both in the flesh and in the spirit. A kindly spirit without a touch of censoriousness or harshness greatly recommends true religion.

II. TENDER-HEARTEDNESS. This expression is in the original closely allied to "bowels of mercy" (Col. iii. 12). It implies a compassionate sense of the miseries and infirmities of others. It is to interpret in the best sense the injunction of the apostle: "Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others" (Phil. ii. 4). The ties of nature are not cancelled by Christianity, but strengthened by it. We ought to be ready at all times to soothe the sorrows, to remove the miseries, to solve the doubts, of our neighbours. It is a temper highly recommended in Scripture (Luke vi. 36; 1 Pet. iii. 8). An unmerciful spirit is declared to be inconsistent with the love of God in the soul: "Whoso . . . shutteth his bowels of compassion . . . how dwelleth the love of God in him?" (1 John iii. 17). We ought to follow the example of our heavenly Father, who is rich in mercy, and whose tender mercies are over all his works; and of his dear Son Jesus Christ, who was often moved with compassion (Matt. ix. 36), and, as the High Priest of our profession, cannot but be touched with the feeling of our infirmities (Heb. vi. 15).

III. THE FORGIVING SPIRIT. "Forgiving one another, even as God also in Christ forgave you." These words imply: 1. That Christians will often do to one another much that needs forgiveness. They are "of like passions with other men," beset by infirmities of temper, or apt to come into collision with others either in a way of opinion or of interest. Faults will be committed, offence will be given. 2. That it is a Christian duty to forgive others. Our Lord gave repeated injunctions respecting it (Matt. vi. 14; Luke xvii. 4). 3. Our forgiving our brethren must be a certain factor in our own prayer for Divine forgiveness. 4. The motive or measure of our forgiveness is to be the very forgiveness of God himself. Note: (1) It is God who forgives; it is an act of his grace (ch. i. 7). (2) He does it in Christ, not merely for his sake, but in him as our Mediator. (3) It is a past act. Believers are forgiven in Christ in the very moment of their conversion. (4) How miserable we should be without it!—God angry with us; hell under our feet; the very blessings of life a curse to us. (5) How happy we are with this forgiveness! God will never condemn you nor remember your sins; all things will be blessed to you; the love of God the guarantee of your final glorification.—T. C.

Vers. 1—16.—The unity of the Church. The doxology has just died away with its ascription of glory to God in the Church throughout all ages, and now the apostle turns

from his intercession to admonish the Ephesian Christians about the necessity of cultivating lowliness of mind and mutual consideration, that in the Church there may be preserved "the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." It is plain from the verses that follow that Paul's conviction was that the Divine glory could only be manifested in a Church thoroughly united. To the all-important subject of the unity of the Church we are consequently led.

I. CONSIDER THE UNIFYING FACTS. (Vers. 4—6.) Paul here lays before the Ephesians certain great facts which are meant to contribute to this unity of the Church. These facts we had better enumerate in barest outline. 1. There is *one body*. This refers to the solidarity of believers, who, so far from being independent units, are dependent parts of one great organism of which Christ is the Head. The unity of the Church is thus shown to be *organic*, and lying deep down in the nature of things. 2. There is *one Spirit*. For to the existence of a body there must be a spirit. The body, the Church, is pervaded by the Spirit, the Holy Ghost. It would be a corpse but for this indwelling. 3. There is *one hope* in all the called ones. The unity of hope is surely a remarkable fact. All the called ones have their faces set towards the future as the golden age, when their ideals shall be realized. Christianity is the religion of hope, the one religion which denies that the former times were better than these, or that the golden age is behind us. 4. *One Lord*. Jesus reigns as the Church's living Head. He as Mediator is the Source of all authority in the Church. His lordship or headship is a fact which calls for unity. 5. *One faith*. This asserts that the truth is one. Error is manifold, but the truth as it is in Jesus is one. It seems to our latitudinarian age almost heresy to affirm the unity of the Christian faith. But seeing that its substance consists in facts, it would be madness to relegate these to the region of uncertainty. 6. *One baptism*. This is baptism into the one Name of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost (Matt. xxviii. 19), so that the Divine Name unifies the baptized believers. "The doctrine of baptism" is reduced to a significant unity thereby. 7. "*One God and Father of all, who is over all, and through all, and in all*" (Revised Version). This is the seventh and last of the unifying facts. The fatherhood of God, all-embracing, all-pervading, speaks of family unity and rebukes all discord. In presence of such facts the wonder is that division could be entertained.

II. CONSIDER THE UNIFYING GIFTS. (Vers. 7—12.) More has been done towards the unity of the Church than confront believers with unifying facts, even in their sevenfold perfection. The ascended Saviour has bestowed unifying gifts upon his believing people. We need not tarry over the humiliation by which Christ secured them—a humiliation down to the lower parts of the earth, and involving the tenantry of the tomb and the region of the dead. We hasten to the glorious gifts themselves, which come out of the hands of the ascended and glorified Christ. And here we have: 1. *Apostles*. We may well restrict the term to the selected witnesses of our Lord's resurrection, the noble band who wrought most earnestly for the unity of the Church. 2. *Prophets*. The inspired ones, whose inspiration was always on the lines of Christian unity; for the will of God which they conveyed to men is that believers should be one. 3. *Evangelists*. Men like Timothy or Apollos, who go forth with the one message, thereby promoting unity in the Church of God. The gospel is not a manifold, as we have seen, but a unity, and he who proclaims it with simplicity and earnestness contributes thereby to the unity of the Church. 4. *Pastors and teachers*. These gifts are less special, and consequently more important. True pastors, true teachers for God, will aim at "the perfecting of the saints, unto the work of ministering, unto the building up of the body of Christ." The note of a Divine gift is the desire to promote the all-important unity. Is it not a glorious thought that orders of men have been established by Christ for this special purpose of promoting the unity of the Church?

III. CONSIDER THE UNIFYING DEVELOPMENT. (Vers. 13—16.) The unifying process is to be educational and so progressive. The unity will not spring full-grown and panoplied like Minerva from the head of Jove, but it will grow, as knowledge grows and kindly feeling, "from more to more." And in this patient development Jesus is to be our Ideal, and his fulness and perfection the goal for which we strive. Taking him as our Standard of excellence, we are to grow up into him in all things; and if we do, unity must result. And here we should observe: 1. *Our development will carry us beyond childish vacillation*. (Ver. 14.) For there is nothing so detrimental to unity as

inability to make up our minds about the essential doctrines of the faith. If we are tossed about like vessels unmoored, if we are a prey to designing and cunning men, we cannot contribute anything to the unity of the Church. 2. *Our development will enable us to be communicative and so far edifying.* (Vers. 15, 16.) For as we grow in knowledge of Christ we learn to speak the truth in love. A speechless member of the community cannot contribute much to unity and edification. We are bound to be witnesses. And loving language about the Lord promotes the glorious unity. It grows as the organism grows in mutual adaptation, strength, and power. The Church, thus growing in the knowledge of the living Head and pervaded by the one Spirit of life and of love, advances towards the perfection which Christ has shown us. Harless and Monod, in writing on these verses, refer to the indeterminate character of the passage as to the realization of the perfect state being in this world or beyond it. But the emphasis is laid by Paul upon the fact of *development*, and how each individual may contribute to the consummation in the unity of the Church. If each of us considers his duty in the matter of edifying that body of which, as a believer, he forms a part, the glorious development will make its steady progress towards the perfection to be realized at last. It is surely worth an effort to contribute something to such a purpose.—R. M. E.

Vers. 17—32.—*Raw material for Christian unity.* It comes upon us with something like a surprise, the exhortations of the present passage after the glories which have gone before. But they are instructive in that they bring out the raw material out of which Paul hoped to manufacture Christian unity. It is evident that he despaired of none, even supposing they had been guilty of the gravest crimes and characterized by the deepest pollution. Does not his grand hope rebuke our faint-heartedness?

I. CONSIDER THE MORAL BEACONS HERE BROUGHT BEFORE THE EPHESIANS. (Vers. 17—20.) Paul presents in the beginning of the Epistle to the Romans a frightful picture of the immorality of the heathen. He had studied the question carefully, as a missionary to the heathen must. He here gives a briefer analysis, but one exceedingly vivid and instructive. The terrible fact was that many of the Gentiles had "given themselves up to lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness," and Paul gives us here the reason of it. They had got utterly "hardened" and "past feeling." This was through their ignorance of the holy God, from whose life, with all its purifying power, they were consequently alienated. They had nothing for it in these circumstances but to follow the glimmer of their own darkened understandings, and to walk in the vanity of their minds. It was a case of alienation and isolation from the only Source of purity and of life. Paul consequently holds up the licentious Gentiles as *beacons* to warn the Ephesians away from the paths of sin, that they may walk worthily as the children of God.

II. CONSIDER THE SPIRITUAL RENEWAL TO WHICH HE SUMMONS THEM. (Vers. 21—24.) The unconverted and lascivious heathen only showed to what excess of sin the old nature within each of us will proceed, if it be not put away. The beacons show the possibility of every sinful soul if it be not converted unto God. Hence Paul counsels the Ephesians to "put away, as concerning your former manner of life, the old man, which waxeth corrupt after the lusts of deceit; and that ye be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put on the new man, which after God hath been created in righteousness and holiness of truth" (Revised Version). The "old man" is the sinful nature which we all possess as children of Adam; the "new man" is the better nature which God creates within us. But this new nature does not assert itself as new faculties and new powers, but utilizes the understanding and affections and will, which it finds already within us, so that according to proper mental laws we experience our renewal. The means by which this renewal is brought about are Christ and his offices and benefits; in other words, it is effected by "the truth as it is in Jesus." The moral manifestation is in "righteousness and holiness of truth."

III. CONSIDER THE SERIOUS SINS AGAINST WHICH HE WARNS THE EPHESIANS. (Vers. 25—29.) It is evident, from the way in which he mentions them, that they prevailed in heathenism, and that the Ephesians had been previously guilty of them. They bring out vividly the raw material with which he had to work, and they should sustain the hope of missionaries still. 1. *Falseness.* It is evident that the veracity of the

heathen could not be calculated on; and what was true in Paul's time is true still. The testimony of missionaries is to this effect, that you cannot rely on the word of the heathen. An interesting fact may here be quoted in illustration. "A Christian Santal was once going through several villages to make an extensive purchase of rice. In the first of the villages he got part of what he required, in the second also he got some baskets, and so forth, all for cash payments. But when he had brought out his money at the last village, he saw that he had not enough. He was twelve shillings short of the sum necessary to pay what he had bought. It is a thing unheard of among the Santals to give any goods on credit, so that the man saw that he had no alternative but to ask the seller to take back twelve shillings' worth of the rice. Meantime the seller had perceived that he had to do with a Christian, and as this impression was confirmed on his directly putting the question, he declared, without more ado, that he would be content in the mean time with the partial payment, and would trust to the buyer that he would soon bring him the balance. Unfortunately, the tax-collector came next day to the village to collect the dues. The man who had given his rice on credit was not able to pay his dues fully at once, and told, by way of excuse, what had befallen him. But the official deemed it incredible that a Santal should part with his goods without getting the money for them. His suspicion was confirmed by the fact that the man could give neither the name nor the residence of his debtor, and only took his stand upon this, that he was a Christian, and would certainly pay the twelve shillings ere long. Even the other villagers did not believe the story, and the collector sentenced the supposed liar to a suitable measure of stripes. A few days after, that Christian returned and paid his debt. His creditor had scarcely recovered from his undeserved ill treatment; but he forgot his pains through the joy of being able to vindicate himself and his honourable debtor before his neighbours and acquaintances. He called them all together and said triumphantly, 'You laughed at me lately because I trusted the word of a Christian. There he is. Look well at him. I have not dunned him for his debt. I knew neither his name nor where he lives, and yet he has come to pay me the twelve shillings.' This interesting circumstance brings out at once the falsehood that exists in heathenism and the veracity fostered by the gospel. Before leaving this first sin, however, it is well to notice on what Paul grounds his appeal for veracity. It is on our being "members one of another." "Truth-speaking," says Mozley, "is not a universal isolated obligation which we are under—a law to say truth under all circumstances, and in whatever relations we stand to the other party; but it *supposes* certain relations, viz. the ordinary relations of man with man, the natural terms of fellowship with man—that we are bound to perform all the offices of humanity to him, and to behave to him as a brother. When we speak of the certain and obvious obligation to sincerity, these are the relations which we suppose; and St. Paul places the duty of veracity upon its proper basis, and gives the law of truth its proper position in the frame and system of morals, when he assigns the duty of truth-speaking this large and deep source, this intelligible connection, and this inclusive *rationale*." We do not proceed further in the quotation, but he infers that the relations of man to man may so vary, as when a man turns out assassin, that we are under no obligation to tell truth to him, if it would further his diabolical designs. 2. *Sinful anger*. This is another sin which is prevalent among unregenerate men. Paul's appeal implies that there is such a thing as sinless anger. God is angry with the wicked, for example, every day. David, again, at the very time when he was calling on God to search him and to try him, could say calmly in the Divine presence, "Do not I hate them, O Lord, that hate thee? and am not I grieved with those that rise up against thee? I hate them with *perfect hatred*: I count them mine enemies" (Ps. cxxxix. 21, 22). But a great deal of the anger indulged in, both in heathen and in Christian lands, is selfish passion, and so sinful anger. It is against this selfish phase Paul warns them, and as we are peculiarly open to assaults from Satan when thus angry, the Ephesians are warned in this connection not to give place to the devil. 3. *Laziness*. The heathen will not work if they can help it. They would rather steal than work. Hence the gospel has always had an important mission in the "exaltation of labour." The monks in the Middle Ages did immense service in this direction, and really prepared Europe for the vast development of modern industry. This is one great feature also of modern missions. They give an impulse to industry wherever they

are established. But it is to be observed that "the apostle does not honour all industry: far from it. He always reprobates the covetous, money-getting spirit. He even says, 'The love of money is the root of all evil,' and he calls covetousness idolatry. . . . He admires industry, but it must be industry which is consecrated by the nature which he requires; for it is that of duty—when a man fulfils in the fear of God the task which is allotted to him." In the present instance he exhorts them to give up the laziness which would prompt a man to steal, and to work earnestly that they may be able to help others. Labour is exalted when disinterestedness enters in and consecrates it. 4. *Filthy conversation.* We need not tarry upon this. It is known to be one of the great trials of missionary life in heathen lands. What they hear is something awful. Some time since an enterprising and able young man disguised himself and spent some nights in the model lodging-houses of Glasgow, to report on the way in which they are conducted. His testimony was that it was not so much what he saw or smelt which gave him such pain, as what he *heard*. This exactly illustrates the point before us. Paul's ear, we may be sure, had been the avenue of exquisite torture as he heard "the filthy conversation of the wicked." He calls upon his converts, consequently, to cultivate a gracious and edifying discourse. It is by speaking that human usefulness is chiefly realized. Men are to be *talked* into better things (Rom. x. 17).

IV. CONSIDER HIS WARNING AGAINST GRIEVING THE HOLY SPIRIT OF GOD. (Ver. 30.) Now, if Paul's ears were grieved with the immoralities of heathenism, how much more must we believe will the *Holy Spirit* be offended! How needful that those in whose hearts he dwells should abstain from all appearance of evil, and so give no offence to the holy Guest! More especially should this be the case when he condescends to seal souls "unto the day of redemption." If he has come to abide with us for ever, surely we ought not to trifle in his presence or to offend his pure and blessed Being!

V. LASTLY, CONSIDER HIS APPEAL FOR MUTUAL FORBEARANCE AND KINDLINESS. (Vers. 31, 32.) He brings in the forgiveness of God to us as a reason why we should be forbearing and forgiving to one another. In this way he expects to bring the Ephesians, who had been so unholy, into the glorious unity of Christian love. The material on which he worked was raw and rough indeed, but not worse than human nature still. But out of the roughest stone hewed from the quarry of nature Divine grace can make polished stones fitted for God's palace.—R. M. E.

Vers. 1—16.—*Exhortation.* I. TRANSITION FROM THE DOCTRINAL TO THE PRACTICAL. "I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beseech you." There is a similar transition at Rom. xii. 1, "I beseech you therefore." In both cases the "therefore" is the link of connection between *doctrine* and *duty*. In both cases the apostle follows up his exposition of doctrine by an *affectionate* enforcement of duty. In the other case his affectionate tone is caught from a consideration of *the mercies of God*. In the present case it is caught from a consideration of *his own sufferings*. He has already prayed for them as *the prisoner of Christ Jesus*. Now, he beseeches them as *the prisoner in the Lord*. If in the former expression the idea is more that the imprisonment was "caused" by Christ, in the latter it is more that it came to him, not as a wrong-doer, but as moving in the Christian sphere. Either way, he refers it to Christ. He might have commanded them as their apostle, who had received the mystery relating to them by revelation, but he rather besought them as the Lord's prisoner. It is well when the "official" can be lost sight in the "*personal*." Paul thought that he might urge those from whom he had had an affectionate parting to the performance of duty by the consideration of his chains (in their relation to Christ).

II. GENERAL EXHORTATION. "Walk worthily of the calling wherewith ye were called." They were called, according to the foregoing part of the Epistle, to be sons, or members of the Christian family. Another aspect of it was that they were called to be citizens, or members of the Christian commonwealth. They were thus called when they accepted of Christ. But whether they were called to be sons or citizens, it was a "high" calling wherewith they were called. They had a great "Head" placed over them. It was in the working out of a great scheme that they were called. And the apostle's thought is that they were to bring their "walk" into some worthy correspondence with their "calling." "It is," said a Roman writer, "useful for cities that

valiant men should (although it be false) believe themselves born of the gods, that their minds, thence bearing a confidence of their divine extraction, may more boldly undertake great enterprises, pursue them more earnestly, and hence accomplish them more happily, from the security the conceit produceth." It is by no conceit, but in sober truth, that as Christian believers we belong to a family, to a commonwealth of which God is the Head. And should not such a connection draw us away from what is mean and base, inspire us with noble thoughts, and incite us to noble actions?

III. SPECIAL EXHORTATION TO CHRISTIAN UNITY. 1. *Disposition leading up to Christian unity.* It is viewed as what should "attend" us in our Christian walk. That is to say, if we walk worthily of our calling, this is the disposition which we shall manifest. "With all lowliness." This is of prime importance with the apostle, for in the twelfth of the Romans, having set forth our duty toward God under the aspects of consecration to his service and separation from the world, he immediately says, "For I say, through the grace that was given me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but so think as to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to each man a measure of faith." We have reason to be *lowly before God*. Even Christ, we know, cherished the spirit of lowliness, and commended it to us by his own example. He was lowly in respect of his creaturely nature. He was also content, as the Representative of mankind, to take whatever place the Father assigned him. He did not need to humble himself for sin, unless *representatively* (if it is proper to think of him as humbling himself for the sin with which he identified himself). We have reason to be lowly, because of having been personally involved in sin, and because of much remaining evil in our nature. And it is only in the way of faith, or in fellowship with Christ, that we have any Christian worth. And if we have thus reason to be lowly before God, shall we be *arrogant toward others*? Shall we not rather keep self in the background, in accordance with the precept, also in the twelfth of the Romans, "In honour preferring one another"? Let us, then, have *all* lowliness, such as becomes us as sinners before God, and such as becomes us in the various positions in life in which we are placed. "And meekness." With lowliness the apostle couples *meekness*; and we need not wonder at his doing it when the Master had done it before, with this difference, that meekness came first to his thought—"Learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart." Meekness points to sufferings which have to be endured; we need not wonder, therefore, at it having a prominence in the Saviour's thought. There are sufferings sent upon us with which others have not had to do. We are to bear ourselves meekly under them before God. We are not to be as though we challenged God's sovereignty, or wisdom, or goodness in sending them. And even when others have had to do with our sufferings, we can look past them to God, as David did when he said, "Let him curse, for the Lord hath bidden him." "With long-suffering." This has reference to *provocation received*. There is provocation in the ordinary course of life. We suffer from the infirmities and faults of others. We may have to do, as Paul had, with "unreasonable and evil men." But we are to think specially here of there being provocation within the Church circle. There is provocation if we are ardent in a good cause and are associated with the apathetic, or if we see clearly the proper course to be pursued and are overborne by the ignorance of others, or if we are bearing our fair share of the common burdens while others are shirking them. There is provocation in a more positive form if we have to do with those who advance views or engage in movements which we must strongly condemn, or who are given to misrepresentation and abuse, or who in malice do not scruple to stir up strife. "Forbearing one another in love." The inward feeling with which we are to meet provocation is long-suffering; its outward manifestation is described as *forbearing one another*. The latter form of expression indicates that we have all our faults, and all need to be borne with. Forbearance is good for ourselves. "He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city." Forbearance is good for those who give provocation. It gives them time for reflection. It is also a likely means by which they may be won to reason. It is heaping coals of fire on their heads. It is overcoming evil with good. Forbearance is good for the ends of a Christian society, in preventing unnecessary division, in promoting unity. 2. *The nature of Christian unity.* "Giving diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." In accordance with what has been said, this unity of the Spirit is, on the one side, a disinclination to obtrude self,

and, on the other side, the power of bearing with others. In accordance with what is said of it here, as produced by the Spirit, this unity is the disposition to be guided by the Spirit, and to advance the end which the Spirit has in view in relation to the cause of Christ. This unity of the Spirit is to find expression in *the bond of peace*. The *Roman Catholic Church* claims to present this bond of peace in its entirety. For, first, it claims to be the unbroken organization of Christians all over the world, and shuts out from the Church of Christ all who do not enter its communion. We Protestants are not Christians; and therefore there is no break so far as we are concerned. And, secondly, it claims to have also the bond of peace, in freedom from internal division. We as Protestants refuse to acknowledge this claim. For, first, we differ from the *Roman Catholic Church*, in spite of its historic position, as to the essentials of salvation. And, secondly, its uniformity is not freely wrought of the Spirit, but results from unreasoning conformity to the law of the priest. It is suggested here that it may only be possible to attain to an imperfect realization of the bond of peace. We are to give diligence in this matter; but it does not entirely depend on ourselves. When we have done our best, the bond may be broken independently of us. Who are the breakers of the bond of peace? (1) *Those who are chargeable with defection*. The bond of union in the Church is not what is supposed to be truth, but what can actually be made out to be truth from the Word of God. Those who are aside from this, whether they are in the majority or not, whether they conform to the language of the confession or not, are really the dividers. They necessitate those who have the leading of the Spirit giving their testimony to the truth and, it may be, dissenting from their brethren. (2) *Those who manifest an unchristian spirit toward brethren who differ from them*. It is right that we should try to convince those whom we believe to be in error. But there is a way in which we are to do it, if we have the interests of truth and of unity at heart. "In meekness correcting them that oppose themselves, if peradventure God may give them repentance unto the knowledge of the truth." If we exhibit a temper that is not consistent with the truth, that may be as dividing as holding an erroneous position. (3) *Those who unnecessarily separate from a Christian society*. The mere fact of separation from a particular ecclesiastical organization is not decisive of the sin of schism. Nor is the fact of error in a society necessarily a warrant for separating from it. We should be content to remain in the same society with brethren, even though we differ from them in many points, if we think that the great interests of the kingdom are being properly advanced. By those who value the continuance of the bond of peace it must be acknowledged that separation is an extreme step; and is only to be justified, in the case of those who separate, where it can be made out that the interests of religion are better served by the existence of a separate society. (4) *Those who claim to be the Church of God to the exclusion of other Christian societies*. If there are Christian bodies that are really doing the work of Christ, though they do not join with us, or work according to our methods, we are bound to regard them as belonging to the Church of Christ, and to live in brotherhood with them. And to be arrogant and uncharitable towards them is breaking the bond of peace as really as though we were separating on insufficient grounds. 3. *Grounds of Christian unity*. (1) *Unities to which we are to be properly related*. It is manifest that the apostle has studied to put these in a striking and memorable form. There is a threefold division, and there are three unities in each of the divisions. (a) *The Church itself is constituted a unity*. "There is one body." Believers are not detached units, but, whatever they are by human denomination, by Divine constitution they are made a unity. They are not two or more organizations, between which there might be rivalry; they are only one organization. And how fitting that there should be sympathy between the various members of the body—that the eye should not say to the hand, "I have no need of thee," or, again, the head to the feet, "I have no need of you"? "And one Spirit." We are not merely constituted one body, but are animated by one Spirit. It is not as though we had a double or treble consciousness, but being dwelt in by the one Spirit, we should be kept from divergence and led in the same direction. There is here ground, if we could get to it, for that unity described in John xvii. 20, "That they all may be one." "Even as also ye were called in one hope of your calling." The consummation is the same in essence to all. It is glory, or full and blessed fellowship with Christ. And how fitting that those who are to live with Christ throughout

eternity should meantime as brethren "dwell together in unity"! (b) *How this unity is brought out.* "One Lord." "In whatsoever notion we take the word 'Lord,' either as a prince over subjects, or as a master over servants, or as an owner of goods, or as a preceptor and president over disciples, or as a leader and captain to followers, or as a person singularly eminent above inferiors, he is according to all such notions truly our Lord." A body implies a head, and as our dependence on Christ is that of responsibility, he is truly our Lord. As united to the same Head, it becomes us to be in good brotherhood. This is his law (common it is), "Hereby shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." "One faith." We have all the same uniting bond to Christ, the same subjective disposition toward him. We all rely upon the atoning merits of his sacrifice. We all confide in him for what is needed to complete our salvation. We can all use the same language of trust; we can sing the same hymns; we can offer the same prayers. Being thus alike in the essential element of character, it is fitting that we should exhibit catholicity, that we should be free from all sectarian feeling. "One baptism." It is this which *symbolizes* our union by faith to Christ. Our unity has received visible manifestation. We have all been baptized into Christ. It is fitting, then, that we should live in good fellowship one with another. (c) *How this unity is sustained.* "One God and Father of all." As the apostle has been speaking of Christians, we must not extend the range of this language beyond them. We can all say, "Our God," and "Our Father." "Who is over all." In his sovereignty he has an absolute right to dispose of all. This a father has to a limited extent over his children. "And through all." In his fatherly love he goes out to all, and *pervades* all with his gracious influences. So a father wishes to pervade his children with those sentiments of which he approves. "And in all." With the revelation of his fatherhood he blesses all. So a father would have his children to live in the sunshine of his love. In love of the brethren, then, we should be tenderly affectioned (or have natural affection) one to another. We must think of God as rejoicing in the peace of his Church, as a father rejoices to see good feeling maintained between those whom he has begotten. (2) *What diversity there is Christ has appointed.* "But unto each one of us was the grace given according to the measure of the gift of Christ." It is a motive for unity. (a) That we have all grace for which to be thankful. No one has been overlooked in the distribution. The humblest Christian has his grace as well as the greatest apostle. (b) That the diversities of grace have not been arbitrarily appointed. They have been measured out (to a nicety, it is suggested by the language) by the great Distributer. (c) That all the diversities are necessary to the grand unity which Christ has in his mind. It was on his ascension that he became Donor, or Distributer to men. "Wherefore he saith, When he ascended on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men." The conception is that he ascended as a conqueror. Satan, sin, and death were in his triumphant train. On his victory over these, he gave "gifts" to men. These were the spoils of the battle-field, as it were, which he distributed among his followers. We are to think of them, in their special association with the Ascension, as the gift of the Holy Spirit, the gift of a finished redemption, the gift of a completed Bible, the gift of the Christian style of character, and, as we shall see presently, the gift of the gospel ministry. It was because he descended that he could do so much when he ascended. "Now this, he ascended, what is it but that he also descended into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things." His descending into the lower parts of the earth points emphatically to the reality of his death. His body was not merely on the earth, but was received *within* the earth. His soul was not merely a dweller in an earthly body, but was received into Hades. He thus had the *extremes* in his experience, and therefore can fill all things, from the lowest depth to the highest height. He can especially, out of his own experience, be with his people in the grave and in Hades, and thence carry them with him to the heights. (3) *The various ministering orders were especially his gifts.* (a) *What these were.* "And he gave some to be apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers." *Apostles.* These were the highest functionaries in the Church. Functions were combined in them which were separated in others. They also possessed extraordinary qualifications. (a) *They had extraordinary administrative power.* They had the care of the Churches generally (or widely), and were a gift to the early Church in

being a *supreme authority* in all matters of administration. Many questions would come up at the first about the right working of the Church, and they were there on the spot as though Christ had been there to settle them decisively. (β) *They had extraordinary teaching power.* There were developments of doctrine without which the Church could not be established, and for a time the Church had in the apostles the gift of *infallible exposition*. It was thus exceptionally helped through the most critical period. It was especially in connection with the *founding of Churches* that the apostolate was exercised. And in connection with this, *on its teaching side*, the apostolate was separated into two offices. (i.) *Prophets.* These were inspired like the apostles, and seem to have come in after them, in the way especially of expounding apostolical teachings. While the apostles planted, the prophets watered. They would be useful to Churches, in the way of continuing the benefit when the apostles had to pass on to found others. (ii.) *Evangelists.* These had the same *itinerant* character that the apostles and prophets had; but their distinctive feature was that they brought the gospel, especially as a message of pardon, to bear upon the ignorant, or careless, or inquiring. Philip did the work of an evangelist in directing the Ethiopian eunuch to Christ. They would be able to render valuable assistance to apostles in the founding of Churches. Christ still gives these to the Church, in the more or less distinctly recognized order of evangelists, *i.e.* men who have a special power in awakening the careless, as distinct from feeding believers with knowledge. He also gives them, in the order of missionaries, in so far as they have to do converting work. There are added, in conjunction, *pastors and teachers*. (i.) These are in connection with Churches as settled, and as distinguished from the other orders are stationary. (ii.) They are the ordinary office-bearers, after the extraordinary have ceased from the Church. (iii.) They represent the two sides of the apostolate, without its infallibility and supremacy. The pastors represent the *administrative* side, the care which is to be exercised over members of a Church, similar to the care which the shepherd exercises over his flock. The teachers, again, represent the teaching side, the exposition which needs to be given of truth founded on the teachings of the Bible, and specially of Christ and his apostles. And, as it is not said as before, some, pastors, and some, teachers, but some, pastors and teachers, it is rightly held that there is contemplated a combination of the two functions in one order. (b) *For what end given.* "For the perfecting of the saints, unto the work of ministering, unto the building up of the body of Christ." (α) *The ultimate end of the gifts is the perfecting of the saints.* This is placed first, though we might have expected it last. For it is well to remember that all that is done in the Church or gifted for the Church is to be judged by this—how far it serves the perfecting of the saints. There is a perfect form after which nature strives; so there is a perfect form to which the saints are designed to come, and it is most emphatically the province of the Church to help saints toward their perfection. What that perfection is we shall see more particularly in the following verses. (β) *The gifts specified agree in being connected with a work of ministering.* The apostolate, we know, was not a sinecure; it meant work, and to Paul it meant hard work and suffering. What Christ still continues to the Church implies the work of ministering to the souls of others, a work than which none should be more arduous. (γ) *The way in which the work of ministering is to reach the perfecting of the saints is by the building up of the body of Christ.* To do the work of an evangelist is not enough. Men, after they have been converted, must be looked after. They must be brought into connection with the Church. And the Church must be thoroughly organized, must have all suitable institutions, must be strong and vigorous in its working, in order that the perfecting of the saints may go on. It follows (i.), as against the Plymouthists and others, that there is a special pastoral and teaching order in the Church; and (ii.) there is this in the interests of unity, which is not broken by the diversity there is, seeing all are gifted to the Church by Christ. (c) *Goal up to which the gospel ministry has been given.* (α) *Goal characterized as the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God.* "Till we all attain unto the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God." There is a difficulty with which we are confronted here. It has already been said in this paragraph (ver. 4) that Christians have "one faith." We must have some "beginning" of faith in us, else we cannot be numbered among the "all" here. How, then, can it be said that we are to have "the unity of the faith" as our goal? It is not

that we are to attain unto the same "degree" of faith. For in our ultimate state there will be differences in the degree of faith, which is only to say that there will be differences in character (no factor therein being more important than faith). But, at the same time, it is true that all will come to a *full-orbed* faith, that all will have clearly brought out the grand characteristics of faith which are only dimly seen now. Again, it is true that all Christians have, to begin with, "one knowledge," the one practical knowledge of the Son of God. In our ultimate state, too, we shall vary in our capacity of knowing the love of Christ and appreciating the bearings of his work. But there is a *full, rounded, satisfying* knowledge to which we shall all come. In our present advancement our faith is not sufficient to exclude unbelief. We can only say, "Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief." But our ultimate will be the expulsion of all unbelief. Our knowledge, too, is not so much one as to exclude all differences of opinion. But the unity with which we shall end will be one in which we shall see eye to eye, from which all difference of opinion will be excluded. (8) *Goal characterized as the full-grown man.* "Till we all attain . . . unto a full-grown man." In opposition with the foregoing, it is said (changing from the abstract to the concrete), "till we all attain . . . unto a full-grown man." We have just seen that there is a unity with which we begin and another unity with which we end. Here it is implied that there is a state of infancy with which we begin and a state of manhood with which we end. And the goal here, too, is purposely viewed as a unity; for it is not said, "full-grown men," but "a full-grown man." We must, however, in order to this unity being attained, become individually full-grown men. And that suggests how much there is before Christians rise from the babe state up to the state of manhood. What a disparity in bulk, stature, strength, and generally in development, between the babe and a man in his prime! We can mark the increase that takes place from year to year. And so there is a goal of spiritual manhood, far away from the point where a man first believes in Christ. There are possibilities of attainment before us which we are slow to realize. God shows us in the *lily* how rapidly we may grow, and in the *cedars* of Lebanon how deep-rooted we may grow; in the *plane tree* he shows us how widespreading we may become, and in the *olive tree* how productive; in the lily and olive, too, how beautiful we may become, and in the *pine* forests what a healthfulness and pleasantness there may be about us. Here he teaches us the lesson of growth from the human body. When we see how a child is growing up, let us think how there should be a parallel to that in our spiritual life. (7) *Goal set before us in Christ.* "Till we all attain . . . unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." If it was the *abstract* first, and then the *concrete*, it is now particularly the *historical*. It is a matter of infinite consequence that the goal for humanity has been reached by the representative Man. He has carried us, representatively, forward from our infantile state to our state of manhood. We can see before the throne, or on it, a representation of what by the inworking of Divine grace we are to become. Let us think of the character which he wrought out for us on earth, and as love is so much introduced by the apostle, let us think of that character as formed into its beauty under the *formative principle of love*. *There is in Christ the representation of contemplative love.* He contemplated whatever the Father showed him in nature, in human life, in the Holy Scriptures. In the stillness of his soul he communed with God through these, and these melted into him, they swallowed up his being. And as a consequence, what the world showed him was exposed to his mind, and could not pollute him. And if we are to attain to *full stature* in Christ, we must keep sabbath in our souls, we must keep out the distraction of the world, we must look upon and appreciate those glorious truths which, through the ages, God by his servants and his own Son has been setting before us. *There is in Christ the representation of active love.* He was more than the perfect man of the mystics; he presented also the side of *activity*. He felt that he had a blessing to impart to men; and all his energies must be strained that the blessing should not be withheld. "I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work." And if we are to be of full stature in Christ, our inertness must be rebuked, our holy energies must be called forth. We must know what it is to "work," and, while working, let us take care that our works are "*wrought in God.*" *There is in Christ the representation of suffering love.* If Christ could be said to excel in one class of virtues more than in another, it was in the passive virtues. He suffered what was

appointed him. He drank the cup which his heavenly Father put into his hand. He suffered sublimely for those whom he came to save. And if we are to attain unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ, we must be ready to suffer, to bear the contradiction of sinners, to shed tears over sinners. For if there is anything which betokens the Christian style of character, it is sympathizing with men as lying under sin, so that we can suffer for them and from them, if so be that we may compass their good. (d) *Gospel ministry needed up to goal.* The teaching here is that the gospel ministry is the means by which the final unity is to be brought about, by which spiritual manhood is to be reached. It is true of the teacher that he *makes his work superfluous*. The child grows up to be able to do without his help. And so with the "gift" of the teacher in the Church; his work is to make himself unnecessary. The time is coming when no man shall need to teach his brother, saying, "Know the Lord;" for all shall know him, from the least to the greatest. But, until the goal is reached, the gospel ministry will be needed. And nothing could set forth its position more strongly than that. It is not to be supposed that it does everything. It rather comes in as a supplement to what Christians can do by themselves. Even when the person sitting in the pew has a better understanding than the person occupying the pulpit, he may reap benefit, if only truth (however imperfectly) is presented to his mind. Let no one say that he has got beyond the help of the Christian ministry. If it is earnest, it may be expected to have Divine power with it. We know that Christ, who did not come to his manhood till the last (albeit that even while he was coming to manhood he left every other immeasurably behind), did not dispense with the teaching of the sanctuary. For he went, as his custom was, into the synagogue on the sabbath day. And shall we say of even the greatest literary man of the day who has a soul to care for, that he is better at home than sitting in church? (e) *Gospel ministry needed to deliver from the dangers incident to childhood.* "That we may be no longer children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, in craftiness, after the wiles of error." There are some who are necessarily in spiritual childhood from their recent spiritual birth. There are others upon whom it is a reflection that they are in their childhood, seeing that they might have got beyond it with the opportunities that they have had. It is the latter rather than that are described here. They are at the mercy of false teachers, or the opinionative. They are like waves tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind. In their simplicity and inexperience they are made a handle of by those who are practised in the wiles of error. A certain sleight of hand is practised on them. The word "sleight" is literally "dice-playing." The dice-player can by trickery (loading the dice is part of the trickery) throw them so that the numbers turn up which suit his purpose. So there are religious tricksters who can turn texts of Scripture to suit their purpose. For instance, it is said by those who advocate the indiscriminate ministry of all that a stated ministry was only a temporary arrangement. And they get the simple—those whom the apostle here calls children—to believe that. This indiscriminate ministry is very much a playing upon men so that they are tossed to and fro and carried about, now believing this and now believing that, as the crafty influence them. A stated ministry is meant to deliver from the evils of such a condition, to carry the inexperienced past instability into a certain established state. (f) *Process of development toward the goal described.* (a) *What we have to do in the determination of the development.* "But speaking truth in love." It is not certain that "speaking truth" is the right translation. If it had been the intention of the apostle to convey this idea, we should have expected the same form of expression which is used in the twenty-fifth verse, where two words are used, and not the one word here, which primarily is *truthing* it. What is certain is that the apostle means to convey the idea that, instead of having to do with the wiles of error, we are to have to do with truth. We must be guided by truth if we would come to the goal set before us. We are to have to do with the truth *in love*. It is implied that there is an intimate connection between truth and love. If truth directs, love impels. Love is the highest law of being, and therefore we must have our being bathed in it if we would understand the truth of things, and speak and act the truth. (b) *Christ has a principal part in the development.* "May grow up in all things into him which is the Head, even Christ." It is from the head that the regulation of the body, in all its movements, proceeds. So it is from Christ as the Head that the whole regulation

of the Church proceeds. What we do is not to regulate ourselves, but rather to put ourselves into accord with Christ in his regulating of us. The head communicates with all the parts of the body; it can send commands to them. And thus it is in the Church. *In all things we are commanded from Christ as from the brain or centre of the whole system.* And so we grow up into him in all things. The whole development takes a distinctively Christian form. (γ) *Particularly, the development proceeds round Christ.* "From whom all the body fitly framed and knit together." In the body round one centre the different parts are harmoniously related to each other, and so related as mutually to support each other. So the idea is that in the Church Christ, as from the centre, is putting each into his proper position—a position in which he will harmonize with other parts and add strength to them. (δ) *The development proceeds by a supply from Christ according to the need of every part:* "Through that which every joint supplieth, according to the working in due measure of each several part, maketh the increase of the body." A tree grows by the vital juices which are supplied to every part. In a tree there is a connecting, as by joints, where the supplies pass off to the various points. The joints in the body are where the supplies of nourishment pass off to the various members. So the Church is so jointed that it can all be supplied from Christ. There is a due apportionment to every part. There is no part forgotten, so that there is nothing like atrophy. And no part is supplied contrary to its nature, so that there is no abnormal development, as though the hand were enlarged to the size of the foot, or the foot dwarfed to the size of the hand. (ε) *The result which is being produced is described (the figure being dropped) as the building up of itself in love.* "Unto the building up of itself in love." While the Church may be endlessly growing, it will come to a state of fixedness, of establishment. It will be built up like a strong compacted building which cannot be broken down. It is in love that this result is produced; and in love it will remain an eternal reality. This then, finally, is the way which the apostle takes to show the foundation that there has been laid for Christian unity. Thus at length has he supported his particular exhortation that we are to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.—R. F.

Vers. 17—24.—*Exhortation resumed.* "This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord." It is characteristic of the apostle to sink his own personality, and to put forward Christ. He wishes it to be understood that it is not in his own thought, but in the thought of him whom he calls Lord, that he makes his statement and gives his solemn asseveration regarding their duty.

I. EXHORTATION DIRECTED AGAINST GENTILISM. "That ye no longer walk as the Gentiles also walk." They had formerly been Gentiles in walk or character, as Gentiles in name. Now they were religiously the people of God. It became them, therefore, to have done with Gentile ways. 1. *General character of Gentilism.* "In the vanity of their mind." That was the moral atmosphere with which they were surrounded. In Rom. i. 21 it is said that they "became vain in their reasonings." The word translated "mind" clearly refers to the governing part of the nature. And the meaning is that they wasted their "rational powers on worthless objects." They were made to have to do with great realities; but they were taken up instead with vanities. They were made to worship God, "who is, and is the Rewarder of them that diligently seek him;" but they were idolaters, making gods of things that were not. They were made for immortality; but amid the trifles of time they had little or no thought of a hereafter. Of the most privileged populace in ancient heathenism it is said that "they spent their time in nothing else but either to tell or to hear some new thing." (1) *Gentilism on its intellectual side.* "Being darkened in their understanding." We are not to understand that they were unable to use their intellectual powers. For though heathenism has been largely associated with degradation of intellect, yet there have been some marked intellectual developments in the heathen world. A pagan, such as Euclid, was able most successfully to prosecute mathematical science. But it is true that, as they came near the centre of human interest, they were dimmed in their vision, they were enveloped in darkness. For want of the Divine light they had no right conception of God, or of the meaning of human life. They called evil good, and good evil; they put darkness for light, and light for darkness. (2) *Gentilism on its practical side.* "Alienated from the life of God." There was much inertness with which heathenism

was chargeable. But at the same time, it is true that there were busy mercantile cities in the old heathen world. And a very great amount of energy was spent by heathen peoples on war. It can only be said that their higher energies were not called forth, and that none of their energies (not even those directed to ordinarily useful pursuits) were penetrated with the life of God. They were alienated from that life, self-pleasing having taken the place of the glory of God; and therefore in all their energies there was the coldness of death, the rottenness of the grave. These two clauses on which we have been commenting are closely related. For what is light but the life of God within the intellectual sphere? And what again is it that utilizes our energies but light? There are subjoined now other two clauses of a causal nature. "Because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardening of their heart." It does not seem natural to connect these two clauses with only the second of the preceding clauses. But rather retaining both in our mind, are we to connect the ignorance that is in them with the darkening of their understanding, and the hardening of their heart with their alienation from the life of God. It is true that ignorance is a form of spiritual darkness, but not otherwise than hardening is a form of spiritual death. Ignorance is both a result and a cause. And, in so far as it has resulted from a refusal to have light, it is a cause from which there is not dissociated blame. As an abiding state (the result of a previous course), it is a source whence there is a perpetual irruption of darkness within the circle of the thoughts. Hardening of the heart also is both a result and a cause. It has been defined as such a suppression of moral and religious feeling as to imply a total disregard of Divine calls and warnings, and an insensibility to their importance? In so far as obduracy is formed, it has resulted from disregard of calls and warnings, and therefore it may be assigned as a cause (with which blame is associated) for alienation from the life of God. By cultivating sensitiveness to good we prevent hardening in evil, and therefore hardening is blameworthy. 2. *Gentilism in its most offensive form.* "Who being past feeling." This was one form of the hardening. The result of a course of dissoluteness was that they were past all feeling, i.e. of shame. That feeling of shame is given as guardian of the purity of the body. But habitually disregarded, it is lost. "Gave themselves up to lasciviousness." Such was their fearful self-abandonment. Instead of abandoning themselves to God (which would have been deliverance from all possible thralldom), they abandoned themselves to what (with speciality) is called lust. That is, they made a god of lust. They degraded *self*, their glorious personality, by making it a means to lust. Thus abandoned to lust, it became their conscious aim or business "to work all uncleanness." And that does not complete the description of their guilt and degradation. For it is added, as indicating the frame of mind in which they wrought uncleanness, that they did it "with greediness." And there is no reason to think that this description, or the description in Rom. i., is exaggerated. Not that there were not some virtuous heathen; but impurity was so rife as to be characteristic of heathenism. And when it is considered how it was not an object of public reprobation, and how it was associated with religion and also with art, it can be understood what foul shapes (amid a certain refinement and luxury) it would take.

II. EPHESIANS REMINDED HOW GENTILISM IS CONTRADICTED BY CHRISTIANITY. "But ye did not so learn Christ." It will be observed that Christ is not put forward here as our Teacher, but as our *Lesson*. It is stronger language than is employed by Christ when he says, "Learn of me," where he puts himself forward as our Example. It corresponds to what the apostle says in 1 Cor. i. 23, "We preach [not 'concerning,' but] Christ crucified." A lesson is what we have to get into our minds; so we have, as it were, to acquire or get into ourselves, by learning, the person of Christ himself. *There is the commencement of the lesson.* "If so be that ye heard him." In this clause Christ is put forward as the Teacher of the lesson. They heard him *when* they were converted. At such a critical time it becomes us to know what we are really doing, under whose instructions we are putting ourselves. A parent sees to his son being put to a school or university where he thinks he will get for him satisfactory instruction. So we should be sure, as taught here, that at the great turning-point it was not the voice of a hireling or the mere echo of our own voice that we heard, but the voice of him who has authority to speak to us. *There is the lesson in its continuance.* "And were taught in him, even as truth is in Jesus." This refers to the further instruction which they had

received as those who had heard Christ. Here again Christ is the Lesson—"taught in him," as we might say taught in languages or in philosophy. And not merely so, but the historical Jesus is pointed to as the *embodied Lesson*—"even as truth is in Jesus." He contains all the truth of God, and especially as he is brought before us in the Gospels, all that we need to know for salvation. He is a Lesson we cannot learn in a day or in a lifetime. Even eternity will not suffice to exhaust its contents. But let us learn Christ as we can now, in the excellence of his character, in the greatness of his work, and in the purport of his doctrine. 1. *Christianity in its negative aspect.* "That ye put away, as concerning your former manner of life, the old man, which waxeth corrupt after the lusts of deceit." He has in view, it will be seen, their former, i.e. their Gentile or pre-Christian manner of life. In this he sees what he calls the *old man*, viz. the *sinful type of humanity*. Originating in opposition to God, there is a type (such as there is in the development of a tree) according to which the corrupt development goes forward. There is a necessity of nature or of Divine government by which, as sinners, we grow worse and worse, and in the way in which we grow worse and worse. There is a law (appointed order) of sin and death under which we are placed. With the same essential type in all sinners, the corrupt development takes a special form from the lust (or desire in a sinful state) that is *dominant*, whether it is what is called lust, or the lust of money, or the lust of power. These lusts all agree in being intimately connected with or in the service of *deceit*. That is to say, under different disguises, we are promising ourselves independence and satisfaction, or making ourselves believe that we are pleasing God or benefiting men while really all our relations are wrong. The old man, then, as truth as it is in Jesus requires, is to be *put away*. That is better than the old translation. We are not merely to put it off, as we put off our clothes at night; but we are to put it away, as an old garment never to be put on again. 2. *Christianity in its positive aspect.* "And that ye be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put on the new man, which after God hath been created in righteousness and holiness of truth." The new man is the type of redeemed humanity, or, as it is put, "the holy form of human life which results from redemption." A condition of this is renewing in the spirit of the mind. We are not to interpret this as though it were renewed by the Spirit in the mind. The spirit is the centre where we appropriate the blessing of redemption, where we choose Christ instead of self, where we put ourselves in a right relation to the holy type of humanity. We are taught that renewal must be from within outwards. If there is only life lingering at the outside, it will never penetrate from thence to the centre. But if there is still life at the centre, though the old forms may have to be cast away, it will clothe itself in new forms. The new man is described as that which *hath been created*. In one view of it, this is what Christ did in his work. He created a *holy type*, which may be assumed by us sinners. And that was surely *creation by pre-eminence*. It was creation *after God*, even as man was created at first in the image of God. And we are here helped to the understanding of what that image was. It did not consist in anything accidental, but it consisted in what is most essential (what presupposes free-will), viz. rightness of moral disposition. It is here referred to as *righteousness and holiness of truth*. "Righteousness betokens a just relation among the powers of the soul within and towards men and duties without. But holiness betokens the integrity of the spiritual life, and the piety towards God of which that is the condition." There is a truth in such relations upon which righteousness and holiness are founded. We are made with a subordination of our lower powers to our higher. We are made to be mutually helpful. And we are made to be dependent on God and to trust in him. In all these respects man was rightly disposed at first. And what we lost in Adam we have more than regained in Christ in the creation of the new man. This new man, then, let us put on as that which we are never to put off. Let us pray for a constant renewing in the spirit of our mind, that, after God, we may have righteousness and holiness of truth—that every relation which God has made for us may be honoured by us.—R. F.

Vers. 25—32.—*Vices.* The apostle here enumerates *five vices pertaining to the old man, or Gentile state*, and shows how they are contradicted by Christianity.

I. LYING. 1. *The negative of Christianity.* "Wherefore, putting away falsehood." Lying sufficiently indicates what is meant, if we take it as including falsehood in act

as well as falsehood in speech. It is the *intention to deceive* that makes the lie, whatever its manifestations. The goodness of the motive does not alter its character. We may be saying what we do not think, to convey a compliment. Or we may be advancing an argument in which we do not believe, to serve our party. Or we may make a strong denial, to cover the fault of a friend. We may, by some half-truth, be getting rid of a slight inconvenience to ourselves. But all the same, there is an offence committed against truth. And we must understand from the teaching here that Christ emphatically says *no* to it in every form. We are to put away lying, and the context plainly suggests that we are to put it away as belonging to the old man. We need not wonder at it characterizing the old man, when we remember that Scripture dates the original of evil in us from the result of a lie told by the father of lies. Many of the heathen were like the Gretzens, of whom Paul testified, in a quotation from one of their own poets, that they were *always liars*. It is a vice which is known to be very prevalent among non-Christianized peoples. There is not so much of *shameless lying* among Christian nations; but in less open forms, where there is not saving grace, there is the same disposition to be false, to state false reasons for our conduct, to keep up false appearances, to cover our faults by a denial of fact. "Do not," says Ruskin, "let us lie at all. Do not think of one falsity as harmless, and another as slight, and another as unintended. Cast them all aside; they are an ugly soot from the smoke of the pit, and it is better that our hearth should be swept clean of them, without overcare as to which of them are largest or blackest." 2. *The positive of Christianity*. "Speak ye truth each one with his neighbour." In Zech. viii. 16 it is said, "Speak ye every man truth to his neighbour." The change from "to his neighbour" to "with his neighbour" has the effect of defining the circle contemplated here as the Christian circle. Why are we to hold the truth sacred? The ethical reason given by Kant is that we are to do so *out of reverence to the humanity subsisting in our person*. The Christian reason as given by the apostle here is virtually this, that we are to do so out of regard to the Christ that is in us. His words are, "For we are members one of another." That is, my Christian neighbour is a part of myself; and why should I wrong him? Not inaptly Chrysostom says, "If the eye were to spy a serpent or a wild beast, will it lie to the foot?" We must do by our Christian neighbour as we would do by a part of ourselves which we would not see hurt. But what is it that makes our Christian neighbour so closely related to us? It is the Christ that is in him and in us. And in lying we are not only dishonouring our common humanity, but, in the Christian circle, we are dishonouring Christ who has made us one. The habit of speaking the truth each one with his neighbour is of *difficult acquisition*. There is so much that is false in the conventionalism of society, and such a desire in men to appear better than they really are, that there is often the spectacle of truth "fallen in the street." The way to acquire it is to put Christ before us in our neighbour as him whom, by the slightest divergence from the truth, we must not demean.

II. SINFUL ANGER. 1. *The negative of Christianity*. "Let not the sun go down upon your wrath." The word is rather *exasperation* (already an evil form of feeling), which, if *nursed*, fast settles down into *wrath*. It was a custom of the Pythagoreans that, if betrayed into railing by passion, *before the sun went down* they shook hands, kissed one another, and were reconciled. It is one of the uses of night that it is a *call to be placable*. "We are not bad gods or demons in our impetuosity, but men, men that go to sleep as children do and must. Being spaced off in this manner by stoppages, we consent to limits. We are softened and gentled in feeling more, perhaps, than we would like to be. A man must be next to a devil who wakes angry." The Christian reason against *nursing wrath* is that it is a giving place to the devil. For it is in connection with wrath that it is said, "*Neither give place to the devil*." He who rises from his bed unsoftened, who seeks about for new reasons for his wrath, is giving the devil *peculiar opportunity*. And when the devil gets in through the door of passion that is nursed, a man will do deeds then that, in his cool moments, he would have shrunk from with the utmost abhorrence. Vindictiveness was a characteristic of the heroes of the ancient heathen world, and does not call forth from such a delineator of them as Homer an expression of disapprobation. It is still found in not dissimilar form in the savage, who ruthlessly pursues his enemy until he has scalped him. Within the Christian sphere indulgence of anger is peculiarly unbecoming, and

must result in the ejection of Christ and, with him, of peace and right guidance.

2. *The positive of Christianity.* "Be ye angry." And we need not wonder at the injunction when we take into account that anger is a hundred times in Scripture attributed to God, and also that it is said of Christ that he looked round about on the hypocrites among his hearers *with anger*. "We are so made that pity is not more naturally awakened by the sight of suffering, fear by the approach of danger, delight by the vision of beauty, gratitude by deeds of generous kindness, than anger by many kinds of wrong-doing. The men whose hearts never glow with enthusiasm at witnessing lofty self-sacrifice, never burn with indignation against cowardice, falsehood, and profligacy; the men whose eyes never flash, whose pulse never quickens, whose words move on in an unbroken flow, and never rush along tumultuously like a cataract, either in praise or blame,—never yet did any work worth doing either for God or man" (Dale). But, as if special danger attended anger, the injunction to it is followed up, and thrown into a certain subordination, by the caution—"And sin not." (1) *Anger is to be proportioned to the offence.* There must be justice in our anger. The passionate man is often causelessly angry. His passion is roused by a mere inconvenience to himself for which no one is to blame, or by a hasty view of the action at which he takes offence. A mere personal slight is not a sufficient cause for anger, especially when we remember him who was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth. Rather are we to reserve our anger for what hurts the *truth* in us or in others. Let our indignation be poured out on the attempt to corrupt our principles, to steal our fair fame, on the cowardice that keeps a man from standing by his convictions, on the selfishness that can keep a wife and family miserable, on the dishonour that is done to God by our want of faith and niggardliness in supporting his cause. "It does not appear," says Butler, "that the feeling of indignation, generally speaking, is at all too high amongst mankind." "Yea, what indignation!" says the apostle, in enumerating the fruits of godly sorrow. (2) *Anger is not to interfere with love.* While Christ looked round on the hypocrites with anger he was at the same time grieved because of the hardening of their hearts. And we must ever draw this distinction between the sinner and his sin. Grievedness of heart for the sinner and strong condemnation of his sin can and should go hand-in-hand. Even as we love him we must show him how we regard his conduct so far as that is calculated to do him good. Such going forth of anger (having justice in it) is fitted to sustain love.

III. STEALING. 1. *The negative of Christianity.* "Let him that stole steal no more." Whether we translate the first part of the injunction "him that stole," or, as is often done, "him that steals," the latter part, "steal no more," implies that there was danger of some in the Ephesian Church falling into this sin. And we need not wonder at this, when we consider their pre-Christian state. They were accustomed, in heathen society, to theft being punished (which would keep up a certain moral sentiment against it), but at the same time, they were brought up in a certain laxity with regard to what was theirs and what was their neighbours'. And is not the Ephesian Church in this respect representative? While there are very few connected with our Churches who will steal, so as to expose themselves to the punishment of the law, there are those who are chargeable with what, if strictly looked into, is dishonesty. They do not give value in labour for money received. Or they contract debts, or come under obligations which they have no reasonable expectation of meeting; or they are not doing their utmost, in the way of exertion and economy, to get out of debt. Or, under the pressure of competition, they fall in with the evil custom of the trade, and adulterate. There are many ways of unjustly hindering the wealth or outward estate of our neighbour. There may be dishonesty even in the *desire* to have what does not belong to us. But nothing could be more emphatic than the declaration here that, whatever our temptations, whatever losses it may entail, we are not to steal at all. 2. *The positive of Christianity.* "But rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing that is good, that he may have whereof to give to him that hath need." There is presented here the Christian aspect of labour. It is according to the rule of Christ that we should work and not be idle. And if it is in literally working with our hands that we spend our energies, yet is that not demeaning, for Christ sanctified such work by working as a carpenter. It is further according to the rule of Christ that we should work *the thing that is good*, that is to say, have an honest

business and do our best (time and circumstance considered). There is further the motive with which we are to work. There is the incentive of providing for our own, and specially our own household, and of providing for our household not merely for the present, but, in view of the uncertainty of our life, also as we can for the future. And if any one of ours needed special nourishment or change of air, that would be a reason for our working hard that what was needed might be supplied. But in the language here employed there is a look to the needy in body or in soul beyond our own immediate circle. And it is taught that the Christian is to labour with the view and in the hope of having *something over*, after making all reasonable allowance for his own, to bestow on the poor and to send the gospel to the heathen. It is this in our aim which is needed to make labour, however assiduous and lawful, *distinctively* Christian. And the exhorter here himself set a Christian example, "In all things I gave you an example, how that so labouring ye ought to help the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he himself said, It is more blessed to give than to receive." And he, even the humblest labourer, who strives in his labour to have something over for Christ (in him that hath need), will not fail, or if he can be said to fail, yet will his effort lead to his labour being accepted of Christ. And if this is the true *gospel of labour*, then how much labour is there which must be rejected in which there is a wrong done to Christ in his not receiving his dues or acknowledgment?

IV. UNWHOLESOME SPEECH. 1. *The negative of Christianity.* "Let no corrupt speech proceed out of your mouth." "Perhaps the image which the word (corrupt) calls up was not distinctly present to the apostle's mind; but it might have been, for it is a very just one. The epithet is used to describe vegetables, meat, and fish which are beginning to go bad; and there are some people whose conversation is quite as unwholesome as food which is not quite fresh. Unsound itself, it injures the moral health and vigour of those who listen to it." Without being *poisonous*, words may be unwholesome. Falsehood he has already condemned. Violence and detraction in speech fall under the next head. Filthiness and foolish talking and jesting come up in the beginning of the next chapter. Words may be neither false, nor violent, nor defamatory, nor foul, nor senseless, nor profane, and yet be *unwholesome*. And to such we limit our attention here. There are some who give the chief place in their conversation to business or household affairs. There are others who give it to fashion, pleasure, amusement. There are others again who give it to the little affairs of their neighbours or to politics. Conversation may properly enough turn upon these things; but when it is so occupied with them as to rouse the impression that the world in one or other of these forms is everything, as to shut out the thought of God, as to take away the feeling of the seriousness of life, then (like food that is not quite fresh) it is fitted to do harm. There is not, in such conversation, *nutriment* for the moral being, exercise for the moral powers. It is to be said, too, that the spirit of worldly conversation is gathered up in certain *worldly maxims* such as these: that we must look after ourselves; that we must take the good of the world; that we must have our time of gaiety; that we must be like our neighbours. These maxims (as excuses for selfishness, thoughtlessness) are unsound; and the apostle, speaking for Christ, would say emphatically, "Let no such corrupt speech proceed out of your mouth." And the *peculiarly Christian reason* against that kind of speech is given in the words, "And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, in whom ye were sealed unto the day of redemption." It will be seen that the apostle regards speech in a sacred light—he would have it as a medium or organ of the Holy Spirit. It is taught that the Divine Spirit is intensely interested in all the movements of our life. There is not a department to which his interest does not extend, and which he would not have permeated with his holy influences. And when he is thwarted in his holy ends he is grieved as a mother is grieved when a son whom she loves as none else can is not acting according to her wishes and prayers. And it is to be noticed that what is represented as grieving the Spirit is that which is hurtful, not so much by its heinousness as by its *commonness*. Against graver faults we are placed more on our guard; but we do not think how we grieve the Holy Spirit by the *feeble moral tone* of our conversation. The Spirit is grieved with the conversation of the unconverted (which is necessarily unwholesome); but he is especially grieved when Christians thwart him by a conversation which is not of him. For on them, as already expressed in the first chapter, his seal was placed, against the day of

their final redemption. You, then, who have the seal of the Holy Spirit of God on you, as marked for redemption, grieve him not by unedifying conversation. 2. *The positive of Christianity.* "But such as is good for edifying as the need may be, that it may give grace to them that hear." The Christian element in conversation is that a regard be paid to edification. We are made to communicate with others by speech, not that we may impose on them, or play with them, or regard them carelessly, but that we may edify them. There is not only that which is edifying, but edifying *for the occasion*. And "a word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver." And what constitutes its fitness is not its mere artistic form or reconditeness, but especially a depth of feeling in it, and a *moral discrimination*, that make it meet a need and prove a blessing to them that hear. A word of this kind, that may not be wanting in sharpness, but can convey comfort too and direction and incitement to good, what an accomplishment it is to be able to speak it! And, however far we are behind, let us strive after the Christian ideal of conversation which is here placed before us.

V. *BAD TEMPER.* 1. *The negative of Christianity.* "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and railing, be put away from you, with all malice." By bitterness here we are to understand all want of sweetness of temper. This is indicated by what are mentioned as its manifestations. It takes the form of *wrath*, or a sudden outburst of passion. Or it takes the form of the more settled feeling of *anger*. The *wrath*, again, takes the form of *clamour*, or violent speech. And the anger takes the form of *railing*, or more deliberate and continued speaking against a brother. And the evil temper in these its manifestations, in all the varieties that belong to it (as is indicated by the word "all"), is represented as having its subsistence in *malice*, by which we are to understand ill feeling, and that not simply in its worst form, but (as is also indicated by "all") in all its forms. This apostolic analysis of bad temper shows that he regarded it in a serious light. He did not regard it as some would, as a mere physical infirmity. Constitution has to do with it in this respect, that some have more to contend against than others. But, whatever our constitutional temper is, we are bound to bring it under law to Christ. Bad temper, therefore, is a sin, an unchristian state, of which we are to repent, and from which we are, according to the thought here, to be forcibly delivered. For "put away" here is stronger than "put away" in the twenty-fifth verse, and implies the putting forth of something like force upon us (by the stronger than we), in order that we may get rightly away from it. 2. *The positive of Christianity.* "And be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, even as God also in Christ forgave you." The kindness here inculcated is that good feeling toward others which keeps us from unseemly manifestations, and sweetens our whole bearing as brethren. And this kindness is to extend (where there is occasion) to *tenderness of heart* (or, as it used to be in Col. iii. 12, with the same allusion as here, "bowels of mercies"). And this tenderness of heart is to take the very beautiful and *distinctively Christian* form of *forgiveness*. For God in Christ forgave us. The allusion is to the historical fact of Christ once for all putting away sin by the sacrifice of himself. Thus God not only showed himself forgiving, but actually made forgiveness a gospel reality. It is after the manner of the apostle to ground deep human duty. He has especially a satisfaction in falling back on the great fact of the atonement. Forgiveness is not an optional matter with us, or something that we may want without losing our Christianity; but it is that to which we are peculiarly, indissolubly bound by the fact that God has gone before us in it in his dealing with us. Let us, then, have that nobility, generosity of disposition, that emanation from God himself, which will lead us to forgive those that sin against us. —R. F.

Vers. 1—3.—*Walking worthy of our vocation.* "I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord," etc. The verses, looked at homiletically, suggest the following truths:—

I. THAT MAN'S EXTERNAL CONDITION IN THIS WORLD IS NO TRUE TEST OF HIS REAL WORTH. A greater man than Paul, greater in; true thought, lofty aims, disinterested sympathies, self-sacrificing love, Christ-like devotion, and philanthropy, never lived. He was great in himself, great in his spiritual influence, great in the estimation of all capable of appreciating worth. Yet he was a "prisoner" and doomed to martyrdom—a condition the most ignominious and painful. This fact shows: 1. *The corruption of*

human society. So blind in moral judgment and so perverse in heart has civil society been, almost from the beginning, that it has doomed its best men to degradation, suffering, and often martyrdom. 2. *The high probability of a future retributive dispensation.* The beheading of John the Baptist, the imprisonment of a Paul, the crucifying of the Christ, proclaim with a tongue of thunder a coming judgment, a day when "all ungodly men shall be convinced of all ungodly things which they have ungodly committed."

II. THAT THE END OF ALL TRUE THEOLOGY IS THE IMPROVEMENT OF CHARACTER. The apostle, after laying down in the preceding chapters the grandest theological truths, begins in these verses an application of these truths to practical life. "I beseech you therefore." "Therefore." Why? Because of the wonderful things I have stated. Theology, if it remains with us merely as a science, will do us no spiritual service. It may stimulate thought, widen the realm of intelligence, afford scope and incentive to our speculative faculties, and develop our powers of logic and controversy. But what boots all this? Devils in depravity and torture are theologians. It is only when theological truths pass from the intellect to the heart, and thence circulate as blood through every particle of our being—in other words, when doctrines are translated into deeds—that they really serve us. Theology is bread; but undigested bread does not impart health, but impairs it, does not invigorate the man, but enfeebles him. A great theologian is often a moral invalid.

III. THAT THE PRIVILEGES OF A MORAL BEING ARE THE MEASURE OF HIS OBLIGATIONS. "Walk worthy of the vocation," etc. The Bible teaches us our duty, not so much by written *precepts* as by *principles*, either expressed or implied. Indeed, it seems to me no code of legislative propositions, though its volumes filled the world, could supply directions for the boundless activities of an undying soul. You cannot bring all the obligations of souls into any number of written sentences. Hence we have principles, and often one principle will meet all the possible activities of a soul, determine its duty in every separate act. The principle we have stated is an example. When a real Christian is told to "act worthy of his vocation," he is told everything touching all conceivable obligations. This point supplies us with two general remarks. 1. *Christians are called into a Divine sonship, and their duty is to walk worthy of that.* The call you have in the fifth verse of the first chapter. "Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will." We are called to be the sons of God. What is our duty? To act worthy of our relationship, act as sons ought to act towards such a Father. Give him: (1) The highest *reverence*. Our heavenly Father is not only greatest to us, but greatest to the universe. Therefore reverence him. (2) The highest *gratitude*. We owe everything to him—being and the highest blessings of being. Therefore to him our profoundest and incessant thanks are due. (3) The highest *esteem*. He is the *best* of Beings, the Fountain of all virtues, the Standard of all character, the Totality of goodness. Therefore he should be loved with all our soul and strength. (4) The highest *confidence*. Yield to him a cheerful trust, a boundless reliance. Trust in him for ever. (5) The highest *attention*. He should occupy more of our thoughts than any other being. You should study his character, trace his ways, anticipate his wishes, imbibe his Spirit, imitate his character, and thus become partakers of his nature. When Christians are told to walk worthy of their sonship, what more can be said? It means to live a pure, useful, elevated, morally royal life. 2. *Christians are called into a spiritual corporation, and their duty is to walk worthy of that.* When on earth Christ founded a new society, its members consisted of those who practically accepted him as their great Teacher, Example, Saviour, Lord. That society, few in numbers at first, has been increasing ever since. Millions have gone to heaven, and millions are still on this earth found in connection with all Churches, and not a few in connection with none. This society, though its members are divided by sentiment and ritual and distance, are nevertheless *one*—one in spirit, purpose, life. They are but branches of one tree the Root of which is Christ, members of one body the Head of which is Christ. Now, every Christian is called into this grand corporation. And the apostle here states two things concerning our relation to it. (1) The *grand purpose we should aim at*. "Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." "Unity of the Spirit," means the unity of which the Spirit is the Author. Unity, not merely doctrinal

or ecclesiastical, for there may be doctrinal and ecclesiastical unity where there is spiritual separation. It is the unity of souls in Christ. Now, every one belonging to this corporation should diligently endeavour to maintain its unity. This unity is consonant with diversity; the waves are different, but the ocean is one; the branches are different, but the tree is one; the members are different, but the body is one; the stars are different, but the system is one. Men's thoughts may be different, but men's loves may be one, and loves are the bonds of souls. (2) *The method for promoting this purpose.* Three things are indicated here. (a) Humility. "With all lowliness and meekness." Pride, arrogance, and haughtiness in all its forms, have ever been amongst the most disturbing elements in Church life. (b) Mutual forbearance. "Forbearing one another." The best members of this Church are imperfect in belief, sympathies, and conduct; hence mutual forbearance is necessary in order to maintain unity. He who feels disposed to quarrel with every fault of his associates may spend his time in doing nothing else. (c) Brotherly love. "Forbearing one another in love." Love is the healer of discords. No hand but hers can retune the discordant harp of Church life. These—lowliness, meekness, long-suffering, loving forbearance—quiet, unpretending, unshowy virtues are amongst the best means for promoting true unity in the Church of God. Who is the most useful Christian? Not as a rule he who has the most transcendent genius, brilliant talents, and commanding eloquence, but he who has the most of this quiet, loving, forbearing spirit. The world may do without its Niagaras, whose thundering roar and majestic rush excite the highest amazement of mankind, but it cannot spare the thousand rivulets that glide unseen and unheard every moment through the earth, imparting life and verdure and beauty wherever they go. And so the Church may do without its men of splendid abilities, but it cannot do without its men of tender, loving, forbearing souls.—D. T.

Vers. 3—6.—*The unities of Christianity a reason for union amongst Christians.* "Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is 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 you all." These various unities in Christianity are here specified by the apostle in order to enforce the importance and obligation of a loving concord amongst all true Christians. By noticing these unities with a little closer attention we shall see how they formed in the apostle's mind an *argument for a loving union amongst all the disciples of Christ.*

I. All Christians are members of ONE SPIRITUAL ORGANIZATION. "One body." Though they are very numerous and ever increasing, though they differ widely in many morally unfundamental points, and live in different lands and different worlds, still they are parts of one great whole. The tree, though it has a thousand branches all varying in size and shape and hue, is an organic whole. This unity, though not visible, really exists. To be a Christian is to be a branch of the one tree, a stone in the one building, a member of the one body. Now, this fact is certainly a *strong* reason for the cherishing amongst all of brotherly love and hearty fellowship. "That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another. And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it."

II. All Christians are animated by ONE GREAT SPIRIT. "One Spirit." What the body is to the human soul, this great organization, this universal Church, is to the Spirit of the living God. 1. *Servant.* As every member of the body is the servant of the soul, every genuine Christian is the servant of the Spirit, obeys his dictates in everything. 2. *Symbol.* As the body reveals and expresses the soul by its looks, words, and operations, so the true Church reveals the Divine Spirit; reveals its quickening, redeeming, elevating, sanctifying influence. 3. *Residence.* As the body is the residence of the soul, even so the Church is the temple for the Holy Ghost to dwell in. If there is this one Spirit running through all, guiding, animating, overruling all, should there not be through all a mutual, loving sympathy and interest?

III. All Christians have ONE GLOUBIOUS HEAVEN. "One hope." What is the object of a true Christian's hope? *Not happiness.* He whose grand object in life is his own happiness is under the influence of that selfishness which is the essence of sin and the

devil of the soul. That spirit in Churches which cries, "Oh that I had the wings of a dove! then would I fly away and be at rest," is discontented selfishness, nothing more. Alas! that there should be churches, chapels, and pulpits in England ministering to an insatiable avarice that considers this beautiful world not good enough for its home! But if the object of a true Christian's hope is not happiness, what then? *Moral goodness.* Goodness as exemplified in the life of Jesus. To become like Christ, to be partakers of the Divine nature, to be holy even as God is holy,—this is the great object of a true Christian's hope. And herein is heaven and nowhere else. To be happy is to be good, to be good is to be like God, and this is the grand object of genuine Christian hope. "Then shall I be satisfied when I awake up in thine own image." Moral goodness is the only true Paradise of souls.

IV. All Christians have ONE SOVEREIGN MASTER. "One Lord." Who is this one Lord? By the general consent of acknowledged expositors, the one Lord Jesus Christ. "One is your Master, even Christ." There are men in Christendom who assume titles indicating authority over human souls. We have the Pope of Rome, the lord bishop, and the "Primate of all England." Terribly sad it is that in the name of him who had nowhere to lay his head, and who taught that the least should be greatest in his kingdom, there should be found men either so dull or daring as to assume such titles as these. Call no man "master," said this "one Lord." He is the Head of the Church which is his body, the *only* Head. Is not this also a potent reason for loving concord among Christians? They have to draw their doctrines from one Teacher, they have to learn their duty from one Master, they have to fashion their character after one Model, to depend for reconciliation to God upon one Mediator.

V. All Christians have ONE SUPREME CREED. "One faith." This means, as we have seen, one *Object* of faith. What is the one creed? Theological propositions put forth as articles of belief? If so, there are many faiths—faiths almost as numerous as there are Christian professors. No two men can perhaps believe the same thing in exactly the same way; the same proposition shapes itself differently to different souls. The New Testament teaches with unmistakable explicitness that the true creed of a Christian is not a propositional manifesto, but a personal life—the life of Christ. In more than thirty passages of one Gospel, the Gospel of St. John, we find with reference to Christ the expressions, "trusting to me," "trusting to him," or "trusting to the Son." Take two or three as specimens. "This is the work of God, that ye believe on *him* whom he hath sent." Again, "He that believeth on *me* hath everlasting life." Again, "He that believeth on *him* shall not be damned." Again, "He that believeth on *me*, the works that I do," etc. "Do this in remembrance of *me*." Christ is the one Creed. He is, in truth, the Bible. See how this *one* creed argues the importance of loving union amongst Christians. If our creed is a series of propositions we shall be divided, but if our creed is the personal life of One all-holy, all-loving, all-good, we shall be united. If all the members of all the Churches believed with a living faith in the one personal Christ, there would be a loving concord of souls.

VI. All Christians have ONE SPIRITUAL CLEANSING. "One baptism." The primary meaning of "baptism" is cleansing. *Βαπτισμός* is rendered "washing" in several places (Mark vii. 4, 8; Heb. ix. 10). There are two kinds of baptisms or cleansings mentioned in the New Testament—the material and the spiritual, that of water and that of fire. The latter, namely, the fiery baptism of the Spirit, is the great thing. This undoubtedly is the one baptism, the one cleansing. 1. This is the one *essential* cleansing. Without this, though we were baptized in all the rivers of the world, we are not members of that one body of which Christ is the Head. Millions have entered heaven without water baptism, but not one without the spiritual. 2. This is the one *Divine* cleansing. It is the Spirit's work. This is the "washing of regeneration" and the renewing of the Holy Ghost. Is not this one essential, Divine cleansing another good argument for unity of love in all Christians?

VII. All Christians have ONE ADORABLE GOD. "One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all." 1. *There is but one God.* This fact is supported by the structure and order of nature; stands in direct antagonism to atheism, fetichism, polytheism, and pantheism; and is accepted as a fundamental truth in all evangelical Churches throughout the world. The glorious fact reveals the greatness of the Creator, the definiteness of moral obligations, the fitness of religion for the

constitution of man, and the universal brotherhood of souls. 2. This one God is *universal Father*. "Father of all." "Of all and through all." "All is not neuter: *πατήρ*." It is true that God is the Author of all nature, is over all nature, and lives through all nature; but the apostle's reference here is undoubtedly to intelligent existences, and it may be that he intends only the members of the true Church. All the members of the true Church recognize him as "the Father of all, over all, through all, and in all."

CONCLUSION. Here, then, in the *unities* of Christianity are the bonds of true union amongst men. Notwithstanding all the discords and conflicts that rage and revel through the world, there lies deep down in the heart of humanity an ineradicable *desire for unity*. The greatest events that have marked and helped the progress of the human race are the outcomes of this desire. Mankind have tried for this unity in many different ways. They have tried by: 1. *Political means*. In ancient times kings and warriors endeavoured to bring men together under one iron sceptre. The Assyrian, the Persian, the Greek, the Roman, each in his turn made the desperate endeavour. In modern times Spain and France and Russia have tried and failed. Far enough are we from denouncing or even depreciating such a grand political purpose. For our own part, we should like to see what we think will one day appear on this earth—one great cosmopolitan government—a government embracing within its majestic arms of righteous and sanitary law all the children of men the world over. The fact that England now sways her sceptre over India and Australia shows that neither diversities of race, language, colour, religion, habit, nor remoteness of position from the central power are necessary obstructions to the establishment of such a rule. With such a government immense and manifold would be the advantages. The liberties of all would be secured. The spirit of nationality, the prolific parent of desolating wars, would find no place. All would be fellow-citizens of one state. All the tyrannies and rivalries of little despots would be played out. The age of standing armies would be over. The markets of the world be open alike to all. Such a government, I believe, will come. The gradual absorption of the smaller into the larger states, the ever-multiplying facilities of intercourse between the remotest parts of the globe and diversified races of mankind, and the ever-advancing intellectual, moral, numerical, and colonizing superiority of the Anglo-Saxon race charm my poor soul at times with the belief that such an empire is in the tenor of things inevitable. But let it come. The real unity for which the human soul craves will not be met. Law cannot create love. 2. *Ecclesiastical means*. Religion has made one great attempt to bind the human race into one grand confederation. The Church of Rome sets up one head to which all souls must bow, prescribes one ritual through which all souls must move, propounds one creed to which all souls must adhere. The object is a noble one; our hearts go with it. But the means, involving priestly assumptions and the infringement of the rights of conscience, are amongst the worst damnabilities of history. Hence it has failed in its object. Aiming at unity, it has led to endless divisions. Many a peace-loving soul, pained with the controversies of the sects, has sought refuge in Rome, but has found it a stormy as well as perilous port. 3. *Commercial means*. Merchandise in this age is preached as the uniting power. Self-interest is to be the golden chain to bind all men together. Nothing is more unphilosophic than this. Self-interest is not a uniting but an insulating power. The battles of the market, if not as bloody, are as base and as heartless as those of the field and the ocean. The true principles of union are in the text. For universal union there must be universal love, for universal love there must be universal excellence, and for universal excellence there must be the universal recognition of the one body, the one Spirit, the one heaven, the one Master, the one creed, the one cleansing, the one God and Father of all.—D. T.

Vers. 7—16.—*Redemptive influence the gift of Christ*. "But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.) And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for

the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: 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; but speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the Head, even Christ: 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." The subject is—*Moral restorative influence the gift of Christ.* The "grace" mentioned in the seventh verse refers undoubtedly to the spiritual influences of God in the salvation and perfection of man. There are four things in this remarkable passage concerning this grace, this restorative influence.

I. THIS GIFT IS COMMUNICATED BY CHRIST. "But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ." The expression, "according to the measure of the gift of Christ," means, I think, that its bestowment is entirely according to his sovereign purpose. 1. *Some have a higher measure of grace than others.* Some have wider and clearer views of truth, a richer experience of Divine love and faithfulness, broader and stronger sympathies, more soul-uplifting hopes and aspirations than others. There are babes in Christ and there are men in Christ. Some are qualified to be ministers, martyrs, apostles, etc. Some are only fitted for a humble place in his vineyard. 2. *This measure is determined by the will of Christ.* It is according to "the measure of the gift of Christ," not according to the measure of a man's *capacity, merit, or effort.* The fact removes all ground for boasting in the most distinguished in his Church. By the grace of God each disciple is what he is.

II. THIS GIFT IS COMMUNICATED BY CHRIST AS THE RESULT OF HIS WONDERFUL HISTORY. "Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive." 1. *His history was a history of wonderful triumphs.* "He led captivity captive." He achieved the most brilliant victories. He triumphed over "principalities and powers, and made a show of them openly." He triumphed over death, rose from the grave, and became the Prince of life. He triumphs over the enmity of the human heart and brings the souls of the rebellious into captivity to himself. 2. *His history was a history of wonderful changes.* (1) It involved the lowest *descension.* "He descended into the lower parts of the earth." He not only came down to the condition of humanity, but he took his place in the *lowest* social grade. "He made himself of no reputation," etc. He descended even into the grave and Hades. (2) It involved the highest *ascension.* "He ascended on high . . . ascended up far above all heavens." How many heavens are there? Who can tell the height of the lowest? He is "far above" the highest. He thus descended and ascended in order that "he might fill" all human things with his spiritual influence, fill all human souls with his ideas, principles, and aims.

III. THIS GIFT IS COMMUNICATED BY CHRIST IN A GREAT VARIETY OF MINISTRIES. "He gave some, apostles; some, prophets; some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers." "*Apostles.*" No one was an apostle but those immediately appointed by Christ, who had seen him after his resurrection and endowed with a special inspiration. "*Prophets.*" Those who, being divinely inspired, taught in the name of God. "*Evangelists.*" Probably itinerant preachers, missionaries, such as Philip. "*Pastors and teachers.*" Overseers and instructors. All; who in any way promote spiritual Christianity in the world, from those who were the most feeble in power to those of loftiest capacity, are the *gift* of Christ. He calls them, qualifies them, and appoints them their respective spheres.

IV. THIS GIFT IS COMMUNICATED BY CHRIST IN ORDER TO PERFECT HIS CHURCH. "For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry." Spiritual perfection is the grand aim of all. 1. *Perfection in service.* "For the work of the ministry." The twelfth verse teaches that a perfect ministry implies a perfect character. There is no perfect service where there is not a perfect character. A man must be good to do good. 2. *Perfection in unity.* "Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God." This may mean oneness or harmony of mind in relation to the doctrine and spirit of Christ, a common thought and sympathy in relation to the

Son of God. 3. *Perfection in character.* "Unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." Christ is the *Standard* of excellence, and perfection of character is conformity to him. His character is the measure. To be Christ-like is to be perfect. 4. *Perfection in strength.* "That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, carried about with every wind of doctrine." (1) The strength of *firmness.* Possessing power enough to stand against all the winds and waves of religious opinions. There are some men at the mercy of every new doctrine. Their souls have no anchorage; they are not "rooted and grounded in the faith." (2) The strength of *determination.* "By the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness." The ideas seem to be not influenced by the mere contingencies of sentiment nor the craftiness of heretical teachers. 5. *Perfection in Church growth.* "Speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the Head, even Christ." The two verses teach: (1) That Church growth is an advancing assimilation to Christ. "We may grow up into him in all things, which is the Head, even Christ." The true growth of the soul is progress towards a perfect conformity to Christ. (2) That Church growth requires the *loving* exhibition of *truth.* "Speaking the truth in love." There is a truth, a *reality* in the gospel, and the ministry of this truth in love is necessary to promote the true growth of the Church. (3) That Church growth is in every part dependent upon its vital connection with Christ. "From whom the whole body fitly joined together," etc. (4) That Church growth requires the healthy action of all its members. "By that which every joint supplieth," etc.—D. T.

Vers. 17—19.—*Symptoms of moral madness.* "This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, 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: who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness." In these verses the Christians at Ephesus are warned against the course of life pursued by the Gentiles, whom he describes as the prey of mental delusion, benighted in intellect, unbridled in licentiousness. Our subject is—*Symptoms of moral madness.* What is "vanity of mind" in a scriptural sense? Not mere mental fatuity. *Ματαιότης*, vanity, includes moral worthlessness and corruption. Sin is folly, and sinners are justly represented as fools. It is said of the prodigal son, that "*when he came to himself*" he began to inquire. A sinner is not himself. "We learn for the first time," says Dr. Arnot, "that the man has been mad by learning that his reason is restored. It is a characteristic of the insane that they never know or confess their insanity until it has passed away: it is when he has 'come to himself' that he first discovers he has been beside himself. The two beings to whom a man living in sin is most a stranger are himself and God; when the right mind returns he becomes acquainted with both again. The first act of the prodigal, when light dawned on his darkness, was to converse with himself, and the second to return to his father." We learn from these verses that this moral madness is associated with several things.

I. WITH AN INTELLECT WITHOUT TRUE LIGHT. There are two expressions here indicating the state of a sinner's intellect. "Understanding darkened" and "ignorance that is in them." When we say that the sinner's intellect is in the dark, we mean, of course, in respect to the spiritual realities and interests of his being. He may have the light of poetic fancy and of secular intelligence—the stars of general science may beam on his horizon; but so far as moral light is concerned, he is in the dark. His eyes are blinded. Three things show this. 1. His adoption of the *partial* to the rejection of the *complete* in enjoyment. He has *sensual* pleasures, but these pleasures even in their highest measure constitute but an infinitesimal portion of those enjoyments for which human nature craves and for which it is organized—the pleasures of holy loves, devout meditations, sublime fellowships, and uplifting hopes and aims. Is not the man mad who chooses the partial and rejects the complete? 2. His adoption of the *fleeing* to the rejection of the *enduring* in enjoyment. The pleasures and dignities he strives after are all connected with this life, which in its longest periods is brief and its securest conditions uncertain. What is our life? "A vapour." All is flowing as a stream, all is transient as a dream. The joys and honours of *immortality* he practically ignores and rejects. Is not this madness? 3. His adoption of the *ruinous* to the

rejection of the *restorative* in enjoyment. By the adoption of the partial and the fleeting to the rejection of the complete and permanent, he pursues a course that involves the ruin of himself, the utter loss of all good. Are not these facts sufficient to show the darkness of the sinner's mind and the dense ignorance that reigns within him?

II. WITH A SOUL WITHOUT THE TRUE GOD. "Alienated from the life of God." No soul, no creature in the world can live a moment without God. "By him we live, and move, and have our being." Yet there is a solemn sense in which moral beings can and do live aloof from him, live without him. Sinners are "*without God*" in the world. "He is not in all their thoughts." They shut him out from the whole sphere of their feelings, thoughts, and activities. Not only do they practically ignore his presence and his claims, but his very existence. They are *without God*. Practical atheists. Is not this moral madness? 1. Is it not moral madness to shut the eye to the *greatest Object* in the universe—One compared with whom the creation itself is as nothing? 2. Is it not moral madness to disregard the *most absolute Master* of our destiny—the one Being in whose hand our breath is; One whose very word can make for us an eternal hell or heaven? 3. Is it not moral madness to have no sympathy with the *best Being* in existence—the Fountain of all love, truth, and blessedness?

III. WITH A HEART WITHOUT TRUE SENSIBILITY. "Blindness [hardness] of their heart." "Past feeling." This insensibility, whilst it has been brought about by moral irrationality and ignorance, reacts, deepens the darkness of the understanding, and intensifies the folly of the soul. When the man's heart gets so hardened as to be "past feeling," he becomes utterly incapable of taking right views of spiritual things. The impure atmosphere of a corrupt and hardened heart will obscure the vision of the intellect. When the heart is "past feeling," man becomes so stupid in intellect as to be utterly incapable of seeing the beauty or feeling the force of spiritual truth. 1. To be "past feeling" is to be past the power of *true improvement*. Where there is no feeling there is no *pain*, and where there is no pain there will be no impulse for the search of a remedy: A bodily disease without pain is the most hopeless, and a moral disease without pain must prove fatal. "Past feeling." The moral heart run to "fat." 2. To be "past feeling" is to be past the power of *true enjoyment*. There is no pleasure without feeling.

IV. WITH A LIFE WITHOUT TRUE VIRTUE. "Given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness." The passage includes two things. 1. *A voluntary abandonment to sin*. "Given themselves over unto lasciviousness," etc. Having lost spiritual intelligence, God, and sensibility, the soul abandons itself to moral corruption. It does it voluntarily. "*Given themselves*." They are not forced by God or the devil. What a sight!—souls made in the image of God plunging into a hideous, sunless, lifeless, lawless chaos! 2. *An avaricious appetite for sin*. "With greediness." The word "greediness" elsewhere means "covetousness"—a desire to have more.

CONCLUSION. Learn: 1. *That a clear intellect requires a clean heart*. 2. *That a clean heart requires a vital connection with God*. Religion is essential to a sound intellect.—D. T.

Vers. 20—24.—*The true method of studying Christianity*. "But ye have not so learned Christ; if so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus: that ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." These verses, including those back to the seventeenth, contain a general exhortation to holiness. The exhortation takes two forms—the negative and the positive. The negative we have noticed in our previous homily, vers. 17—19; the positive is now before us. The subject is—*The true method of studying Christianity*. Christianity is to be "learned." It is not an inbred knowledge. Man has no intuitions about it. Nor is it a knowledge imparted in any way irrespective of the use of our faculties and means. It comes to a man as the result of "learning." The man who does not rightly study will never know it. But what is the *true method of studying*? This is our present question, a question which we shall endeavour to answer in the light of the passage before us.

I. THE TRUE METHOD OF STUDYING CHRISTIANITY REQUIRES THAT IT SHOULD BE STUDIED IN CHRIST. "Truth . . . in Jesus." Christianity must be looked upon as seen in Christ. 1. *Not as seen in religious professors.* This would give a false view. 2. *Not as seen in religious books.* This would give a false view. 3. *Not as seen in religious institutions.* These would give a false view. There is nothing cold in truth or narrow, as seen in Jesus, but all that is broad, warm, free, sublime.

II. THE TRUE METHOD OF STUDYING CHRISTIANITY REQUIRES THAT IT SHOULD BE STUDIED UNDER THE TUITION OF CHRIST. We are "taught by him," or, as some translate it, "taught in him." Christ is the only effective Teacher of his own religion. If the sun is to be seen it must show itself—all the stars and moons of the universe cannot reveal it; so with Christ. But how are we to place ourselves under his tuition? Three things are necessary. 1. *We should realize our true moral relation to truth as it is in him.* Truth in him has a special relation to us, not merely as men, but as corrupt, guilty, and ruined sinners. We must feel ourselves to be the character to which it is specially addressed. 3. *We must endeavour to identify ourselves with the particular class of character which it indicates.* "Truth in Jesus" has reference to special classes of sinners, such as the worldling, the formalist, the hypocrite, the inquirer, the penitent. We must put ourselves in the right class. 3. *We must invoke the aid of his Spirit.* Christ's body is not in the world, but his *Spirit* is. The bodies and souls of other great men have left the world—Plato, Seneca, etc. They are not with the students of their works, but Christ is. He is with all his students.

III. THE TRUE METHOD OF STUDYING CHRISTIANITY REQUIRES THAT WE SHOULD STUDY IT IN ORDER TO BE MADE CHRIST-LIKE. "Which after God"—that is, God's image—"is created in righteousness and true holiness." It is not to be studied for intellectual, ecclesiastical, secular, or professional purposes, but for moral ends—studied in order to make us like God. The moral transformation is here indicated as consisting of two things. 1. *The renunciation of the old and corrupt character.* The "old man" is put off. (1) Character is the *man*. It is moral character that makes the human animal a *man*. "As a man thinketh in heart so is he." His character forms his world, his heaven or his hell. (2) A *sinful* character is the *old* man. It is old because it is the *first* character we get. This must be put off. Old principles, purposes, habits, motives, thrown away. 2. *The adoption of a new principle of character.* "Be renewed in the spirit of your mind." Renewed in the central springs of being. The assimilation of our character to the grandest ideal which after God is created, and so on.—D. T.

Vers. 25—32.—*The abjured and the enjoined in Christian life.* "Wherefore," etc. In the preceding verses, as we have seen, under the head of *The true method of studying Christianity*, the apostle exhorted the Ephesians "to put off the old man and to put on the new man." He here proceeds to particularize and urge this the great practical work of Christianity. He *abjures* the elements of the old man and enjoins the elements of the new. Our subject is the *abjured* and the *enjoined in the Christian life*.

I. THE ABJURED IN CHRISTIAN LIFE. There are certain things here which are, alas! often found in connection with *nominal* Christians, and which are therefore too often regarded as identified with the Christian system, which are here abjured in language most earnest and strong. What are they? 1. *Lying speech.* "Putting away lying." A lie is a falsehood intended to deceive, with an immoral design; it is a misrepresentation of that to another about which he has a right to know the truth. What, then, is fiction and parable, say you? There is no justifiable fiction that does not agree with fact and serve the cause of reality and morals. Lying is one of the most prevalent sins. The ancient heathens everywhere practised it, and moderns too. All travellers and missionaries bear testimony to this. Heathens are not to be believed on their oaths. Alas! the vice is not confined to heathendom; it prevails throughout the civilized world. Lies fill the social atmosphere. Men in every department of life are deceiving and being deceived by their fellow-men, and often for selfish and immoral ends. Christianity condemns lies. "Lying lips are an abomination unto the Lord." And "liars at last shall have their part in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone." Christianity is essentially and eternally antagonistic to all insincerities and unrealities. Vanity, cowardice, and greed are the prolific factors of falsehoods.

2. *Sinful anger.* "Be ye angry, and sin not." We say, "sinful anger," for the text implies that there is an anger that is not sinful. Anger is the mind in emotional antagonism, and in a world of unreality, sin, and crime there is much to justify the strongest antagonism of the soul. Christ himself looked upon the conduct of the Jews with anger (Mark iii. 5). Indignation sometimes fired his breast, and "woes" like thunderbolts rolled from his lips. The stronger a being's love for the right, the mightier his indignation for the wrong. The text implies two things concerning *sinful* anger. (1) *That it is abiding.* Hence the command, "Let not the sun go down upon your wrath." Anger should not be allowed to continue in the mind, because it is painful to the soul; it is a fire that burns. He who cherishes it could not better gratify the vengeance of an enemy, for he is in agony all the while. The great Creator, in whose nature there is "no fury," never made the human soul for anger. "Let not the sun go down upon your wrath." Do not take it to bed with you; it will break your slumber and it will breed the devils of revenge. "Anger resteth in the bosom of fools." There is another thing here implied concerning *sinful* anger. (2) *It is favourable to the devil.* "Neither give place to the devil." An angry soul is just the sphere to which the devil has the freest access and can best work out his malignant ends. All the assassinations, murders, and wars he works through angry souls. Don't give place to the devil. Human souls may keep the devil out. He cannot enter without their consent. 3. *Social dishonesty.* "Let him that stole steal no more." Stealing in some way or other is a vice as prevalent as lying. Our popular ideas of *larceny* are not deep or broad enough for Christianity. Englishmen regard those as thieves only whom the law has convicted of pilfering, and who are generally amongst the poor and needy. But in the eye of Christianity he is a thief who takes from another his rightful due. The tradesman who deals in short weights and measures, and overcharges for his wares, is a thief; the servant who does not occupy faithfully in his master's service the hours and faculties for which he is paid, is a thief; the physician who prolongs his visit to his patient beyond what is necessary, in order to get gain, is a thief; the rulers who tax the people to pay them enormous salaries for offices inefficiently and often injuriously filled, are thieves. To all these Christianity says, "Let him that stole steal no more;" be honest. 4. *Corrupt language.* "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth." It is a *putrescent* language that is here abjured. What is a foul speech in the sense of Christianity? Not the ungrammatical in structure or the inelegant in style. The irreligious speech, which treats sacred things with frivolous profanity and sneering ridicule, is foul and corrupt; the selfish speech, which argues and persuades solely for personal gratification, is foul and corrupt; the malicious speech, which endeavours to undermine the influence, damage the interests, and injure the reputation of others, is foul and corrupt; the sensuous speech, that seeks to influence the animal passions and pollute the pure love of mankind, is foul and corrupt. All such language—and, alas! it abounds amongst us—is indeed putrescent. As heaps of decomposing vegetable and animal matter send forth gases into the atmosphere injurious to the physical health of the world, all corrupt communications proceeding from the mouths of men impregnate the mental atmosphere with elements damaging to the moral health of souls. 5. *The anti-Divine.* "And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God." Of course we are not to suppose that the eternal Spirit literally endures grief. He is the ever-blessed God. What is meant is, "do not do that which is repugnant to the heart and desires of the infinite Spirit." And what is thus repugnant to the Spirit? All that the Spirit here abjures, as well as moral evil of all kinds. A good reason is here added by Paul, "Whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption." This expression implies two things. (1) There is a perfection awaiting the genuine disciples of Christ—"the day of redemption"—redemption from all evils, corporeal, intellectual, social, spiritual. Blessed day! (2) The Divine Spirit has secured them to this. They are sealed for it. How flagrant the ingratitude and impiety of opposing such a spirit! Another thing abjured here is: 6. *Malevolent conduct.* "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil-speaking, be put away from you, with all malice." Malice, or malevolence, is the root of all. It is malice that generates the *bitter* things in social life; it is malice that kindles the fires of "wrath and anger;" it is malice that makes the tumultuous "clamours" and the contentious brawls. Let this malice be destroyed, and social love and purity and

peace shall prevail. Such are some of the evils that Christianity abjures, and, in abjuring, it abjures that which is the disgrace, the guilt, and the curse of mankind. With an exulting confidence, I say to infidels that whatever is bad in the world or the Church, instead of growing out of Christianity, is in direct antagonism to it. All wrong is antichrist; all right is Christian.

II. THE ENJOINED IN CHRISTIAN LIFE. Christian life is not a negation. It does not consist in the mere deprivation of the morally wrong; its essence is the spirit of goodness—*love*. This love, in its social character, is forcibly inculcated in these words. We are here taught: 1. That the social love enjoined is *courteous*. "Be ye kind one to another." Christianity requires us to cherish a benignant spirit, and maintain an amiable and considerate deportment towards all mankind. Where this kindness of nature is there will be true courtesy and a gentle bearing in all our intercourse with men. There is a politeness of manner in society which has no heart, no nature; it is mere mechanism and polish; it is often in alliance with the coarse in thought, the selfish in spirit, the putrid in moral feeling. Such politeness is theatrical. The coarse-minded churl on the stage assumes the costume and plays the part of a gentleman. The spirit of Christianity is antagonistic to all that is coarse, crabbed, and morose. Love "doth not behave itself unseemly." 2. That the social love enjoined is *compassionate*. "Tender-hearted." There is suffering in society—physical, mental, moral, social. Children of sorrow and trial are found in every walk of life. Towards those Christianity inculcates "tender-hearted" compassion. "Put on . . . as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye" (Col. iii. 12, 13). "Be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous: not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing" (1 Pet. iii. 8, 9). 3. That the social love enjoined is *forgiving*. "Forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you." Few men pass through life without meeting with those who commit offences against them; those who seek to damage their secular interests, their social enjoyments, or their moral reputation. How does Christianity require its disciples to act towards them? Not with the spirit of vengeance, but with that of forgiveness. "Forgiving one another." The words contain three facts. (1) That God hath forgiven Christians. Glorious fact this. (2) That God in forgiving Christians has acted in Christ. "As God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you," *ὡς ἐν Χριστῷ*—in Christ. God works through various organs, through material nature, through moral mind, and through Jesus Christ. But it is only through the last—Christ—that he forgives. "God is in Christ reconciling the world unto himself." It is only in Christ that he works in the sinner that state of mind which separates him from his sin. (3) That God's forgiveness of Christians is a rule for their forgiveness. "Even as God." How does God grant forgiveness? (a) Freely. No urging required, no constraint. (b) Abundantly. "He will abundantly pardon." "How oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? until seven times?" This was Peter's question to Christ; and what was the reply? "Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven" (Matt. xviii. 21, 22). 4. That the social love enjoined is *God-like*. "Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children." "Become, then, followers of God, as beloved children (Ellicott). "God is love." Seek to become like him in love. His love is disinterested, compassionate, forgiving, boundless, and ever-acting. This is the standard to be aimed at; nothing lower. (1) God can be imitated in this respect. We cannot become like God in wisdom, power, sovereignty, but we can in love. The child can love as well as the man, and the man as well as the seraph. The God of love hath made all souls to love. (2) God *must* be imitated in this respect. It is essential to happiness. Heaven is in this love, and nowhere else. "He that loveth dwelleth in God, and God in him." 5. That the social love is *self-sacrificing*. "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 savour." (1) The self-sacrificing love which Christianity enjoins is like that *exemplified in Christ*. Christ "hath given himself for us." "He gave himself for our sins." "He loved us, and gave himself for us." Christ so loved mankind that he sacrificed his time,

energy, peace, reputation, life, all to save them. The love that Christianity enjoins must be like this, nothing inferior to this, nothing short of this; self-sacrificing love is the love of Christianity. It is the true heroic element. (2) The self-sacrificing love which Christianity enjoins is *acceptable to God*. It is "a sweet-smelling savour." Its exhibition in Christ was delightful to the heart of God, and the same self-sacrifice in man can alone make man pleasing in his sight.

CONCLUSION. What a sublime system is Christianity! It abjures in the life of its disciples all that is false, malign, unjust, impure, and profane, and enjoins that spirit of love which purifies, ennobles, and beatifies.—D. T.

Vers. 1—3.—*Walking worthily*. It is touching to see how the great apostle, who had a right to issue commands to the Churches in the name of Christ, prefers to beseech his readers with gentle entreaty as "the prisoner in the Lord." This method is as much a mark of his wisdom as of his humility and kindness of heart. For we are all more easily moved by persuasion and sympathy than by patronage and authority.

I. CHRISTIANS ARE CALLED TO A HIGH VOCATION. 1. There is a *Divine call*. We are not left to drift through life aimlessly, nor are we permitted to carve out careers for ourselves. Divine purposes go before us, mapping out our course of future service; and Divine voices in the gospel and in our hearts bid us follow our vocation. 2. The call is *lofty* and worthy of all honour. Christians are not saved with a bare and beggarly deliverance, like shipwrecked mariners flung upon the beach, half drowned and bereft of everything. When we enter the Christian life we commence a course of high service, vast enterprise, and splendid aims. 3. The purpose of this vocation is to glorify God and bless the world by *realizing the idea of the Christian Church*. In the previous chapter St. Paul has been describing some of the great privileges of Christians, which consist chiefly in their being built into one great temple and growing together in union. The breaking down of national, ecclesiastical, intellectual, and moral barriers, and the building up of one great family, knit together by love and united through a common union with Christ, is St. Paul's magnificent conception of the fruits that the gospel is to bear on earth.

II. IT IS THE DUTY OF CHRISTIANS TO WALK WORTHILY OF THEIR HIGH CALLING. 1. The *responsibility* of fulfilling our vocation rests upon us. We are called, not driven, and we can disobey the Divine voice. But though we are free from compulsion, we are not free from responsibility. For God has a right to call us whither he will, and Christ has laid us under peculiar obligations by his work and sacrifice for us. 2. This fulfilment of our vocation must be in our *daily conduct*. We are to "walk worthily." Belief and worship are not enough. The life and the whole work and daily occupation are to follow the Divine call. 3. Christian consistency is *squaring our conduct with our calling*. Many make much of mere self-consistency; but it is well often to be inconsistent with ourselves, or we can never progress, much less repent and amend. Nor is it enough to make our actions consistent with our opinions, unless both opinions and actions are consistent with truth, with God's will, and with our vocation.

III. WALKING WORTHILY OF THE CHRISTIAN CALLING CONSISTS CHIEFLY IN MAINTAINING AND INCREASING OUR MUTUAL BROTHERHOOD. Love is the queen of the New Testament graces. Selfishness, moroseness, lack of sympathy, and the like are sins against the peculiar genius of the gospel. To be zealous in defending the faith, to be pure as white marble in saintly separation from vice, to be strict in integrity, etc., will not be enough; for our calling is to a brotherhood, and our worthy walking must help this. 1. Negatively, we must have *lowliness* which declines to assert one's self before one's brethren, *meekness* which acts gently to them, and *long-suffering* which bears with any provocations they may give us. 2. Positively, we must *extend* Christian unity and the spirit of peace. The peaceful brotherly spirit must not only be passively harmless, it must be earnest, active, and diligent.—W. F. A.

Vers. 4—6.—*Christian unity*. This is a frequently recurring theme in the Epistle to the Ephesians, and it is always treated with an emphasis that marks its supreme importance, and with a prophetic hopefulness that regards the higher development of it as one of the grandest features of the ideal future.

I. WHEREIN CHRISTIAN UNITY CONSISTS. 1. *Externally it consists in the "one body."* Plainly the "one body" is the Church, the community of Christians. It should be clear to an impartial reader of the New Testament that neither Christ nor his apostles contemplated the ideal of the kingdom of heaven on earth as we see that kingdom realized only in a Christendom torn and distracted with the bitter rivalries and mutual excommunications of innumerable sects. The Church of Christ, the Church in St. Paul's conception, was to be catholic—one great family, harmonious, mutually sympathetic and mutually helpful. 2. *Internally it consists in the "one Spirit."* So long as there is not oneness of spirit in the Church, the attempt to preserve external union by force is futile; nay, it is positively hurtful. It is best not to have a mock's semblance of union when at heart we differ strongly. But if there is a unity of spirit, that should be regarded as the most essential thing. History shows that the greatest breaches of unity have been caused by the illiberal efforts of bigots to constrain uniformity. If we want true unity we must dispense with agreement in doctrine, form of worship and ecclesiastical order, and be content with oneness of spirit. This unity will be realized, not by increasing, but by minimizing, the points of uniformity; in comprehensiveness, not in stringent discipline; with larger charity, never with more absolute authority.

II. TOWARDS WHAT END CHRISTIAN UNITY IS TENDING. The Christian calling points to "one hope." All things make for final integration (ch. i. 10). We fail of our vocation if we are satisfied with a churlish isolation. There will be varieties of life in the future, no doubt, as there will be "many mansions." But all Christians will be united in the one city of God, even in the one house of our Father (John xiv. 2). It becomes, therefore, our manifest duty to heal the breaches of Zion. Controversialists should ask themselves whether they bring the millennium nearer by their pugnacious advocacy of pet doctrines, or drive it further off by deepening the fissures of a sorely divided Christendom; and ecclesiastical advocates of Church unity should consider whether it is likely they will win over to their side all the divergent sects by standing on the narrowest possible ground and erecting about it frowning ramparts.

III. ON WHAT ORIGINAL FOUNDATIONS CHRISTIAN UNITY IS BASED. 1. *One Lord.* We all have one and the same Christ, and in him we are one. In proportion as Christianity becomes less an affair of theological dogmas and ecclesiastical systems, and more a religion of personal devotion to Christ, shall we be able to realize our true unity. 2. *One faith.* All Christians must experience the same spiritual faith in becoming Christ's, and must walk equally by faith. Opinions and rules may differ, but we do not live by opinions and rules—we live by faith. Now, faith is the same spiritual act in child and in philosopher, in penitent and in saint, in the shouting recruit of the Salvation Army and in the grave Quaker, in the evangelical Methodist and in the devout restorer of mediæval theology. 3. *One baptism.* There is one outward sacrament common to nearly the whole of Christendom significant of the washing and renewal all need and all can receive in Christ. 4. *One God and Father.* A common worship unites. Communion with our one Father makes us members of one family.—W. F. A.

Ver. 7.—*Measured grace.* I. CHRISTIANS ARE RECIPIENTS OF GRACE. 1. *Without grace we can do nothing.* All our attainments will be proportionate to the amount and kind of grace we receive. We cannot fulfil our vocation nor realize the grand unity of the Church by unaided human efforts. 2. *But grace is vouchsafed to Christians.* It is the peculiar privilege of the New Testament dispensation that it brings the energy of grace as well as the light of truth.

II. CHRISTIAN GRACE IS THE GIFT OF CHRIST. 1. *Grace must be a gift.* It would cease to be grace if we could create, earn, or deserve it. All the blessings of the gospel are free gifts, as are also our natural endowments. 2. *Christian grace comes direct from Christ.* His sacrifice won it. His ascension enables him to dispense it (vers. 8—10).

III. THIS GRACE IS GIVEN TO ALL CHRISTIANS. It is not reserved for high ecclesiastical officials and select saints. We are no Christians if we have it not. The Church is the body of all Christians, and it is one because the same grace flows through the whole brotherhood. The gospel is broad and democratic.

IV. THIS GRACE IS DISPENSED TO EACH INDIVIDUAL SEVERALLY. Each one receives

the gift. We cannot be blessed by Divine grace in crowds and masses. The Church can only be endowed with grace when her private members are personally blessed. We do not receive grace by becoming part of the grand Catholic Church. But we realize the unity of the Church when we have been first blessed with Christ's grace in our own souls.

V. THIS GRACE IS MEASURED OUT IN VARYING PROPORTIONS. In Christ there was grace without measure. In us it is measured. Christ has a right to measure it, because it is a gift which he can withhold or bestow as he pleases. Yet if it is measured there is no stint, for if Christ has first given us himself, we may be sure that he will never keep back any needful lower blessings. The measure of the grace is determined by our spiritual capacity, our faith, our need, our special mission.—W. F. A.

Vers. 9, 10.—*The universal experience of Christ.* I. THE ASCENSION OF CHRIST IMPLIES THAT HE HAD PREVIOUSLY DESCENDED. 1. It implies that he was *low down at some period*. Had he always enjoyed his rightful honours there could have been no act of rising to them. The coronation shows that the sovereign had once been a subject. The greatness of the elevation of Christ and the stir and change it produces are significant of the low depth of an earlier state. 2. It implies that he had been *highly exalted at a previous period*. The mere act of ascension may not show this, but the spiritual character of it does. All things ultimately find their level. The high-shooting fountain is an evidence that its water has come from a great elevation. 3. It implies that by *his deep humiliation Christ merited his great exaltation*. He did not simply deserve it by way of compensation. He earned the high honour of the Ascension by the patient sacrifice of himself in his descent down to a life of lowly service, down to the cross, down even to the dim land of the dead (Phil. ii. 5—11). Thus the last is first, and he who humbled himself is exalted.

II. THE ASCENSION AND PREVIOUS DESCENDING OF CHRIST ENABLE HIM TO FILL ALL THINGS. 1. *His presence enters into every grade of being*. From his awful primeval glory down to the dread depths of Hades and then up to the throne and the right hand of God, by the vast sweep and range of his profound humiliation and superb exaltation, along every step of existence traversed, Christ comes into personal contact with all life and death. 2. *His experience gives him knowledge of every grade of being*. And with this knowledge he has sympathy for all. Our lack of wide sympathies is chiefly owing to our narrow experience. Christ's sympathy is as universal as his experience. In his exaltation he does not forget the scenes that moved his heart in lowlier walks.

“ . . . Resting by th' incarnate Lord,
Once bleeding, now triumphant for my sake,
I mark him, how by seraph hosts adored,
He to earth's lowest cares is still awake.”

3. Filling all things by experience, knowledge, and sympathy, *he has power over all things*. Down even to the spirits in prison to whom he preached by the Divine Spirit, and through every rank of life, he has influences to exert, graces to bestow, redemption to accomplish. There is no order of things beyond the reach of Christ. As the great reward of his sacrifice and triumph, of his deepest humiliation and his highest exaltation, he fills heaven, earth, and hell with a presence which, if he is the same now as when he lived among men, is everywhere healing and redemptive.—W. F. A.

Vers. 13—16.—*The full-grown man*. The object for which the various gifts that flow from the ascension of Christ (see ver. 8) are bestowed is here described. That object is not the mere enjoyment of the gifts themselves. It is practical and for a distinct purpose, viz. to accomplish “the building up of the body of Christ.” For this same end the offices of the Christian ministry and all other ordinances and institutions of Christianity are now ordained. It is not enough to hold services and gather together decorous congregations. Nor is it even enough to secure converts. The final object is to build up the Church itself, by developing its manhood and cementing its unity. The end is twofold; and though the two parts of it are as intimately connected in experience as they are here blended together in the language of St. Paul, they can be considered separately. The first element in the building up of the

Church is the development of individual Christians from spiritual infancy to spiritual manhood; the second is the consolidation of the several members of the Church into the one body of Christ—the inward growth to the stature of the fulness of Christ, the outward growth of the various parts of that great organism of which Christ is the Head.

I. THE INWARD GROWTH OF SPIRITUAL MANHOOD. Individual Christians must grow if the whole Church is to grow. 1. *The characteristics of the growth.* It is the gradual attainment of manhood. There are babes in Christ among men who are old in years. The work of the gospel is not accomplished till it has made strong men of us. A religion of soft sentiment and imbecile intelligence, such as some would commend as a rebuke to our pride, would find no favour with St. Paul. He was a man of robust intellect and vigorous energy. The childlikeness of the Christian is far from the childishness of the sentimental religionist. Many of the greatest heroes have had a singular childlikeness which has only enhanced the manliness of their lives. The perfect Christian is just the perfect man. In particular he must have: (1) *Increase of knowledge.* (2) *Stability of belief*; the lack of personal convictions that is so common among us is a symptom of intellectual feebleness. We do not want rigid dogmatism, but surely as our thinking and experience progress some truths should emerge out of the mist of doubt clear and certain, some ground should be securely won, though much must still be beyond our comprehension. (3) *Fidelity*; “speaking the truth,” or rather “dealing truly;” for this a manly firmness must be acquired. (4) *Love*; “in love,” etc. 2. *The relation of this growth to Christ.* (1) Christ is the *object* of our growing knowledge; we have to grow in “the knowledge of the Son of God.” (2) Christ is the *standard* of Christian manliness. “The measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ” is what we are called to grow up to. (3) Christ is the *end* of Christian effort. We have to grow “into him.” The degree of our Christian progress may be determined by our nearness to Christ. Apparent increase of knowledge, energy, etc., is real decline if we are drifting further from Christ. The perfect Christian is at once he who is most Christ-like in character and he who is nearest to Christ in living communion.

II. THE OUTWARD GROWTH OF THE CHURCH. The whole body grows with the gradual increase of its several parts. But this general increase has a character and a history of its own. The Church grows up to manhood. Through all the ages of Christendom it has been the object of Christ to develop and educate his people till the infant Church of the first age should become the manly Church of the last. This thought warns us against the foolish veneration for antiquity which Lord Bacon repudiated, reminding us that these later days are the truly ancient times when the world has grown old in experience. Doubtless we may learn much by the study of patristic and primitive Christianity. But we shall be in error if we imagine that all we have to do is to revive the days of the Church’s childhood; and we shall be far from the broad, strong, spirit of St. Paul if we timidly shrink from those new advances that make for the increase of the Church’s manhood. The Church, as well as the individual Christian must grow in knowledge; it should also grow in fixity of established faith, in fidelity, and in love. The true growth of the Church will also show (1) more *harmony and unity, of sympathy and co-operation in work*—“fitly framed and knit together;” (2) at the same time more *elasticity, versatility, and variety* of life and action—“every joint” supplying its own share of work; (3) enlargement in *numbers and size*—“increase of the body;” and (4) *closer union with Christ*—the whole body must “grow up in all things unto him which is the Head.”—W. F. A.

Ver. 21.—*As the truth is in Jesus.* These words describe the method, not the substance, of Christian teaching; the latter is adverted to in the next verse. The historical name, “Jesus,” instead of the more common official name, “Christ,” indicates that this teaching is given through the life of our Lord on earth. We come to the knowledge of truth by hearing him, by being taught of him, by seeing it as it is in him.

I. THE KNOWLEDGE OF TRUTH IS OF SUPREME IMPORTANCE TO US. The means is proportioned to the end. If the life of Christ is necessary for the revelation

of truth, the truth thus revealed must be of first moment. Emotion without truth is vapid sentiment; and action without truth can have no moral character, and is as likely to be hurtful as useful. It is a blind man's groping. We can dispense with a superfluity of dogma. We have too many words about truth. But truth itself, the living spiritual reality, is the very breath of our souls. To know ourselves and our vocation, to know God, his love and his will, to know the spiritual order of things as far as it touches our own lives and conduct, is of vital interest.

II. TRUTH IS REVEALED IN CHRIST. Truth is written on the great book of creation, but in obscure hieroglyphics, for nature is an inarticulate prophet. Truth has also come through the inspiration of thought and conscience in poets and seers. But then it is always in words; and words make it but a clumsy garment hiding its finer beauty and, at best, speaking at second hand. In Christ we see truth intelligible, powerful, touching. It is revealed in his very self and in his words and deeds as they are the outcome and signs of his character and nature. Christ is the truth. He has but to be and to be seen and heard for truth to be revealed.

III. THIS REVELATION OF TRUTH IN CHRIST IS OF A DISTINCTIVE CHARACTER. 1. It is *human*. Truth is seen in Jesus just because he is a real and perfect Man. As man is made in the image of God, the very being of a perfect man must be a manifestation of Divine thoughts. (1) Therefore any dogmas that are contrary to humanity are false. (2) Therefore, also, we need not fear truth. She has a human countenance. 2. It is *living*. Truth in words is cold and dead, though it may be clear and beautiful. Truth in Jesus is alive, revealing itself in action, putting forth energy, responding to our sympathy. 3. It is *spiritual*. Truth of religion and of conduct is what we see in Jesus, not reminiscences of secular history nor anticipations of material science. The highest truth concerns God and the soul, duty and the unseen world. 4. It is *beautiful*. Christ's glory was full of grace and truth. In his face truth has no terrors, but the most winning attractions and the most moving loveliness.

IV. SUCH A PRESENTATION OF TRUTH CALLS FORTH DUTIES ON OUR PART. 1. We have to "*learn Christ*." That is the one lesson for our souls. We may learn all systems of theology and yet know nothing of the highest truth, if we do not know Christ. They who sit at the feet of Jesus drink from the deepest fountains. As Christ is best described to us in the four Gospels, these Gospels are the chief source of Christian knowledge. Yet inasmuch as the apostles interpret the mind of Christ, we may learn Christ from the whole of the New Testament. But we must also come to a personal communion with Christ in order to know him aright. 2. We have to *prove how we have learned Christ by our conduct*. This knowledge is to shape our actions. Fidelity, purity, and charity of life must make men see what truth we have found in Jesus.—W. F. A.

Ver. 26.—*Anger*. I. ANGER IS A DUTY. 1. It is *natural*. The man who is never angry is lacking in moral fibre. Christ was sometimes angry (Mark iii. 5). God is angry with the wicked (Ps. vii. 11). 2. It is *just*. We cannot rightly rebuke evil without anger. Lies and cruelty should not be treated mildly. Christ would not have been faithful to righteousness if he had not shown indignation in response to hypocrisy. 3. It is *useful*. We may save a man by first being angry with him. A mild complacency may be the greatest cruelty to a bad man. Even when we cannot rouse the conscience of the guilty by anger we may protect the weak and wronged who claim our first sympathy.

II. ANGER BRINGS A DANGER. It is the most perilous of duties even when it is obligatory. 1. It is in danger of being indulged for *our own satisfaction* instead of the resistance and checking of moral evil. Personal revenge is likely to usurp the place of righteous indignation. 2. It is in danger of running into *excess*. It is a passion, and every passion tends to irrational extravagance. The angry man must beware of losing his temper.

III. THE LIMITS OF RIGHTEOUS ANGER SHOULD BE CAREFULLY MARKED. 1. We must *avoid the mingling of wicked feelings* with necessary anger. While angry with our brother we must not cease to love him. We may be most angry with those we love most. But when anger provokes us to wish harm to any one, it degenerates to

hatred and becomes a great sin. 2. We must not *cherish anger for long*. The mercy of God is everlasting; his wrath is for a season (Ps. ciii. 9). It is the devil only whose habitual mood is anger. Men may do fearful harm by the sudden ebullition of a hasty temper—harm which may be repented of in vain for long years. Nevertheless, the sullen persistence of ill-feeling for weeks and longer that some people practise is in itself more culpable. It would be well to remember every night that we cannot have God's forgiveness of our sins of the day unless we have first forgiven those who have sinned against us. 3. We must not *lose self-control in anger*. "Neither give place to the devil."

IV. THE CHRISTIAN SAFEGUARD AGAINST THE ABUSE OF ANGER IS LOVE. No man can be safely angry with his brother unless he first love him. It is only they that love much who can make a wise use of the furious weapon of anger. If we are "kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other," we shall be able to show righteous anger without lowering ourselves to personal spite. Then our anger will be a pain to us and we shall long to abandon it for more congenial feelings. So shall we be like God, whose wrath is sinless, because he loves his children through all the anger their sin has called forth.—W. F. A.

Ver. 30.—*Grieving the Holy Spirit of God*. I. WHAT IT IS TO GRIEVE THE HOLY SPIRIT OF GOD. We are startled at the expression. Few of us would have thought of using it if we had not found it in the Bible. It cannot be a mere figure of speech. It must describe a strange, sad, touching fact. 1. God is a *living Spirit*. He can be grieved. 2. God is our *Father*, related to us, loving us. It is of the self-sacrificing nature of love that it lays itself out to be wounded when it is treated unworthily. We can always hurt most those who love us most. 3. God is *within us*. The Holy Spirit is God dwelling in our spirits. Because he is so near he is much concerned with our character and conduct.

II. HOW WE MAY GRIEVE THE HOLY SPIRIT OF GOD. 1. *All sin* is grievous to him, as holiness is hurt by unholiness and love by unworthiness. This should be one warning against our carelessness in falling into temptation. If we do not feel it, God does. A child who would not refrain from a bad thing on its own account, checks himself as he thinks how it would vex his mother. We should be warned by remembering that our sin hurts God,—did it not kill Christ? 2. St. Paul has in mind the particular sin of *corrupt speech* (ver. 29). This defiles the soul and dishonours the temple in which the Spirit of God dwells. Flippant conversation on sacred subjects, as well as language that is absolutely debased, is grievous in the ears of God, not only on its own account, but because it reveals a low tone of spiritual life and a want of the reverence and love that we owe to the Holy Spirit.

III. WHY WE SHOULD BE MOST CAREFUL NOT TO GRIEVE THE HOLY SPIRIT OF GOD. 1. Because of the obligations of gratitude for *past grace*. If we are spiritual Christians we are "sealed;" i.e. we have the mark of God's recognition and owning given by the Spirit. After accepting the uniform of the Divine King, how can we heedlessly bring dishonour on his Name? 2. Because of the responsibilities of our *present condition*. We are sealed "in the Spirit." To be in living relation with the Spirit of God is the condition of all who are new creatures in Christ. This higher fellowship brings higher claims. 3. Because of the hope of our *future redemption*. Christians are sealed "unto the day of redemption." The first day of redemption is the day of Christ's death, but that marks only the beginning of deliverance. To each soul the day of God's forgiveness and welcome of the penitent is a day of redemption; but perfect redemption is deliverance from all evil. This is at present a hope, and the hope depends on the work of the Spirit of God. If we are grieving the Spirit of God how can we ask for his aid? There is danger lest one grieve the Holy Spirit so that he take his departure, and then how dark and woeful will the deserted soul be!—W. F. A.

Vers. 31, 32.—*Charity to the undeserving*. I. THE NEGATIVE DUTIES. "Let all bitterness, etc., be put away from you." Various influences tempt us to the indulgence of these dark passions. 1. *Natural disposition*. Some men appear to be born with an acrid and mordant temper, as some plants secrete irritant poisons. 2. *Provocation*.

Anger rouses anger as fire kindles fire. The reference to forgiveness shows that St. Paul is especially condemning outbursts of wrath against people who have treated us maliciously. 3. *Evil example*. "Clamour and railing" are public offences. When many men concur in pouring wrath on a selected victim it is difficult to stand aside from the current of abuse and recognize the unholiness of it. The admonition may be applied (1) to public life, that politics may be freed from the degradation of personal spite; (2) to affairs of religion in condemnation of the *odium theologicum*, and also of the *odium antitheologicum*,—why should we hate a man because his opinion is not ours? (3) to social life, since it is better to suffer an injury unavenged than to add a second injury in return.

II. THE POSITIVE DUTIES. Christianity is not satisfied with passive meekness. We must not only turn the cheek to the smiter, we must love our enemies—a duty of positive feeling and action. 1. *General kindness*. This would destroy the selfishness that is at the root of all revengeful feelings. He who has injured us is our brother. The ties of our common brotherhood that urge us to love him should be stronger than the provocations of his unkindness that would make us bitter against him. 2. *Tender-heartedness*. This should make us pity the offender for the shame and guilt he has brought upon himself, and long for reconciliation with him. 3. *Forgiveness*. The final step for the healing of positive injury is the most necessary, for without it we can have no Divine forgiveness, nor can we truly love our enemy.

III. THE GRAND MOTIVE. "Even as God also in Christ forgave you." As we must forgive others before God will forgive us, so when he has forgiven us a stronger reason is added to urge us to forgive those who may in future injure us. 1. The Divine forgiveness is the *reason* for our forgiveness and kindness to others. The parable of the unforgiving servant reveals the gross inconsistency of an unforgiving spirit in Christian men and women (Matt. xviii. 23—35). How can we who simply exist because God has forgiven us deny forgiveness to our brethren? If God who is infinitely above us has condescended to forgiveness, shall we stand more strictly on our petty rights? If God has forgiven us our innumerable, great, and awful sins against him, can we be backward in pardoning the much fewer and slighter sins of our fellow-men against us? Forgiven the debt of ten thousand talents, how have we the face to exact the debt of a hundred pence? 2. The Divine forgiveness is the *pattern* of our forgiveness. It is (1) at the greatest cost—"in Christ," through the gift of God's own Son; (2) covering all sins, the worst and blackest without exception; (3) perfect, full, and ungrudging—remembering our sins no more, removing them from us as far as the east is from the west, burying them in the sea; (4) cheerful and generous—putting the ring and best robe on the penitent; (5) free, not earned by sacrifice, penance, or good works. Such should be on our forgiveness of one another.—W. F. A.

EXPOSITION.

CHAPTER V.

Ver. 1.—**Be ye therefore imitators of God, as children beloved.** These words are closely connected with the preceding. In ch. iv. 32 he had urged the example of God in one very momentous matter; he now urges it in a more general sense and on another ground. We ought to forgive men because God has forgiven us—all admit that; but moreover, we ought to imitate our Father in his forgiveness and in his loving spirit, because beloved children should always imitate, and will always strive to imitate, what is good in a beloved father. Forgiving love is one of the great glories of our Father; it has been made peculiarly attractive in our eyes, because it has been exer-

cised by him towards us; every consideration, therefore, ought to induce us to show the same spirit.

Ver. 2.—**And walk in love.** Taking up anew the exhortation of ch. iv. 1. Let your ordinary life be spent in an atmosphere of love. Drink it in from heaven, as plants drink in the sunshine; radiate it forth from eyes and face; let hands and feet be active in the service; let looks, words, and acts all be steeped in it. **Even as Christ also loved us.** The passing from the Father to the Son as our Example is not a new departure; for the Son reveals the Father, the Son's love is the counterpart of the Father's, made visible to us in the way most fitted to impress us. Though Christ's love, like his Father's, is eternal, the artist is used, to

denote that specific act of love which is immediately in view. And gave himself for us. The Pauline phrase (Gal. i. 4; ii. 20; Titus ii. 14; 1 Tim. ii. 6), simple, but very comprehensive: "himself"—all that he was as God, all that he became as Man, a complete self-surrender, a whole burnt offering. "For us," not merely on our behalf, but in our room (after verbs of giving, dying, etc.); this, indeed, being implied in the idea immediately following of a *sacrifice*, which, alike to the Jewish and pagan mind, conveyed the idea of a life given in room of another. An offering and a sacrifice to God. Offering and sacrifice are nearly synonymous, but the first probably includes the whole earthly career of Christ incarnate—his holy life, blessed example, gracious teaching, loving companionship, as well as his atoning death, which last is more precisely the *θυσία*, sacrifice. The offering and sacrifice were presented to God, to satisfy his justice, fulfil the demands of his law, and glorify his holy and righteous government. For a sweet-smelling savour. Allusion to Noah's sacrifice of every clean beast and of every fowl—"the Lord smelled a sweet savour;" that is, the whole transaction, not the offering merely, but the spirit in which it was offered likewise, was grateful to God. The whole work of Christ, and the beautiful spirit in which he offered himself, were grateful to the Father, and procure saving blessings for all who by faith make the offering their own.

Vers. 3—21.—THE WALK SUITABLE TO THE CHILDREN OF LIGHT.

Ver. 3.—But. Another of the remarkable contrasts of this Epistle; the fumes of lust are doubly odious in contact with the sweet savour of Christ's offering. Fornication and all impurity, or covetousness. The combination of covetousness with sins of the flesh, occurring several times in the apostle's writings (1 Cor. v. 11; ch. v. 3; Col. iii. 5), is rather unexpected. *Παρεσβεία*, covetousness, means the desire of having more, which is peculiarly true of sensual sins; but it is not coupled with them by a *καί*, but disjoined by an *ἤ*, indicating something of another class. In the mind of the apostle, sensuality was inseparable from greed, unnatural craving for more, dissatisfaction with what was enough; hence the neighbourhood of the two vices. Let it not be even named among you, as becometh saints. The practice of such sins was out of the question; but even speaking of them, as matters of ordinary conversation, was unsuitable for saints; the very conversation of Christians must be pure. The exhortation bears on Christians in their social relations; had the apostle been treating of the duty of the individual, he would have urged that such sins should

never be admitted even to the thoughts or the imagination.

Ver. 4.—And filthiness; *aischρότης*, implying that such things are disgraceful, ugly, revolting, the opposite of *καλός*, fair, comely, attractive. And foolish talking or jesting, which are not becoming. This would be well understood in sensual, frivolous Ephesus; a light, bantering, jesting kind of talk, seasoned with *double entendres* and obscene allusions, very pernicious in its moral effect. There is no reason to suppose that the apostle meant to condemn all play of humour, which is a Divine gift, and which in moderation has its own useful place as a means of refreshing and invigorating the spirit; it was the jesting associated with ribaldry that drew his reproof. But rather giving of thanks. *Εὐχαρίστια* is somewhat similar in sound to *εὐπαρεσβεία*, jesting: the reason for putting the one in opposition to the other is not very apparent; the meaning seems to be that, in place of giving vent to lively feelings in frivolous talk and jesting, it is better for Christians to do so by pouring out their hearts in thanksgivings to God for all his goodness.

Ver. 5.—For this ye know well; an appeal to their own consciences, made confidently, as beyond all doubt. That no fornicator, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom. Covetousness, the twin-brother sin of uncleanness, is denounced as idolatry. It is worshipping the creature more than the Creator, depending on vast stores of earthly substance in place of the favour and blessing of God. It must receive the doom of the idolater; instead of inheriting the kingdom, he must die the death. The doom in this verse is not future, but present—not *shall have*, but *hath*, inheritance, etc. (comp. ch. i. 11, 18). The lust of greed overreaches itself; it loses all that is truly worth having; it may have this and that—lands, houses, and goods—but it has not one scrap in the kingdom. Of Christ and God. The two are united in the closest way, as equals, implying the divinity of Christ and his oneness with the Father in the administration of the kingdom.

Ver. 6.—Let no man deceive you with empty words. No man, whether pagan or nominal Christian: the pagan defending a life of pleasure as the only thing to be had with even a smack of good in it; the Christian mitigating pleasant sins, saying that the young must have an outlet for their warm feelings, that men in business must put all their soul into it, and that life must be brightened by a little mirth and jollity. As opposed to what the apostle has laid down (ver. 5), such words are empty, destitute of all solidity or truth. For on account of these things the wrath of God cometh on the

children of disobedience. The sophistry is swept away by an awful fact—the wrath cometh, is coming, and will come too in the future life. It comes in the form of natural punishment, Nature avenging her broken laws by deadly diseases; in the form, too, of disappointment, remorse, desolation of soul; and in the form of judgments, like that which befell Sodom and Gomorrah, or the sword which never departed from David's house.

Ver. 7.—Be not ye therefore partakers with them. If you are partakers of their sins, you must be of their punishments too. Refuse all partnership, therefore. Your natural instincts recoil from partnership in punishment; let your spiritual instincts recoil from partnership in sin.

Ver. 8.—For ye were once darkness, but are now light in the Lord. Another expressive "but." To make the contrast more emphatic, it is not said, "ye were in darkness, but are now in light;" but, "ye were darkness itself, and are now light itself," and this last is explained by the usual formula, "in the Lord." There was a celebrated Ephesian philosopher, Alexander, who was called "The Light;" but not from that source had the light come. The idea of *light-giving* is also involved in their being light. "Arise, shine, for thy light is come." Walk as children of light. Another expressive image, denoting close connection with light, as if they were actually born of it; hence their lives should be full of it. The figure connecting darkness with sin and light with purity, common to all languages, underlies the exhortation.

Ver. 9.—For the fruit of light is [shown] in all goodness and righteousness and truth. The exhortation is confirmed by this statement of what is the natural result of light—goodness, the disposition that leads to good works; righteousness, rectitude, or integrity, which is most careful against all disorder and injustice, and renders to all their due, and especially to God the things that are God's; and truth, meaning a regard for truth in every form and way—believing it, reverencing it, speaking it, acting according to it, hoping and rejoicing in it, being sincere and honest, not false or treacherous.

Ver. 10.—Proving what is well-pleasing to the Lord. A general rule applicable to the whole walk. To prove is to ascertain by test and experiment. Our whole walk should be directed to finding out what things are pleasing to Christ, rejecting at once everything that is not so, and clinging to all that is. We are not to follow the tradition of our people, and not to take a vague view of duty; we are to prove the matter, to put it to the test. For the supreme practical rule of the Christian's life must be to please Christ.

Ver. 11.—And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness. The point of this exhortation is in the adjective "unfruitful." The works of darkness are unfruitful: they produce no goodness, give rise to no satisfaction, to no moral results that are "a joy for ever;" or, if fruit they have, it is shame, remorse, despair. Contrast this with the renovating, satisfying, joy-producing, fruits of righteousness. But rather even reprove them. Do not be content with a passive attitude towards them, but take the aggressive and expose their wickedness, whether in public or in the domestic circle. A testimony has to be lifted up against ways that are so shameful and that bring down the wrath of God.

Ver. 12.—For the things that are done by them in secret it is a shame even to speak of. The groves of Ephesus were notorious for the shameful of lust. To speak of such deeds was not only wrong, but shameful; so extreme is the delicacy which Christianity fosters. Too much pains cannot be taken, by parents, masters of schools, and others, to foster this delicacy among the young—to exclude from conversation the faintest touch of what is unbecoming.

Ver. 13.—But all things when they are reprov'd are made manifest by the light. As, for instance, when our Lord reprov'd the hypocrisy of the Pharisees—their practices had not seem'd to the disciples very evil before, but when Christ threw on them the pure light of truth, they were made manifest in their true character—they appear'd and they still appear, odious. A just reproof places evil in a light that shows its true character. For everything which is made manifest is light. Literally, this is a truism; anything shone on is no longer dark, but light. The nearest approach to this, morally, is that light has a transforming power; when the light of the gospel shines on anything dark or evil, it transforms it into what is light or good. This is not uniformly true; all the light of heaven turned on hell would not make it morally light; but it is the general property and tendency of moral light to transform. The exhortation would thus mean—Use your light to reprove what is evil or dark, for not only will the true character of the evil thereby be made apparent, but your light will have a transforming power. But if this were the meaning, we should expect in the end of the verse, not *ὅς ἐστι*, but *ὅς γίνεται*, to denote this transformation. The rendering of A.V., giving to *φανερὸν* an active meaning ("whatsoever doth make manifest is light"), is rejected by most grammarians, as not being consistent with the usage of the word. The meaning which that rendering gives is this: "Light is the

element which makes all clear." We should thus have in the latter clause a proposition, affirming as universal what in the former clause is affirmed of one particular case; "things reprov'd are made manifest by the light, for it is only light that makes things clear." The exhortation to reprove would thus be confirmed by the consideration that the only way of making immoral things appear in their proper character is to let in on them the light of the gospel. The great practical point is that *Christians ought to let in and diffuse the light*.

Ver. 14.—Therefore he saith, *Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light*. This is evidently intended to give an additional impulse to the Ephesians to walk as children of the light; but a difficulty arises as to the source of the quotation. There is no difficulty with the formula, "he saith," which, like the same expression in ch. iv. 8, is clearly to be referred to God. But no such words occur in the Old Testament. The passage that comes nearest to them is Isa. lx. 1, "Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord hath risen upon thee." The simplest and best explanation is, not that the apostle quoted from any lost book, but that he did not mean to give the words, but only the spirit of the passage. This is evident from his introducing the word "Christ." It must be owned that the apostle makes a very free use of the prophet's words. But the fundamental idea in the prophecy is, that when the Church gets the light of heaven, she is not to lie still, as if she were asleep or dead, but is to be active, is to make use of the light, is to use it for illuminating the world. The apostle maintains that the Ephesian Church had got the light of heaven; she, therefore, was not to sleep or loiter, but spring forth as if from the grave, and pour light on the world. The changes which the apostle makes on the form of the prophecy are remarkable, and show that it was to its spirit and substance rather than to its precise form and letter that he attached the authority of inspiration.

Ver. 15.—*Take heed then how ye walk strictly*. The construction is somewhat peculiar, combining two ideas—see that you walk strictly, but consider well the kind of strictness. Do not walk loosely, without fixed principles of action; but make sure that your rules are of the true kind. Many are strict who are not wisely strict; they have rules, but not good rules. Not as unwise, but as wise. This rendering brings out the force of *καρποὶ* and *σοφοί*: "fools" (A.V.) is rather strong, for it is not utterly folly that is reprov'd, but enay-mindedness, want of earnest consideration in a matter so

infinitely vital, so as to know what is truly best.

Ver. 16.—*Redeeming the time, because the days are evil; or, buying up for yourselves the opportunity*, the idea being that of a merchant who, knowing the value of an article and the good use to which he can put it, buys it up. The opportunity is the opportunity of spending the light and acting according to it; and the reason assigned, "because the days are evil," indicates that, owing to the prevalence of evil, there is much need for the light over which the Christian has control. It may be hinted likewise that the prevalence of evil is apt to cool the love and diminish the zeal of the Christian; hence the need for special eagerness of spirit in the matter—he must greedily watch for his opportunity.

Ver. 17.—*Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what is the will of the Lord*. The "wherefore" bears on all the preceding argument: because ye are children of light; because light is so valuable and so indispensable; because your whole circumstances demand so much care and earnestness. "Unwise" is equivalent to senseless; "understanding," to both knowing and laying to heart, as in parable of sower: "When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and *understandeth* it not," i.e. does not consider or ponder it, "then cometh the wicked one," etc. The will of the Lord is the great rule of the Christian life; to know and in the deeper sense understand this, is to walk wisely and to walk surely.

Ver. 18.—*And be not intoxicated with wine, wherein is dissoluteness*. Drunkenness is suggested because it is a work of darkness; it is the foe to vigilance and earnestness, and it leads all who yield to it to act unwisely. It is the social aspect of drunkenness the apostle has in view—the exhilarating influence of wine in company, giving a rush of high spirits. *Ἀσωτία*, from *α* and *σῶζω*, the opposite of savingness, wastefulness, dissoluteness, or the process of being dissolved, involving perdition. Spoken of the prodigal son, "riotous living;" *the habit which sends everything to wreck and ruin*. But be filled with the Spirit. Instead of resorting to wine to cheer and animate you, throw your hearts open to the Holy Spirit, so that he may come and fill them; seek the joy that the Spirit inspires when he makes you to sit with Christ in heavenly places, so that, instead of pouring out your joyous feelings in bacchanalian songs, you may do so in Christian hymns.

Ver. 19.—*Speaking to one another*. Literally, this would denote antiphonal singing, but this is rather an artificial idea for so simple times. It seems here to denote

one person singing one hymn, then another another, and so on; and the meetings would seem to have been for social Christian enjoyment rather than for the public worship of God. In the Epistle to the Colossians it is, "Teaching and admonishing one another with psalms," and this has more of the idea of public worship; and if it be proper to express joyful feelings in the comparatively private social gatherings of Christians, it is proper to do the same in united public worship. In psalms and hymns and spiritual songs. The precise meaning of these terms is not easily seen; "psalms" we should naturally apply to the Old Testament psalms, but the want of the article makes the meaning more general, equivalent to "songs with the character of the psalms;" "hymns," songs celebrating the praises of the Divine Being, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; "spiritual songs" or odes of a more general cast, meditative, historical, hortatory, or didactic. But these must be "spiritual," such as the Holy Spirit would lead us to use and would use with us for our good. The two clauses correspond: "be filled with the Spirit;" "speaking in spiritual songs." Receive the Spirit—pour out the Spirit; let your songs be effusions sent forth from your hearts with the aroma of the Holy Spirit. Singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord; i.e. to the Lord Jesus. Some have argued that while *ᾠδῶντες* denotes singing, *ψάλλοντες* means striking the musical instrument. But *ψάλλω* is so frequently used in a more general sense, that it can hardly be restricted to this meaning here. The great thought is that this musical service must not be musical only, but a service of the heart, in rendering which the heart must be in a state of worship.

Ver. 20.—Giving thanks always for all things; this being not only a most Christian duty, but an excellent way to keep the heart in good tone, to keep up happy feelings—the duty not being occasional, but "always," and not for things *primâ facie* agreeable only, but "for all things" (see Job ii. 10; Rom. viii. 28). In the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father. God the Father is the proper Object of thanksgiving, as of prayer generally; but the thanks are to be given in the Name of Christ. That is, through him who has brought in the economy of grace, whereby for wrath we get blessing, for suffering we get reward, for misery glory; whereby, in short, the whole aspect of life is brightened, and even the greatest trials and sorrows turned into real blessings.

Ver. 21.—Subjecting yourselves one to another in the fear of Christ. The last of the participial exhortations depending on the general exhortation of ver. 15 to walk

strictly. Most commentators connect it with the three immediately preceding participles (speaking, singing, giving thanks), but are unable to find a link of connection. Better connect with ver. 15. Mutual subjection is part of a wise, circumspect walk, i.e. mutual recognition of each other's rights and of our obligations to serve them. In some sense we are all servants, i.e. we are bound to serve others; the very father is, in this sense, servant of his child. So in the Christian Church we are all in a sense servants ("By love serve one another," Gal. v. 15; comp. Matt. xx. 26—28; John xiii. 15, 16). This view is in harmony with the *humble* spirit of the gospel. Pride leads us to demand rigorously from others what we fancy they owe to us; humility, to give to others what Christ teaches that we owe to them. The one feeling is to be discouraged, the other exercised and strengthened. In the verses following we have this precept split up into its constituent filaments. The reading of R.V., "in the fear of Christ," has more authority than A.V., "in the fear of God." It brings to our mind the wonderful example of Christ in this element of character (comp. Luke ii. 51; Heb. v. 8). Reverential regard for him should inspire us with the same spirit (Phil. ii. 5—8).

Ver. 22—ch. vi. 9.—EXHORTATION TO RELATIVE DUTIES.

Ver. 22.—Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands, as to the Lord. Though Christianity emancipates and elevates woman, it does not release her from the duty of subjection (comp. 1 Pet. iii. 1—6). The relation to the husband is intensified in order to enforce the duty: "your own husbands," *τοῖς ἰδίοις ἀνδράσι*: as we say, "she deserted her own child." The "as to" denotes a *parallel* duty: as it is your duty to be subject to Christ, so also to your husbands (see next verse).

Ver. 23.—For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the Head of the Church. The woman was made for the man (Gen. ii. 18; 1 Tim. ii. 13), showing the Divine purpose that the man should be the head and centre of the household, and that the position of the wife, as wife, should be one of subordination. Parallel to this arrangement is the relation of Christ to the Church. In words, at least, all admit the headship of Christ, and the subordination of the Church to him. The Christian household, on a much lower level, should exemplify the same relation. Being himself saviour of the body. This is not said by way of contrast, but still by way of parallel. The very saviourship of Christ should find an analogy in the Christian husband. The husband should be the ever-vigilant and self-denying protector, guardian, deliverer,

of his family, though his saving power can never come near the high level of Christ's. A husband reckless of these obligations virtually ceases to have any claim on the subjection of the wife and the family. The very comparison of the husband to the Saviour implies that, while there is a certain analogy, there is a still greater contrast. This is implied in the first word of the following verse. Between the lines we read this thought: "Not that the parallel between Christ's saving function and the husband's extends to the highest things."

Ver. 24.—But [it exists so far as to enforce this exhortation] as the Church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their husbands in everything. Let there be a subjection in the one case parallel to that in the other, for such is the Divine will and purpose. Any subjection due to the husband must be modified by what is due to God, for as the husband may not require for himself, so the wife may not give to him, what is God's: God's will is paramount over all. Of the three wills that may be in collision, viz. God's, the husband's, and the wife's—the duty of the wife is to take them in this order, having regard first to God's, next to her husband's, and last to her own.

Ver. 25.—Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church, and gave himself for her. The husband's duty to the wife is enforced by another parallel—it ought to correspond to Christ's love for the Church. This parallel restores the balance; if it should seem hard for the wife to be in subjection, the spirit of love, Christ-like love, on the part of the husband makes the duty easy. Christ did not merely pity the Church, or merely desire her good, but loved her; her image was stamped on his heart and her name graven on his hands; he desired to have her for his companion, longing for a return of her affection, for the establishment of sympathy between her and him. And he gave himself for her (comp. ver. 2), showing that her happiness and welfare were dearer to him than his own—the true test of deep, real love.

Ver. 26.—That he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the Word. The immediate object of Christ was to cleanse her, and for this end he used the Word as a purifying agent, washing her by means of it. The difference between selfish and unselfish love is seen here: a selfish lover cares for his wife in his own interest—like Samson, desires to have her simply because she pleases him, and, in his converse with her, thinks, not of her good, but of his own enjoyment; but the love of an unselfish lover constrains him to seek her good, to do nothing that will hurt her and damage her in any manner

of way, but to do everything that he believes will advance her well-being, especially in the highest sense. He finds her polluted (comp. Ezek. xvi.), and his great instrument of cleansing is "the Word" (comp. John xv. 3; xvii. 5)—the Word in all its searching, humbling, rebuking, correcting, informing, stimulating, refreshing, consoling power. There is no express allusion to baptism, τῷ λουτρῷ τοῦ ὕδατος is explained by ἐν ῥήματι, "the Word" being the great sanctifying medium, and baptism a figure (1 Pet. iii. 21).

Ver. 27.—That he might present to himself the Church glorious. The ultimate end, to which ver. 26 is introductory. Christ both gives and takes the bride; he presents her to himself—the day of his espousals being in the state of glory (Rev. xxi. 2), and all the training of this life being designed to fit her for that condition. She becomes glorious at last through assimilation to himself (2 Cor. iii. 18; John xvii. 22). Not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing. The idea is that of a body perfectly free from blemish, typical of a soul perfectly delivered from sin—of a character perfected in all grace and goodness. But that it should be holy and without blemish. The same truth expressed in positive form, which in the preceding clause is expressed in the negative. Nothing could more clearly denote perfection of character—the full development of the character with whatever of variety may arise from differences in natural gifts and constitution, or convey a more glorious idea of the destiny of redeemed humanity. To be, as it were, the bride of Christ is a high destiny in point of condition; but it would be miserable if character did not tally with condition; this agreement, however, is secured, for the Church is to be holy and without blemish.

Ver. 28.—Even so ought husbands also to love their own wives as their own bodies. A new illustration is introduced here to throw light on the bearing of the husband to his wife, and the *ὅπως* seems to refer, not to what goes before, but to what follows (comp. in ver. 33). He that loveth his own wife loveth himself. His wife is part of himself, so that not to love her as himself is not only a sin against law, but a sin against nature.

Ver. 29.—For no man ever hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as Christ also the Church. To hate one's wife is as irrational as to hate one's own flesh, and as, on the other hand, men constantly nourish and cherish their flesh, protecting it from hurt, seeking to heal it when hurt, and generally to promote its welfare and comfort, so ought husbands to act towards their wives. In this aspect of the case, too,

the sharp eye of the apostle finds an analogy between the relation of the wife to the husband and that of the Church to Christ, expanded in the next verse.

Ver. 30.—For we are members of his body [being], of his flesh, and of his bones (the last seven words omitted in many manuscripts and in the R.V.). The reference is to the original formation of woman as narrated in Gen. ii. Her very name indicated that she was “taken from man.” She was taken from him and given to him. So the Church is taken from Christ and given to him. Taken from his body, sprung from his incarnation and his crucifixion and resurrection, the spiritual offspring of his humanity, and then given to him, to be his servant, nay, above a servant, his companion, friend, and confidant for evermore. If it had not been for the body of Christ (Heb. x. 5) the Church could have had no existence. No bride fit for the King of heaven could have sprung from the earth. As Eve came from the opened side of Adam, so figuratively the Church springs from the pierced side of Jesus.

Ver. 31.—For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife, and they two shall come to be one flesh. Quoted in substance from Gen. ii. 24. It seems to be introduced simply to show the closeness of the relation between man and wife; it is such as in a sense to supersede that between parent and child. The apostle (as appears from the next verse) has in view, at the same time, the parallel truth—the closeness of the relation between Christ and the Church; it too in a sense surpasses the relations of nature (comp. Luke xiv. 26; Matt. xii. 50).

Ver. 32.—This mystery is a great one;

but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the Church. The matter referred to is the typical relation between the marriage of man and wife, and the union of Christ and the Church. It is called a mystery, and it is not said, as is said of another mystery, referred to before (ch. iii. 5), that it has been completely explained. Some light has been thrown upon it, but that is all. It is implied that there is something of mystery in many of the relations between things natural and things spiritual, but that in the depth and grandeur of the subject, the mystery connected with the marriage relation is pre-eminent—it is “a great mystery.” The analogy of the wind to the Holy Spirit; the springing up of plants to the resurrection; the melancholy sounds of nature to the prevalence of sin; and many other analogies, present vague shadows of truth, the clear, full forms of which we cannot see. When the day breaks and “the shadows flee away,” such things will appear in a clearer light.

Ver. 33.—Nevertheless let each of you severally so love his own wife even as himself. The “nevertheless” refers to the unsolved part of the mystery: whatever may be mysterious, there is no mystery as to this, as to the duty of each husband to love his wife even as himself: that, as already shown, is clear from many considerations. And let the wife see that she fear her husband. Not, of course, with the slavish fear of one terrified and trembling because of a stronger being, but with the holy respect due to one to whom, by the will of God, she stands in a subordinate relation. The relation of Sarah to Abraham may again be referred to as indicating the true ideal of the relation of the wife to the husband.

HOMILETICS.

Vers. 1—14.—*The walk suitable to the children of light: no fellowship with sins of the flesh.* The fearful prevalence of sensual vice at Ephesus naturally led the apostle to dwell on it emphatically as one of the worst rags of the old man, a rag to be wholly and for ever cast away. But, indeed, there are few heathen communities where sensual vice does not flourish when men have it in their power to indulge in it. It is singular how universal sin is in connection with the irregular and disorderly indulgence of the bodily appetites. It would seem as if God made this a special matter of probation, for when these appetites get the upper hand, they lead into terrible excesses, and, by bringing disease on both mind and body, avenge the sin to which they have impelled. First, they tempt men to sin, and then, as if in heartless mockery, they scourge them for having sinned. We find here—

I. SINS OF THE FLESH DENOUNCED, with a corresponding sin of the spirit—covetousness (vers. 3, 4).

II. REASONS WHY SUCH SINS SHOULD BE RENOUNCED BY CHRISTIANS. 1. No such person has any inheritance in the kingdom of God (ver. 5). 2. The wrath of God cometh—is present and visible—for such things on very evil men (Sodom and Gomorrah, Canaanites, etc.) (ver. 6). 3. They belong to the world of darkness, and

Christians are children of light (ver. 8). 4. Christians, as living in the Spirit, should bring forth the fruit of the Spirit (ver. 9). 5. They should ascertain and follow only what is pleasing to Christ (ver. 10).

III. REASONS WHY SUCH SINS SHOULD BE REPROVED BY CHRISTIANS. 1. They are so evil that it is a sin even to speak of them (ver. 12). 2. The true character of such sins is seen by light let in on them (ver. 13). 3. The light has a tendency to transform (ver. 13), and by letting in the light that shows the odiousness of the sin you may be the means of changing the sinner; while you reprove you may also improve him. 4. It is for this purpose the Church has got the light—when the light is brought to her, her Lord calls on her to awake and shine (ver. 15). Such precepts and considerations have a wider bearing than Ephesus and its groves. Sins of the flesh flourish even in Christian lands. Young men! lay these things to heart; fear God and keep his commandments, and be not misled by any of the sophistry to which you listen; for they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts.

Vers. 15—21.—*Walk circumspectly, or strictly.* The apostle goes on to urge a circumspect, wise, and earnest life, closely conformed in all things to the will of God, fashioned according to that idea of wisdom which is set forth in the proverb, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." Nothing is of more value than fixed principles for guiding our life. One settled conviction may be of inestimable value; e.g. the conviction that nothing can come to any good in the end which is against the will of God. Whenever greatness is achieved in any sphere of life it is through the force of well-kept rules. Every great author, artist, statesman, has owed his success to certain principles of action to which he has rigidly adhered. It has been remarked that the puritan age was an age of convictions; ours is an age of opinions. But what we need is convictions, and pre-eminently the conviction that the only true, safe, and blessed rule of life is to follow implicitly the will of God. We find here rules for a careful Christian life, (1) apart, (2) in Christian society.

I. APART. 1. Walk circumspectly, or strictly, not carelessly. 2. Walk wisely, taking pains to ascertain that you so walk as to gain the great end. 3. Redeem the time, or buy back the opportunity (see Exposition). 4. Understand; i.e. lay to heart and follow the will of Christ. 5. Avoid intoxication and all wild excitement and unhalloved pleasure. 6. Be filled with the Spirit, and the holy, blessed emotions which he renders.

II. IN CHRISTIAN SOCIETY. 1. Cultivate Christian song, and make melody in your heart to the Lord. 2. Let thanksgiving have a special place in your exercises. 3. Submit yourselves one to another in the fear of the Lord. As Christians have not only duties, but also joys, belonging to their individual life, so they have both duties and joys belonging to their social life. What is most characteristic of the social duties of Christians is mutual submission; consideration of one another—of what is due by one to another, and still more of the loving service which one may be able to render to the other. What is most characteristic of their social joys is the element of thankfulness in which they flourish; they should ever live as those who in Christ have received mercies beyond all calculation; and they should make abundant use of song to give expression to such feelings and to deepen them in so doing. This joyous element goes a long way to give brightness to the social life of Christians; they will not miss the more carnal delights on which worldly men set so much store, but will feel that God puts joy in their hearts, more than in the time that their corn and wine increased.

Vers. 22—33.—*Duties of wives and husbands.* The Apostle Peter, in his First Epistle, after dwelling on the privileges of believers, strongly urges them to have their conversation honest or fair among the Gentiles, exemplifying, by the purity and beauty of their life, the excellence of the principles and privileges of the gospel; and then he branches out into three cases or relations that afford scope for this mode of life—that of subjects to their rulers, that of servants to their masters, and that of wives to their husbands and husbands to their wives. Though Peter and Paul moved in different orbits, yet, from the strength of the convictions held by them in common, and the guidance of the Holy Spirit in them both, they were led to enforce wonderfully similar

applications of the great principles of the gospel. Paul, like Peter, brings forward three relations, the only difference being that, in place of the relation of subjects to their rulers, he has that of children to their parents, and the corresponding duty of parents to their children. We have the clearest proof of its being the purpose of Christianity to purify and elevate the common relations of life. Much of the visible fruit of true religion lies in its making better subjects, better spouses, better children, better servants. Pagans were struck with the excellence of Christian women. The mother of Chrysostom won golden opinions by remaining a widow from her twenty-first year. "What women these Christians have!" was the exclamation of some. Christian women were wonderful missionaries in the early centuries by their devout, pure, and earnest lives; many was the pagan who, "without the Word, was won by the conversation of the wife." Such lives are doubly blessed—blessed in themselves, and blessed in their influence on the world.

I. THE WIFE'S DUTY. Submission to the husband as to the Lord (ver. 22). Reasons for this. 1. The husband is the head of the wife (ver. 23). 2. There is a parallel between the husband and Christ (ver. 23). 3. Even in respect of Christ's saving power, the parallel holds to a limited, though very limited, extent (ver. 23). 4. The parallel is close enough to require the subjection of the wife (ver. 24).

II. THE HUSBAND'S DUTY. To love his wife. This is enforced: 1. By the consideration of what Christ felt and did for his Church. (1) He loved the Church (ver. 25). (2) He gave himself for her (ver. 25). And the object for which he did so. (a) His immediate object (ver. 26). (b) His ultimate object (ver. 27). 2. By the consideration of the closeness of the relation of the wife to the husband as his own flesh. This relation is considered (1) naturally (vers. 28, 29); (2) symbolically (ver. 30). The Church taken from Christ; given to Christ. The relation of the husband to his wife supersedes (in a manner) the relations of nature. The relation of the Church to Christ does so too (ver. 31). But the subject is mysterious (ver. 32). Yet one practical obligation is very clear (ver. 33).

The constitution of the Church, like that of natural society, involves mutual duties. Nothing can be complete unless each party performs his share. While it is the woman's part to be in subjection, it is the husband's part to love. The one balances the other. It is the duty of the wife to be subject even though the husband does not love, and the duty of the husband to love even though the wife is not subject; but how hard, difficult, almost impossible, such duties thus become! If the husband withhold love, he is wronging his wife, and altogether subverting the relation between them. Let it ever be observed that, while God has joined husband and wife together, he has joined the husband's love to the wife's subjection; what, therefore, God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.

HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Ver. 1.—"*Followers of God*." This is the high destiny of God's children.

I. THE DUTY HERE COMMANDED. "Be ye imitators of me." It is to do (1) what God does; (2) because he does it; (3) as he does it. The special point of imitation here is the duty of showing a forgiving spirit to one another.

II. WHY WE SHOULD IMITATE GOD. 1. *Because we are his "dear children."* Whom should children imitate but their father? Believers have had experience of their Father's wisdom, love, and power, and it is only an instinct of filial love to imitate such a Father. 2. *Because we were originally made in his image* (Gen. i. 26), and though that image has been marred by sin, it is to be renewed in the process of a Christian experience (ch. iv. 23). 3. *Holiness consists in the imitation of God.* "Because it is written, Be ye holy, for I am holy" (1 Pet. i. 16). 4. *The prospect of perfect likeness to God in the day of our Lord's appearing.* (1 John iii. 2.)

III. MEANS TOWARDS THE FULFILMENT OF THIS DUTY. 1. *Pray without ceasing*, especially for fuller measures of his grace, for larger disclosures of his love, for a deeper insight into his truth. 2. *Live continually as being under his eye.* (Ps. cxxxix. 6, 7.) 3. *Consider how others have followed him.* (1 Cor. xi. 1.)—T. C.

Ver. 2.—*The walk of love.* We are bound to love one another.

I. THIS WAS THE GREAT DUTY OF THE LAW. "All the Law is fulfilled in one word, even in this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (Gal. v. 14). "The end of the commandment is love" (1 Tim. i. 5). All our duty to our neighbour is summed up in love. Love supplies the motive-power to all right relations with our fellow-men.

II. THIS WAS THE NEW COMMANDMENT OF CHRIST. "A new commandment give I unto you, that ye love one another" (John xiii. 34). The love thus newly enjoined has certain important characteristics. 1. *It must be the love of deeds, not words.* "Let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth" (1 John iii. 18). 2. *It must be ardent.* "Above all things have fervent charity among yourselves" (1 Pet. iv. 7, 8). 3. *It must be self-sacrificing.* "We ought also to lay down our lives for the brethren" (1 John iii. 16). 4. *It ought to be a love well guided and controlled.* "This I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and all judgment" (Phil. i. 9). 5. *It ought to be a constant love like that of Christ.* "Having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end" (John xiii. 1). 6. *It ought to be a decisive test as to our condition in God's sight.* "He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him" (1 John ii. 10). "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren" (1 John iii. 14). 7. *It must be a love recommended by the highest examples.* "God is love." "If God so loved us, we ought also to love one another." We are to "walk in love, as Christ also loved us." "Let the same mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus" (Phil. ii. 5).—T. C.

Ver. 2.—*The pattern of Christian love.* "As Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour." Jesus was an example of love in his life, for he went about every day doing good (Acts x. 38). But it is to his suffering of death that the apostle points us for the most sublime and impressive illustration of his love. The words suggest many pregnant thoughts.

I. WHO OFFERED HIMSELF? It was Christ, the only begotten Son of God. It was his own voluntary act. "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (John xv. 13). "Who loved me, and gave himself for me" (Gal. ii. 20). It was love that prompted the gift of himself—eternal, infinite, free.

II. WHAT DID HE OFFER? Himself. Not the blood of others, much less the blood of bulls and goats. It was the offering of the body of Christ (Heb. x. 10).

III. FOR WHOM? For us, while we were yet enemies (Rom. v. 10). Whether he died in our stead or merely for our benefit is determined by the context, which represents him as giving himself "an offering and a sacrifice." This language marks the distinctly substitutionary character of Christ's death, just as he is himself described elsewhere as "a ransom for many."

IV. TO WHOM DID HE OFFER HIMSELF? To God. That is, with the design that God might accept the sacrifice. God had pleasure in the death and atonement of his Son.

V. IN WHAT MANNER? "As an offering and a sacrifice." The term "offering" applies to propitiatory sacrifices, as well as to free-will offerings (Heb. x. 18, 14). The additional word, "sacrifice," marks the clearly propitiatory character of his offering (Heb. vii. 27).

VI. WITH WHAT RESULT? "For a sweet-smelling savour." This phrase is applied to propitiatory as well as to free-will offerings, as, for example, to the burnt offerings of Noah (Gen. viii. 21). The sacrifice of Christ was well-pleasing to God, who could henceforth manifest his character "as just, and the Justifier of him who believeth in Jesus." The whole passage teaches us: 1. The unsoundness of that theology which sees in the sufferings of Christ, not a propitiatory sacrifice, but the love, faith, and submission of God's Son, as an example to man. This view is altogether one-sided. 2. The unsoundness of that theology which sees in his sufferings a mere exhibition of love, without that element of righteousness which made these sufferings necessary. If love alone could save, why should he have suffered or died at all? It is the atoning love that is the element of consolation to man. 3. The unsoundness of that theology which sees the redeeming power of Christ in his birth rather than in his death, as if the event of Bethlehem were transcendently more important than the event of

Golgotha. 4. That there is in Christ's love, not merely a force of argument or motive, but a very rule or measure, of the love which we ought to exercise toward each other in the bonds of the gospel.—T. C.

Vers. 3—5.—Warnings against impurity of all kinds. The sins here described were common among the heathen, and received no adequate check from their moral guides. Indeed, the old pagan world regarded them as things indifferent. They are, for the most part, sins against ourselves, as the sins condemned in the previous verses are sins against our neighbours. They are to be condemned on many grounds.

I. **THEY ARE EXPRESS VIOLATIONS OF THE DIVINE LAW.** (Exod. xx. 14.)

II. **THEY ARE DISHONOURING TO GOD AND HIS HOLINESS.** The corruption that is in the world through lust is inconsistent with the Divine nature (2 Pet. i. 4).

III. **THEY THWART THE DESIGN OF THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST,** which is "to purify a people to himself" (Titus ii. 14); "to cleanse us from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit" (2 Cor. vii. 1). Jesus suffered in the flesh that we should die to the flesh (1 Pet. iv. 1).

IV. **THEY GRIEVE THE HOLY SPIRIT,** whose office is to sanctify us (ch. iv. 29, 30). "That pure and holy dove will not dwell in a cage of unclean and filthy birds."

V. **THEY DISHONOUR THE BODY,** which is the temple of the Holy Ghost (1 Cor. vi. 18). They waste it as well as dishonour it (Prov. v. 11).

VI. **THEY WAR AGAINST THE SOUL** in every sense of the term—against its life, its aspirations, its happiness (1 Pet. ii. 11). They even darken the judgment and the understanding (Hos. iv. 11). No sort of sin so hardens the heart.

VII. **THEY PROVOKE GOD'S ANGER.** (Col. iii. 5, 6; Jer. v. 7; ch. v. 6.) "For the wrath of God cometh upon the children of disobedience." They subject transgressors to God's judgment, for "whoremongers and adulterers God will judge" (Heb. xiii. 4). And they keep them out of heaven (1 Cor. vi. 9; ver. 5). These sins of impurity are not even to be named among saints, who are to be pure in thought, pure in heart, pure in speech, pure in life. "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof" (Rom. vi. 12). To this end we must: 1. Avoid all the occasions that prompt to impurity: (1) idleness (Ezek. xvi. 49); (2) evil company (Prov. vii. 25); and (3) all other sins (Prov. i. 25). 2. Make a covenant with our eyes (Job xxxi. 1). 3. Watch over our thoughts (Mal. ii. 16). 4. Delight in God's Word (Prov. ii. 10, 16). 5. Continue in prayer (Ps. cxix. 37).—T. C.

Vers. 3—5.—Warning against covetousness. It is singular to find covetousness, which is often the sin of respectability, linked with sins of gross impurity. In reality it springs from selfishness, like these other sins. It has its origin in the same unholy root.

I. **CONSIDER THE NATURE OF COVETOUSNESS.** It is the inordinate love of riches, manifesting itself in several ways. 1. *In the eager anxiety to attain wealth,* without respect either to God's glory or our own spiritual good. 2. *In a sinful acquisition of wealth by extortion or fraud.* (1 Kings xxi. 2, 13; Prov. x. 2; xxviii. 8.) 3. *In a reluctance to use our wealth for good ends.* (1 Tim. vi. 17, 18.)

II. **HOW IS COVETOUSNESS TO BE REGARDED AS "IDOLATRY"?** It is to make a god of our possessions and to give them the homage of our hearts. All the essential elements of idolatry are included in this worldly disposition. The covetous man transfers to riches the love, desire, joy, trust, and labour which God demands for himself. His sin is all the greater because he knows that his god is no god. The warning of the text is applicable (1) to all whose thoughts run more upon earth than upon heaven (Luke xii. 22, 25, 29); (2) to all whose comfort depends upon worldly successes (Luke xii. 19); (3) to all who grudge the time that is spent in religious duties (Amos viii. 5). The sin of covetousness is, therefore, to be jealously avoided (1) because it is odious to God—"The covetous whom the Lord abhorreth" (Ps. x. 3); (2) because it is destructive to ourselves, in turning our hearts from God (1 John ii. 15), in filling our hearts with trouble and care (1 Tim. vi. 9, 10), and in keeping us out of the kingdom of God (ver. 5). Let us, therefore, estimate the world at its true value, meditate much on the fatherly care of our God (Luke xii. 31, 32; Matt. vi. 25, 26), act in faith upon the promises (Heb. xiii. 5), and remember the terrible brand of idolatry which rests upon

covetousness. It is a solemn thought that the most common of all sins is the most serious in God's sight. Yet there is nothing in the condemnation of this sin that justifies the theory of other-worldliness, or the neglect of the duties of common life.—T. C.

Ver. 4.—*Warning against unbecoming speech.* "Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks."

I. THERE ARE THREE VARIETIES OF UNEDIFYING SPEECH. 1. "*Filthiness.*" This term, though referring to acts as much as words, points especially to that obscenity of speech which is so disgusting to the moral sense of man. It is proof of a corrupt heart—for "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh"—and, more than anything else, makes the tongue "a fire, a world of iniquity," even "set on fire of hell." 2. "*Foolish talking.*" This is the talking that will have many idle words to answer for at the day of judgment (Matt. xii. 36). It is more than mere random gossip; it is the talk of fools which is folly and sin; it includes "corrupt speech" (ch. iv. 29). It is aimless, senseless, frivolous talk. Our talk ought to be full of reason and purpose, and bright with happy suggestion. 3. "*Jesting.*" The apostle does not condemn the pleasantry which lends such a grace and joy to conversation, but the wit that is allied to lewdness, brimming over in *double entendres*, and tending to demoralization.

II. THE APOSTLE'S JUDGMENT UPON THESE KINDS OF SPEECH. "Which are not convenient." 1. They are not so in themselves, for the character of impropriety essentially attaches to each of them. 2. They are not so in the speakers, who incur a still deeper reproach and prepare for themselves a graver judgment. 3. They are not so for the hearers, who, though they may be amused for the moment, are not profited, but rather debased by such conversation.

III. THE RIGHT USE OF THE TONGUE. "Giving of thanks." Christian cheerfulness ought to express itself, not in buffoonery or levity, but in thanksgiving and praise. We have much to be thankful for in our daily lot, and the thought of the indulgent kindness which supplies all our need ought to repress anything like foolish or scurrilous discourse. The language of thankfulness will minister grace to the hearers.—T. C.

Ver. 6.—*Divine wrath upon disobedience.* It was necessary for the apostle to mark the true nature and real end of impurity in all its manifestations. "Let no man deceive you with vain words."

I. IT IS NO UNUSUAL EXPERIENCE FOR WICKED MEN NOT TO SEE THE WICKEDNESS OF THEIR ACTS. The heathen regarded moral purity as a thing indifferent, and many of their moral guides palliated some of the worst features of pagan sensuality. They argued, as some have argued in modern times with a wicked levity of purpose, that sins of impurity have their origin and their justification in the very constitution of our nature, that they are not inconsistent with many social virtues, and that they are not injurious to others. It is one of the blinding effects of sin that men do not see their sin "through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart" (ch. iv. 18).

II. IT IS A MISTAKE TO SUPPOSE THAT THE WRATH OF GOD IS LIMITED TO THE PRESENT LIFE, and is merely entailed through the connection established by the Divine government between sin and suffering. There is such a connection written in the physical constitution of man. Sinners often in this life receive in themselves "that recompense of their error which is meet" (Rom. i. 27). The drunkard is punished here in broken health, in loss of substance, reputation, and happiness. But we are not to suppose that the laws of Providence which ensure these results exhaust the fulness of Divine wrath against sin. Scripture tells us plainly that sins of impurity entail exclusion "from the kingdom of Christ and of God" (ver. 5); that he will judge whoremongers and adulterers (Heb. xiii. 5), and that "the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone" (Rev. xxi. 8).—T. C.

Ver. 7.—*Separation from evil.* The apostle counsels believers not to be partakers with sinners. That is, in their sins, not their punishment. We are here taught—

1. THAT IT IS POSSIBLE FOR BELIEVERS TO PARTAKE OF THE SINS OF OTHERS. They

may do so by conniving at them, by not checking or punishing them, by not mourning over them, as well as by actually committing them. It is a dishonour to God, a lure to others, a mischief to ourselves, to stand in the way of transgressors.

II. **THAT BELIEVERS OUGHT TO MAINTAIN A VERY SEPARATE WALK IN THE WORLD.** They who have named the name of Christ ought to depart from iniquity (2 Tim. ii. 19). The cry to them ever is, "Come out from among them, and be ye separate" (2 Cor. vi. 17). There is no common standing-room for Christ and Belial in the Church. This does not countenance our separation from society; for Jesus, who was "separate from sinners," was always in society that he might win sinners to God. Our walk is yet to be as separate as it is to be circumspect, that we may stand apart from the plagues that will descend upon a doomed world.—T. C.

Ver. 8.—*The darkness turned into light.* As a reason for their not lapsing into vices from which they had escaped, the apostle reminds them of the darkness of their pagan condition.

I. **THEY WERE ONCE DARKNESS ITSELF.** "Ye were sometimes darkness." The phrase is very impressive, for it indicates a moral as well as an intellectual darkness. A hard heart is always linked with a blinded understanding. The two act and react upon each other, becoming alternately cause and effect. Men do not care to retain the knowledge of God in their thoughts, and God, in judgment, gives them over to a reprobate mind. The most enlightened natures of the ancient world were thus "darkness" itself. Athens, the eye of Greece, inscribed upon an altar the confession of its ignorance. The phrase, "darkness," suggests three thoughts. 1. *There is fear in darkness*—the fear of enemies, the fear of death, the fear of undefined agencies. Heathenism was full of fears. Death was a dark and terrible spectre. 2. *There is discomfort in darkness.* Light, its opposite, is the symbol of joy. 3. *There is danger in darkness.* Enemies use the nights for their deeds of violence. We stumble on a dark night; we fall down precipices; we take a wrong road. How expressive is the term as applied to the heathen!

II. **THEY ARE NOW "LIGHT IN THE LORD."** Conversion has wrought a radical change in the understanding as well as the heart. Believers are now light "in fellowship with the Lord" (1 John i. 3). There is more implied than the flashing into a human mind the knowledge of the truth; there is the renewing of that mind into the love of the truth which it knows. Otherwise the light would torment and not comfort. But believers, thus doubly furnished, may well be called "light in the Lord." The light of the sun does not stream down directly upon the world; at least, it comes to the service of men reflected from a thousand objects which receive it upon their surfaces; similarly the world sees the glory of the Sun of righteousness reflected in the millions of saints who are "lights in the Lord."

III. **THE DUTY OF BELIEVERS IN THESE CIRCUMSTANCES—"WALK AS CHILDREN OF LIGHT."** That is, as those in nearest connection with it. 1. *As light signifies joy, believers walk in the joy of an assured hope and a perpetual cleansing.* "If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, . . . the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John i. 7). 2. *We walk in the day and therefore should not stumble.* "The darkness is past, and the true light now shineth" (1 John ii. 8). We ought to keep an eye fixed on the straight path of duty, and avoid the by-paths that lead to darkness and ruin. 3. *If we walk in the light, we ought clearly to recognize the fellowship of all travellers to Zion.* "If we walk in the light . . . we have fellowship one with another." We are going the same way, inspired by the same hopes, meeting the same difficulties, arriving at last at the same home.—T. C.

Ver. 9.—*The fruit of the light.* It is shown or seen in all the forms of "goodness and righteousness and truth." The good, the right, the true, are only to be realized through the light that streams from the Sun of righteousness—"the true light" that "now shineth." The apostle says the fruit, not the fruits, of the light—as if to show that it takes all the three colours to make this light. Christianity would be a very imperfect manifestation of God if a single one of these elements were missing from the true light.

I. **GOODNESS.** It is spoken of elsewhere as a fruit of the Spirit (Gal. v. 22), and therefore is not mere beneficence, for it has its source in religious principle. This

excellence, in its various aspects of kindness and generosity, is kindled by the light that illuminates the understanding.

II. **RIGHTeousNESS.** The light which communicates a knowledge of righteousness to the mind also infuses a love of righteousness into the affections. This principle has a due sense of Divine obligation, and subjects the believer in every relation of life to the guidance of Divine Law.

III. **TRUTH.** This is a direct emanation of the light. It is religious truth, working ultimately to truth of character in all the genuine forms of Christian life.—T. C.

Ver. 10.—*The experimental test of the Lord's will.* As the ninth verse is a parenthesis, the apostle states that it is by walking as children of light we are in a position to prove "what is well-pleasing unto the Lord."

I. **CONSIDER THE TRUE STANDARD OF JUDGMENT AS TO RIGHT AND WRONG.** The believer is not to discover it in whatever may be well-pleasing to himself, but in what is well-pleasing to the Lord. It is the Lord Jesus Christ who is Lord of the conscience to regulate all our thoughts and all our actions. He has a supreme lordship over our life as well as over our death: "For whether we live we live unto the Lord." He is thus not merely Saviour and Example, but Director of his people in all the concerns of religious life. In difficult situations, therefore, the true casuistry of life is to ask—Will this action be well-pleasing to Christ?

II. **CONSIDER THE SUBJECTIVE TEST OF THIS DIVINE WILL.** Believers are enabled, in the clear light in which they walk, to discover the right path. It is through their being transformed by the renewing of their mind that they "prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God" (Rom. xii. 2). Similarly we learn that "if any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God" (John vii. 17). Light admitted into the understanding contributes to win the affections, and, the affections won, open wide the doors for the admission of more light. To know the law you love and to love the law you know is the best condition in which human beings can be. It is the union of clear light in the understanding with perfect purity of heart which distinguishes the kingdom of redemption in its final practical triumph.—T. C.

Vers. 11—13.—*Separation and rebuke the true attitude toward works of darkness.* The apostle thus describes the duty of Christians in reference to evil works.

I. **THE CHARACTER OF THESE WORKS.** "Unfruitful works of darkness." They spring out of darkness, they delight in darkness, they lead to darkness eternal. They are not naturally unfruitful, for they are fearfully prolific of result, but, in the light of God they are fruitless, because most unlike to the fruits of light, which are goodness, righteousness, and truth. They have "no fruit unto holiness," with an end of eternal life (Rom. vi. 22).

II. **THE DUTY OF SEPARATION FROM THEM.** This is a negative security. Christians are to stand apart from every evil work. There must be no fellowship with darkness. The friendship of the world can only be purchased at the cost of the Father's friendship (Jas. iv. 4).

III. **THE DUTY OF REBUKING WORKS OF DARKNESS.** This is to be done with the view of producing a consciousness of guilt and evil. The Christian attitude must be aggressive toward all the forms of sin. The rebuke is to be administered (1) with the lips, using all plainness, yet with prudence and meekness, so as to win Gentiles to the truth; (2) with our lives, which, by their holy separateness, ought to demonstrate the folly and sin of the world. A holy man is a visible reproof of sin.

IV. **THE REASON FOR THIS ATTITUDE OF SEPARATION AND REBUKE.** The heinousness of the sins and the necessity of making them manifest to the sinner's conscience. 1. *The sins are (1) done in secret, (2) and they are too shameful for mention.* Such sins would naturally shun the light of day, for "every one that doeth evil hateth the light" (John iii. 20), and could not be committed to language without risk of defilement to others. 2. *Yet they are not beyond cure.* The light of Divine truth must be let fall upon them, that they may be corrected. "All things that are reprov'd are made manifest by the light." There is a necessary connection in Scripture between truth and holiness, and the truth must first be applied to the ignorant and the wicked, that it may make way for the sanctifying agency of the Spirit. The sun-glass of truth held

in the hand of the rebuker will concentrate the light from heaven upon the conscience of the sinner so that he will see it full of all nameless lusts, and that very light will kindle a fire to consume them, unless the sinner, loving darkness, should turn away from the unwelcome light. Therefore let Christians remember the duty of pious and prudent reproof, which may not only put sin to shame, if not to silence, but lead the sinner from darkness to light, from the kingdom of Satan to the kingdom of God's dear Son.—T. C.

Ver. 14.—*The trumpet-call of the gospel.* Since it is light that manifests, there must be a rousing voice to awake the sleeper, that the light of life may be poured fully upon him.

I. THE PERSON ADDRESSED. "Thou that sleepest." Sleep is an apt figure to describe the sinner. 1. *He lives in an unreal world, full of dreams and fancies, quite unconscious of the real world around him.* The sinner dreams of safety and peace. He is carnally secure (Rom. xiii. 10; 1 Thess. v. 6). He may even walk in his sleep. 2. *He is wholly unprotected against danger.* If he knew of his danger, he would not be asleep. He needs, therefore, to be roused. 3. *His work is wholly suspended.* So long as the sinner sleeps in spiritual death he does no good, he gets no good, he cares for nothing. The figure of the text is, therefore, very expressive.

II. THE COMMAND ADDRESSED TO THE SLEEPER. "Awake . . . and arise from the dead." The first thing is to open the eyes; but we are not to suppose that the sinner has any power of himself to open them, any more than the man with the withered hand had power to stretch it forth before Christ said, "Stretch forth thine hand." It is the light which Christ is to shed upon the sleeper that will awake him. Just as the sun in the natural heavens, shining upon the eye of a sleeper, awakes him, so the beams of the Sun of righteousness end the sleep of death. 1. The cry, "Awake!" is the voice of love. A mother's love will lull her child to sleep, but if the house is on fire, it will take another turn, and startle the child from its slumbers. 2. The cry, "Awake!" is the voice of wisdom. The sinner loses much by sleeping. The thief pilfers by night. The tare-sower goes forth in darkness to sow his seed. If you sleep on till death, you lose everything. 3. The cry is a voice of command. Who commands? It is he who redeemed you with his precious blood. 4. It is a voice you have often heard—in sermons, in sickness, in sorrows, in calamities.

III. THE PROMISE TO THE SLEEPER. "And Christ shall give thee light." The light that comes from Christ can reach even the dead: "The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live" (John v. 25). The dead are not quickened before they hear his voice, but his voice causes them to hear and live. Christ will give you light to carry you out of the society of the dead into the companionship of the children of light, because it has already introduced you into the fellowship of the Father and the Son. "Let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and put on the armour of light."—T. C.

Vers. 15, 16.—*The circumspect walk.* I. ITS NECESSITY. The duty of reproof involved the necessity of circumspection in those who were bound to administer it. It may be a small thing to Christians "to be judged of man's judgment" (1 Cor. iv. 3), yet they cannot afford to disregard the force of public opinion. They ought to "have a good report of them which are without" (1 Tim. iii. 7). It is evidently with reference to onlookers that the counsel of the apostle is given: "Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time" (Col. iv. 5). When we consider the number of our enemies, the inconstancy of our minds, the strictness of the Divine requirements, and the jealousy our Divine Master cherishes over his people, it is impossible to walk acceptably unless we walk circumspectly.

II. THE NATURE OF THIS WALK. We are to "walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise." 1. *We are to have knowledge of the true way* (Jer. vi. 16; Matt. vii. 14), not as the fool, who misses the path. 2. *We are to follow the light that falls upon our path,* not like the fool, who turns aside to darkness, only to stumble in it (Prov. iv. 27). 3. *We are to foresee the dangers of the way and provide against them,* not like "the simple, who pass on and are punished" (Prov. xxii. 3). 4. *We are to have the Lord for our Companion by the way,* like "Enoch, who walked with God" (Gen. v. 22). The

fool seeks the company of the foolish. 5. *We are to keep in view the end of our walk.* "Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls" (1 Pet. i. 9).

III. THE APPLICATION OF THIS PRINCIPLE TO THE PROFITABLE USE OF OPPORTUNITY. "Redeeming the time, because the days are evil." There can be no wise or careful walking without a due consideration both of the value of time and of the importance of using our opportunities for doing good. 1. *The nature of this redemption of time.* It is not the mere effort to rescue the fleeting hours of our life from idleness, vanity, distraction, or excessive devotion to business, but an effort to lay hold of opportunities for doing good, to make the most of them, to allow no distractions of pleasure or life to stand in the way of their right employment. Jesus, in his extreme youth, was eager to be "about his Father's business" (Luke ii. 49). We are to do good unto all men "as we have opportunity" (Gal. vi. 10). We are to do good to our very enemies, after the example of that Father who "maketh his sun to rise upon the evil and the good" (Matt. v. 45). We are to use our opportunities also for receiving good, giving all diligence to make our calling and our election sure (2 Pet. i. 10). 2. *Reasons for redeeming the time.* "Because the days are evil." It is not because our days are few, though that is also a very good reason. (1) We have lost much time already (1 Pet. iv. 3); (2) we do not know how much time yet remains to us (Jas. iv. 14); (3) we have to give an account of all our time and opportunities. The reason assigned by the apostle is the evil of the days. Time must not be lost if the evil is to be quickly and effectively counteracted. The apostle does not hint the nature of the evil. Yet it is allowable to suppose that the days were evil, not in themselves, but by reason of man's wickedness and folly. (1) It is the evil of sin, rather than the evil of punishment, that is meant. (2) It is part of the evil that men do not see it at all. (3) It is part of the evil that they do not mourn over it. (4) It is part of the evil that they will do nothing to remove it. There is, therefore, all the more reason for Christians bestirring themselves in all seasons and spheres of action to counteract the evil of the days.—T. C.

Ver. 17.—*The right understanding of duty.* This is necessary to its efficient performance.

I. UNWISDOM. The thought of the apostle turns upon the misapplication or misdirection of our powers. "Be ye not unthinking and senseless." It is a sin against our rational nature, against our high calling, against the Lord, not to use our intellectual faculties with supreme relation to the Lord's will.

II. THE IMPORTANCE OF A TRUE KNOWLEDGE OF THE LORD'S WILL. Religion is a question of knowledge as well as feeling. Knowledge supplies the basis of feeling. Though Scripture tells us not to lean to our own understanding, it tells us to love with knowledge and all judgment. The knowledge is needed both to stimulate and to regulate the love. We must know our duties, dangers, temptations, in respect to every condition of life in which we are placed by Divine providence. It is the will of the Lord Jesus Christ which supplies the true standard of action to every Christian. The direction of our life is to be determined by his precepts.—T. C.

Ver. 18.—*Warning against drunkenness.* The tremendous sin of intemperance must have had a great hold upon a commercial city like Ephesus. It was necessary that Christians should beware of such an insidious vice.

I. IT DISHONOURS THE LAW OF GOD. (Rom. xiii. 13.)

II. IT DISTURBS THE REASON OF MAN.

III. IT ENDANGERS THE HEALTH OF THE BODY.

IV. IT INJURES THE SOUL. (Hos. iv. 11.)

V. IT WASTES THE SUBSTANCE AND TENDS TO BEGGARY. (Prov. xxiii. 21.)

VI. IT CONSUMES PRECIOUS TIME AND DETERIORATES THE CHARACTER OF WORK.

VII. IT IS THE CAUSE OF OTHER SINS. Such as swearing, strife, licentiousness (Prov. xxiii. 19).

VIII. IT UNFITS FOR RELIGIOUS DUTIES.

IX. IT KEEPS SOULS OUT OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD. (1 Cor. vi. 9.) Therefore Christians ought to avoid it, abstaining altogether from intoxicating drinks on the grounds of Christian expediency, and using their influence to rescue others from its ruinous fascination.—T. C.

Vers. 18—21.—*The true antidote to drunkenness.* There is a real contrast here exhibited between fulness of wine and fulness of the Spirit. There is an intensity of feeling produced in both cases. "There is one intensity of feeling produced by stimulating the senses; another, by vivifying the spiritual life within. The one commences with impulses from without, the other is guarded by forces from within." The one tends to ruin, the other to salvation. The Spirit-fulness "will keep the soul holy, the body chaste, and render the Christian fit for the service of God on earth and meet for the fruition and enjoyment of God in heaven." The exhilaration caused by the Spirit finds a threefold expression.

I. IN PSALMS, HYMNS, AND SPIRITUAL SONGS. 1. The heathen festivals were remarkable for songs of drunken revelry. The excitement of the worshippers found vent in singing. Christians are likewise to express their exhilaration in songs. "The hearts and spirits of good men are full of spiritual mirth and joy; they are as merry in the Lord as sinners in their lust; it is, therefore, lawful and laudable for them to express their mirth and give vent to their spiritual joy by singing." 2. There is a happy variety in such songs adapted to the various moods of the singers. We have the Psalms of David; we have the hymns composed by pious men like Zacharias and Simeon; and we have the compositions, for public assemblies, of those inspired by the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. xiv.). 3. There must be a harmony in these songs between the artistic service of the voice and the inner melody of the heart. Otherwise the spirit and meaning of the exercise will disappear. 4. Singing has always been a powerful instrument of promoting the spread of true religion (Reformation, periods of revival). 5. The singing here enjoined was for social intercourse as well as for the public assemblies of worship. Christians ought to exercise their gifts of song to spiritual ends.

II. IN GIVING OF THANKS. The heart which is filled with the Spirit brims over with thankfulness. 1. *To whom thanks are to be given.* "To God, even the Father." To God as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and therefore our Father in him. (1) Because it is only from him we have anything that is good (Jas. i. 17); (2) because it is only by him we are preserved from evil (Ps. cxxi. 7); (3) because he only is good in himself (Luke xviii. 19). 2. *How should we give thanks to him?* (1) By humble confession of our unworthiness (Gen. xxxii. 10; ch. iii. 8); (2) by humble acknowledgment of his mercies (Prov. iii. 6; Ps. cxlv. 1—9); (3) by improving everything to his glory (Prov. iii. 9); (4) by walking before him in all well-pleasing. 3. *What must we thank him for?* "For all things." (1) For our mercies—for sparing mercy, for recovering mercy, for mercies both received and expected. You cannot expect a blessing in them unless you are thankful for them; and the more thankful you are for mercies received the more reason is there for your expecting more. (2) For all providences—for prosperity or adversity, for health or sickness. The afflictions may be mixed with mercies, and may be the means of quickening our graces (Ps. cxix. 67). 4. *How often must we thank him?* "Always." It must be continuous. The heart must be kept in a constantly thankful frame, and not expend itself at mere intervals in acts of devout thanksgiving. 5. *Through whom are our thanksgivings to be made acceptable to God?* "In the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ." We are authorized to use this Name as our warrant for expecting the acceptance of our services as well as the fullest enjoyment of all spiritual mercies.

III. MUTUAL SUBMISSION. The effect of the Spirit's full enjoyment is to produce a humble and loving spirit among Christian people. 1. *The duty of mutual submission.* This principle, which is inconsistent with a perverse egotism or a self-opinionated superiority, has great and happy effects. It reduces the friction of human life, and contributes greatly to its comfort and peace. It has nothing in common with the servile and obsequious temper which is such a dishonour to manhood. Let us mutually condescend to each other. "In lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves" (Phil. ii. 3). "All of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility" (1 Pet. v. 5). We are not isolated units in society. "The essential equality of men and their mutual dependence lay the foundation for the obligation of mutual subjection." 2. *The element or sphere in which this duty is to be maintained.* "In the fear of Christ." This is not terror, but the solemn reverence with which we bow to the authority of our Divine Lord. Our submission is grounded in our reverence for him, in our fear of offending him by our airs of assumption or authority, in our supreme

regard for his holy will. Thus Christianity lifts the commonest duties and civilities and amenities of social life into the highest sphere, by connecting them with the supreme lordship of Christ over his saints.—T. C.

Vers. 22—24.—*The duties of wives.* In enforcing relative duties the apostle reminds us that religion takes hold of all possible conditions and callings of men. Religion is the great formative grace for men. We are set in a curiously various scheme of relations, in which the two principles of union and subjection are beautifully blended. The three relations in which these principles are seen in operation are peculiar to family life. The wife is first mentioned, then the children, then the servants. Religion rounds out the life of the family in a lovely completeness. Consider—

I. THE DUTIES OF WIVES. They are all summed up in the one word—*subjection*. It is singular that the apostle does not command the wife to love her husband as the husband is commanded to love his wife. Her love is commanded elsewhere (Titus ii. 4), but not here. It has been observed that what is instinctive is not enforced, but only what is necessary to hallow and direct our instincts. The husband is to be the head; yet he is not commanded to govern; but he is commanded to love, as the means of securing subjection or submission on the part of the wife. She, again, loves more naturally and more passionately than man; her love is no subject of command, it is taken for granted; and the apostle commands her to obey and honour her husband as the best expression of this love. Jeremy Taylor says, "He rules her by authority, she rules him by love; she ought by all means to please him, and he must by no means displease her." Her great duty, then, is subjection. Let us see what it involves. 1. *It is not servitude.* It is not like the obedience of servants to masters, nor even like that of children to parents. It is a submission that recognizes the husband's rule as just, tender, and wise. 2. *It is a wise and loving obedience.* Wives are "to be obedient to their own husbands" (Titus ii. 5). Sarah is quoted by another apostle as an example of this obedience (1 Pet. iii. 1—6). It was necessary to emphasize this duty at a time when Christianity gave woman a new position of dignity and privilege, and when there might have been a temptation on the part of Christian wives who had unbelieving husbands to assert an authority over them inconsistent with the original institution of marriage. There is to be no dual authority in the family. The gospel made them both "heirs together of the grace of life," as it made "both male and female one in Christ," yet, even in religious or ecclesiastical matters, she was not to usurp authority over the man, but "to be in silence" (1 Tim. ii. 12). 3. *It is an obedience within limits,* though the wives are enjoined to be subject to their husbands "in everything," that is, in everything within the due sphere of a husband's authority, for they are not to obey him in anything contrary to God and his Law. They are to obey God rather than man. 4. *It is an obedience fashioned in its conditions and spirit upon the subjection of the Church to Christ.* "As the Church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything." This implies that the wife's obedience is not to be forced or feigned, but springing naturally out of her affection to her husband, her dependence upon him, and her recognition of the just grounds of his superiority. 5. *It implies fear, or reverence.* "Let the wife see that she reverence her husband" (ver. 33), not despising him in her heart, as Michal despised David (2 Sam. vi. 16), but, like Sarah, calling her husband "lord" (1 Pet. iii. 6). The chaste conversation of the wife is to be "coupled with fear" to assert its own power.

II. THE REASONS FOR THIS SUBMISSION. 1. *The husband's recognized headship in the original institution of marriage.* "The head of the woman is the man" (1 Cor. xi. 3). Her obedience, therefore, while a religious duty, has its foundation in nature. (1) The man was first formed. "Adam was first formed, then Eve" (1 Tim. ii. 13). (2) The man was not created for the woman, but the woman for the man (1 Cor. xi. 9). (3) The woman was first in transgression. "Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression" (1 Tim. ii. 14). (4) The woman is the "glory of the man," but "the man is the image and glory of God" (1 Cor. xi. 7). 2. *Her dependent position.* As the "weaker vessel," she needs protection, while he far excels her in those qualities which entitle to command. Yet his superiority in these respects is consistent with his inferiority to the woman in gentleness, patience, sympathy, love, delicacy of sentiment. 3. *The fitness of things.* She is "to be subject to her own

husband." This expressive phrase points to the closeness, exclusiveness, and specialty of the relationship. It is thus a great mischief to unsex woman by denying or disregarding the superiority of man. 4. *The similarity of the relation to that between the Church and Christ.* "As the Church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything." As Christ is the Source of authority and direction to the Church, as he exercises both with meekness and gentleness, so is the husband to the wife. She is bound, therefore, to give him the obedience the Church gives to Christ, limited, of course, by the nature of the relation and the authority of God. She is not to identify her husband's claims with Christ, as if her Saviour could supersede or weaken the just authority of her husband over her. A religious wife loves and honours her husband all the more from the very intenseness of her love to Christ. Her very obedience, too, fashioned upon the obedience of the Church to Christ, becomes tributary to her influence over her husband. Christianity has lifted woman to a high place, but without unsexing her. The old pagan writer, Libanius, might well exclaim, "Oh what women these Christians have!"—T. C.

Vers. 25—33.—*The duties of husbands.* As the duties of wives are comprehended in the single duty of subjection, the duties of husbands are comprehended in the single duty of love. The injunction is significantly repeated three times, as if to indicate that it was essentially needed to correct or qualify his sense of sovereignty or superiority over her. Consider three points.

I. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF A HUSBAND'S LOVE. 1. *It is peculiar in its nature*, unlike the love of parent or child, friend or neighbour. "He is to love his wife even as himself." 2. *It is single, exclusive, and undivided in its object*; for the husband is to devote to his one wife all the affection of his life. "Rejoice with the wife of thy youth" (Prov. v. 18, 19). This fact is the condemnation of bigamy and polygamy. 3. *It is to be considerate and tender*, excluding all bitterness. "Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them" (Col. iii. 19). Husbands are "to dwell with their wives according to knowledge" (1 Pet. iii. 7); that is, with a due consideration to their condition as "the weaker vessel," and with a disposition to hide or bear with their weaknesses or infirmities. It is to be a love that will make it unnecessary for the husband ever to command his wife. The gospel counterpart of "Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands," is not "Husbands, command your wives," but "love your wives." 4. *It is to be mutual.* The wife's love is presupposed, though elsewhere it is expressly commanded (Titus ii. 4). The husband is to love her as she loves him. The rightful confidence and sympathy of married life are impossible without mutual affection. All marriages of convenience or self-interest are thus condemned. Love must be the basis of marriage. 5. *It is to be constant and lasting*, notwithstanding all the weaknesses or failings of the wife.

II. THE METHODS IN WHICH THIS LOVE IS TO FIND EXPRESSION. 1. *In providing for the temporal support of a wife.* The husband is to "nourish and cherish" his wife. He that provideth not for his own is worse than an unbeliever (1 Tim. v. 3). 2. *He must consult her happiness and pleasure*; for "he that is married is to care that he may please his wife" (1 Cor. vii. 33). 3. *He must protect her life, her honour, her good name*; for she is "the weaker vessel." He must "give honour to the wife" (1 Pet. iii. 7). 4. *He is to seek her spiritual welfare.* He is to pray for her and with her, remembering that she is an heir with him of the grace of life, "that your prayers be not hindered."

III. THE REASONS FOR THIS COMMAND. 1. *The original law of marriage.* "For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife, and the twain shall become one flesh." The union implies such an identification of interest, property, and relationship to the world as to make them almost one person. 2. *The wife is the husband's other self.* She is not only one flesh with himself, but she is his very body. "No man ever yet hated his own flesh," except the fanatics of ascetic devotion. 3. *The help, comfort, and blessing she brings to him.* She is given to him as "an helpmeet"; she is his companion. "Yet she is thy companion and the wife of thy covenant" (Mal. ii. 14). The heart of the husband "safely trusts in her" (Prov. xii. 4). 4. *She is the weaker vessel.* A spirit of chivalry ought to surround her with the shield of protecting love. 5. *She is "the glory of the man"* (1 Cor. xi. 7)—his honour and ornament and delight. 6. *His union with her is typical of the blessed union that exists*

between Christ and the Church. All the love and self-sacrifice and service which Christ expended upon the Church supply the type of a husband's duty to his wife.—T. C.

Vers. 25—32.—*The union between Christ and the Church.* The apostle unites, with an exposition of the duties of conjugal life, a very impressive statement of the nature of the union between Christ and the Church. This statement is exceedingly important, quite irrespective of its supplying an illustration of the ground and measure of a husband's affection for his wife. There are three truths here exhibited respecting the union of Christ and his Church.

I. CHRIST IS THE HEAD OF THE CHURCH AS WELL AS THE SAVIOUR OF THE BODY. He not only saves the Church, but governs it; he not only redeemed it by his atoning death, but is its continuous Preserver and Director, his life the very life of his people: "Because I live, ye shall live also."

II. CHRIST PREPARES THE CHURCH FOR HIMSELF AS HIS SPOTLESS BRIDE. 1. *The language implies that the Church was originally impure*, in fact, like the founding infant of the prophet exposed on the day of its birth, "to the loathing of its person" (Ezek. xvi.). If she had not been so, there would have been no need of Christ's glorious cleansing. 2. *It was through his death that Christ designed to make his people holy.* "He gave himself" for them (ver. 25). The language is clearly sacrificial. The gift involved a death of unutterable anguish, yet he shrank not from it in his unutterable love. It is the death which secures our ultimate holiness, for it reconciles us to God and secures to us the gift of the Holy Spirit. We are redeemed from the curse of the Law, that "we might receive the promise of the Spirit" (Gal. iii. 13, 14). 3. *The application of the atonement.* "That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word;" or, rather, "that, having purified it, he might consecrate it." The Church is thus set apart as his bride—"the Lamb's wife." It is thus that Christ sanctifies his people with his blood (Heb. x. 10; xiii. 11, 12), not merely by way of expiation, but by way of consecrating them to himself. The instrumental means of the Church's sanctification is "the washing of water by the Word." This points clearly to baptism, which is elsewhere described as "the laver of regeneration;" but it is baptism inseparably linked with "the Word." What is the spiritual import of this baptism? It neither regenerates nor secures the remission of sins. It is true that it is called "the laver of regeneration" (Titus iii. 5), and that remission of sins is connected with it. "Arise, be baptized, and wash away thy sins" (Acts xxiii. 16). But no more is ascribed in Scripture to baptism than to the Word of God. Baptism cleanses from sin as the Word does. We are saved by the truth, begotten by the truth, sanctified by the truth. But this language does not imply that the Word regenerates every one who hears it, or that it possesses a magic power to work saving results. "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God" (Rom. x. 17); but many who hear do not believe. Besides, salvation, as in the case of infants, is not linked inseparably with the Word. Historically, we know from the instances of baptism recorded in the New Testament that faith preceded baptism. Therefore baptism cannot regenerate. We believe, however, that baptism is both a sign and a seal of the covenant of grace, without believing that it has any regenerating power in itself. The Lord connects the blessings of salvation with a believing reception of baptism, just as he does with a believing acceptance of the Word. For the apostle is here speaking of the effect of baptism on the Church, not upon those who are aliens from its blessings. 4. *The design of the Lord in this purification of the Church.* "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." (1) *This refers evidently to the time of our Lord's second coming*, when he is to be admired in all them that believe. It cannot refer to the Church in this world, which, even in its best states, has many a spot and many a wrinkle. (2) *It implies that the Lord will himself present his Church* "as his purchased possession," and he and no other will receive the Church as his bride to himself. (3) *The condition of the Church will be one of spotless glory.* She will have neither the spots of sin or error to mar her beauty nor the wrinkles of decay, but will be "holy and without blemish." 5. *It was love that prompted and directed the whole process which is to have such a glorious result.* "As Christ also loved the Church."

III. CHRIST AND THE CHURCH ARE ONE MEMBERSHIP. "For we are members of his

body, of his flesh, and of his bones" (ver. 30). 1. This does not refer to the incarnation, for the assumption of human nature allied our Saviour to the whole race of man. This membership applies to believers only. 2. Neither does it refer, as Romanists say, to the Lord's Supper, in which, partaking of his flesh, we are flesh of his flesh. 3. It signifies community of life, like that which connected Eve in her creation with the flesh of Adam. We are elsewhere said to be saved by his flesh (ch. ii. 15), by his blood (ch. ii. 13), by his body (Rom. vii. 4), by the body of his flesh (Col. i. 22); and his flesh is called our life, and described as essential to eternal life. "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you" (John vi. 53, 54). There is, no doubt, great mystery here, and therefore the relation between Christ and his Church may well be called so (ver. 32).—T. C.

Vers. 1—16.—*The love and the wrath of God enforcing morality.* Paul is still working for the unity of the Church and calling for that watchful and pure walk on the part of the Ephesians which can alone promote it. He consequently brings to bear upon them the allied motives of the love and the wrath of God. And here we may remark, in passing, that the moralities which have tried to work themselves without the aid of Divine sanctions have proved practically powerless. No "independent morality" has as yet rendered any appreciable service to the world. We still need to be overshadowed by the Divine. Paul, moreover, begins with love, and then passes on to the fact of the Divine wrath. And—

I. THE LOVE OF GOD PATERNAL AND FRATERNAL SHOULD MOVE US TO MUTUAL LOVE (Vers. 1, 2.) The Ephesians are exhorted to follow their Divine Father as dear children. The constant love of the heavenly Father lights all the children on their way and rebukes their want of love. The first motive in this section is, therefore, *paternal* love a call to children of God to be loving like their Father in heaven. But the second motive is from the *fraternal* love of Christ, which led him out of consideration for us to "give himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for an odour of a sweet smell" (Revised Version). The self-sacrifice of Christ, we are here taught, was a very precious offering in the Father's sight. In the cross the Father for the first time saw perfect obedience carried up to the point and in the article of death. While in one aspect Jesus realized the Father's wrath on the cross, because the Substitute for sinners, in another aspect he was contemplated by the Father with the utmost complacency. Self-sacrifice is fully appreciated by our Father in heaven. Now, if God regarded with infinite delight the self-sacrifice of the only begotten Son for the sake of his brethren, there is no way in which we can delight our Father so much as by following in the Elder Brother's footsteps and being ready to sacrifice ourselves out of love to the brethren. What a spirit this would infuse into our Church life! Harless notices that in this passage Christ is really represented as both Priest and Victim. In the same way we may delight the mind of God in being victims and priests in our loving relations to the brethren.

II. THE WRATH OF GOD IS A REALITY TOWARDS THE COVETOUS AND UNCLEAN. (Vers. 3—7.) The idea that God will not be angry with wicked men must be dismissed from all minds. *Righteous indignation* against certain forms of evil is an experience of a most imperative and holy character. We should lose our reverence for a God who did not become angry with sinners. It was the more needful to affirm this truth at Ephesus, since the deities of heathenism were supposed to be addicted to such crimes as uncleanness and covetousness. Olympus was filled, by the impure imaginations of men, with a set of men and women who were for the most part fit for penitentiaries and state prisons. Morality received no backing from the mythology. But the thought that a God so loving as our heavenly Father is wrathful with the covetous and the unclean, and allows his wrath to burn against them, is surely calculated to wean men from such sins. There seems to have been insinuations in Paul's time that the Divine wrath against impurity and covetousness was mythical, just as such insinuation prevails at present. But surely the frightful punishment which these sins entail in the order of nature speak to the spirit of man about the reality of the Divine wrath. Not all the ameliorations of science can bring it about that men can so sin with impunity; the unclean are cursed in the very nature of things with a grievous curse, and the covetous suffer of necessity

in their pinched and miserly souls. God is an angry God against those who love sin, and our only course is to forsake it. Harless and Olshausen believe the word here rendered "covetousness" to mean in this connection "intemperance," the desire, not for gold, but for fleshly gratification—the making a god of the belly, and so an idolatry. Of course, if this sense be taken of ἀσχευία, it agrees better with the context and makes more emphatic Paul's appeal for purity. Do we make as much in these days of the Divine wrath as we should? As the love-pain of God, as one writer has called it, it is surely well fitted to enforce morality.

III. PAUL FURTHER SHOWS THAT THE DEEDS OF DARKNESS ARE UNFRUITFUL. (Vers. 8—11.) He tells the Ephesians they were once in darkness, and did these deeds of darkness. But they have come into the light which is shed upon our path by our radiant Lord. They must walk, consequently, as children of the light, remembering that the fruit of the light (so Revised Version) is in all goodness and righteousness and truth. Thus they would prove what is well-pleasing unto the Lord. In so doing they would have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but would rather reprove them. Now, in arguing that the works of darkness are "unfruitful," Paul is advocating morality on the ground of expediency. He has already applied the Divine sanctions, but he does not hesitate to back these up by showing that what God wills is good. Natural law endorses the Divine precepts. But this is quite distinct from the position that the natural law can secure obedience when it stands alone. All experience disproves this. Utilitarianism is not a sufficiently broad basis for a sound morality. But the expediency of moral rectitude is an important argument in its favour. Sooner or later a man who commits deeds of darkness finds he has made a mistake.

IV. BUT IT IS A PURE LIFE WHICH WILL REALLY REPROVE THEM. (Vers. 12—14.) It is thought sometimes by superficial people that accurate descriptions of the deeds of darkness will do something to disgust people with them. But this is Satan advising man again to become wiser by eating forbidden fruit. Paul's opinion is that it is a shame to speak and therefore to think of what is done by the sinful in secret. All the prurient curiosity which feasts itself like flies on foul corruption is of the devil. The true plan, therefore, is not to mention such matters. Let them be buried in oblivion, but let Christians awake from all lethargic slumber, and arise from the corruption of spiritual death, and in the light of Christ live purely. Thus shall the deeds of darkness be reprov'd. All that we have to do then is to carry in the light, and the darkness and its deeds will stand convicted before us. The Ephesians are to indulge in no scandalous conversation under the pretence of defeating the doers of the dark deeds; but they are to walk in the light of Christ and be pure, and let the sinners shall hide themselves before them.

V. TIME MAY BE REDEEMED BY HOLY LIVING. (Vers. 15, 16.) There has been some discussion as to the exact meaning of "time" in this passage. Harless is clearly of opinion—in which, as in most matters, he is followed by his French disciple, M. Monod—that "opportunity" (*der rechte Zeitpunkt*) best expresses τὸν καιρὸν. Paul is consequently anxious that in evil days, such as those upon which the Ephesians have fallen, they should be watchful and wise enough to "buy up eagerly their opportunity," and do the best they can for their age. This is by holy living. There is no other way of understanding the times and fulfilling our course in them. It will thus be seen that Paul appeals to the Ephesians, by both the love and wrath of God, by the expediency and power of a pure life, to walk worthy of their high calling. In this way he expects to enlist them in the great army of united and brotherly souls who are gathering round Jesus our King and Head. May we all respond to his appeal!—R. M. E.

Vers. 17—21.—*Inspiration, spirituous and spiritual.* Following up his exhortations about holy living, Paul now proceeds to the subject of understanding the Lord's will. In doing so he comes across the necessity which human nature feels for excitement of some kind, and, warning the Ephesians against the low excitement of wine, he

¹ Upon 'Redeeming the Time,' Saurin has two sermons in his tome viii. pp. 187—268; and Jonathan Edwards has a short discourse on 'The Preciousness of Time,' founded on ver. 16.

commends the high excitement of the Spirit, with all its pleasurable manifestations. In other words, he speaks of inspiration, but condemns the spirituous while he commends the spiritual. We have thus suggested—

I. THE NEED OF SOME STIMULUS FROM BEYOND OURSELVES. (Vers. 17, 18.) This is apparent from the fact that every one needs some excitement, as it is called, to keep him moving—something to “interrupt our quiet and ordinary state of mind with some more lively feeling, which makes us live more consciously and in a manner quicker than we do in common.” We all feel this. Now, this goes to show that we are not self-contained, no matter how much we desire to be so, but need a helping hand from without our personalities. Withhold food, and we perish. Withhold all stimulus from us, and we go of necessity to pieces. The whole question comes to be, therefore, where we shall get our required stimulus.

II. THE STIMULUS OF WINE IS ATTENDED WITH DANGER. (Ver. 18.) This is an inspiration which comes through sense. Now, all of us need a stimulus through our senses. Food is such a stimulus. A well-digested meal makes life move faster and quicker than fasting would. But the vinous inspiration leads to “riot” (Revised Version), and is inconsistent with that unity of the Church for which the gospel calls. We should abstain from such a dangerous stimulus as this, for its effect has been hostile to unity of spirit. But we might extend the precaution here to all those excitements of a sensual nature which exhaust and retard the spirit. As Robertson says, “Wine is but a specimen of a class of stimulants. All that begins from *without* belongs to the same class. The stimulus may be afforded by almost any enjoyment of the senses. Drunkenness may come from anything wherein is excess—from over-indulgence in society, in pleasure, in music, and in the delight of listening to oratory, nay, even from the excitement of sermons and religious meetings. The prophet tells us of those who are drunken, and not with wine.” Arnold, in the same way, bases upon this passage warnings against excess of bodily exercise, excess of intellectual exercise, excess even in our hours of work, excess, in a word, so far as it militates against Christian sober-mindedness.

III. THE INSPIRATION FROM ABOVE CAN HAVE NO ATTENDANT EXCESS. (Vers. 18, 19.) We may be filled with the Spirit, and no riot result, nothing which will do anything but foster the glorious unity. For, as Arnold shows, the gospel and the inspirations from God “at once excite and soothe,” so that the soul is kept in holy equilibrium, and the inspiration has its natural manifestation. 1. There will be *harmony in social song*. Poetry and music will become tributary to unity of spirit. The Holy Ghost will permeate by his harmonizing presence social praise. 2. The praise offered to the Lord will be *heartfelt*. It will not be a form of praise, but the very heart going up to heaven. 3. *Thanksgiving* will be mightily promoted. In the midst of manifold mercies our God in heaven looks for constant thankfulness from us. And, indeed, if we understand his love we shall be prompted to give thanks “always for all things,” in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ. 4. And inspiration will promote *mutual subjection in the fear of Christ* (so Revised Version). Thus it comes to pass that an inspired people proves a praising and united people. What harmony the society filled with the Spirit realizes! It is heaven begun below. What we need, therefore, is a Pentecost. If the Holy Spirit is pleased to fill us, then shall our discords vanish and our hearts beat in unison. **It is by inspiration that the unity of the Church shall be secured.**—R. M. E.

Vers. 22—33.—*What husbands and wives owe to Christ.* In exhorting the Ephesians to purity and enthusiasm of life, Paul is naturally led to the family institution and the relations to be found there. In the heathen world the relations between men and women were degrading. As Pressensé says, in his most suggestive book, ‘*La Famille Chrétienne*,’ “One found in the pagan family neither purity nor love. At the moment when Jesus Christ came, it had reached the last degree of degradation, and one can apply to the family itself those words of the Gospel, ‘He has come to seek and to save that which was lost.’” In this passage of Ephesians we have an insight into what Christ has done for the family. He has made of marriage the choice symbol of his own relation to the Church, and so family life is lifted into a Divine and spiritual light. The consideration of Christ for his people regulates the consideration husband should show to

wife; and the loyalty of Christ's people to their Master indicates the loyalty the wife should show the husband. Husbands and wives thus owe to Christ the purification of their relations and the sanctification of the home!

I. JESUS LEFT HIS HEAVENLY HOME TO BE UNITED TO HIS BRIDE, THE CHURCH. (Ver. 31.) It is evident that the parallel between the son leaving father and mother that he may cleave unto his wife, and Jesus leaving the bosom of the Father to be united to the bride, the Church, is what is in the apostle's mind. He says that he speaks of Christ and the Church (ver. 32). And in no more beautiful way can the self-denial of Jesus in leaving heaven be presented. Heaven had been from all eternity the happy home of the only begotten Son. He had lain in the Father's bosom and enjoyed ineffable bliss. But thoughts of marriage came, and the Father favoured the Son's idea. The morning dawned when Jesus must leave the homestead, and go forth to win his bride. Angels may well have wondered at the step and doubted its wisdom. But the step is taken. The home is left, and never again can it be what it once was. It is to be tenanted in due time with a bride, the Lamb's wife, composed of a multitude that no man can number, happy souls, each and all in deepest unity with the Son. We do not sufficiently appreciate the magnificent design of God in the marriage of his only Son, or the condescension of the Son in forming such an alliance as he has done. For no condescension in earthly marriages can more than feebly illustrate the condescension of the Divine Son in taking a human bride. Princes may marry paupers, but the difference between poverty and princely wealth is as nothing compared with the difference between human nature and what is Divine. But besides, the human nature was not pure upon which he set his love; it was sinful, lost, ruined. Imagine a prince, out of pure as distinguished from passionate love, singling out some poor, abandoned woman, and arranging for her education and health and elevation in thought and feeling, until at last he can fairly marry her and give her share of his glories and his home;—this is but a faint image of what Jesus the Son of God has done in selecting as a bride the ruined human race. He determined to win his bride, and so he took sinless human nature on him, and arranged for the union of once sinful, but through grace sanctified, human nature with himself.

II. THE CARE OF JESUS FOR THE CHURCH IS THE IDEAL AT WHICH HUSBANDS SHOULD AIM IN CARING FOR THEIR WIVES. (Vers. 25—33.) This is Paul's idea in this whole passage. Let us notice the order of the thought. 1. *Christ loved the Church.* This sovereign and yet most unselfish love led to the whole history of Christ's devotion. His great heart recognized the possibilities of love when manifested to lost souls, and determined to realize them. 2. *He gave himself for it.* Here was heroic love. In the nature of things husbands cannot give themselves to death for their wives and afterwards enjoy their confidence. But Christ was able to give himself for the Church and then to enter into union with it. But it surely shows that a husband who truly loves his wife should be ready to die for her. 3. *His self-sacrifice was to secure the Church's sanctification.* The Church was naturally polluted, sinful, degraded; but the whole history of Christ's devotion goes to show that he had our sanctification in view. While setting his love on sinful souls, he hated our sin, and provided blood to cleanse our sin away. And the sanctification Christ secures for his bride is to be perfect. She is to be without "spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing;" she is to be "holy and without blemish." In other words, the sanctification is to be thorough. And is this not to show that husbands who are true to their wives should keep their sanctification steady as a star before them? If a husband does all in his power to promote his wife's holiness, she can never be the victim of any unholy lust, but sanctification will characterize every relation. 4. *The love thus lavished on the wife is the love of a man's "better self."* To encourage this gallant and holy devotion to women, Paul further shows the compensation. The husband and wife are one, just as Christ and the Church are one. In loving his wife a man is really loving himself. It is self-love as distinguished from selfishness. It is the love of a man's "better self." A man is not expected to hate his own flesh, but to nourish and cherish it; self-preservation dictates such a course; in the same way husbands should love their wives, cherishing them as really their "better halves," or rather, "better selves," and feeling assured that a man's real interests all lie in the direction of tender consideration towards his wife. It thus appears that Jesus has furnished the true ideal of devotion. We go not

to belted knights or tales of chivalry for our ideas about devotion to our wives, but to the foot of the cross, that we may see in Jesus our perfect Example!

III. THE CHURCH'S REVERENTIAL LOVE TO CHRIST IS THE IDEAL OF WIFELY DEVOTION. (Vers. 22—25.) If Paul would summon husbands up to the heights of consecration by the example of Christ, he would also summon wives up to a corresponding return of reverential devotion. The Church, in her love and obedience to Christ, is the pattern of wifely devotion. Now, this leads us to consider how Christ rules in his Church. It is not an inconsiderate despotism, but an intelligent, considerate rule of love. His wishes are expressed with infinite tenderness. There is no fury in his commandments. The Church feels and finds that they are not grievous. And so believers are loyal to the Lord from the heart. Nothing is so delightful as to obey him. Suppose, then, that such a spirit characterized the wife's relations to her husband; that she saw in his every expressed wish the outcome of love, and obeyed him in the belief that obedience was her privilege as well as duty,—what Edenic homes men and women would possess on earth! And here it may be well to notice a fact brought out in Pressensé's volume already referred to, and it is this, that the New Testament has evidently entered into *many more details about the family than about the constitution of the Church*. The reason is obvious. The battle of the faith is to be won through the family. The family is God's unit. The Church is but a family enlarged; heaven, again, is only a family still more enlarged. God as a Father overshadows all! If Christianity ensures a holy family; if she wins families from worldliness to holiness of life;—then she may indeed lift up her head assured that redemption is drawing nigh. Christian homes on earth, paradise restored,—these are really the creations which we look for; and beyond the shadows a still statelier home arises in "the Father's house with its many mansions" prepared for the reception of the bride. The family on earth is sanctified that the family in heaven may be prepared for; the heavenly home is but the perfection of the earthly, if this is Christian to its core.—R. M. E.

Vers. 1—14.—*What to imitate and to avoid.* I. THE IMITATION OF GOD AND CHRIST. 1. *The imitation of God.* "Bo ye therefore imitators of God, as beloved children." The force of example is abundantly acknowledged. How much do most of us suffer from the low standard of opinion and practice with which we are surrounded? On the other hand, we have all felt what it is to come into contact with one who is raised above the common standard. By his strength of principle and generous sentiments and noble endeavours he kindles our aspiration. We should like to be what he is. The wonderful thing here is that God places us (which is of far greater consequence) under the influence of his own example. This is the only place in which we are distinctly called to imitate God. But the same truth is given expression to by Christ when he says, "That ye may be the sons of your Father which is in heaven, for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust. . . . Ye therefore shall be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect." Paul has just exhorted us to imitate God in his forgivingness. This imitation of God proceeds on what was referred to before—our being made after the Divine image. It proceeds on what is referred to here—God being our Father, and as such communicating a kindred nature to us. But for this kindred nature with God we should have no more conception of him than the brutes have. "The idea of God, sublime and awful as it is, is the idea of our own spiritual nature purified and enlarged to infinity. The infinite Light would be for ever hidden from us, did not kindred rays dawn and brighten within us." It belongs to the dignity of our nature (our being partakers of the Divine nature) that there can be proposed to us as our end *likeness to God*. It is designed that there should be a perpetual *unfolding and enlarging* of our spiritual powers and excellences. All our desires, hopes, efforts, are to be toward this. We are to be filled with the Divine thoughts, replenished with the Divine energy, warmed with the Divine love. As a child catches the very tone of his father, so are we to catch the tone of our heavenly Father. *There is a reason given for our being eager to imitate God.* We are his beloved children. Oh, the love bestowed on us! Sonship forfeited and then restored. What a contradiction, to be children peculiarly loved and not to seek likeness to God! But this leads on to the other thought. 2. *The imitation of God is also the imitation of Christ.* "And walk in love, even as Christ also loved

you, and gave himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for an odour of a sweet smell." Christ is *presented for imitation in his love*. We are not to understand that love was an attribute more distinctive of Christ than of God. For love is the greatest attribute of God. But we are to understand that Christ was especially the manifestation of the love of God. In Christ's love we see what God's love is. And to imitate Christ in his love is the best way to imitate God. And how does love manifest itself? Selfishness manifests itself in *isolation*. Love, on the other hand, manifests itself in *approachableness*. And this was the form which Christ's love took. He loved us so much as to come within human conditions—to become one of ourselves. And that (wonderful as it is) was not the extent of his approach to us. For, coming into our nature, he next threw himself into our position, he became our Representative. And he presented before God for us the offering of a perfect life. He especially, in his death, presented the sacrifice which had full atoning virtue for our sin. And this presentation of himself as an offering and a sacrifice to God (with the love that prompted it) was for an odour of a sweet smell. More grateful than to the sense of smell was the incense that the High Priest took with him into the holy of holies was to the heart of God the incense from his life and sacrifice which Christ took with him into heaven. It is an incense which continually rises before God with acceptance. The love which prompted to this and carried it out to completion is here proposed for our imitation. But how need we think of copying such a pattern? As well set down a child to copy a masterpiece of a Raphael or an Angelo? But let us take these things into consideration. (1) *He has made provision for our imitating him*. We are to be thankful to God, that, amid many bad examples and imperfect examples of good men, he has given us one perfectly good example. He has shown us that a life of the highest unselfishness is not impracticable in our humanity. If that had been all, the effect would only have been to fill us with despair. But the apostle does not encourage us to imitate Christ without pointing to his sacrifice of atonement. His atonement having been accepted for us, his perfect life has been accepted too, as that which with assisting grace we may now hopefully strive after. (2) *Compared with the example of God, the example of Christ is more circumstantial*. We know that God is love, but in Christ we see, under many conditions, how love operates. There is much detail upon which we can dwell and from which we can obtain help as to the details of our life. (3) *It is an example easily followed from its familiarity*. It was a perfect example; but not in the way of being apart from us, but rather in the way of being so close to us as to be easily understood. It was the time—

“When truth, embodied in a tale,
Did enter in at lowly doors.”

(4) *It was an example accompanied with the strongest incentive to imitation*. It was not merely that he taught us the reasonableness of a good life, and exemplified it; but he placed us under infinite obligation in dying for us, and then, having obtained this immense advantage, he comes forward and asks us to imitate him. (5) *We are to imitate him in his love by walking in love as he did*. This does not imply any unnatural straining; but, in the ordinary walks of life, we may find sufficient sphere for the exercise and growth of love. We are specially to imitate Christ in the missionary character of his love. We are to feel for sinners as in need of salvation. And we are to sacrifice much in order that those ends for which he died, and on which his heart is set, may be furthered. Let us, then, choose Christ as our Pattern with the whole energy of our wills. And let us follow him, not as perhaps we may have done, with a faint and yielding purpose, but in the full conviction that in following him we shall best imitate God.

II. THINGS TO BE CONDEMNED. 1. *The things that are not to be named*. “But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not even be named among you, as becometh saints.” The apostle points here to a fact which is sometimes forgotten, that there is a sphere of *that which is not to be named*. There are, for instance, books written, in which blasphemous things are said against the Saviour. There is this reason for not reading these books or not repeating blasphemous expressions contained in them, that they stick to and pollute the imagination. So the apostle teaches that saints are to be so cultivated in their sensibilities, to have such a delicacy of feeling,

that they will not talk about or hint at things connected with fornication and uncleanness. To take to them in conversation indicates a coarseness of mind, a polluted state of the imagination. That is the proper circle, whether family, or Church, or neighbourhood, from which the very name of such things is banished. We are surprised that *covetousness* is classed as it is here among the things which are not to be named. It is a sin about which strange things are said in the New Testament. It is said that *the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil*. The apostle teaches here that saints are to have such sensitiveness as to be repelled from the very mention of covetousness, as that which would pollute their lips. Think of a community educated up to that state of refinement.

2. *The things which are not befitting.* "Nor filthiness, nor foolish talking, or jesting, which are not befitting: but rather giving of thanks." There are things, the apostle teaches, which are to be condemned on the lower ground of their being improper, or conducing to no good end. By the first mentioned we are to understand, especially, that which is foul in speech. If we distinguish *foolish talking* from other faults of speech which are mentioned in this Epistle, we must limit it to what is *senseless* in speech. Fools have a way of talking in wanton disregard of what is rational, as though their rational powers were given them to be played with. The word translated "jesting" is sometimes used in a good sense. And Barrow has shown that there is a wit which is not to be condemned, but which is fitted to minister harmless delight to conversation, to expose things base and vile to due contempt, to reprove some vices and reclaim some persons, to confute errors that do not deserve solid confutation, to repel unjust reproach and obloquy, and to counterbalance the improper use of it. "It is bad objects or bad adjuncts, which do spoil its indifference and innocence: it is the abuse thereof to which (as all pleasant things are dangerous, and apt to degenerate into baits of intemperance and excess) it is very liable, that corrupteth it, and seemeth to be the ground why in so general terms it is prohibited by the apostle." "All profane jesting, all speaking loosely and wantonly about holy things, making such things the matter of sport and mockery, playing and trifling with them, is certainly prohibited as an intolerably vain and wicked practice." "All injurious, abusive, scurrilous jesting, which causeth or needlessly tendeth to the disgrace, damage, vexation, or prejudice in any kind of our neighbour, is also prohibited." "There are some times and circumstances of things wherein it concerneth and becometh men to be serious in mind, grave in demeanour, and plain in discourse." To what the apostle condemns as not befitting he opposes *giving of thanks*. There is a fitness in thanksgiving at all times ("giving thanks always," as it is said in the twentieth verse); but we are to understand that there is a singular fitness in the present connection. Thanksgiving is speech put to the best use (implying both seriousness and joyfulness). Let there be that, the apostle would say, and it will rectify and hallow all speech.

3. *The things which are not safe.* "For this ye know of a surety, that no fornicator, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, which is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God." The apostle is confident, as declaring what was attested by their own consciousness or practical acquaintance with the kingdom. It is the kingdom, not only of God, but of *Christ and God*, that is to say, a kingdom peculiarly associated with the cross of Christ, in which God shows his deep detestation of sin by punishing it in his Son. A kingdom that is ruled over by One who shed his blood that sin might be done away, cannot receive into it those who sin and do not mean to give up their sins. By their very antagonism to the whole spirit, law, ends, of the kingdom, they shut the door against themselves. We are surprised again that the covetous man appears in such company, and further here that he is singled out for special remark. "Nor covetous man, which is an idolater." There is idolatry in the other sins, that is, sensual pleasure is put in the place of God. And that may be the light in which the apostle views the devotees of pleasure as shut out from inheritance in the kingdom. But the covetous man is put forward as being an *idolater by pre-eminence*. Christ had already said, "Ye cannot serve God and mammon." The covetous man is not he who values money and seeks to serve God therewith. But, according to the thought here, he is one who *idolizes* money, values it in itself and not for God's ends, sets his affections on it, trusts in it; and, such being his relation to it, then it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for him to enter into the kingdom of God. It is true of the covetous man, as it is not true of the others,

that he can go on in his sin without incurring the opprobrium of men, and (partly from the difficulty of drawing the exact line between the right and the wrong love of gain) without suspecting himself that it is getting a hold upon him, and thus (without such checks as the others have) getting hardened in his sin, we can understand how he should be called by pre-eminence the idolater. *Warning.* "Let no man deceive you with empty words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the sons of disobedience. Be not ye therefore partakers with them." It would seem that there were apologists for vice, who, by their representations, tried to entice the Ephesian Christians back to Gentile ways. One of their representations was that, besides being pleasant, it was safe to do these things. So apologists for vice are ready to say this and many other things still. But "let no man deceive you with empty words." Such words have not as their contents eternal truth. "For because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the sons of disobedience." The sons of disobedience are those who (in their love for sin) disobey the gospel of Christ, by which alone there is deliverance from wrath. Refusing God's mercy, how can they escape God's wrath? They are not only lying under ordinary judgments or condemnation now, but they have yet to be dealt with for these very sins. "After their hardness and impenitent hearts they are treasuring up for themselves wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God." It is for those, then, who regard their safety (to bring in no higher consideration), whatever apologists may say, to refuse to be partakers with the disobedient. 4. *The things that are dark.* (1) *They are in their walk to be separate from their former state.* "Ye were once darkness, but are now light in the Lord: walk as children of light." They had been brought up in heathen darkness. It was that in which they lived and moved and had their being. And so, by appropriation, it was more or less embedded in their nature. But now, living and moving and having their being in the Lord, that is, in light (as contrasted with heathen darkness), and being enlightened by him through his gospel and Spirit, they were light. And such being their state, there was a call to walk as children of light. *We are to walk under the incitement of the glorious fruit of Christian illumination.* "For the fruit of the light is in all goodness and righteousness and truth." The philosophic triad is the true, the good, and the beautiful. The Christian triad as given here, and with which we ought to be familiar, is the *good*, the *right*, and the *true*. The good, or excellence of the heart, comes first; for that is first in God. Then follows the right, or regard to conscience, to eternal principle. And, lastly, there is the true, or regard to reality, not only in fact, but in thought (including the perfect in form). We are good in cherishing a spirit of love; we are righteous in doing our duty; we are true in conforming to Divine forms of thought. Having these three in us, then it may be said that the beauty of the Lord our God is upon us. *We are to walk in the way of proving what is well-pleasing to Christ.* "Proving what is well-pleasing unto the Lord." It is not what the apologists for vice say; it is what Christ says. It is that which is to be tested. It is implied that we have the means of *testing all things* in this light. There are many things which, put to the test by us, we must reject. They are revealed in our Christian consciousness as wrong. There are other things which we see to be good, not merely in the convincing light of truth, but in our own blessed experience in the doing of them we feel that we have the approval of the Master, we can even now hear his words, "Well done, good and faithful servant." *Our position, then, must be separation from darkness.* "And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness." The fruit of light is one, a glorious indivisible cluster. The works of darkness are many. The fruit of light is fitted to incite us. The works of darkness should deter us. They are unfruitful. They yield nothing that is worthy of the name of fruit, but only shame and death. (2) *They are to take an aggressive position toward darkness.* "But rather even reprove them." They were not to pass them over in silence or find excuses for them, but to hold them up to reprobation to the doers of them. As darkness was aggressive toward them, so were they as light (even for their own safety) to be aggressive toward the darkness. They were to lift up the Gentiles to their own position. It is added, as showing the clamant need for reproof, "For the things which are done by them in secret it is a shame even to speak of." It is added further, as showing the use or end of reproof, "But all things when they are reprov'd are made manifest by the light." "All those secret sins are laid bare in their real

moral character, unveiled and brought into distinctness before the moral consciousness, by the light of Christian truth, which is at work in your reproof; by the light, I say, it is made manifest—for, it is added, ‘everything that is made manifest is light,’ has ceased thereby to have the nature of darkness, and is now of the essence of light.” And thus, whether there was amendment or not, they would be making an inroad on the territory of darkness, making dark deeds stand out in the light. (3) *They are to take this aggressive position in consistency with the awakening call of God.* “Wherefore he saith, Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall shine upon thee.” The words are from Isa. lx. 1, 2, and receive from the apostle a Christian adaptation. (a) *It is a call to the child of darkness.* He is described as sleeping and dead, that is, in sin. He is insensible to the infinite importance of spiritual and eternal things. (b) *It is a call to awake and arise.* “Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead.” He does not let the child of the night alone. He comes to the sleeper and bids him awake, to the dead and bids him arise. And in his very summons there is an awakening, quickening power. (c) *It is a call to which a promise is attached.* “And Christ shall shine upon thee.” As if it were said, “The sun is already up, and will pour his enlightening rays upon thee.” So while we are sleeping and dead in our sin, it is true that the Sun of righteousness is up shining upon this world of ours, and we must up and catch his rays. Other men are up and doing their work under the light of this Sun; why should we be asleep and dead in sin?—R. F.

Vers. 15—21.—*Exhortation to exercise wisdom in regard to our manner of walk.* “Look therefore carefully how ye walk, not as unwise, but as wise.” The object to which we are to look is this—how we walk; in other words, the conduct of our life. In regard to this we are to be careful. At cross-roads there are sometimes finger-posts put up to indicate where the different roads lead to, that travellers may be at no loss. By looking carefully at these, they may save themselves much trouble and delay. So it becomes every traveller to eternity to know the road that he is taking, whether it is the narrow or the broad. There are finger-posts put up by God (in the Word) by which we may ascertain this and put ourselves right if we have to our grief taken the wrong road. But, seeing many do not make use of these finger-posts (do not look at them at all, or only carelessly, and thus exhibit great folly), the exhortation takes the negative as well as the positive form. “Not as unwise, but as wise.” The word translated “carefully” may also be translated “precisely,” and suggests this, that we are not only to look to the general correctness of our conduct, but to look to it down to the smallest details. It is only by thus going carefully over it in detail, with no foregone conclusion in our mind, but earnestly seeking God to search us and to discover to us what can be altered for the better, that we may be able to bring it out into some beauty of conception as a whole. *There are two things in regard to which we are to exercise wisdom.*

I. TIME. “Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.” The right management of our time is what we are particularly to look to. The exhortation is to redeem the time, that is, the time meted out to us on earth, in which to fulfil the Divine purposes. Literally, as given in the margin, we are to buy up the opportunity. The idea is that every moment has its own duty assigned to it. By doing the duty in the moment, we make a purchase of the opportunity, we turn it into a gain. We keep abreast of time; we avoid subsequent collision of duties. Whereas by not doing the duty in the moment, we contract debt, we fall behind. Instead of being the free owners of our time, we become slavish debtors to it. We are to be like merchants that seize every vantage that is going. Merchants, that travel about from place to place, do not get a vantage at every turn. They must lay their account by an amount of fruitless toil. But as heavenly merchants, we are in this enviable position, that every moment comes laden with golden opportunity. And we are to make our moments as they pass rich in all the gains of a good life. 1. *Good planning.* If we would redeem the time in its days, then we must anticipate them by wise economical arrangements. We must see them coming, and know how (God willing) we are to fill them up. The light that we have got from past days we are to put into some workable scheme for the days to come. To the excellence of a day-plan it is essential that we rightly proportion between the various duties of life (so that none are left out or do not get their proper place). *We are to keep up the right proportion between our severer and our lighter engagements.* It behoves every one to

have a task, a definite task, a task that taxes his energies. And if he does not have it by necessity of procuring his daily bread, yet should he have it by necessity of steadying himself. But it is not good for the bow to be always bent, and, if we manage well, we shall find time (and find it good for the doing of our task too) to relax ourselves in social enjoyment. *We are also to keep up the right proportion between our religious and our secular duties.* The latter, as a general arrangement, must take up a large proportion of our time. Six to one is the proportion indicated in the command. But in every well-planned life there will be found ample time for religious duties. Every day is to begin with an acknowledgment of God. It may seem utopian to expect morning devotions of one who has to be at his work at six o'clock. And yet it only requires a little taken off sleep or off the previous evening to secure the necessary time for God. And surely that is not too much to expect of any Christian in the interest of a well-ordered life. Morning devotions alone will not make the day good. Only when these have been conscientiously engaged in there will be felt to be an obligation to make the day's work harmonize with them. The evening may be utilized for self-improvement and ministries to others. And the day is to end, as it began, with God. It is only by such planning (in the name of him who is not the author of confusion), that we can expect to be like merchants accumulating a large fortune. 2. *Good planning followed up by decisiveness in execution.* There is a reason given for redeeming the time: "Because the days are evil." The very earth has taken a complexion from the degeneracy of the dwellers on it. And so our days are evil, and not such as they would have been under normal conditions. (1) *The days are evil because many of them are lost already.* We have known the degeneracy of the days in our own experience. We have lost many a good opportunity. This thought should act as a powerful stimulus to us. The apostle gives revenge as the last and crowning fruit of a godly sorrow. "Yea, what revenge!" he says. We are to take revenge upon ourselves that we have given so much of our valuable strength and time to our adversary. The workman knows what it is to make up lost time. When he falls behind with his tale of work, he has to work longer hours or to apply himself with double energy when he is at it. So, because our days have been ill spent in the past (before conversion and after conversion too) are we to work with redoubled energy in the future. (2) *The days are evil because of the many temptations they bring.* In our calm moments (sorrowful for the past) we think of spending our time in a certain way that seems good to us. But circumstances are not altogether with us. In a world where evil has obtained such a hold we must lay our account to our being solicited from without more or less urgently to depart from our plan. And what makes the solicitation much to be feared is that we are enfeebled from our past. If we had conquered obstacles as we went along, we should have been in a freer, stronger position to-day. But we have to drag our antecedents with us, like an old debt. We have undigested time, lying like a burden on our present energies. And though, with repentance and forgiveness, there is a sense of freedom and hope imparted to us, yet there is that which is to be conquered in evil habit. The only way of conquest is to deal rigorously with all interruptions of duty, as they arise, as those who would see the time redeemed, and not its losses added to. (3) *The days are evil because they are few.* We have time to make up (in the face of great temptations), and little time to make it up in. Had we a thousand years to live, the case would be altered. That would be a comparatively long period in which to make up what we had lost in thirty or fifty or seventy years. But when the days are evil in this sense, that we cannot calculate on a single day as ours, there is surely urgent reason for making up our losses without delay. Were all the interests of life crowded into one moment, were we told that upon the use we made of that moment depended our future happiness or misery,—how urgently should we be called upon to use it aright! What is actually the arrangement differs little from that. We really live on from moment to moment, not knowing which is to be our last. How wise, then, to seek to make out of every passing moment eternal gain! *Inference in which there is a recurrence to the general exhortation and a transition to the second particular.* "Wherefore be ye not slothful, but understand what the will of the Lord is." The teaching here is that Christ is Lord of our time. He has the sovereign appointment of the time of our coming here and the time of our going hence. All our undertakings are conditioned by this: "If the Lord will." He has sovereign rights over our time. To him we owe the firstfruits

of our time, as we owe the firstfruits of our substance. From Christ we get the whole plan of our life. The right management of our time, then, is to understand what the will of the Lord is, what Christ would have us to do. Seeking Christ's mind as to the employment of our time, we may expect that we shall obtain from him the strength necessary to conquer all the obstacles of our time, and to do the work of each day in its day, according as the duty of the day requires.

II. WINE. 1. *Dissuasive from false excitement.* "And be not drunken with wine, wherein is riot." It is evident from the language which is here employed that the wine drunk in those times was intoxicating. The apostolic advice must be regarded as even more applicable to drinks of stronger intoxicating qualities, which are manufactured now. It has its application to the intoxicating cup of the world in every form—to the intoxication of novel-reading, to the intoxication of keenness in business, to the intoxication of political excitement. This advice is not inaptly connected with the previous advice as to the right management of time. For it is when time is not properly filled up, when it is insipid, monotonous, or when it is filled up with wrong-doing, that there is the temptation to go after some form or other of earthly excitement. It cannot be said that the use of wine at all is forbidden by this precept. But there is certainly sounded in connection with it the note of alarm. There is put up beside it the red flag of danger. "*Be not drunken with wine.*" Drunkenness is the feverish desire, the morbid craving, for drink. The man with his noble powers becomes one huge, ever-seeking, never-satisfied appetite. It is a vice into which all classes are in danger of falling. If the idle take to drinking to relieve the tedium of existence, the overwrought take to it to make up exhausted strength. The young take to it from a love of excitement, and the aged and debilitated take to it to get new tone to their system. Men of a coarse nature take to it because they are incapable of higher pleasures, and men of fine sensibility take to it because it is a source of inspiration to the intellect. Men of social tendencies take to it because it helps good fellowship; and the saddest thing is that women take to it in private, because of a peculiarly sensitive frame and inequalities of feeling. It is a vice, then, which must be said to be of a peculiarly fascinating, dangerous nature. And let no one think that *he* is out of danger. Many of those who have fallen were not like falling at first. They did not take drink at all for a time, and their friends had hope in them that they would prove temperate men. And when (with other social surroundings in some cases) they began to make any use of it, they seemed to be taking it in a perfectly innocent or needful way, until the liking was formed, and they could not do without a certain and an increasing amount of drink. Now, let it be observed on what ground the apostle condemns drunkenness. It is in the line of his thought that we are to exercise wisdom as to our manner of walk. *Wherein, he says, is riot.* Drunkenness is a madness. There is a form of it to which this description is specially applicable, that which is known as *delirium tremens*. But even in its ordinary working it has a close resemblance to madness. It takes away from men the guiding power of reason, their self-possession, their self-restraint, and leads them to make such exhibitions of themselves as in their calm moments they would be ashamed of. "*Riot*," which is the word employed in the Revised translation, is defined by Johnson to be "wild and loose festivity."

"When his headstrong riot hath no curb,
When rage and hot blood are his counsellors,
When means and lavish manners meet together."

(1) *The word "riot" points to the prodigal manner of the drunkard.* The drunkard is prodigal of his *means*.

"So senseless of expense
That he will know neither how to maintain it
Nor cease his flow of riot."

He spends on self-indulgence what, if saved, would not only increase the comfort of his home, but would do much good besides. The drunkard is prodigal of his *time*, and thus violates the previous precept. The golden opportunity, which he might employ for informing his mind or instructing his children, he wastes in the public-house. The drunkard is prodigal of *the stuff of which his frame is made*. He wastes his physical

powers, takes away his clearness of head, his steadiness of hand, and his general vigour, induces disease and premature death (again violating the previous precept in throwing away years that in the paths of temperance would have been his). The drunkard is prodigal of his *worth to his fellows*, as the temperate man is preservative in this respect. When the Indian general saw disaster waiting on his country's arms, because, alas! in an emergency his regiments were found besotted with drink, "Call out Havelock's saints!" he exclaimed; "they are never drunk, and Havelock is always ready." The drunkard is prodigal of his *better feelings*. He deadens his home feelings. He does not value the society of his wife and children; he does not study their happiness; nay, he can see them want in order that he may be gratified. He deadens his spiritual sensibilities. And to his wife the most dreadful thought may be, not that she is set aside or the children neglected, but that for his idol he is casting off his God. (2) *The word "riot" points to the noisy manner of the drunkard.* Men under excitement are naturally demonstrative, and the drunkard is peculiarly noisy (and in that senseless) in his demonstrations. There is the noise of *drunken laughter*. "As the crackling of thorns under a pot, so [empty and shortlived] is the laughter of the fool." There is the noise of *drunken songs*. There is the song (of its own kind) which goes along with the drinking of wine (Isa. xxiv. 8). In the convivial song men tell each other vociferously of their freedom from care, of their good-heartedness (though there may be the spectres of poverty, of broken hearts, in their homes); or they may go to the lower depth of the indelicate and the profane. But how all such hilarity is out of place! "I will turn," it is said in the Prophet Amos, "your feasts into mourning, and all your songs into lamentation." And there is the echo of this in James: "Be afflicted and mourn and weep, let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to heaviness." There is the noise of *drunken brawls*. There is often, under the excitement of strong drink, a combativeness in words and a combativeness in acts. "Who hath contentions? who hath babbling? who hath wounds without cause? They that tarry long at the wine." It cannot be said that the apostle gives a decision in favour of *total abstinence*. He nowhere counsels total abstinence as a duty in itself or in relation to his times. At the same time, he gives no decision adverse to total abstinence. And we know that elsewhere he lays down a principle of expediency which, under certain conditions, makes total abstinence a Christian duty. Many good people think that these conditions exist in our country at the present time. They feel that the evil of intemperance has risen to such a height as to be a national vice (threatening our very position as a nation), and they wish to stand as clear of it as they can. They feel that there are endangered persons in their home, or circle of their acquaintances, or Christian congregation with which they are connected; and they wish to guard them as well as they can. They feel that they are in danger themselves, and they wish to be on their guard. And those who for such reasons as these can sacrifice their gratification are deserving of all honour. Let us see that (in the discouragement of drinking) our influence is duly on the side of temperance, that we are doing nothing to hinder others in their struggle (often painful) towards virtue and happiness. 2. *Persuasive to true excitement.* "But be filled with the Spirit." The apostle does not forbid all excitement; rather for the excitement which he negatives as false would he substitute a true excitement. (1) *We can be drunken with wine; we are to be filled (never can be drunken) with the Spirit.* There is warning connected with the use of wine, but there is no warning connected with the reception of the exhilarating influences of the Spirit. Our appetite is encouraged here: "*Be filled with the Spirit.*" We can never be too much abandoned to spiritual appetite; it can never grow in us to dangerous strength. In our carnality we know too little of what it is to be joyfully excited in our highest nature. Cowper tells us how he must have died with joy if special strength had not been given him to bear the Divine disclosures. And Jonathan Edwards tells how he felt as though rapt and swallowed up in God. Doubtless such a state (so far ordinary) was the foundation for the supernatural communications which John received in Patmos. Let it not be thought that this is too high. There must be something of this pure excitement experienced in us, if we would be cured of love for false excitement. We do not despise other cures; but this is the best cure for drunkenness, this is the all-effectual *positive* which we are to put in its place. (2) *The manifestations of excitement from wine are unseemly; the manifestations of excitement from the Spirit are pure and lovely.* (a) *Singing.* It is

known how to take advantage of harmonious sound in encouraging men to go into battle in "the shrill trump, the spirit-stirring drum, the ear-piercing fife." It is also known how to use it as an auxiliary in the service of superstition, revelry, and vice. And God, in his infinite wisdom, has seen fit to make use of the same instrumentality. In the old Jewish temple four thousand Levites, an entire fourth division of them, were employed in connection with the service of praise. God has inspired and enabled men to write psalms and hymns for the sanctuary; and he has also enabled men to compose suitable music for them. The singing of musical words, with or without an instrumental accompaniment, has a wonderful power in stirring emotion, in waking sweet and glad memories, and even in exciting the imagination in a certain vagueness and immensity which belongs to the sounds. As in a sea-shell pressed to the ear we are said to hear the sound of the ocean from which it has come, so in the sweet strains of music may we hear a sounding as from the eternal shores.

"Thou, Lord, art the Father of music:
Sweet sounds are a whisper from thee."

In an elevated mood (as here supposed) we naturally give expression to our feelings in song. "Is any cheerful? let him sing praise." (a) *Singing together*. "Speaking one to another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs." Men, under the excitement of the Spirit, delight to sing spiritual songs (as distinguished from the songs of the drunkard). Under this come the psalms in their grand historic position. And there also come hymns, that is, songs other than the psalms, which are used in praise. We are to speak one to another by means of these. Pliny records of the early Christians that they were wont on a fixed day to meet before daylight (to avoid persecution), and to recite a hymn among themselves by turns to Christ as to God. Luther greatly advanced the cause of the Reformation by his hymns, which were sung at the firesides of the people. How we can thus breathe the spirit of confidence, of courage, of hope, into one another! Having encouraged ourselves in the Rock of our strength, we turn and thus speak to our fellow-worshippers, one to the rest, or one section to another—

"Ye people, place your confidence
In him continually;
Before him pour ye out your heart:
God is our Refuge high."

(a) *Singing with the heart*. "Singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord." Singing together can only occupy a small proportion of our time. But in our other engagements we may be so full of trust, so free from care, that we sing with the heart. And the song that we sing all day is set to the Name of Christ, to the work of redemption.

"There are in this low stunning tide
Of human care and crime,
With whom the melodies abide
Of the everlasting chime;
Who carry music in their heart
Through dusky lane and wrangling mart,
Plying their daily task with busier feet
Because their secret souls a holy strain repeat."

(b) *Thanksgiving*. "Giving thanks always for all things, in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father." This is another beautiful manifestation of spiritual excitement. In our higher moods we naturally turn to God in joyful gratitude. Thanksgiving (to which the drunkard must be a stranger, for he abuses his mercies), like song, is to run like a golden thread through the whole of our life. In the depths of our heart we can be always thankful, though the language of thankfulness cannot be always on our lips. We have to thank God that a joyful thrill of the Spirit can pass through our being, better than of wine. We have to thank God for innumerable mercies.

"New mercies each returning day
Hover around us while we pray;
New perils past, new sins forgiven,
New thoughts of God, new hopes of heaven."

We have to thank God even for our afflictions, which are blessings in disguise; for though, in so far as they are evil, we are to be reconciled to them, yet we have to thank God for that which is good in them, viz. the merciful design, the accompanying comfort, the resulting benefit. And as we receive all only through Christ, so we are to give thanks to the Father in the Name of Christ. (c) *Subjection*. "Subjecting yourselves one to another in the fear of Christ." It seems strange that this should be mentioned as one of the manifestations of spiritual elevation. We can only think of it in this way. As men under the excitement of wine are apt to be self-assertive, heady, so under the excitement of the Spirit we have such a fund of joy in ourselves that we are content to fall into every position of subjection in which God would place us. The particulars of this subjection follow; it here only concerns us to note the peculiar feeling which is associated with it, viz. the fear of Christ. We know that from all the joy of his first visit as a youth to the temple, the joy of his being there about his Father's business, he could go down and be subject to his parents. And we know that, amid all the rapture of the transfiguration, he could yet think of subjection to the Father's will in his decease. As, then, we reverence Christ and fear to offend him, let us (with all that we experience of the higher excitement) be subject one to another.—R. F.

Vers. 22—23.—*Relative duties*. I. DUTY OF WIVES. "Wives, be in subjection unto your own husbands." 1. *Ground of subjection*. (1) *The husband represents Christ to the wife*. "As unto the Lord." The original of the position of husband is to be found in Christ. It is in this character that he appears in the forty-fifth psalm, in the Song of Songs, and in other parts of Scripture. He is the absolute impersonation of the idea (the Husband by pre-eminence); and what we find in the human family on earth is only a faint copy of the original. It is true, too, that the husband is not in the family in his own name. He derives his authority from Christ. He is there as representing Christ. He is there as though Christ were there. What, then, the wife is in duty bound to render to her husband, she is not to render to him simply, but to him as representing Christ. (2) *It has its foundation in nature. The natural relationship*. "For the husband is the head of the wife." It is not implied in this that the husband is superior to the wife in all qualities, but only that he is her superior in those qualities which fit him for being head. Especially his superior strength and self-reliance mark him out for taking the leading part. He is husband, or band of the house—what keeps it undivided and keeps it up. He has to come between his wife and the world, to shield her from its glare and its harm. While she is a keeper at home, he has to go out and work for her, that he may provide for her maintenance and comfort. It is therefore fitting that she should lean upon him and be guided by him. *The Christian analogy*. "As Christ also is the Head of the Church." The headship is a great doctrine for the Church, already taught in this Epistle. As the wife in her weakness and distrustfulness of self leans upon her husband, so the Church in her weakness and felt insufficiency is to lean upon Christ. Worldly powers may be hostile, but she can never be deprived of the protection of her Head. Protected by him, she must be dictated to by none, but must take the law, pure and simple, from his lips. *In the analogy there is an important difference*. "Being himself the Saviour of the body." It must very seldom have happened that one has made a wife of her whom he has rescued from a watery grave or other form of death. But it is true of Christ that *he has made a spouse of her whom he has delivered from everlasting destruction*. He is Saviour of the body, i.e. the Church. That makes his headship peculiar (without analogy in the earthly type), and gives him a peculiar hold on the obedience of the Church. 2. *Manner and extent of subjection*. (1) *Manner*. "But" (that is, though Christ is more than Protector, is also Saviour of the Church) "as the Church is subject to Christ, so let the wives also be to their husbands." The ideal set before her is that, as the Church deports herself toward Christ, so she is to deport herself toward her husband. It has this advantage (high as it is) that, by entering into the spirit of her relationship to her husband, she should be greatly assisted in subjecting herself (as her husband under some disadvantage must also subject himself) to Christ. (2) *Extent*. "In everything." The necessary limitation here is—in everything that he, acting in the Name of Christ, has a right to expect of her. If he were laying anything sinful or purely arbitrary and tyrannical upon her, she would be justified in resisting him (appealing from him

to Christ). But if it is within his right, and what he judges important, then (even when she cannot give her approval) she should be willing to fall in with his arrangement.

II. DUTY OF HUSBANDS. "Husbands, love your wives." As the husband excels in the governing qualities, so she excels in the lovable qualities.

"For softness she, and sweet attractive grace."

If it can be said that he has more *power*, it can be said that (by her pure and modest feeling, her deep tenderness and devotion) she has more *influence*. 1. *Manner. Christian analogy.* "Even as Christ also loved the Church." We are to think of the love of Christ here only under the special aspect in which the apostle presents it, viz. *his conjugal love*, or love of espousals. (1) *His devotion to his spouse.* "And gave himself up for it" (or "her," as in the original). "Israel served for a wife, and for a wife he kept sheep." Years of servitude he had to give for Rachel; yet they seemed to him but a few days, for the love he bore to her. It was a hard price he had to pay for her; but we read here of what was infinitely harder, of One who had to give himself for his spouse. He had to forget himself in humiliation and sorrow and death for her, and yet, hard as that was beyond all conception, it appeared as though it was nothing, for the love he bore to her. (2) *Purpose of his devotion.* (a) *Immediate purpose* (process of sanctification). "That he might sanctify it, having cleansed it by the washing of water with the Word." The language is taken from the ordinance of baptism. *The fact is pointed to that the Church needs cleansing.* Baptism goes upon the supposition that we are all by nature defiled with sin. It says this, "We are all as an unclean thing." The Church was in this state of impurity when the Son chose her for his bride. To this the words apply—He loved her foul that he might make her fair. Washed certainly she must be (as the bride used to be before marriage), to be fit for associating with the highest purity. *The blessed fact is also pointed to that there is what has cleansing power.* "By the washing of water," it is said here. It is the water used in baptism that we are to think of, and that water in what it signifies, viz. the purifying influences of the Spirit. As water washes defilement from vessels, from the person, so the Spirit washes moral defilement from our hearts. This washing of water must be accompanied *with the Word*. For the Spirit cannot purify alone, but only through what the Word reveals, especially that blood of Christ which is said to cleanse from all sin. (b) *Remote purpose* (result of sanctification). "That he might present the Church to himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." By this we are to understand that Christ is to have in the Church a bride of incomparable beauty. When the cleansing process has been completed, the Church will be glorious ("all-glorious" is the language of the forty-fifth psalm, and the effect of the description here), more glorious than any material substance can be, more glorious than the sun in the heavens. There will not be spot or trace left of her former defilement. There will not be wrinkle or sign appearing of coming age (such as comes to an ordinary bride). To make it more emphatic, it is added that there will not be any such thing, nothing whatever to mar her beauty. But still the description proceeds; she will be holy. Her beauty (as it will not be imperfect or fading) will not be outward, but will be the beauty of holiness. And she will be without blemish, so transcendently beautified that to add to her beauty would be (in things that are less)

"To gild refined gold, to paint the lily,
To throw a perfume on the violet."

At present the Son's bride has many a spot, many a wrinkle (her cleansing must still go on, her beauty needs bringing out), but the time is coming (in the Divine purpose which cannot fail, in the conception of Christ which must be realized) when she will be a fit bride for him. And then it is that, as is said here, he is to present her to himself. He is to leave it to no other (say, angelic attendants) to present her, but he is to take it into his own hand (notwithstanding the double character in which it requires him to act). And this done (the marriage an accomplished fact), then, as is said in the Prophet Zephaniah, he will rejoice over her with joy. He will rest in his love; he will joy over her with singing. *This, then, is the ideal which is put before husbands.* It

is what we could not have dared to have put before us of ourselves. It would have seemed profanity to have conjoined things so far apart. But thus it has been dictated for us by the Spirit of inspiration: "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church." The husband is to possess, to cherish, and to manifest devoted love toward his wife. And if his is the position of authority, yet is he (an all-requiring love being also his) to forget himself in services rendered to her. And specially is he taught from the high model that he is not to pamper his wife (or to be careful how to please his wife, as Paul puts the case of the married), but he is to regard her as given him for a higher end, and to seek that she may possess all spiritual beauty. 2. *Ground.* "Even so ought husbands also to love their own wives as their own bodies." The ground of the duty is that the wife is *one flesh* with the husband. There are two points (not immediately connected, but brought up afterward) which go to prove this. The first is that woman derived her being from man. Eve was taken out of Adam, and the language was used regarding her by Adam: "This is now bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh." The second point is that, in the marriage union, man and woman are said to become one flesh. "For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and the twain shall become one flesh." The wife, then, being one flesh with the husband, there comes into operation (in support of the duty of the husband) the principle of self-preservation. "He that loveth his own wife loveth himself: for no man ever hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it." *The Christian analogy.* "Even as Christ also the Church." Christ bestows a fostering care on the Church; and this is not only lovely, but it is *thoroughly natural*. For: (1) *The Church is one flesh with Christ by derivation.* "Because we are members of his body." Her spiritual being is from Christ as much as Eve's physical being was from Adam. (2) *The Church becomes one flesh with Christ in the marriage union.* Here the words of the marriage ceremony are quoted with the added comment, "This mystery is great: but I speak in regard of Christ and of the Church." The language, "one flesh," has a strangeness in its application to an ordinary marriage union, but the apostle is careful to let us know that he uses it in reference to the *mystical union of Christ and the Church* (by no distortion, for that is the archetype, or original pattern of all marriage, and, we must believe, was in the Divine mind when the words were uttered in Paradise). Shall we think of the Son leaving his Father's house and cleaving to his bride in human flesh? But we must not (as some have done) pry too curiously into it; for it is a mystery, and we must simply lay hold upon the great fact that it points to the union between Christ and the Church being so intimate that he loves her as he loves himself.

III. RECAPITULATION (order of duties inverted). *Duty of husband.* "Nevertheless [i.e. not to press the mystical bearings of the subject] do ye also severally love each one his own wife even as himself." It is again an ideal of very difficult attainment. What a fostering care is conjoined with his authority! And this to be Christ-like (in that fostering care which he is now bestowing upon his Church, and which he will one day bring to a mature result)? *Duty of wife.* "And let the wife see that she fear her husband." He may personally be deficient (in comparison with her) in those qualities which fit him for being head, but nevertheless she is to show deference to him in respect of the position which he holds. In the precept here it is supposed that he has Christian worth (which is what the representative of Christ should have, what is the adornment of his position). And even when a Christian wife cannot look to Christian worth in her husband, yet must she preserve reverence toward him, while at the same time seeking to win him over to Christ. *Two lessons may be learned here.* 1. *Marriage is a Christian ordinance.* It is not, indeed, to be raised (as it is by the Roman Catholics) to the rank of a Christian sacrament; but neither is it to be reduced to a mere civil arrangement. It is here associated with the sublimest Christian thought. This, and the presence of Christ at the marriage in Cana of Galilee, give it a thoroughly Christian character and throw a Christian halo around it of the brightest nature. 2. *It is not to be lightly entered into, but in a Christian manner.* Man and woman must belong to the Lord before they belong to each other, and are to enter into the married state that they may help each other to be more entirely the Lord's. A Christian is not at liberty to marry one who is not a Christian (even in the hope of making him or her a Christian). A Christian even among Christians is to seek from the Lord.

“And now, before the word we speak
That knits the bond man must not break,
We fain would know thy mind.
Lord, be the sweet conviction given
To both that thou thyself in heaven
The hallowed bond hast twined.”

It is in that spirit that it ought to be contemplated. Without this there can be no security for happiness or for Christ being honoured in connection with the union formed.—R. F.

Vers. 3—7.—*Covetousness amongst the worst of human crimes.* “But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints; neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks. 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. Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience. Be not ye therefore partakers with them.” The subject which we gather from these words is that *covetousness is amongst the worst of human crimes.*

I. IT IS HERE CLASSED WITH CRIMES OF THE WORST CHARACTER. There are three sins amongst which covetousness is placed in the text: unbridled licentiousness, “fornication,” and “whoremongery”—revolting indecency; “filthiness,” that which is so unchaste and impure as to awaken universal disgust; and immoral speech—speech that is frivolous, untruthful, obscene, profane. These are sins confessedly of enormous magnitude. All true souls recoil from them, all pure minds renounce them as a degradation of the race and an offence to Almighty God. But mark, amongst these *covetousness* is placed. It is ranked with them as related to them in moral vileness. More than this, it is singled out as worse than these—“a covetous man, who is an idolater.” What is idolatry? Holding anything nearer to the heart than God. The “covetous man” loves money more than anything else, and money is his god. We here in England are very zealous for the conversion of heathen idolaters. We create and sustain costly organizations, but there is no idolatry more real, more powerful, more damning, than the idolatry that prevails throughout England. What god in heathendom is more earnestly and constantly served than *Mammon* is served in this island? Before the introduction of Christianity into this country there were many idols here. “In Scotland stood the temple of Mars; in Cornwall, the temple of Mercury; in Bangor, the temple of Minerva; at Maldon, the temple of Victoria; in Bath, the temple of Apollo; at Leicester, the temple of Janus; at York, where St. Peter’s now stands, the temple of Bellona; in London, on the site of St. Paul’s Cathedral, the temple of Diana; and at Westminster, where the Abbey rears its venerable pile, a temple of Apollo.” But *Mammon* now has a temple everywhere, a temple on every hill and in every valley, in every church and house. *Mammon* has said to England, “Thou shalt have none other gods beside me,” and England heartily responds, “Amen.”

II. IT IS HERE CLASSED WITH THE WORST OF CRIMES, AS EXCLUDING FROM THE KINGDOM OF GOD. “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.” From this passage may be inferred: 1. That heaven is a *kingdom*. There is rule and order there. 2. That heaven is a *Divine* kingdom. “Kingdom of Christ and of God.” Christ reigns there. He is in the midst of the throne; his Spirit animates all; his Spirit fills all with adoring wonder and worship. Christ reigns as God there. *Βασιλεὶα τοῦ Χριστοῦ καὶ Θεοῦ*. Christ and God. The heavens are a kingdom managed, not by Divine partnership,—it is governed by God in Christ. 3. That heaven *excludes* evil characters of all descriptions. How clearly and forcibly this is declared in Scripture!—“The works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness . . . of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God” (Gal. v. 19—21). “Without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.” With the excluded will be the *covetous* man. Yes, though he has been a member of a Christian

Church, though cultured in intellect, chaste in feeling, and refined in manners, though an eloquent preacher of the gospel of benevolence, he will find no admission into that world. He will be "without." With whom? Will he have a place set apart for himself? No, with the common damned.

III. IT IS HERE CLASSED WITH THE WORST OF CRIMES REPUGNANT TO THE DIVINE NATURE. "For because of these things cometh the wrath of God." Paul says, in his letter to the Romans, that "the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men." His deep, settled, immutable antagonism to wrong of all kinds is clearly revealed in the gospel of Jesus Christ. But is there any sin more repugnant to the Divine nature than covetousness, which is idolatry? What sin has the Almighty denounced with greater frequency and force than that of idolatry? But why should covetousness be so abhorrent to the Almighty? 1. *Because it involves a mal-appropriation of the blessings of Providence.* God's will is that whatever a man, either by good fortune or by industry, obtains of this world's goods, should be expended for the advancement of truth and the general promotion of human happiness. But the covetous man appropriates all to pamper his own appetites, gratify his own vanity, and promote his own selfish and ambitious ends. 2. *Because it involves an utter perversion of his own spiritual nature.* The powers of the soul are not given to amass material wealth, nor the affections to love it. On the contrary, they were given to gather elements of the highest knowledge, and to love and serve the Infinite supremely in all. The soul was made to have God, not money, as the dominant subject of thought and the dominant object of love. 3. *Because it involves the promotion of misery in the universe.* Nothing is more repugnant to the heart of the loving God than misery. The cause of universal happiness is his, but the covetous man is necessarily a promoter of misery in his own soul, misery in his circle, misery through the creation. God's order is that no man should live unto himself, that all should labour for the common weal; in this way only the good of the universe can be served, its blessedness advanced, and its order maintained. Every man who sets himself up as his own end in labour and life opposes all the arrangements of God. He does what he can to create discords in its harmonies, miasma in its atmosphere, poison in its streams. No wonder, then, that the "wrath of God" is against "the covetous man."—D. T.

Vers. 8—10.—*Christian life.* "For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light: (for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth;) proving what is acceptable unto the Lord." These verses present to us the Christian life in its *transformation, obligation, and demonstration.*

I. TRANSFORMATION. A true Christian is one who has been changed from darkness into light. The figurative language implies: 1. A change from *immorality to holiness.* "Darkness" is the emblem of depravity. "They that be drunken are drunken in the night." The ghastly legions of hell win their most terrible victories in the gloom and silence of night. The "light" is a symbol of purity. 2. A change from *ignorance to knowledge.* Darkness clouds our vision, and hides from us the world in which we live. Man in an unregenerated state is in the moral world as a man in midnight. "Light" is a symbol of intelligence. 3. A change from *sadness to joy.* Darkness is depressing. Even the irrational creatures feel its dejecting power. Sin is sadness; true religion is joy. We are told that there is "no night in heaven." It means that there is no immorality, no ignorance, no sorrow there. How great the change that has taken place in a true Christian man!

II. OBLIGATION. Two duties are here indicated. 1. *Walking in light.* "Walk as children of light." Don't go back into darkness. Nay, don't remain in the twilight of Christian experience, but step farther and farther into the day. Leave the valleys, scale the hills, and come more directly under the broad beams of day. To walk in the light is to walk intelligently, safely, and joyously. 2. *Pleasing God.* The ninth verse being parenthetical, the last clause of the eighth verse should be read with the tenth. "Walk as children of light, proving what is acceptable [well-pleasing] unto the Lord." "Be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God"

(Rom. xii. 2). The expression "well-pleasing" to God throws a light upwards on God and downwards on man. (1) It reveals *God*. It indicates (a) his moral *susceptibility*. He is not indifferent to the moral conduct of his creatures. It indicates (b) his *forgiving mercy*. Man, though a sinner, can, through his infinite mercy, render himself acceptable to him. (2) It reveals *man*. (a) It indicates the highest end of his being. What higher object can a creature have than to please the Creator? (b) It indicates the highest blessedness of his being. The smile of the Creator is the heaven of the creature.

III. DEMONSTRATION. The Christian man develops in his life certain glorious things. "The fruit of the Spirit [light] is in all goodness and righteousness and truth." He demonstrates in his life: 1. Divine *beneficence*. "In all goodness." He is full of social love, tender, compassionate, self-sacrificing. 2. Divine *righteousness*. He is a man of inflexible honesty, unswerving rectitude. In him the "righteousness of the Law is fulfilled." 3. Divine *reality*. His thoughts, sympathies, actions, are in harmony with the eternal realities of being. He is neither a visionary nor a hypocrite. His thoughts are true, his life is sincere.

CONCLUSION. What an infinite boon is the gospel to mankind! How glorious the transformation it effects! how righteous the obligation it imposes! how great the power it confers!—a power to demonstrate in our life the *good*, the *right*, and the *true*.—D. T.

Vers. 11—14.—(1) *Two worlds of one race*. "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." But all things that are reprovèd are made manifest by the light: for whatsoever doth make manifest is light. Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." The text may be regarded as a portraiture of two distinct worlds of men on this earth—the world of the wicked and the world of the Christly. Here we have—

I. THE WORLD OF WICKED MEN. The characteristics of these men are here indicated. 1. They are *worthless*. Their works are "the unfruitful works of darkness." Ungodly men live in moral darkness. The sun, which alone reveals things as they are in the spiritual world, shines not in their heavens. All the light they have are the electric flashes of an impure atmosphere. They work in the dark, and their works are "unfruitful." That is "unfruitful" of good. The soil that is sterile as regards its capability of producing fruit is often fertile in its capacity to produce noxious weeds and poisonous herbs; so the ungodly soul—it is unfruitful in goodness, but prolific in crime. 2. They are *clandestine*. "Which are done of them in secret." There may be an allusion here to the abominable mysteries which were celebrated in Greece under the screen of night and secrecy, it describes the general character of a sinful life. All is secret. Sin is necessarily hypocritical; it speaks in a false voice; it works under masks. The more corrupt the human soul the more sneaky and clandestine. The good alone can afford to be bland and open. 3. They are *shameful*. "For it is a shame even to speak of those things." Heathenism has ever abounded and still abounds with nameless iniquities (Rom. i. 24—32). But sin in all its forms is a shameful thing. It is essentially disgraceful, disreputable, and ignominious. A man has only to think calmly of it in the light of conscience and God, in order to bring burning blushes to his cheek. Sin is a shame. 4. They are *sleepy*. "Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest." A sinful soul is sleepy in a moral sense. It is unconscious of its moral surroundings—it is filled with illusory dreams; it must one day be aroused to a sense of reality. Unlike natural sleep, moral sleep does not refresh and invigorate, but enervates and destroys. 5. They are *mortal*. "Arise from the dead." Everywhere the Bible represents sin as a state of death. The sinful soul is like a corpse. It is odious and the victim of external forces. Such is the world of wicked men around us. It is worthless, clandestine, shameful, sleepy, mortal.

II. THE WORLD OF CHRISTLY MEN. These are represented by the Christians at Ephesus, the men to whom the apostle is writing. This world has a work to do with the other—the dark world of wickedness around them. And it is here indicated. What is it? 1. *Separation*. "Have no fellowship." It does not mean, of course, that Christians are to have no intercourse or dealings with the ungodly. This could not be, and ought not to be if it could. It means that they are to have no spiritual

identification with them—no thoughts, purposes, or feelings alike. That, like Christ, they are to be “separate from sinners.” Morally detached as the lamp from the darkness. “I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner: with such a one no not to eat” (1 Cor. v. 11). “Wherefore come out from among them,” etc. (2 Cor. vi. 14—18). 2. *Reprehension*. “But rather reprove them.” Reprove them by *lip*. In the name of purity and truth expose and denounce their wickedness. Reprove them by *life*. Let the life stand in such a grand contrast to all that is sinful that it may be a standing rebuke. 3. *Illumination*. “All things that are reprovèd are made manifest by the light.” Hold forth the light of the gospel in the midst of a “crooked and perverse generation.” 4. *Resuscitation*. “Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead.” Thunder in the ear of the sleeper; speak life into the heart of the dead. There is living light for all in Christ. “Christ shall give thee light.” “He is the Light of the world.” The idea of this verse seems to be that, if Christians will use all their efforts to convert men, they may expect Christ to shine upon them and bless them. The “light” that comes from him is a soul-quickenning light. “The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live” (John v. 25). Elijah raised the dead; so did the apostles. We, also, in God’s great Name, can raise the dead—dead souls. The resurrection of a soul is a far grander work than the resurrection of a body. Let us sound the blast of the gospel trumpet over moral cemeteries, and the graves will open and dead souls come forth to life.—D. T.

Vers. 15—21.—(2) *Two worlds of one race*. “See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is. And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ; submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.” All these verses must be brought in under the same heading as the verses discussed in our preceding article, viz.—*Two worlds of one race*. These verses continue to indicate the duties pertaining to the world of *Christian men*. The duties which we previously discussed were *separation, reprehension, illumination, and resuscitation*; the duties which we have now to notice are *Christian consistency, holy excitement, and social worship*.

I. CHRISTIAN CONSISTENCY. “See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise.” The verses teach that walking strictly in harmony with the Christian creed implies: 1. *Wisdom*. “Not as fools, but as wise.” A conduct inconsistent with the Christian creed we profess is exceedingly foolish. (1) It damages our own moral nature. (2) It misrepresents the gospel of Christ. (3) It insults the omniscience of God. *Hypocrisy is in every way unwise*. 2. *Diligence*. “Redeeming the time”—“Buying up opportunities.” How is time to be redeemed? Not by regaining any portion of the past. The past is irrecoverably gone. Not by inoperative regrets concerning the wrong of the past. Not by mere sentimental desires that the future may be better. How then? (1) By deducing the true moral lessons of the past. (2) By a deep and devout determination to avoid all the evils of the past. (3) By turning every circumstance of our life to a right spiritual account. “Because the days are evil,” says Paul. The times in which Paul wrote were corrupt; our times are corrupt. There are several things that make our times evil. (1) A ruling secularism. How mercenary is our age! (2) Religious formalism. The forms of religion abound everywhere; the real spirit is rare. The “letter” is killing the “spirit.” (3) Sceptical rationalism. The world’s philosophy, as it is called, is for the most part anti-theistic, anti-supernatural, anti-Christian. These elements fill the social atmosphere with the moral fungi that make our “days” evil. Because our days are charged with so many evils we should be diligent; we should seize every opportunity to crush the wrong and to promote the right. 3. *Inquiry*. “Understanding what the will of the Lord is.” God has a *will* concerning us, and it is our duty to endeavour to understand it, and for this purpose we must inquire into it.

II. HOLY EXCITEMENT. "Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit." This verse suggests several thoughts. 1. *Man has an instinctive craving for excitement.* The words evidently imply this. Paul assumes that his readers must have excitement, in telling them in what they should and in what they should not find it. Excitement is a necessity of our nature. The soul has a deep hunger for it. (1) Observation shows this. Look at society, either as it appears on the page of history or as it surrounds you now in all the activities of life, and you will find that the love of excitement explains much of all its restlessness, amusements, and toils. (2) Consciousness shows this. All are conscious of this impulse. Monotony and stagnation become intolerable. We crave a quicker pulse, a warmer and a fuller passion. Yes, man has a native hunger for excitement. Hence the popularity of *sensational* theatres, sports, books, scenes, music, sermons. 2. *Man has recourse to improper expedients for excitement.* "Be not drunk with wine." Wine stimulates excitement. It quickens the pulse, it heats the blood, it fires the passions. Hence men like it. They use it, not for the sake of intoxication, but excitement. Wine-drinking is only one of many improper expedients for excitement. Drunkenness is here a type of whatever improperly stimulates the senses and enkindles the lusts. (1) There is sensualism. How many seek excitement in an inordinate gratification of mere animal propensities! (2) There is gambling. What thousands resort to the race-course, the exchange, the billiard-table, for excitement! (3) There is immoral literature. Luscious tales, filthy narratives, and sensational romances;—these are eagerly sought because they make the imagination glow with impure fires.

III. SOCIAL WORSHIP. "Speaking to yourselves," etc. These verses (from the nineteenth to the twenty-first) show what is meant by being "filled with the Spirit." 1. *High spiritual intercourse with man.* "Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs." Speaking to men the highest things in the highest forms of language—poetry. High feeling always runs into poetry. 2. *Devout fellowship with Christ.* "Singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord." The soul pouring out its devotions in sweet melodies in the Divine ear. 3. *Thankful recognition of Divine favours.* "Giving thanks always for all things unto God." 4. *Godly devotion to the common weal.* "Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God." All this is implied in being "filled with the Spirit." And is there not sufficient excitement here? To be filled with the Spirit is to be filled with the Spirit's ideas; and what exciting ideas are his! With the Spirit's purposes; and what inspiring purposes are his! With the Spirit's love; and what an immensity of stirring impulses is in that love!—D. T.

Vers. 22—33.—*Ideal marriage.* "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. 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 to their own husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the Church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word, 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. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. 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. 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." The subject of this passage is *Ideal matrimony*; or, *God's idea of the marriage state.* As we look into it, our convictions will deepen that the Divine idea is but very partially, if at all, developed in the matrimonial alliances of modern society. What is marriage? It comes not within the limits of our purpose or space to enter into a full discussion of the grand subject of human marriage. Our readers will find a very learned and exhaustive treatment of this question in Dr. William Smith's 'Dictionary of the Bible.' Our remarks must be confined entirely to those phases of the subject which the passage under review sug-

gests. On all hands it is admitted that marriage—that is, the union of one man to one woman—is a Divine ordination. Some philosophers see the principle of matrimony running through all nature, not only in the sexual distinction of all animals, but in the sexual form of all kinds of vegetable life. But the Bible is our authority. The Divine institution of marriage is clearly taught, both in the Old and the New Testaments. In the opening pages of the Divine volume we read these words, “And the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him.” And in the New Testament we have these words from the lips of the Son of God himself, “Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, and said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder” (Matt. xix. 4—6). What does the text teach concerning marriage? It teaches—

I. That marriage implies **MORAL ROYALTY ON THE PART OF THE HUSBAND.** Wives are here commanded to *submit* themselves unto their husbands “as unto the Lord.” The husband is here called the “*head* of the wife, even as Christ is the Head of the Church,” and the apostle concludes the paragraph by saying, “Let the wife see that she *reverence* her husband.” The idea of supremacy, therefore, on the part of the husband is manifest throughout the passage. But what is the rule to be? Not the rule of superior muscular force or intellectual power. Such a rule would be despotism and nothing less. The apostle teaches here that the husband’s rulership should be similar to that rulership that Christ holds over the Church. 1. The husband is to rule by *moral* influence. How does Christ rule the Church? Not by force, but by love; by the royalty of his character, the sublimity of his thoughts, the Divine grandeur of his aims. The Church bows lovingly to his authority, because of the supremacy of his excellence. Thus the husband is to rule the wife, for “the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the Head of the Church.” It is only as the wife sees in her husband true moral grandeur that she can bow loyally to his sceptre and feel a loving reverence in her heart. 2. The husband is to rule for *beneficent* ends. (1) The rule is to be *restorative*. “He is the Saviour of the body.” This refers to Christ. The Church is his body; he is to it what the soul is to the body—the ever-present, animating, controlling spirit. So the grand object of the husband should be to *save* his wife—save her from all that is mean and coarse, from all that degrades the character or pains the soul. Her true elevation, and not the gratification of her vanity, or pride, or lower appetites, should be his master aim. (2) This rule is to be *universal*. “In everything.” It is to extend through the whole of domestic life. Indeed, a true moral rule over the heart will extend to “everything” in the woman’s life. (3) The rule is to be *self-sacrificing in spirit*. “Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ loved the Church, and gave himself for it.” The husband’s love should be that of the highest chivalry—a love that shrinks at no sacrifice in order to bless and ennoble the partner of his choice. It must be of the same kind as that which prompted Christ to give himself for the salvation of the world. Ay, and he must have the same grand object, too—viz. the perfect *cleansing* of his bride from all that is morally corrupt. Christ loved the Church, and gave himself for it; what for? “That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word, 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.” It is said that the glowworm never shines after it has become a parent. Some women lose the lustre of all delicacy and refinement under the influence of men whom they call their husbands. The aim of the true husband should be to make the character of his wife a “glorious” character, “without spot or blemish.” Behold and admire this Divine picture of a *true* husband! The marriage in which there is not such a husband is no *true* marriage. It is an impious mockery. When a woman in the marriage ceremony of Churches is called upon to *obey* a man smaller in intellect, narrower in sympathies, and inferior in moral character to herself, she is called upon to do violence to her nature—to do that, in fact, which the eternal laws of mind forbid her in sincerity and truth ever to perform. Who can admire the contemptible? who can reverence the mean? The man should appear as a morally royal man in her eyes, or he is no true husband at all.

II. That marriage implies **MORAL LOVABLENESS ON THE PART OF THE WIFE.** “So

ought men to love their wives as their own bodies." If the wife is to be loved, she must be lovable, for it is as impossible for the human mind to love the morally unbeautiful as it is to believe a mathematical contradiction. There are women who are morally hideous, and from whom all manly natures must revolt with disgust. What is the truly lovable in a wife? Personal beauty? This may fascinate the eye for a short time, but it has no power to generate moral esteem. Brilliant genius or sparkling accomplishments? No; these may charm the fancy, but never evoke the true germ of manly love. What is the lovable? The text suggests two of its elements. 1. *A vital sympathy with the spirit of a true husband.* "So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the Church." The true husband we have described: he is a royal man, who rules by moral influence for beneficent ends in the spirit of self-sacrificing love; and the true wife must have such a vital sympathy with that high moral spirit of his as to make the "twain one flesh." His aims are elevated, his spirit is Christ-like, and her whole heart being in vital accord with his, they are "no more twain, but one flesh." God, not priests nor hireling registrars, has joined them together. 2. *A love-centralizing power of character.* There must be that fascination and bewitchment of moral spirit about her that will draw the affections of her husband from all the dearest of other objects, and centre them on herself. "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." He should discover in her virtues so numerous and strong as to draw his sympathies even from the nearest of his other relations and centre them on her, feeling that he can repose in her his utmost confidence and bestow on her his choicest love.

CONCLUSION. It is obvious that the world abounds with *spurious* marriages. The popular idea of marriage is a legalized union of one man to one woman. Though the union may be formed by mere sensual impulses and selfish considerations, it is still called a marriage. Though it be formed, not only without any relative fitness between the parties conjoined, but with a painful discrepancy in temper, age, health, education, it is still called a marriage. Though it be formed without any element of moral excellence as a foundation, and without mutual love for virtue—simply because no mutual virtue exists—still it is called a marriage. The woman may be destitute of every high quality, immersed in sensuality and pride, still at the altar the man pledges to her his love; and the man may be a little soul, in every respect inferior to the woman, yet at the altar she pledges him reverence and obedience. Nothing is more baneful to a country than the corruption of the marriage institution. The law of England, alas! unites brutes and fiends together as well as saints.

"For marriage is a matter of more worth
Than to be dealt in by attorneyship:
For what is wedlock forced, but a hell,
An age of discord and continual strife?
Whereas the contrary bringeth forth happiness,
And is a pattern of celestial bliss."

(Shakespeare.)

D. T.

Ver. 1.—"*Imitators of God.*" I. HOW IT IS POSSIBLE FOR US TO BE IMITATORS OF GOD. It is vain to try to imitate God if all resemblance to God is beyond our reach. But this is not the case. While speculative theology is fatally successful in magnifying the distance between man and God, practical revelation is ever bringing us nearer to God. 1. We are like God by *nature*. God is spirit, and we are spiritual beings. As Channing taught, all spirits are of one family. God made us in his own image. It is our work to revive that image where it has been obscured and to carry it up to higher resemblances. 2. We can imitate God in *very small ways*. Because he is infinite and we are finite we are not to infer that all common likeness is impossible. The smallest pool may bear a perfect image of the sun. 3. We are susceptible of *indefinite growth and improvement*. Because we are sadly unlike God now it does not follow that we may never resemble him. "It is not yet made manifest what we shall be. We know that, if he shall be manifested, we shall be like him" (1 John iii. 2). God has revealed

himself to us. We cannot imitate what we do not know. Mysteries of the Divine nature must ever lie beyond our sight. Nevertheless, something real about God we do know. For we have seen Christ, and he who sees Christ sees God (John xiv. 9).

II. IN WHAT RESPECTS WE ARE TO BECOME IMITATORS OF GOD. We cannot attain to his almighty energy nor to his unfathomable wisdom. Yet we may imitate the method of these Divine attributes in the exercise of corresponding human qualities. But the resemblance to God that is both most important and most attainable is moral and spiritual likeness in character and conduct. Consider especially in what points we most need to be like God. 1. *Purity*. 2. *Truth*. 3. *Generous giving*. There are men who are always grasping for themselves, and others who distribute abroad. The latter are like God, who is ever raying out blessings. 4. *Forbearance*. In nothing do we more need to imitate God than in his gentleness with sinners, his long-suffering patience, and his forgiving mercy. 5. *Love*. This is nearest to the heart and very being of God, for God is love. He who loves his kind most widely and warmly is likest God (see ver. 2).

III. WHY WE SHOULD BE IMITATORS OF GOD. 1. It is our *natural duty*. Nothing short of this will satisfy the claims of right. It is not enough that we follow the best men and conform with the utmost propriety to the pious fashions of the times, nor even that we obey our own consciences. We have to make our conduct agree with God's conscience. Duty is infinite—a ceaseless climbing to higher and yet higher regions of holiness. We cannot reach the pinnacle of perfection at once, and we are not guilty for not doing what lies beyond our present powers. But we are blameworthy if we aim at less than perfection and if we ever rest contented with any lower stage of progress. "Ye therefore shall be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Matt. v. 48). 2. We are under *obligations of gratitude* to become imitators of God. The word "therefore" calls our attention to these obligations. It points back to the previous words, wherein we are exhorted to forgive one another, even as God also in Christ forgave us. 3. Our *highest blessedness* will be found in our resemblance to God. He is ever blessed. Everything ungodlike must be ultimately a source of pain and death. Though the imitation of God begins in toil and sacrifice, it grows into the deepest peace and the richest gladness.

IV. BY WHAT MEANS WE MAY BECOME IMITATORS OF GOD. 1. *Worship*. Heathen gods are objective representations, and even monstrous exaggerations, of the natures of their devotees. Such gods can have no good moral influence. But God, as he is revealed in Christ, is infinitely above us, and full of wonderful beauty and attraction. As we gaze upon his glory in rapt devotion we are changed into his likeness. We all imitate, consciously or unconsciously, what we admire. When we see a great picture we wish to paint; when we enjoy good music we desire to produce it; when we see noble deeds we are fired to emulate them. 2. *Meditation*. As St. Francis is said to have received the wounds of Christ on his own person by intense meditation on them, we may receive the spiritual likeness of our Lord—a more profitable resemblance—by contemplating and dwelling in the spirit of his life. Then also we shall have the likeness of God. He who is nearest to God in prayer and communion grows likest God. 3. *Obedient action*. We must do Divine deeds of holiness and charity if we would have the character that a habit of such deeds begets. All this God will supplement and vivify by the inspiration of his Holy Spirit breathing his own life and likeness into us.

V. IN WHAT SPIRIT WE ARE TO BECOME IMITATORS OF GOD. "As beloved children." Thus loved children venerate and imitate their parents. Here is no room for spiritual pride. For when we lose the childlike spirit we fall away from the imitation of God. They who imitate God most truly are most simple and childlike, and that spirit of trust in a loving parent which is the highest educational influence in the child, must be in us if we would be good imitators of God.—W. F. A.

Ver. 2.—*The sacrifice of Christ*. I. THE SACRIFICE OF CHRIST WAS VOLUNTARY. He gave himself. He said he had power—right as well as ability—to lay down his life (John x. 18). Had the sacrifice of Christ not been the free giving of himself, it would have been like the human sacrifices of the heathen—a fearful deed in those who slew him and of no import to any one else. The essence of the sacrifice, all that gave to it

propitiatory efficacy, was the willingness of the Sufferer who offered himself. God is not pleased with pain and death. What he is pleased with is the devotion, fidelity, and love that endure pain and death in the fulfilment of an unselfish and noble mission.

II. THE SACRIFICE OF CHRIST WAS OFFERED TO GOD. Christ was not simply a Martyr to truth, nor only a Sufferer in the cause of humanity. The cup that he drank was given to him by his Father. His persistence through mortal agony was in submission to the will of God. Gethsemane interprets Calvary. It reveals an essential element of the sacrifice of Christ that has been too much neglected in our theologies—the obedience of Christ. St. Paul saw this when he said that Christ became “obedient unto death.” Thus the cross was an altar and the crucifixion an offering to God.

III. THE SACRIFICE OF CHRIST WAS WELL-PLEASING TO GOD. In primitive language it is said that when the smoke of Noah’s sacrifice went up to heaven “God smelled a sweet savour”—literally, “a savour of satisfaction,” i.e. it was acceptable to God. So Christ’s sacrifice is described as “an odour of a sweet smell.” Such an act of fidelity to God and love to man could not but be pleasing to God. Thus the sacrifice becomes a propitiation; it becomes the means through which God looks favourably on those for whom it is offered.

IV. THE SACRIFICE OF CHRIST WAS MADE ON OUR BEHALF. “For us.” Men had often offered sacrifices for themselves—to express their own devotion and to expiate their own sins. It is customary now for people to talk of making a present sacrifice in order to secure a future advantage. But Christ’s sacrifice was not for his own interests. It was the Shepherd giving his life for the sheep, the Friend laying down his life for his friends. His was the pain, ours is the gain; his the cross of death, ours the crown of life.

V. THE SACRIFICE OF CHRIST WAS OCCASIONED BY HIS LOVE TO US. “Christ also loved you.” There was no necessity that Christ should die. Ordinary duty would not have required the sacrifice, for, though fidelity and obedience entered into it, these elements were consequent on the free undertaking of a work of love by Christ. Christ as a man was possessed of a great love of his kind that constrained him to die for the world; Christ as the Son of God and “the very image of his substance” (Heb. i. 3) died because he was full of the love of the Father for his lost children.

VI. THE SACRIFICE OF CHRIST SHOULD LEAD US TO WALK IN LOVE. 1. *In return for his love.* Love should inspire love. If it does we shall show our love to Christ by loving our brethren. 2. *In breathing his Spirit.* Christianity is not merely appropriating the fruits of the work of Christ. It is following in his footsteps. Christians are called to be imitators of God, especially as he is manifested in Christ. An imitation of God must therefore consist chiefly in an exercise of love like that of Christ. His love to us led him to submit to crucifixion. He asks us simply to walk in love.—W. F. A.

Ver. 14.—*Awake!* I. A DESCRIPTION. A particular kind of man is here addressed—“thou that sleepest;” “the dead.” 1. The man is *asleep*. His sleep is spiritual indifference. Whether or no he has an abstract belief in religion is not of the slightest moment. He may be an atheist or he may be orthodox of the orthodox. So long as he is sleeping it matters little what he might have been doing had he been awake. The sleeper may have his eyes open to secular interests; he may have a quick intellect in speculation or a vigorous energy in business. Yet angels who see that he is unconscious of the greatest realities must regard him as a dreamer or at best as a restless sleep-walker. 2. This sleep is a sign of *death*. It is more than sleep. It is unnatural and impossible to a soul in full energy. Spiritual perceptions must have been dulled and spiritual powers paralyzed to admit of this blindness and stupor in regard to Divine things.

II. A CALL. *Awake! Up! Arise!* A loud voice disturbs the sleeper. 1. *God calls*, sometimes (1) in providence, rousing the careless soul by the shock of some sudden change; and often (2) in the gospel, for it is the duty of the preacher to speak in trumpet-notes, not merely to teach the attentive but also to rouse the listless. 2. It is *important to respond* to this call; for sleep is (1) a sinful neglect of duty; (2) a foolish loss of blessings—he who sleeps till the full day never sees the glory of the sunrise; and (3) a dangerous condition—the longer a man sleeps the more difficult will it

be to awake, and meanwhile death and judgment may be upon him. 3. It is *possible to awake*. The spiritual sleep is partly voluntary and semi-conscious. As a man sometimes knows that he is dreaming so he may be made aware that he is spiritually asleep and may rouse himself if he will. There is rousing power, too, in the Divine voice. It vexes a man to have his rest disturbed, but as one who wakes the sleeper when his house is on fire it comes for his deliverance and he will do well to bestir himself.

III. A PROMISE. "Christ shall shine upon thee." There is something to wake up for. Christ is the Light of the world. His people are now "light in the Lord." He brings to the waking soul truth, purity, and joy. When the storm rages and the dark night lingers, and to wake is only to take up again the burden of sorrow and grope in the hopeless gloom, a man has some excuse for sleeping. Despair may sleep. But the Christian finds a bright morning responding to his opening eyes. We are not to wake only to kindle a poor light for ourselves. We are rewarded for waking by the cheering brightness of Christ. We must rouse ourselves, however, to enjoy it. The people that sit in darkness see the great light only when they awake and arise from the dead.—W. F. A.

Ver. 15.—*The value of time*. I. ALL TIME IS OF HIGH VALUE. They who kill time destroy one of the best talents God has given them and rob him of a sacred trust he has lent to them. 1. *Time is not our own property*. We are servants and have to account to our Master for our use of his hours. 2. *Great concerns have to be attended to*. Not only is art long while life is short, but duty is great, the claims of service are many, and the wants of our fellow-men are numerous. In this world of toil and strife and sorrow every moment is of value for some good deed of mercy or some solid work of truth. 3. *Lost time is irrecoverable*. We cannot redeem the time that has been wasted. A repentant diligence may bring back the inheritance that was squandered away in extravagant folly; careful attention may bring back the wasted health; but time once gone is gone for ever. 4. *Time may be made of increasing value*. An hour is worth more in the use of one man than a day with another man.

II. SPECIAL OPPORTUNITIES ARE OF SPECIAL VALUE. St. Paul urges us to buy up "the seasons." All time is not of equal value. There are moments of peculiar preciousness. Woe to him who, through heedlessness or wilful negligence, lets them slip! The moment when the rope floats by the drowning man it must be seized or he dies. Strike the iron while it is hot. Sow the seed in the spring if you would reap the harvest in the autumn. 1. *Youth* has its golden opportunities that belong to no other age. Young men especially should make the most of their own season. 2. *Manhood* has its time of vigour for work that will be beyond the strength of old age. The wise man will watch for occasions of usefulness that his word may be "in season."

III. THE TRUE VALUE OF TIME CAN ONLY BE OBTAINED AT A COST. We have to buy it up before we can make use of it. 1. We must spend *thought* in considering how we can best use our time and in watching for right opportunities. For want of due consideration there is a frightful lack of economy of energy and time. 2. We must sacrifice our own *pleasure* in giving up time that we are tempted to expend on ourselves, our amusement or our rest, to the service of God. He who only gives to God his leisure moments, when he is worn and jaded with his own selfish work, makes but a poor offering. 3. We must *put out greater energy* in order to make our time of more value. Few of us work on the highest subjects at full pressure. The busiest might do more good if, when they cannot as yet find time for serving Christ, they would make time.—W. F. A.

Ver. 18.—*Drunkenness and its antidote*. I. THE SIN. It was the mistake of some of the earlier advocates of temperance to dwell too much on the economic arguments against drunkenness, to the neglect of those which are supplied by religion. That dissipation wrecks a man's position in the world is plain and sad enough. But it is not worldly self-interest that is chiefly outraged thereby. The sin of drunkenness is its great condemnation. It is a sin against God and man. 1. *It desecrates the temple of the Holy Ghost*. 2. *It unfits a man for his mission in the world*. 3. *It occasions brutal unkindness to others*, robbing the family of daily bread for the sake of gross

self-indulgence, bringing poverty and gloom, wretchedness and terror on the home, and giving to children a hideous inheritance of disease and constitutional tendencies to the same vice. 4. *It opens the door for other vices.* Instead of pleading intoxication as an excuse for a crime committed in the madness of drink, a man should be made to feel that the wickedness of putting himself into such a condition was aggravated by the terrible results.

II. **THE TEMPTATION.** In order to remedy the fearful evil we must consider how it arises. 1. *From customs of sociability.* Drinking has been regarded as an almost necessary accompaniment of friendly intercourse. 2. *From lack of mental occupation.* Men spending hours together of a winter's night without any education to supply food for the mind resort to the glass as the one available relief from the tedium of doing nothing. 3. *The craving for nervous stimulation.* This is the real thirst of the excessive drinker. What is called "low spirits," resulting from general ill health, or nervous debility, or trouble, or as the natural consequence of previous indulgence, creates the craving for stimulants. Early in the present century, Lord Jeffrey quoted a statement of a physician of Liverpool, respecting some of the most prosperous merchants of that town. "He informs me," said the lord advocate, "that few of the richer sort live to be fifty, but die of a sort of atrophy. They eat too much, take little exercise, and, above all, have no nervous excitement." This condition tempts to indulgence in nerve-stimulants.

III. **THE ANTIDOTE.** We must have an antidote if we would remedy the evil. Mere negative abstinence without anything to support and encourage it is impossible on a large scale and in the worst cases. St. Paul, by a flash of inspiration reveals the cure. "Be filled with the Spirit." These are old words. Yet they read strangely in the present connection—so little have they been heeded by zealous but unimaginative and unspiritual social reformers. We are to pray for the Spirit of God which Christ assures us will be given to all who ask for it (Luke xi. 13). How is this to counteract drunkenness? 1. *It counteracts the craving for nervous stimulation.* It is itself a pure and vitalizing spiritual stimulus, infusing at once restfulness and energy. 2. *It supplies interest and occupation.* For the Spirit of God is the inspiration of thought and power. 3. *It purifies and elevates social intercourse.* They who are filled with the Spirit will find that "singing and making melody in their hearts" is a more congenial accompaniment of social intercourse than drinking strong drinks.—W. F. A.

Ver. 19.—*Christian worship.* We have here, not only an interesting picture of worship as it was conducted in the early Church, but also apostolic directions for Christian worship that may be applied to all times. Consider some of the chief features of this worship.

I. **IT IS PURE.** The context shows that this point was of especial interest under the circumstances that obtained when the Epistle was written. The pure and simple observances of the Christian assembly at Ephesus must have stood in striking contrast to the riotous orgies that characterized the heathen festivities. In those pagan ceremonies intoxication and licentiousness were recognized accompaniments. Instead of indulging in drunkenness, the Christians seek to be filled with the Spirit; abandoning immoral practices, they occupy themselves in social worship by singing and making melody in their hearts. Pagans separated morality from religion. To Christians neither is possible without the other. Christian worship must be offered up in the beauty of holiness. Christian conduct is purified and elevated by the inspiration of worship.

II. **IT IS SPIRITUAL.** We are to make melody with our "heart." The heart stands, not for the feelings only nor chiefly, but generally for the inner life. Worship must begin here, or the richest music and the sweetest song will be an empty mockery. Whatever be our forms of worship, we have constantly to remember that the spiritual God can only be really worshipped in spirit, in inward thoughts and feelings of devotion.

III. **IT IS EMOTIONAL.** Religion is not all feeling. It is based on convictions, and it develops into actions. But religion does not dispense with emotions. It touches our whole nature—the emotional part with the rest. It makes great use of feelings as

springs of active and sympathetic influences. We ought to cherish feelings of love and adoration. In worship this element of religion finds its natural scope and exercise.

IV. IT IS JOYOUS. Instead of gloomy rites and bloody sacrifices Christians have music and song in their worship. They are living under a gospel and should echo back the glad tidings of God's love. They are coming to a Father and should approach him with happy home-confidence. They are following Christ, who gives his joy to his people (John xv. 11).

V. IT IS VOCAL. It begins in the heart, but it does not remain hidden there. Deep feeling naturally wells out in strong utterance. Religious emotion is encouraged and assisted by adequate expression. Of all parts of religion thanksgiving should be least reserved.

VI. IT IS MUSICAL. "Making melody." We cannot make the service of praise too beautiful, because we should offer to God what is best in form as well as in substance, and because the music of song assists the feeling that it expresses. Slovenly singing is a mark of indifference and irreverence.

VII. IT IS CONGREGATIONAL. "Speaking one to another." This is probably an allusion to antiphonal congregational singing. But whatever be the method adopted, and though a choir may take its part in the service, it is plainly the intention of St. Paul that all the people should sing, and that thus one should exhort and encourage another. We cannot praise God by proxy.

VIII. IT IS ADDRESSED TO GOD IN CHRIST. "To the Lord." Pliny writes how the Christians in his time met in the early morning to sing hymns to one Christ. We are not to sing simply for our own delectation or spiritual culture, or merely to attract and interest others, but mainly as addressing God and Christ in praise and communion.—W. F. A.

Ver. 20.—*Thanksgiving*. There are three points in this exhortation to thanksgiving that arrest our attention, viz. the time, the objects, and the method.

I. THE TIME FOR THANKSGIVING. There is a time for everything. When, therefore, is thanksgiving seasonable? Always. As we should pray without ceasing by living in constant communication with God, so a spirit of gratitude should pervade our whole life and express itself by the brightness and colour that it gives to every action (Ps. xxxiv. 1). If the context limits the application of St. Paul's words to public worship (ver. 17), the breadth of their incidence is still very significant. Every Christian assembly should be joyous with praise, in every prayer supplication should be mingled with thanksgiving (Phil. iv. 6). There are times when this is difficult, e.g. in trouble and in moods of spiritual depression. But the difficulty would be diminished if we thought less of our own feelings and more of the gifts and deeds of God's goodness. Modern religion is too subjective, and therefore it fluctuates with our varying phases of experience. Thanksgiving should call us out of ourselves to contemplate and praise God. Under the darkest cloud a thankful heart will see innumerable causes of gratitude. But let our thanksgiving be honest. If we do not feel grateful, do not let us try to force the expression of gratitude.

II. THE OBJECTS OF THANKSGIVING. "All things." 1. *Personal blessings*. While we thank God for common gifts to all mankind, our gratitude would be warmer and more genuine if we reflected on the special proofs of his goodness in our own lives. 2. *Fresh blessings*. If thanksgiving is to be perpetual it must constantly find new food for gratitude. This, of all parts of worship, should not be a mere repetition of old, worn thoughts. Our ideas on this point are too narrowed by conventionality. If we are careful to say grace before meat, why should we not be equally ready to thank God for a good book, a cheerful visit, or a refreshing walk? 3. *Things that we cannot see to be blessings*. Gratitude for troubles is difficult to realize. It is only possible through faith. But if we believe that God is blessing us in them we should thank him as one would thank a surgeon for even amputating a limb to save his patient's life.

III. THE METHOD OF THANKSGIVING. 1. It should be offered to *God our Father*. It is a direct speaking to God. As he is the Father of mercies, his fatherhood should be the attribute that is most in our thoughts when we praise him. We are not rendering adulation to a distant monarch who claims it as the condition of sparing our lives; we are expressing our love and genuine devotion to our Father. There should, there-

fore, be no cringing abjectness in our worship. It should be cheerful and confident. 2. The thanksgiving is to be given *in the Name of Christ*; i.e. (1) in recognition that God's blessings come to us through Christ; and (2) as receiving and appreciating them in the spirit of Christ.—W. F. A.

Vers. 22—33.—*Husbands and wives.* I. CHRISTIANITY CONSECRATES AND ELEVATES THE UNION OF HUSBAND AND WIFE. 1. *Christianity sanctions marriage.* St. Paul, though an unmarried man, casts no slight on marriage. It is true that he discourages it under temporary trying circumstances (1 Cor. vii. 1), but it is also true that he plainly teaches, not only the lawfulness, but especially the dignity of Christian marriage in itself. The ascetic view of celibacy as a more holy state than marriage is not found in the New Testament. "Let marriage be had in honour among all" (Heb. xiii. 4). 2. *Christianity elevates marriage.* St. Paul compares it with the union of Christ with his Church. He does not take the marriage relation to illustrate that union—an illustration that was familiar with the prophets in explaining the relation of God to Israel. He makes the comparison in the opposite way, taking the union of Christ and the Church as the true and perfect union, and therefore as the type of what marriage should be, viz. (1) close union and (2) spiritual union. Further, it is to be observed that Christianity elevates marriage (1) by giving women a religious equality with men—men and women have equal privileges in the gospel; and (2) by inculcating purity, justice, gentleness, and unselfishness.

II. THE HIGH CHRISTIAN IDEA OF MARRIAGE LAYS GREAT RESPONSIBILITIES ON HUSBANDS AND WIVES. Care and effort are necessary to realize so magnificent an ideal as a human copy of the mystical union of Christ and the Church. Care should be given in particular to the following requisites:—1. *Mutual sympathy.* It is not right that husbands and wives, in dividing the home life into separate departments, should fail to take interest in one another's cares and works. The husband should show sympathy for the wife's domestic hopes, and fears, and joys, and troubles, and the wife for the husband's schemes and achievements and disappointments. 2. *Mutual confidence.* This is essential to mutual sympathy. There should be no secret between husband and wife. Surely it is a mistake for a husband to hide his trouble from his wife out of a desire to spare her pain, and equally so for the wife to do the same in regard to her husband. The separation thus caused is a more serious evil than the pain that is prevented. 3. *Mutual forbearance.* Each must be prepared to meet with faults in the other. But each would be less provoked by those faults if the husband would think rather of what his wife has to endure in him than of what he may be annoyed at in her, and if the wife would reflect in the same way on her own failings. 4. *The consecration of marriage through union with Christ.* Such a truly Christian marriage is safe from shipwreck. It is sad to see how rarely the Christian idea of marriage is realized; but little better can be expected till men and women are aiming throughout at a higher life than what is now prevalent in society—a life of spiritual union with Christ.—W. F. A.

Vers. 25—27.—*Christ's treatment of his Church.* St. Paul describes Christ's treatment of his Church as an illustration of the way in which husbands should behave to their wives. But that vision of the spiritual world which is the ideal of earthly marriage is so attractive that it arrests the apostle's attention on its own account. It may well do the same with us.

I. WHAT CHRIST HAS DONE FOR THE CHURCH. We are first directed to Christ's work for the Church in the past. He loved it and gave himself up for it. 1. *Christ loved the Church.* He loved the whole world, but he had a peculiar love for those who trusted and obeyed him—a love like that which is between him and God, a love of sympathy and confidence which could not be given to the world that did not trust and obey him and was loved only with the love of mercy. 2. *Christ loved the Church before the Church was worthy of his love.* His love begins the process of the purification of the Church. He does not love because his people are holy, but he makes them holy because he loves them. 3. *Christ's love to his Church led him to give himself up for it.* His love was not an idle sentiment. It inspired his sacrifice of himself. That sacrifice, then, is the great proof of his love. By all that he suffers he confirms his

love to the Church. The language of St. Paul may seem to imply that Christ did not die for the whole world, but only for the Church. On the other hand, however, it is to be observed that St. Paul taught that Christ would ultimately gather the whole world into his Church (ch. i. 10).

II. WHAT CHRIST IS DOING TO THE CHURCH. 1. He is *purifying* it. The spiritual baptism of the Word, i.e. the teaching of Christian truth, is the method. But Christ is in the truth, and he is actively purging the souls of his people. Therefore note (1) we have not to wait to be pure before seeking Christ and becoming members of his Church, but are rather to come in our sin, repenting and desiring amendment through his grace, in order that, after we have come to him, he may purify us; and (2) we shall be purified if we enter the Church of Christ, for Christ will not suffer us to remain in the imperfect condition in which he at first admits us. The Christian life throughout is a process of sanctification. 2. Christ is *nourishing and cherishing* his Church (ver. 29). He feeds his people with the bread that is his body. He watches over them and deals gently and kindly with them, and by his grace strengthens and advances their spiritual life. Thus Christ has not accomplished a finished work and sacrifice. He is now carrying on the double process of cleansing and nourishing the Church.

III. WHAT CHRIST WILL DO WITH THE CHURCH. 1. He will make it *glorious*. Christians are not to receive bare deliverance, but joy and glory. The Church is not only to have blessings bestowed upon her; she is to be raised herself in holiness and glory. She is to be (1) "without spot," every stain of sin vanishing; and (2) "without wrinkle," all marks of age, weariness, and trouble passing away. 2. Christ will *present the Church to himself*. He is preparing his bride for the great marriage of the Lamb. The end of all is that, being first redeemed by Christ and then purified and strengthened, Christians may be ultimately united to him in eternal blessedness.—W. F. A.

EXPOSITION.

CHAPTER VI.

Ver. 1.—Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. The first duty of children is obedience, and "in the Lord," i.e. in Christ, this duty is confirmed. The *ἐν Κυρίῳ* qualifies, not "parents," but "obey," and indicates that the element or life which even children lead in fellowship with Christ makes such obedience more easy and more graceful. The duty itself rests on the first principles of morality—"for this is right." It is an obligation that rests on the very nature of things, and cannot change with the spirit of the age; it is in no degree modified by what is called the spirit of independence in children.

Ver. 2.—Honour thy father and mother (which is the first commandment with a promise). The exhortation, based on natural morality (ver. 1), is here confirmed from the Decalogue. "Honour" is higher than obedience (ver. 1); it is the regard due to those who, by Divine appointment, are above us, and to whom our most respectful consideration is due. Father and mother, though not quite on a footing of equality in their relation to each other (ch. v. 22), are equal as objects of honour and obedience to their children. It is assumed here that they are Christians; where one was a Christian and not the other, the duty would be modified. But in these succinct verses

the apostle lays down general rules, and does not complicate his exhortations with exceptions. The latter part of the verse contains a special reason for the precept; it is the first commandment *with a promise attached*. But obviously the apostle meant more than this; for as in ver. 1 he had affirmed the duty to be one of natural religion, so here he means to add that it is also part of the *revealed will* of God—it is one of the commandments; but still further, it is the first commandment *with a promise*. It may, perhaps, be said that this is appealing, not to the higher, but to the lower part of our nature—to our selfishness, not our goodness; but it is not an appeal to one part of our nature to the exclusion of the rest; it is an appeal to our *whole nature*, for it is a part of our nature to expect that in the end virtue will be rewarded and vice punished. In the case of children it is difficult to look far forward; the rewards and the punishments, to be influential, must be within the ken of vision, as it were; therefore it is quite suitable that, in writing to them, the apostle should lay emphasis on a promise which had its special fulfilment in the life that now is.

Ver. 3.—That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth. A free rendering (after the manner of the apostle) of the reason annexed to the fifth commandment, "that thy days may be long

in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee." While the Decalogue was an expression of the will of God on matters of moral and indefeasible obligation, it had a local Hebrew element here and there. In the present case the apostle drops what is specially Hebrew, adapting the promise in spirit to a wider area. The special promise of long life in the land of Canaan is translated into a general promise of prosperity and longevity. As before, we must not suppose that the apostle excludes exceptions. The promise is not for each individual; many good and obedient children do not live long. But the general tendency of obedience to parents is towards the results specified. Where obedience to parents is found, there is usually found along with it temperance, self-control, industry, regular ways of life, and other habits that tend towards prosperity and longevity. In Christian families there is commonly affection, unity, prayer, mutual helpfulness, reliance on God, trust in Christ, and all that makes life sweet and wholesome. The spirit of the promise is realized in such ways, and it may be likewise in special mercies vouchsafed to each family.

Ver. 4.—*And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath.* "Fathers" is inclusive of mothers, to whom the practical administration of the household and training of the children so much belong. The first counsel on the subject is negative, and probably has respect to a common pagan habit, against which Christians needed to be put on their guard. Irritation of children was common, through loss of temper and violence in reproving them, through capricious and unsteady treatment and unreasonable commands; but more especially (what is still so common) by the parents being violently angry when the children, inconsiderately, perhaps, disturbed or annoyed them, rather than when they deliberately did wrong. All this the apostle deprecates. But bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord. The words *paideia* and *voutheia* are not easily defined in this connection; the former is thought to denote the discipline of training, with its appropriate rewards and punishments; the latter, instruction. Both are to be "of the Lord," such as he inspires and approves. Instilling sound principles of life, training to good habits, cautioning and protecting against moral dangers, encouraging prayer, Bible-reading, church-going, sabbath-keeping; taking pains to let them have good associates, and especially dealing with them prayerfully and earnestly, in order that they may accept Christ as their Saviour and follow him,—are among the matters included in this counsel.

EPHESIANS.

Ver. 5.—*Bond-servants, obey your masters according to the flesh.* There were many slaves in the early Church, but, however unjust their position, the apostle could not but counsel them to obedience, this course being the best for ultimately working out their emancipation. The words of Christ were peculiarly welcome to them "that labour and are heavy laden;" and, as we find from Celsus and others, the early Church was much ridiculed for the large number of uneducated persons in its pale. *With fear and trembling.* Comp. 1 Cor. ii. 3; Phil. ii. 12, from which it will be seen that this expression does not denote *slavish dread*, but *great moral anxiety lest one should fail in duty.* It was probably a proverbial expression. *In the singleness of your heart, as to Christ.* Not with a got-up semblance of obedience, but with inward sincerity, knowing that it is your duty; and even if it be irksome, doing it pleasantly, as though Christ required it, and you were doing it to him.

Ver. 6.—*Not in the spirit of eye-service, as men-pleasers; but as the bond-servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart.* Exegetical of the last exhortation, with a negative and a positive clause, according to the apostle's frequent practice (comp. ch. ii. 8, 19; iii. 5; iv. 14, 15, 23, 28, 29; v. 18, 27, 29; vi. 4). Eye-service and men-pleasing have reference only to what will pass muster in the world; Christians must go deeper, as bound to Christ's service by the great claim of redemption (1 Cor. vi. 20), and remembering that "man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart" (1 Sam. xvi. 7). The will of God is our great standard, "and our daily prayer is, 'Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.'" In heaven it is done "from the heart."

Ver. 7.—*With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men.* Some join the last words of the preceding verse to this clause, "from the heart with good will," etc., on the ground that it is not needed for ver. 6, for if you do the will of God at all, you must do it from the heart. But one may do the will of God in a sense outwardly and formally, therefore the clause is not superfluous in ver. 6, whereas, if one does service with good will, one surely does it from the heart, so that the clause would be more superfluous here. Jesus is the Overlord of every earthly lord, and his follower has but to substitute him by faith for his earthly master to enable him to do service with good will.

Ver. 8.—*Knowing that whatsoever good thing each man shall have done, the same shall he receive from the Lord, whether he be bond or free.* The hope of reward is

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brought in to supplement the more disinterested motive, such addition being specially useful in the case of slaves (as of children, vers. 2, 3). For the slave the hope of reward is future—it is at the Lord's coming that he will have his reward.

Ver. 9.—**And, ye masters, do the same things to them, forbearing threatening.** Act correspondingly toward your slaves, as if the eye of Christ were on you, which indeed it is; if you are ever tempted to grind them down, or defraud, or scold unreasonably and make their life bitter, remember that there is a Master above you, into whose ears their cry will come. If they are to do service to you as to the Lord, you are to require service of them as if you were the Lord. Therefore forbear threatening; influence them by love more than by fear. **Knowing that both their and your Master is in heaven; and there is no respect of persons with him.** Both of you stand in the same relation to the great Lord, who is in heaven and over all (comp. ch. i. 20, 21). Your being higher in earthly station than they will not procure for you any indulgence or consideration. You will be judged simply and solely according to your deeds. Your responsibility to the Judge and your obligations to the Saviour alike bind you to just and merciful treatment. If such principles were applicable to the relations of enforced labour, they are certainly not less so to the relations of labour when free.

Vers. 10-20.—**THE CHRISTIAN WARFARE.**

Ver. 10.—**Finally.** The apostle has now reached his last passage, and by this word quickens the attention of his readers and prepares them for a counsel eminently weighty in itself, and gathering up the pith and marrow, as it were, of what goes before. "My brethren," A.V., is rejected by R.V. and most modern commentators, for lack of external evidence. We note, however, that, whereas in the preceding verses he had distributed the Ephesians into groups, giving an appropriate counsel to each, he now brings them again together, and has a concluding counsel for them all. **Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.** Compare with ch. iii. 16, where the heavenly provision for obtaining strength is specified, and with ch. iv. 30, where we are cautioned against a course that will fritter away that provision. The ever-recurring formula, "in the Lord," indicates the relation to Christ in which alone the strength can be experienced (comp. 2 Cor. xii. 9). The might is Christ's, but by faith it becomes our strength. As the steam-engine renders the dynamic force, which belts and wheels communicate to the inert machinery of the factory, so Christ is the source of that spiritual strength which

through faith is communicated to all his people. To be strong is our duty; to be weak is our sin. Strong trust, strong courage, strong endurance, strong hope, strong love, may all be had from him, if only our fellowship with him be maintained in uninterrupted vigour.

Ver. 11.—**Put on the entire armour of God.** Chained to a soldier, the apostle's mind would go forth naturally to the subject of armour and warfare. Put on armour, for life is a battle-field; not a scene of soft enjoyment and ease, but of hard conflict, with foes within and without; put on the armour of God, provided by him for your protection and for aggression too, for it is good, well-adapted for your use,—God has thought of you, and has sent his armour for you; put on the whole armour of God, for each part of you needs to be protected, and you need suitable weapons for assailing all your foes. That ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. Our chief enemy does not engage us in open warfare, but deals in wiles and stratagems, which need to be watched against and prepared for with peculiar care.

Ver. 12.—**For we wrestle not against flesh and blood.** Our conflict is not with men, here denoted by "flesh and blood," which is usually a symbol of weakness, therefore denoting that our opponents are not weak mortals, but powers of a far more formidable order. But against the principalities, against the powers. The same words as in ch. i. 21; therefore the definite article is prefixed, as denoting what we are already familiar with: for though all of these, evil as well as good, have been put under Christ the Head, they have not been put under the members, but the evil among them are warring against these members with all the greater ferocity that they cannot assail the Head. **Against the world-rulers of this [state of] darkness** (comp. ch. ii. 2). "World-rulers" denotes the extent of the dominion of these invisible foes—the term is applied only to the rulers of the most widely extended tracts; there is no part of the globe to which their influence does not extend, and where their dark rule does not show itself (comp. Luke iv. 6). "This darkness" expressively denotes the element and the results of their rule. Observe contrast with Christ's servants, who are children of light, equivalent to order, knowledge, purity, joy, peace, etc.; while the element of the devil and his servants is darkness, equivalent to confusion, ignorance, crime, terror, strife, and all misery. **Against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.** The natural meaning, though questioned by some, is, either that these hosts of wickedness have their residence in heavenly places, or, that these places are

the scene of our conflict with them. The latter seems more agreeable to the context, for "in heavenly places" does not denote a geographical locality here any more than in ch. i. 3 and ii. 6. When it is said that "we have been seated with Christ in heavenly places," the allusion is to the spiritual experience of his people; in spirit they are at the gate of heaven, where their hearts are full of heavenly thoughts and feelings; the statement now before us is that, even in such places, amid their most fervent experiences or their most sublime services, they are subject to the attacks of the spirits of wickedness.

Ver. 13.—Wherefore take up the entire armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day. Some have tried to affix a specific time to the "evil day" of the apostle, as if it were one or other of the days specified in the Apocalypse; but more probably it is a general phrase, like "the day of adversity," or "the day of battle," indicating a day that comes often. In fact, any day when the evil one comes upon us in force is the evil day, and our ignorance of the time when such assault may be made is what makes it so necessary for us to be watchful. And having done all, to stand. "Having done fully," or "completed," is the literal import of *κατεργασμένοι*, having reference, not only to the preparation for the battle, but to the fighting too. The command to be "strong in the Lord" is fitly associated with our "having done all," because leaning on almighty strength implies the effort to put forth strength by our own instrumentality; when God's strength comes to us it constrains us "to do all" that can be done by us or through us (comp. Ps. cxliv. 1; Phil. ii. 12, 13). We are not called to do merely as well as our neighbours; nor even to do well on the whole, but to do *all*—to leave nothing undone that can contribute to the success of the battle; then we shall be able to stand, or stand firm.

Ver. 14.—Stand therefore, having girt about your loins with truth. The "stand" in ver. 13 denotes the end of the conflict; this "stand" is at the beginning. Obviously there must be a firm stand at the beginning if there is to be at the end. In order to this, we must fasten the girdle round our loins—viz. truth, here used in a comprehensive sense, denoting honesty; sincerity of profession in opposition to all sham, levity, hypocrisy; and likewise the element of "truth in Jesus" (ch. v. 21), the substance of the gospel revelation. We are to gird ourselves *in* truth, *ἐν ἀληθείᾳ*, establishing ourselves in that element, wrapping it round us; *ἐν ἀληθείᾳ*, literally, "girded *in* truth." And having put on the breastplate

of righteousness. Comp. ch. v. 24, for at least one element of the righteousness—righteousness wrought in us by the Holy Ghost after the image of Christ. But a more comprehensive use of the term is not excluded—the whole righteousness that we derive from Christ—righteousness imputed and righteousness infused.

Ver. 15.—And having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace. The metaphor becomes somewhat difficult to follow; the feet have to be shod or armed as with military sandals, and the sandal is the *ἐτοιμασία*, or preparedness of, or caused by, the gospel of peace. The idea seems to be that the mind is to be steadied, kept from fear and flutter, by means of the good news of peace—the good news that we are at peace with God; and "if God be for us, who can be against us?" The Roman sandal was furnished with nails that gripped the ground firmly, even when it was sloping or slippery; so the good news of peace keeps us upright and firm.

Ver. 16.—Withal taking up the shield of faith. The *θυρεός* was a large oblong shield covering a great part of the body, not the *ἀσπίς*, smaller and more round. Faith, in its widest sense, constitutes this shield—faith in God as our Father, in Christ as our Redeemer, in the Spirit as our Sanctifier and Strengthener—faith in all the promises, and especially such promises as we find in Rev. ii. and iii. "to him that overcometh" (comp. promise to Ephesus, Rev. ii. 7). Wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the evil one. "Fiery darts" were weapons tipped with inflammable materials, firebrands, curiously constructed, adapted to set on fire. Metaphorically, considerations darted into the mind inflaming lust, pride, revenge, or other evil feelings, emanations from the great tempter, the evil one. That such considerations sometimes start up suddenly in the mind, against the deliberate desire, sometimes even in the middle of holy exercises, is the painful experience of every Christian, and must make him thankful for the shield on which they are quenched. An act of faith on Christ, placing the soul consciously in his presence, recalling his atoning love and grace, and the promises of the Spirit, will extinguish these fiery temptations.

Ver. 17.—And take the helmet of salvation. This is the head-covering (comp. 1's. xli. 7). In 1 Thess. v. 8 we read, "putting on for an helmet the hope of salvation." The glorious truth that we are saved (comp. ch. ii. 5, 8) appropriated, rested on, rejoiced in, will protect even so vital a part as the head, will keep us from intellectual surrender and rationalistic doubt. And the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. The

sword *supplied by the Spirit*, the Word being inspired by him, and employed by the Spirit; for he enlightens us to know it, applies it to us, and teaches us to use it both defensively and offensively. Our Lord in his conflict with Satan, and also with the scribes and Pharisees, has taught us how this weapon is to be used, and with what wonderful effect. Paul, too, reasoning from the Scriptures and proving from them "that this Jesus whom I preach unto you is the Christ," or (going back to the Old Testament) the author of the hundred and nineteenth psalm, showing us how the soul is to be fed, quickened, strengthened and comforted out of God's Law, indicates the manifold use of the sword, and shows how earnestly we should study and practice this sword exercise, for our own good and the good of others.

Ver. 18.—**With all prayer and supplication praying.** The metaphor of armour is now dropped, but not the idea of the conflict, for what is now insisted on is of the most vital importance for successful warfare. Though prayer is virtually comprehended in most of the previous exhortations, it is now specifically enjoined, and in a great variety of ways; "all prayer and supplication," equivalent to every form of it, e.g. ejaculatory, secret, spoken, domestic, social, congregational. At all seasons. No period of life should be without it—youth, middle life, old age, all demand it; no condition of life—adversity, prosperity, sunshine, desolation, under sore temptation, under important duty, under heavy trial, under all the changing circumstances of life, personal, social, Christian. See the hymn—

"Go, when the morning shineth;
Go, when the noon is bright;
Go, when the day declineth;
Go, in the hush of night."

In the Spirit; for true prayer is spiritual, and it is not true prayer unless by the Holy Spirit the heart is filled with heavenward longings and aspirations, changing our prayer from cold form to heartfelt realities. The ordinary habit of the soul should be prayerful, realizing the presence of God and looking for his grace and guidance. And watching thereunto; that is, "towards" spirituality, against formality, as also against forgetfulness and neglect of prayer. Perhaps also the idea of watching for the answer is involved, as you wait for an answer when you have despatched a letter. In all perseverance; this being very specially needed to make prayer triumphant, as in the case of the Syro-phenician mother, or in that of Monica, mother of Augustine, and many more. And prayer for all saints; this being one of the great objects for which saints are

gathered into the "one body" the Church, that they may be upheld and carried on, in warfare and in work, by mutual prayer, kept from slips and infirmitics, and from deadly sins, and enabled one and all to "walk worthy of the vocation wherewith they are called."

Ver. 19.—**And for me.** Mark the *unpriestly* idea; so far from Paul having a store of grace for all the Galatians, he needed their prayers that, out of the one living store, the needful grace might begin to him. That utterance may be given to me, in the opening of my mouth, to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel. With all his practice in preaching, he felt that every instance of right utterance was a gift—"may be given to me;" especially when great matters were involved—"in the opening of my mouth." To open the mouth denotes an authoritative act of teaching (comp. Matt. v. 2); on such occasions he especially desired boldness, not stormy vehemence, but earnestness, fearlessness in making known the destination of the gospel, once secret, now designed for all (comp. ch. ii.). Boldness was needed because the message was so hateful to some and so contemptible to others.

Ver. 20.—**For which I am an ambassador in chains.** Thereby not only physically helpless, but in danger of being subdued into tameness, the ordinary effect of captivity, and thus reduced to a spirit not befitting the bearer of a great message from the King of kings. That in it—i.e. in the matter of it, of the gospel—I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.

VERS. 21, 22.—MISSION OF TYCHICUS.

Ver. 21.—**But that ye also may know my affairs, how I do.** Having referred to his captivity, he thought it natural for the Ephesians to desire more information about him, how he did or fared in his captivity. Tychicus, the beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord. Nothing more is known of him than that (with Trophimus) he was a man of Asia (Acts xx. 4), who accompanied Paul when travelling from Macedonia to Asia, and was sent by him to various Churches (Col. iv. 7; 2 Tim. iv. 12; Titus iii. 12). The two qualities by which he is noted, loveliness and fidelity, have not only served to embalm his name, but show that he had much of Paul's own character. Shall make known to you all things.

Ver. 22.—**Whom I have sent unto you for this very purpose, that ye may know our state, and that he may comfort your hearts.** This serves to explain the absence of personal remembrances, allusions, and messages in the Epistle. Tychicus, who had his full confidence, would tell them all by word of mouth. The concluding words show that it was not to gratify any mere personal feeling

that Paul directed Tychicus to make this communication; but knowing how much they felt for him, he believed it would be a comfort to hear how he fared. To pagans the idea of captivity was always dolorous and dreadful; it was well for them to learn how Christians could glory in tribulations (Rom. v. 3). Tychicus, the beloved brother, was evidently well fitted to apply to the Ephesians this comforting view of his state.

Vers. 23, 24.—CLOSING BENEDICTION.

Ver. 23.—Peace be to the brethren. There is a double invocation of blessing—to the brethren, and to all that love the Lord. "The brethren" must mean the members of the Church addressed, with special reference to the amalgamation in one body of Jews and Gentiles, or to the one family (ch. iii. 15) in which they were brethren. Peace is the echo of ch. i. 2, and denotes the apostle's desire for the continuance among them of the peace with God to which they had been admitted, as well as the prevalence of peace in every sense of the word. And love with faith. "Love" in the widest sense (ch. iii. 17, 19)—the love of Christ to them, their love to Christ, and their love to one another; and

love is coupled with faith, because faith is the companion of love, they are in the closest relation to each other. Faith in Christ receives him as he is offered, in all his love and goodness; it sees his loving face, and is changed into the same image. From God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ (comp. ch. i. 2).

Ver. 24.—Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in incorruptibility. As grace was the first word, so it is the last (comp. ch. i. 2), not as denoting anything essentially different from the blessings invoked in the preceding verse, but for variety, and in order that the favourite word may be, both here and before, in the place of prominence. The expression is peculiar—love the Lord Jesus Christ *ἡ ἀκαταπαύσις*. The word denotes, especially in Paul's usage, what is unfading and permanent. The love that marks genuine Christians is not a passing gleam, like the morning cloud and the early dew, but an abiding emotion. Nowhere can we have a more vivid idea of this incorruptible love than in the closing verses of Rom. viii., "I am persuaded that neither death nor life," etc.

HOMILETICS.

Vers. 1-4.—*Duties of children and parents.* It must have been an interesting day in the Church of Ephesus when it was known that a pastoral letter would be read in the public assembly from the beloved and venerable apostle whose labours had been attended with such a blessing. Whether the meeting was held in early morning or late in the evening, every effort would be made by every Christian to be present, and even as they were walking towards the place of meeting, a certain briskness of manner and eagerness of expression would show that something beyond the common was in expectation. Those who had to pass the great temple of Diana would cast no lingering look behind, nor think of the contrast between that magnificent shrine of idolatry and the very humble building where the true God was worshipped, by whom all things were made. Even the children would not linger to peep at the gorgeous glory of the temple, for their parents would have told them that at their meeting a letter was going to be read from the great apostle, now unable to come to them because wicked men had imprisoned him, but still remembering them all, as his letter would show. Remembering the interest which, like his Master, the apostle had taken in the young, it would be an interesting question whether the letter to be read would not contain some passage for them, and, if it did, what would be its tenor? Perhaps the most attentive of them would be beginning to feel weary as five-sixths of the letter was read, but no word yet for them. But at last the message comes; and when it comes it appears that it is not only about them, but addressed to them; the apostle looks them full in the face, and says, "Children." And when the children's morsel is brought out, it is perhaps not quite what they expected. It is not a sugared morsel, nor is it particularly affectionate in its terms. It is not a nice little story or a poetical allegory, carrying them to the realms of dreamland; it is just a simple, practical requirement—"Children, obey your parents in the Lord." Possibly even the older hearers were rather surprised, and certainly there are many now who would have expected a more spiritual counsel. They would have expected him to say something to the children about Jesus, or about prayer, or about trying to teach the heathen around them; but he speaks on none of these things. He probably counted that, if the children were right with their parents, other things would follow; if they obeyed their

parents, and their parents brought them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, God's blessing would rest on their efforts and all would be well. But if the apostle did not speak to children in the modern fashion, it is all the more important to notice and ponder the message which he actually gives them.

I. DUTY OF CHILDREN. 1. *To obey.* 2. *To honour their parents.* The reasons are—(1) it is right; (2) it is a commandment; (3) it is the first of the commandments with a promise; (4) that promise gives expectation of long life and prosperity. In one of the best books of the early Church, written by one of its greatest men—"The Confessions" of St. Augustine—there is a chapter in which he humbly confesses his disobedience as a boy, in neglecting his lessons, and going to see games and sights in opposition to the wishes of his parents. Long after, when he came to be a Christian, the thought haunted and distressed him until, confessing it, and laying it on Jesus, he obtained the mercy and forgiveness of God. Long life among the Jews was a token of the Divine favour, and it seems to have been an emblem of the life to come. We need not count in all cases on a literal fulfilment of the Jewish promise; but we may rest assured that a spirit of honour to our parents tends to make our earthly lot better and brighter, and will have some recognition likewise in the life that is to come.

II. DUTY OF PARENTS. 1. *Negatively.* Not to provoke or irritate their children. But: 2. *Positively,* to bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. In the Old Testament, Samuel, and in the New Testament, Timothy, are samples of children so brought up. The Lord's command is, "Bring up this child for me, and I will pay thee thy wages." What infinitely precious results depend on the execution of these two precepts! Every well-trained Christian household is a nursery of all that tends to bless the world; while disorderly and unchristian families are hotbeds of vice and evil. The prayer of the hundred and forty-fourth psalm is never out of date: "That our sons may be as plants grown up in their youth; our daughters as corner-stones, polished after the similitude of a palace. . . . Happy is that people that is in such a case; yea, happy is that people whose God is the Lord."

Vers. 5—9.—*Duties of servants and masters.* I. DUTY OF SERVANTS. Recognized as constituent members of the Church, and, however little esteemed by man, as greatly regarded by God. In Christ all are brethren, for all are brothers of Christ, therefore of one another. 1. *The duty of servants* is obedience. Qualities of the obedience. (1) With fear and trembling (see Exposition); (2) in singleness of heart; (3) as unto Christ and not to men; (4) not with eye-service, but as servants of Christ; (5) doing the will of God from the heart; (6) with good will. 2. *The reward of good service.* Whatsoever good you do, you shall receive of the Lord; he will repay you. We are apt to be jealous of this doctrine. It seems to undermine free grace. But no; salvation is wholly of grace; but one feature of grace is that, when you receive it and act on it, it begets, as it were, another gift of grace. If by grace the servant obey in the Lord, a further act of grace will follow; the obedience rendered will be rewarded and blessed. Better this surely than any amount of earthly reward! "God is not unrighteous to forget" the faithful work of those who remember him above all other.

II. DUTY OF MASTERS. (1) Do the same things to them, observe their rights and do as you would be done by; (2) forbear threatening. Reasons for this. (a) You have a Master also, One in heaven, who oversees all you do; (b) there is no respect of persons with him. One of the great problems of the day is how to impregnate the relations of master and servant with the Christian spirit, and carry into effect the aim of such passages as this. We do not refer particularly to domestic service, for a servant, by entering a house, becomes in a sense a member of the family, and is thereby bound to fall in with the family order. The difficulty lies mainly with the case of large bodies of men working under a single employer. The problem is too intricate to be discussed here. But both masters and men need to beware of offending Christ by a bitter and unreasonable spirit. Occasions for glorifying God by the manifestation of a noble Christian spirit may become occasions for letting out the selfishness of the carnal heart. Yet, complicated though the question is, it is probable that the true solution would be reached by all Christian men if the spirit of this text were carried out, if both masters and men tried to do all as to the Lord and not to men, and to esteem his approval the very highest reward to which they could look.

Vers. 10—20.—*The Christian warfare.* Even in common parlance we speak of "the battle of life." Even for ordinary purposes we have to fight against indolence, evil lusts, dishonest tendencies, and many other things in ourselves; and against opposition, ill treatment, temptation on the part of others, and the depressing effects of trial and disappointment. All hard work is a fight; we have to fight against the sense of monotony, against the feeling of weariness, against the longing for ease; and when we are sick, or feeble, or depressed, it is often hard to hold on the straight path of hard duty and turn away from the allurements of pleasure. The ring of the hammer, the blow of the shuttle, the housewife's active step from dawn to dewy eve, often tell of battles and victories in quiet spheres, that without the *éclat* have much more real glory than ordinary wars. But much more is the Christian life a battle. The chief enemies here are unseen. It is impossible to pursue an aimless, careless life and be a Christian. "If any man will come after me," said Christ, "let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me." Not only to be a Christian, but such a Christian as this Epistle delineates; to walk worthy of the vocation with which we are called; to be ever reaching forth toward the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ; to be growing up into Christ toward that condition in which we shall be without spot or wrinkle or any such thing; to be advancing thus in spite of hosts of spiritual foes, working unseen, sapping and mining our Christian life, trying to entangle and enslave us in every way,—this can be no easy task; it is a veritable battle, demanding constant vigilance and incessant care. It may seem strange that we should be exposed to such enemies. Is not our blessed Lord exalted far above all principality and power and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come? Has he not spoiled principalities and powers, making a show of them openly? Is he not Head over all things to his Church? Why, then, does he not crush all her foes? Doubtless because he has purposes of discipline to carry out in connection with these enemies, because, while he is willing to fight in and through his people, he does not see it right to crush his foes without their instrumentality; in this way habits of vigilance and prayer and activity must be kept up by them; but all the greater will be their joy when at last the victory is gained, and they get the reward of "him that overcometh." In the Middle Ages, certain coarse means were employed to arrest attention to the formidable foes that beset the Christian soldier. Frescoes were painted on the walls of churches and other ecclesiastical buildings, representing souls which were sometimes seen coming out of dying bodies, while angels on the one side, and devils on the other, were striving to get them. The devils were grotesque, hideous, revolting monsters, more absurd than terrible. It was the way of that age to embody truths which in our material age are apt to be thought as ridiculous as the demons of the Italian frescoes. But there are spirits of evil hovering about us, trying to obscure and pervert the truth, to blind us to the fruits of sin, to dazzle our eyes with the glory of earth, to entangle us in subtle temptations, to fill our minds with doubts and fears and evil forebodings, luring us to the edge of the precipice, and ready, if they should get their way, to burst into their bitter scornful laugh, as they behold us, through their wiles, weltering in the gulf of despair. Let us observe: 1. *The true Source of strength:* "In the Lord" (ver. 10). 2. *The true armour to seek.* "The whole armour of God" (ver. 11). 3. *The true enemies to be overcome.* (Vers. 11, 12.) "The wiles of the devil," and other unseen spiritual foes. 4. *The true employment and attitude of the Christian warrior:* "Withstand . . . and stand" (ver. 13). 5. *The various pieces of the armour, and their use.* (Vers. 14—18.) "Who is she that looketh forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners?" An army consists of men who not only have armour, but have been trained to use it. An unarmed army can only be food for the enemy's artillery, material for a dreadful massacre. Let professing Christians see that they are armed, and that they are making a good use of their armour. Nature cries out for an easy life, for a truce with the world, the devil, and the flesh. In this sense our motto must be war, not peace; for in this sense Christ came, not to send peace on earth, but a sword.

Vers. 18—20.—"*Praying always.*" Here is a part of the Christian's armour which had nothing corresponding to it in the panoply of the Roman soldier. Prayer comes in without any figure. We are taught that, even when every spiritual weapon is prepared

and directed against the spiritual foe, all is in vain without a direct appeal to God. When Jacob, looking for an attack by Esau, had completed his arrangements of his family and flocks, the most important part of his preparations remained—another warfare had to be carried on, he must wrestle with the angel for his blessing. So in the Christian conflict, even when the loins are girt with truth, the heart protected by the breastplate of righteousness, the feet shod with peace, the head crowned with the helmet of salvation, the person protected by the shield of faith, and when the hands are grasping and wielding the sword of the Spirit, there is another duty which is quite indispensable—prayer: “Praying always with all prayer,” etc. This is in accordance with the whole tenor of the Bible: Enoch, walking with God; Abraham, interceding for Sodom; Moses, pleading on the mountain; Elijah, praying for rain; David, Hezekiah, Daniel, Simeon, Anna, our blessed Lord in Gethsemane,—all show us that fighting men ought always to pray and not to faint. The soul is thus strengthened and encouraged; it reaches the promises and rests on them; it feels that God is with it; “They that wait on the Lord renew their strength; they mount up with wings as eagles; they run, and are not weary; they walk, and are not faint.” The prayer required is marked by six features. 1. *Manifold*. With all prayer and supplication; all kinds—secret, ejaculatory, domestic, social, public. 2. *Incessant*. At all seasons: (1) at all times or periods of life, youth, manhood, age; (2) in connection with every employment, recreation, trial, mercy, undertaking, both great and small; (3) as a constant habit of the spirit, thinking on God, depending on him, working for him. 3. *Spiritual*. “In the Spirit”—in dependence on his aid and inspiring power, in opposition to the mere form or rhyming of “pater noster.” 4. *Watchful*. (See Exposition.) 5. *Persevering* (see Exposition). 6. *Comprehensive*. “For all saints,” and especially for God’s servants in the gospel, the men who are bearing the burden and heat of the battle. Men may ridicule prayer; they may scoff at a praying man, a praying family, a praying nation; but the spectacle is really sublime. When Père Hyacinthe, lecturing on the public immorality of his country, made the aisles of Notre Dame ring with his eloquence, he did not find cause to scoff at prayer. He said that it moved him to find England and the United States not ashamed to pray in the time of calamity, and to give thanks in the hour of deliverance. God, after all, is the Ruler among the nations, and his rule of good will stand true. “Them that honour me I will honour, but they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed.”

Vers. 21, 22.—*Tychicus*. Many honourable men in the Bible have short biographies, but they are very expressive. Nothing else is known of Tychicus except that he was a man of Asia. But we see here that: 1. He devoted himself to the service of Christ (ver. 21). 2. He was faithful in that service. 3. He was the fellow-labourer of other devoted men. 4. By his loving spirit he secured their love. 5. He was sympathetic, friendly, tender-hearted, suitable to be employed on a mission of comfort (ver. 22). 6. His memory continues embalmed and fragrant for these two qualities—fidelity to his master, and kindly sympathy for his brother men. His short biography is full of instruction for the servants of Christ. He was unselfish, unworldly, unambitious; it were a blessing for the Church if the rank-and-file of its undistinguished ministers and other workers were like him. After all, few inscriptions on a tombstone would be more to be desired by the minister of Christ than this: “He served his Master and he loved his brethren.”

Vers. 23, 24.—*The benediction*. The last drops of the Epistle are of the dew of Heaven.

I. THE BENEDICTION FOR THE BRETHREN. 1. *Its substance*. (1) Peace. (2) Love. (3) Faith. 2. *Its source*. “God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.”

II. THE BENEDICTION FOR THE WHOLE CHURCH. *Grace*, sum and substance of the Epistle—“the Epistle of grace.” With that he began, with that he ends. But the word is much richer after the exposition of the Epistle. It has been connected with two eternities, past and future. And with the infinity of the three-one God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, the soul of the reader has been exercised and expanded to its utmost stretch, in trying to comprehend it; but it is incomprehensible. And now, with all this added fullness of meaning, it falls on the head of all that love the Lord

Jesus in incorruptibility. This treasure, multiplied, deepened, lengthened, heightened to infinity, I invoke on you, says the apostle, in the Name of God. Blessed privilege of the minister who can do so. Deep responsibility of the people to whom it is done. Great importance of the closing benediction in public service; tendency to think of it as a mere closing form. It contains the very essence of all blessing. Let it be received reverently, pondered seriously, accepted joyously.

HOMILIES BY VARIOUS AUTHORS.

Vers. 1—3.—*The duties of children to parents.* There is a beautiful and appropriate simplicity in the counsel here addressed to children. Their duties are founded in nature. They derive their being from their parents; they are fed by them; they are trained by them for the duties of life.

I. THEIR DUTY IS SUMMED UP IN THE ONE WORD "OBEDIENCE." But it includes four important elements. 1. *Love.* This is an instinctive feeling, but it is not the less a commanded duty, for it is the spring of all hearty obedience. It makes obedience easy. Yet we are not to love our parents more than the Lord; we are rather to love them in the Lord. 2. *Honour.* This is only another form of obedience: "Honour thy father and thy mother." Children are never to set light by their parents (Deut. xxvii. 17); "A son honoureth his father" (Mal. i. 6); "Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head, and honour the face of the old man" (Lev. xix. 32). God has, indeed, given his own honour to parents. We may not always be called to obey them, but we are always to honour them. "Hearken unto thy father that begat thee, and despise not thy mother when she is old" (Prov. xxiii. 22). This honour is allied to reverence: "We have had fathers of our flesh who corrected us, and we gave them reverence" (Heb. xii. 9). 3. *Gratitude.* It is our duty to requite our parents (1 Tim. v. 4), and our Lord implies that we are to do them good (Matt. xv. 4). We ought to remember their love, their care, their concern for us. Joseph provided for his father Jacob in old age, and the women said to Naomi of Boaz, "He shall be unto thee a restorer of thy life, and a nourisher of thine old age." 4. *Subjection.* "Children, obey your parents in all things;" that is, in all things falling within the sphere of a parent's authority. If parents command their children to steal, or lie, or commit idolatry, they are not to be obeyed. They are to be obeyed "in the Lord." There are several reasons to make obedience natural. (1) Parents know more than their children; therefore "a wise son beareth his father's instruction" (Prov. xiii. 1). The child must take much of his knowledge for granted on the mere authority of his father. (2) The habit of obedience is good as a discipline. It is even good for the health of a child, as a desultory and dawdling obedience breaks its temper and injures its health. (3) Children are not able to guide themselves; for "folly is bound up in the heart of a child" (Prov. xxii. 15). (4) Society is benefited by the due subordination of family life.

II. THE REASON OF OBEDIENCE ASSIGNED IN THIS PASSAGE IS SIMPLY "FOR THIS IS RIGHT." It is right (1) according to the light of nature; (2) according to the Law of God. "It is well-pleasing unto the Lord" (Col. iii. 20). It is embodied in the Decalogue, and holds the first place among the duties of the second table, and "is the first commandment with promise"—the promise of a long life. This implies (1) that the fifth commandment is still binding on the Christians of this dispensation; (2) that long life is to be desired; (3) that disobedience to parents tends to shorten life. There may be undutiful children who live to old age, and dutiful children who die young, but the promise abides in its general purpose. It is like the saying, "The hand of the diligent maketh rich," yet diligent persons have felt the bitterness of poverty. Children are therefore justified in having regard firstly to the command of God, and then to the recompense of the reward.—T. C.

Vers. 4.—*Duties of parents.* They are here summarily expressed, first in a negative and then in a positive form.

I. THERE MUST BE INSTRUCTION. "Train up a child in the way he should go." Parents must not suffer them to grow up without instruction, as Rousseau suggested, because not to teach religion is to teach impiety and infidelity; not to teach truth is to

teach error. 1. *In what principles?* (1) In the principles of the Divine Word, which are able to make the youngest "wise unto salvation" (2 Tim. iii. 15). "Desire the sincere milk of the Word, that ye may grow thereby" (1 Pet. ii. 2). This is counsel for babes. (2) Teach them they are sinners. (3) Lead them to Christ as the Saviour, and pray that the Lord may place his hands of power and blessing upon the little ones, as he did when on earth. (4) Train them in habits of piety, church-going, and religious action. 2. *In what manner?* (1) Early, like Timothy; (2) gradually (Deut. vi. 6—9); (3) patiently (Deut. vi. 20—23); (4) lovingly; (5) by example—your own example, and Scripture examples; (6) prayerfully.

II. **THERE MUST BE DISCIPLINE.** 1. Children soon manifest a corrupt and selfish nature, for folly is bound up in their hearts; therefore they need correction (Heb. xii. 9). 2. Parents must isolate them by their personal authority from evil or evil companions or temptations to evil. 3. Parents must use discipline with due discretion; they must not "provoke their children to wrath, lest they be discouraged" (1) by unreasonable commands; (2) by undue severity; (3) by exhibitions of anger.

III. **ENCOURAGEMENTS OR MOTIVES TO THE FAITHFUL DISCHARGE OF PARENTAL DUTY.** 1. The promise: "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it" (Prov. xxii. 6). 2. We shall have the interests of eternity secured early in life. 3. We shall thus restrain them from many follies and sinful habits which would otherwise be the burden and curse of their after life. 4. We shall be promoting our own happiness and comfort in old age. 5. We shall be shaping the destinies of future generations.—T. C.

Vers. 5—8.—*Duties of servants.* It is interesting to reflect that the New Testament devotes more space to the instruction of servants than to the instruction of either parents or children, husbands or wives. The servants, or rather slaves, were a large and interesting class in the cities of Asia Minor, often greatly more numerous than freemen, and very many of them had embraced the gospel with great heartiness. There were obvious reasons for a studious minuteness in the counsels given to such a class.

I. **THEIR DUTY IS SUMMED UP IN THE SINGLE WORD "OBEDIENCE."** Christianity does not rudely strike at existing relations in life, but seeks to improve and sanctify them. In its appeals to slaves as well as to masters, it sowed the seed-corn, small as a grain of mustard seed, which grew into a harvest of emancipation in the ages which were to see the full power of the gospel. Obedience was therefore the duty of slaves, or servants, "in all things" (Col. iii. 22), that is, in all things included within the sphere of a master's rightful authority, not contrary to the Law of God, or the gospel of Christ, or the dictates of conscience. It is set forth first in a negative, then in a positive form. 1. *Negatively.* "Not with eye-service, as men-pleasers." This word is coined by the apostle for the occasion. Eye-service is either work done only to please the eye, but which cannot bear to be tested, or it may be good work done only when the master's eye is upon the worker. This was a vice peculiar to slavery. But it enters into all forms of service. Dishonest work is to be avoided quite as much as dishonest words. An acted lie is as dishonourable as a spoken one. There must be no mere perfunctory discharge of human duties. 2. *Positively.* (1) "With fear and trembling." Not from regard to the lash of the master, but with an anxious and tremulous desire to do our duty thoroughly. Obedience is to be yielded "with all fear" (1 Pet. ii. 18), that is, with the fear of incurring the just rebukes of their masters, and "as fearing God" (Col. iii. 22). (2) "In singleness of heart, as unto Christ." In simplicity and sincerity of spirit, without dissimulation or hypocrisy. There is a great temptation to duplicity in those subjected to another's will, especially if the service is irksome or unreasonable. Let there be a single desire to do your duty. (3) "With good-will doing service," not grudgingly, or murmuringly, or by constraint, but with cheerfulness and alacrity, "seeking to please them well in all things," that they may obtain their good will (Titus ii. 9).

II. **THE MOTIVES TO SUCH OBEDIENCE.** 1. The command of God here addressed to all servants. 2. The Lord's mastership, for they are "the servants of Christ," and are "doing service as to the Lord, and not to men." Here is the constraining force of the Lord's love. How this motive sweetens, sanctifies, ennobles work! The work is done, not for wages, not by constraint, but "unto the Lord," and therefore becomes part of

our worship. It is thus that the Lord has married the work of earth to the worship of heaven. 3. The rewards of this service: "Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive, . . . whether he be bond or free." Whatever disappointment may mix itself with the service of men, the Lord will have a rich reward in store for the faithful worker. He is not unrighteous to forget your labour of love, for "of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance" (Col. iii. 24). 4. The honour of the gospel. His Name and his doctrine will be blasphemed by a contrary spirit (1 Tim. vi. 1; Titus ii. 10). 5. The example of Christ himself. He "took upon him the form of a servant;" for "he came not to be ministered unto, but to minister." He always did the things which pleased God, and has set us an example that we should follow in his steps.—T. C.

Ver. 9.—*The duties of masters.* They needed to be instructed as well as their servants; for they had irresponsible power in their hands, and might be led to use it severely or cruelly.

I. **THEIR DUTIES WERE RECIPROCAL.** They were "to do the same things unto them"—not the same duties as servants were bound to do, but after the same manner, in obedience to God's command, with the same singleness of heart, and with the same heartiness and good will. They were to give their servants what "was just and equal." They were to treat them with justice and equity, with a full recognition of their rights. The apostle, however, demands something more than just treatment; masters are to forbear the threatening which was a too familiar feature of slavery. They are not to rule them with rigour or harshness, or even with displays of temper, but with gentleness, moderation, and kindness.

II. **THE ARGUMENT TO ENFORCE THE DUTIES OF MASTERS.** "Your Master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with him." He is the Judge of master and servant alike, and will not respect either of them on account of their station in life, but will reward them justly according to their works. Both masters and servants, therefore, ought to have an eye to the presence of their great Master in heaven, ought to seek his glory, and pray for his assistance and acceptance.—T. C.

Ver. 10.—*The secret of spiritual strength.* This strength is needed under all the burdens, in all the conflicts and temptations of life, beneath its sorrows and its cares—strength of heart, strength of purpose, strength of will.

I. **"BE STRONG."** This is a strange command, just as strange as it would be for a physician to say to a weak man, "Be strong." It is like the command, "Rejoice in the Lord;" but it seems more difficult by any volition of our own to add to our strength than to add to our joy. Yet, as we can do much to regulate our emotions by determining what set of thoughts shall engage us, we can equally provide for an increase in our strength by a direct recourse to the secret and source of it. Our obedience to this command stands on the same footing as our obedience to God's other commandments; and if we continue to be weak, it is more than our misfortune, it is our fault. But there is nothing strange when we consider the secret of the origin of this strength. We are conscious of a sense of feebleness, of heartlessness, of hopelessness, which of itself goes far to disqualify us for duty, and gives us up an easy prey to the adversary of souls. It is to meet this want that God reveals himself to us as the great Giver of strength.

II. **"BE STRONG IN THE LORD, AND IN THE POWER OF HIS MIGHT."** The strength poured into us is strength in Christ, springing out of a realizing apprehension of the continued presence, love, and help of the Redeemer. "My strength shall be made perfect in weakness." A fly is able to walk upon the ceiling of a room. The cause is to be found in the vacuum in its webbed foot caused by its very weight, and it is thus enabled to hold on by the smooth surface of the ceiling. So our safety lies likewise in our emptiness. The soldier fights with greater confidence when he is led by a general who has been always successful. Wellington calculated the presence of Bonaparte at the head of an army as equal to a hundred thousand additional bayonets. Thus we understand the invincibility of the French army under his leadership. Thus the Christian fights with greater resolution because Christ is the Captain of his salvation.

III. **THE COMMAND IMPLIES A CONTINUOUS DEPENDENCE UPON THE LORD.** The

strength is not given at once and in full measure, but according to the desire, the capacity, the faith, the need, the duty, the trial. Our lowest powers, those of the body, we get by growth, and they grow by exercise. Such is the law of our physical childhood, and no other is the law of our spiritual being. The sense of weakness obliges us to repair every day afresh to him for fresh supplies. "He giveth power to the faint; to them that have no might he increaseth strength."—T. C.

Vers. 11, 12.—*The Divine panoply: its necessity and design.* Christians have a spiritual warfare on earth (2 Tim. iv. 7). They have to fight for God (1 Sam. xxv. 28), for truth (Jude 3), and for themselves (Rev. iii. 11).

I. THE DIVINE ARMOUR. It is so called because God provides each individual part of it. It is armour for offence as well as defence—"forged on no earthly anvil and tempered by no human skill." The armour of Rome—celibacy, poverty, obedience, asceticism—is for flight, not for conflict. This Divine armour we are not required to provide, but merely to put on, and its efficacy depends entirely upon the power of him who made it.

II. ITS PURPOSE. "That ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil." The grand enemy of the Church is the devil, a superhuman tempter older than man. This language implies (1) the personal existence of Satan; (2) his possession of immense resources of cunning and craft; (3) his power to inject evil into the minds of the saints; (4) his great end to destroy the souls of men and the whole moral order of the world; (5) the possibility of resisting his wiles in the strength of the Divine armour.

III. ITS NECESSITY. This Divine equipment is indispensable in view of the serried ranks of evil which are leagued against us under the leadership of Satan. Our conflict is not with feeble man. It is with fallen spirits. The language of the apostle implies (1) that these spirits have a hierarchy of their own of different orders; (2) that their malignant activity is exercised in the world of men under a reign of darkness; (3) that their moral character is wickedness; (4) and that, as Satan is the prince of the power of the air, they seem to have their abode or the scene of their activity in the atmosphere that surrounds our earth. We need, therefore, to be strong and valiant in this warfare, (1) because we are fighting for our life; (2) because, though our enemies be strong, our Captain is stronger still; (3) because nothing but cowardice can lose the victory (Jas. iv. 7); (4) because, if we conquer, we shall ride triumphantly into heaven (2 Tim. iv. 7, 8).—T. C.

Vers. 14—17.—*The Divine panoply in its separate parts.* The spiritual equipment of the Christian is here described in detail—the belt, the breastplate, the sandals, the shield, the helmet, and the sword.

I. TRUTH IS THE BELT, AS RIGHTEOUSNESS IS THE BREASTPLATE. "Having your loins girt about with truth." As the belt or girdle kept the armour in its proper place, giving strength and buoyancy of action, so truth acts in relation to righteousness, faith, and peace. If truth were wanting, there could be none of these things, and nothing Christ-like or noble. The truth here does not mean truth of doctrine, as the Word of God is again referred to, nor even sincerity in the sense of truthfulness, but the truth subjectively apprehended, that is, the knowledge and belief of the truth. It is the conscious grasp of the truth which gives a Christian boundless confidence in his conflict with evil. Error, as a principle of life, dissolves strength and unnerves for the great fight with sin. Truth is our proper girdle, because we fight for a God of truth (Titus i. 2), and against Satan the father of lies (John viii. 44). Without it we are spiritless, heartless, and weak.

II. THE BREASTPLATE. "Having on the breastplate of righteousness." The Roman soldier wore it to protect his heart, the centre of physical life. The breastplate of the Christian is here called "the righteousness," evidently in allusion to Isa. lix. 17, where Jehovah puts on "righteousness as a breastplate, and a helmet of salvation on his head." It can hardly mean moral rectitude, which, after all, would be but a poor guard against the reproaches of conscience or the assaults of Satan. This righteousness is that which the Apostle Paul desired for himself—"the righteousness of God by faith" (Phil. iii. 8, 9). It is emphatically "the righteousness," so perfect that it

satisfied every demand of Law, and is perfectly proof against all assaults from within or from without. Let us not show the bare breast of our righteousness to the tempter, but rather the righteousness of God himself, imputed to us and received by faith. This breastplate was purchased by Christ at a dear rate; none are his soldiers who have not put it on; without it, God himself will fight against you; if you have it, you are sure of ultimate triumph (Rom. viii. 31, 32).

III. SANDALS. "Having your feet shod with the preparedness of the gospel of peace." The legs of the Roman soldier were covered with greaves, and below these were the sandals, or *caligæ*. Swiftmess of foot was of great consequence in military movements. Christians are to show a readiness, a celerity, an alacrity of movement, in doing God's will. This preparedness is the effect of the gospel of peace, which inspires us with severity and courage, and liberates us from those doubts which generate weakness. The unready warrior is liable to sudden and secret attacks. The Christian ought ever to be prepared to advance against the enemy, to obey his great Captain, to fight, to suffer, and to die in the cause of God and truth.

IV. THE SHIELD. "Above all, taking the shield of faith." The shield covered the whole body, as well as the armour itself. *Faith is a shield in the spiritual warfare.* It is that faith of which Christ is the Object, at once "the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen;" that confidence which defends the understanding from error, the heart from weakness or despair, the will from revolt against Divine command. It is, in a word, "the victory that overcometh the world" (1 John v. 4, 5). Its special service is "to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one." Satan showers his burning arrows upon the soul of the Christian, either in the shape of blasphemous suggestions, or unholy thoughts, or dark despair; but faith makes the soul impenetrable to such destructive missiles, because it falls back upon the Divine Word, and apprehends the mercy of God, the merits of Christ, and the help of the Spirit.

V. THE HELMET. "And take the helmet of salvation." The helmet protects the head, the most exposed part of the body, enables the soldier to hold it up without the fear of injury, and to look calmly round upon the enemy's movements. Salvation, and not the mere hope of it (1 Thess. v. 8), is the helmet that covers the head, is our true defence against the devil. It will make you active in all duties, courageous in all conflicts, cheerful in all conditions, and constant to the end of life.

VI. THE SWORD. "And the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God." The other parts of the armour were defensive; this is both offensive and defensive. 1. The Word of God is a sword, because it pierces like a sword into the heart (Heb. iv. 12), because it pierces through all disguises of error, because it lays bare the "wiles" of the devil. It was wielded by Christ himself in his great temptation. It is still the saint's only weapon of offence. Whether the temptation is to atheism, to impiety, to despair, to unbelief, to covetousness, to pride, to hatred, or to worldliness, the legend, "It is written," stands clearly revealed on the handle of this sword. 2. It is the sword of the Spirit, because he is its Author, its Interpreter, and he who makes it effectual to the defeat of all enemies.—T. C.

Ver. 18.—*The duty of prayer.* We are not to regard prayer as a seventh weapon, but rather as exhibiting the spirit in which the Divine armour is to be assumed and the warfare carried on. It is easy to see the intimate relation existing between prayer and each individual part of the Christian's armour. 1. It is to be prayer of all kinds—public and private, oral and mental, formal and ejaculatory. 2. It is to be spiritual prayer: "In the Spirit;" for "He makes intercession for the saints with groanings which cannot be uttered" (Rom. viii. 26). We must "pray in the Holy Ghost" (Jude 20). 3. It is to be persevering prayer: "At all times;" at every suitable season. We must cultivate an habitual frame of prayer. 4. It is to be watchful prayer: "Watching thereunto." We must watch against watchlessness, watch for occasions of prayer, watch for answers to prayer. 5. It is to be intercessory prayer: "For all saints." It is most comprehensive in its character. It is based on the communion of saints. We have every heavenly motive for continuing in prayer. We have no ground to expect blessing without it (Ezek. xxxvi. 37). It is a means of getting all blessings, temporal, and spiritual (Matt. vii. 7; xxi. 22; Jas. i. 5). It is in itself the most heavenly duty we can perform (Phil. iii. 20).—T. C.

Vers. 19, 20.—Prayer for an ambassador in bonds. The apostle feels his need of the prayers of the saints, because he has a true appreciation of the difficulty and importance of his work.

I. THE BLESSING HE ASKS FOR. It is no temporal blessing, not even release from imprisonment that he might more widely preach the gospel. It is simply that "utterance might be given to him" to preach the mystery of the gospel with boldness. This implies (1) that courage was needed for the declaration of a gospel which was an offence to the world; (2) that even an apostle was dependent upon God for simple utterance.

II. A DOUBLE ARGUMENT TO BESPEAK AN AFFECTIONATE INTEREST IN THEIR PRAYERS. "For which I am an ambassador in bonds." 1. *He was an ambassador.* The apostle never forgets the dignity of his office. He knows he is the representative of a great King, though he is immured in Roman prisons. Ministers are Christ's ambassadors. "We are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God" (2 Cor. v. 20). 2. *He was an ambassador in bonds.* The ambassadors of earthly sovereigns come with pomp and splendour. Their persons are sacred and inviolable; to touch them is to declare war. But this ambassador of Christ is in prison and afflicted. Brave ambassador in bonds! He is worthy of the prayers of the saints.—T. C.

Vers. 21, 22.—The errand of Tychicus to Ephesus. The apostle showed his affectionate concern for the Church at Ephesus, not only by writing them an Epistle, but in despatching a minister to inform them concerning his condition and labours as a prisoner, and to comfort their hearts under their various trials. It was a great mark of love and confidence to send a messenger so far, for Ephesus was many hundred miles distant from Rome.

I. THE MESSENGER WAS TYCHICUS. We know little of him except what is told in several passages of Scripture. "Tychicus have I sent to Ephesus" (2 Tim. iv. 12), probably in reference to this very mission. He was an Asiatic, who remained faithful to the apostle amidst many desertions (Acts xx. 4); "a faithful minister in the Lord;" as well as "a beloved brother" of the apostle—one thoroughly acquainted with all his affairs, and quite in harmony with all his aims. How powerfully the apostle influenced all the Churches by his chosen messengers! They reflected his feelings, they intensified the impression made by his direct labours, they perpetuated the cordial relationship which bound him to all the Churches.

II. THE DESIGN OF HIS JOURNEY. It was twofold. 1. To acquaint the Ephesians with his circumstances as a prisoner at Rome. There were many things in that imprisonment that the Ephesians would be anxious to know, besides the state of his health and spirits. They would like to know what facilities he still enjoyed for prosecuting his labours, even as a prisoner; how the gospel was spreading in the great capital of the world; how the Judaic party was affecting his legitimate influence as an apostle; and what were the prospects of his release from imprisonment. 2. To comfort the Ephesians, not merely by minute oral information respecting these matters, but by the higher lessons of the gospel. As a faithful minister in the Lord, Tychicus was capable of doing great service in explaining and enforcing the lessons of affliction. It is the business of ministers to comfort the hearts of believers, who, whether at Ephesus or elsewhere, may suffer from persecution, from Satan's temptations, from spiritual deadness. It is a poor state of the Church when she is without such comforters.—T. C.

Vers. 23, 24.—Double apostolic blessing. The apostle ends the Epistle by a blessing addressed first to the brethren at Ephesus, and secondly to all true lovers of the Lord Jesus Christ.

I. BLESSING TO THE BROTHERHOOD. 1. *Peace.* This is not mere concord—"the peace to which they were called in one body"—but everything that is implied in the favour of God, repose of spirit under the sprinklings of the blood of Christ, a continuous flow of spiritual blessings. 2. *Love with faith.* That is, a love joined to faith, not love and faith as two distinct blessings. Their faith was an actually existing fact; the apostle desired that love should be there, as at once the characteristic and the discoverer of faith. 3. *The full blessing is ascribed to God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.* All the graces spring from Father and Son in the power of the Holy

Spirit; for God the Father is at once the God of peace and the God of love, and Jesus is our very Peace, in whom is fulness of grace and love.

II. BLESSING TO ALL TRUE LOVERS OF CHRIST. The Epistle ends, as it begins, with grace and peace. The apostle implores God's favour upon all who love Christ in sincerity. 1. *Christ is worthy of our love.* He ought to be the supreme Object of our love, because of the loveliness of his character, because of his boundless love to his people, because of his work as our Mediator. 2. *The love of Christ is a test of our religion.* He who loves him has found grace in God's sight, and will stand high in the Divine favour. If we love him not, we are anathema; for we love not God, we love not man, we love not ourselves. If we love him, we have a grace of the Spirit, and we shall value his gospel, his Word, his cause, his people, and we shall delight in his presence. 3. *The love must be sincere,* free from those elements of decay or change that would work its destruction. It must be without hypocrisy, not in word only, but in deed and in truth. 4. *The apostle wishes grace to all such lovers of Christ,* so that they might have fresh discoveries of his love, a fuller enjoyment of his person, and a larger supply of all spiritual gifts. Amen.—T. C.

Vers. 1—4.—*Christian nurture.* Having shown how Christ sanctifies the marriage union and gives to husbands the ideal of devotion, the apostle proceeds in the present section to show the relation which should exist between children and parents. He directs children to the fifth commandment and to the promise it contains, and he calls upon fathers to afford their children Christian nurture in place of provocation. The section suggests—

I. PARENTAL QUALIFICATIONS. And here we fall back upon the previous section. It is when husbands and wives are related as Christ is to the Church, when self-sacrificing love is met by reverential obedience, that the parents are qualified to train up the children. It is surely significant also that upon the father the burden of the nurture is laid. For he is in danger of provoking the children by severity, and so is not naturally so sympathetic as the mother. Besides, if the Christian father keep Christ before him as his great Ideal, then the Divine fatherhood regulates his conscience and he nurtures the little ones accordingly.¹

II. THE NURTURE ITSELF. The children are not to be provoked, but “nurtured in the chastening and admonition of the Lord” (Revised Version). The former of these words (*paideia*) might mean, as Harless suggests, “education in general” (*allgemeine Begrif*); but it is better to restrict it to the discipline, made up of order and of act, under which the children grow, while the latter word (*voutheia*) will indicate education by word. “The same spirit,” says Monod, *in loco*, “which in our day relaxes filial obedience, softens paternal power; the abuse of independence among inferiors and the forgetfulness of authority among superiors, march hand-in-hand. Parents who have known how to guard themselves against an excessive rigour, whether as a matter of principle or of temperament, fall usually into the contrary excess; chastisement is banished from their household, and as for corporal punishment in particular, it is held most frequently for a mark of a hard heart or of a base-born spirit. Let us oppose to these prejudices Prov. xiii. 24; xxii. 15; xxiii. 13, 14; xxix. 17. By the *rod* we do not mean corporal punishment alone; we simply say that one ought not to exclude it (cf. Prov. xxiii. 14), and that there are some cases where nothing else will do. As for the rest, behold the principle which should direct Christian parents in such a case—to employ discipline of the *sweetest possible* character, but discipline *sufficient* to repress the sin.” Let this careful discipline be supplemented by a careful instruction and the children shall be faithfully “nurtured” for the Lord.

III. THE EVOKED OBEDIENCE. (Vers. 1—3.) Children are to obey their parents; they are to *honour* their father and mother. There is to be reverence in the obedience. This will be secured if the parents are qualified by being God-like. It should, however, be rendered even when the parents are far from perfect. The loyalty of the children must not be determined by the character of the parents; as the natural governors, the parents are entitled to obedience even though they do not morally deserve it. Tho

¹ Cf. Bushnell's striking volume ‘Christian Nurture,’ especially the chapter on ‘Parental Qualifications.’

obedience has no exception. Nor does any majority make the obligation to cease.¹ Our obedience as God's "dear children" should be the model of our filial obedience. Let us be loyal to our parents, just as we feel bound to be loyal to our Father in heaven!

IV. THE ATTENDANT BLESSING. (Ver. 3.) All God's commandments carry blessings in their bosoms. In the keeping of them there is great reward (Ps. xix. 11). But the fifth commandment has this temporal blessing associated with it of *longevity*. Obedient children, by a Divine law, live longer than disobedient ones. Dr. Crosby goes so far as to assert that this law of longevity has only "*one apparent exception*—where the soul itself prefers to leave this world for a better, and where, therefore, the letter of the promise yields to its spirit, and God, instead of continuing the saint upon earth, takes him to his desired home in heaven. Where this exception does not occur, we must believe that every one who dies before old age has disregarded this command."² Now, Christianity, in promoting nurture and evoking obedience, is so far securing the longevity of its children. We can see that the unity of Christian families must, *ceteris paribus*, foster health and longevity. In this way Bushnell's assurance may come true of "the out-populating power of the Christian stock."—R. M. E.

Vers. 5—9.—*The Christian treatment of slavery.* The treatment of slavery by Christianity is one of the most interesting of themes. Because Christianity did not preach a servile war, that is, did not propose emancipation by force, it was imagined that it was a conniver in the selfish plot against the liberties of man. But Christianity confines itself to spiritual means. It is by a spirit that it regenerates mankind. Force and mechanical appliances may subserve its purposes, judgment may have to take place in consequence of men's selfishness and sin, but the instrumentalities of Christianity are not carnal, but spiritual, and so mighty through God to the pulling down of the diabolic strongholds. It can be shown that the Mosaic legislation, as well as the Divine judgments in Old Testament times, were hostile to slavery.³ But we are now concerned with Paul's policy about slaves. Suppose, then, that he had advocated revolt and immediate emancipation. The slaves would have been separated from their masters, and a chasm created between them which would not have been filled for generations. Christianity would have been the disintegrator instead of the unifier of mankind, and the evils of separation would have been excessive. Was it not better to infuse a new spirit into service and masterhood? Was it not better to carry both into a Divine light, and so secure the master and slaves dwelling together in unity? Christianity consequently told master and slave how they were each related to the one Master in heaven, and so made them one. The actual emancipation has been the outcome of the Christian spirit.

I. BOND AND FREE WERE TOLD ABOUT A COMMON MASTER IN HEAVEN. (Vers. 7—9.) The slave was thus asked to look past his earthly master to his heavenly. He might be possessed by a master on earth, but a Master in heaven told him he was not his own, but bought with a price, and so bound to serve him with his body which was God's. This lifted life at once to a new plane and infused into service a religious spirit. The Christian slave became the conscious property of Jesus. But at the same time, he felt that this slavery to God was "perfect freedom," that to be God's "slave" was to be at the same time his "freeman." He was thus spiritually emancipated. Again, the master was given to understand that he had a Master in heaven, and was the slave of God. Hence his spiritual life gave to him the ideal of what authority is when its spirit is love. Lovingly dealt with by God above, he had a model of masterhood evermore set before him, and his own relation to his slaves was of necessity modified thereby.

II. THEY WERE ASSURED THAT HE WAS NO RESPECTER OF PERSONS. (Ver. 9.) Here a blow was struck at the caste prejudices of the time. Here persons were lifted into the light of eternal justice and seen in their native equality. Now, if God took no

¹ Cf. Dale on 'The Ten Commandments,' on the Fifth; also Washburne's 'Social Law of God,' on 'The Law of the Household.'

² Cf. 'Thoughts on the Decalogue,' p. 114.

³ Cf. Cheever's eloquent appeal, 'God against Slavery,' *passim*.

account of personal distinctions so as to draw any line between bond and free, if the distinctions dwelt on by men were of no account with him, the truth tended to annihilate the distinctions. Here was a great Leveller before whom high and low, rich and poor, bond and free, were absolutely undistinguishable. It is this primary truth of all men having equal rights before the Supreme which has led in time to all men having equal rights before enlightened law, as for example in Britain, and which has secured the emancipation of men from meaningless distinctions. The method taken by Christianity has thus been to bring unmeaning distinctions into the light of God's countenance, and when men realize that he disregards them, they are sure to see eye to eye with him in the end. It is by reason, not by force, that the emancipation is accomplished.

III. THEY WERE ASKED TO SERVE EACH OTHER FOR THE HIGHER MASTER'S SAKE. Mutual service for God's sake was the ideal set before masters and slaves by the gospel. For God himself became incarnate, "not to be ministered unto, but to minister." He came to show that "it is better to give than to receive." He came to consecrate service, to glorify devotion to another's welfare. When masters and slaves learn this, their relations will contract a cordiality, and be mutually helpful in a degree impossible otherwise. The gospel has thus quenched tyrannies by the dazzling light of God's unsuspected justice. There was wisdom in the arrangement. Another policy would have disorganized society and brought evils greater than existed. Onesimus goes back to Philemon to be a son in his house rather than a slave, and to help his master in his progress home to the common Master in heaven. Patiently waiting in his spiritual freedom and doing his part, he can assure himself that the political emancipation will be realized in due season.—R. M. E.

Vers. 10—24.—*The Christian panoply.* After having treated Christian morals so carefully and shown how Christianity elevates the individual, the family, and the slave, Paul proceeds, in the close of this remarkable Epistle, to speak of the enemies and the arms of a Christian. Life is seen to be a battle. The enemies are manifold. It is not flesh and blood against which we fight. We leave the carnal warfare to the world. We contend against "the principalities, against the powers, against the world-rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places" (Revised Version). These foes are of a spiritual character—false principles and their advocates, whether men in flesh and blood or demons in their invisible might. So that the Christian finds himself confronted by a most serious host, perhaps not in very strict order of battle, yet mobbed together into perplexing power. How is one to withstand the assault of so many? There is but one way, by becoming "strong in the Lord, and in the strength of his might" (Revised Version). And, blessed be his Name, he has furnished us with a complete panoply. We must put on the *whole* armour, that we may withstand all the devil's wiles. Let us translate the figures into their simplicities.

I. THE CHRISTIAN IS TO BE COMPACTED BY TRUTH. (Ver. 14.) In Oriental as well as Occidental warfare, the girdle or belt is all-important. It binds the soldier into a unity and makes him feel compact and firm. Now, truth, by which is meant *God's truth* in the man, not the man's veracity, is what gives compactness to our whole being. When Jesus is realized as the embodied "truth" (*ἀληθεία*, the same word as here, John xiv. 6), when he is felt to be dwelling within us, then we become a unity and strength which we could not otherwise be. Our straggled powers are united in the fear of God (Ps. lxxxvi. 11).

II. THE CHRISTIAN IS PROTECTED BY ENTERTAINING A SPIRIT OF RIGHTEOUSNESS. (Ver. 14.) Here again it is the Divine "justice" coming into us and permeating our being. Now, there is no such protection for us in our contact with others as this spirit of fairness, the desire to do what is right as between man and man. If we are able to let righteousness reign in all our relations, the hostility of men and devils will but little avail. It is to be "God-like" in all our attitudes, and nothing then can harm us.

III. THE CHRISTIAN WILL MAKE PROGRESS ONLY THROUGH ENTERTAINING AN EVANGELISTIC SPIRIT. (Ver. 15.) Here we have the public spirit coming to secure progress. The Christian has ceased to be self-centred. He cannot live the selfish life. He must be a missionary. The gospel of peace is to be sent round the world. In doing so he must have some share. He makes progress by giving the evangelistic centrifugal force

free play. We are never so safe as when the safety of others has become our great concern.

IV. THE CHRISTIAN QUENCHES ALL ASSAULTS OF SATAN BY THE POWER OF FAITH. (Ver. 16.) Now, Satan's fiery darts belong to the region of sense. He appeals to passion. He assaults us through the appetites. But faith vanquishes him, and nothing else can do so. What are we to understand by "faith"? Not assent to propositions; not a mere realizing faculty, assuring us of things unseen; but a *trust* extended to the personal and Divine Saviour who rules over all things. This loyalty to an unseen Sovereign enables us to see through the wiles of the arch-enemy, enables us to see how narrow are Satan's limits, and how wide the order and interests of our Saviour's kingdom. We are thus transported to the wider relations of the spiritual world, and the temptations through sense and passion fall extinguished at our feet. As we live by faith in him who rules the universe and dwells within us, Satan finds himself defeated.

V. THE CHRISTIAN'S HEAD IS COVERED BY THE ASSURANCE OF SALVATION. (Ver. 17.) It has been supposed that a victorious spirit will make men careless in the battle-field. But is it so? If soldiers believe themselves destined to be victorious, they will strain every nerve to make themselves so. The flush of victory in their heart gives power in the contest. Now, it is when we have got assurance of victory through our indwelling Lord that we can do valiant things for him. Suppose that a soldier goes to battle with head exposed, and no helmet protecting it, his anxiety about self will destroy his fighting power. But give him his *pickelhaube*, and he passes into the fight free from self-care and with the one idea of doing his very best to win the battle. So is it with the assurance to which faith is meant to lead us.

VI. THE CHRISTIAN WIELDS, AS HIS ONLY OFFENSIVE WEAPON, THE WORD OF GOD. (Ver. 17.) This is the sword with which he is to lay around him. The Bible is a wonderful weapon. It cuts men and devils to the heart. It enters into the very joints and marrow. There is no such discernor of the thoughts and intents of men's hearts. Now, when we consider that *force* is only the preliminary to *reason*—individuals or nations fight first and then make up peace upon some pretence of *principle*—we see that what Christianity does is to keep strictly to the sphere of *reason*, and to refuse all seduction into the field of brute force. The doctrine of *non-resistance* is the highest of all tributes to the reasonableness of Christianity. The Christian, then, who masters most thoroughly the Word of God will be the most powerful among his fellows. For after all, this inspired Word is ahead of all human wisdom. It is the crown and anticipation of human genius. If we have mastered it in the spirit, we are ahead of our time and shall understand what we can best do for our generation.

VII. THE CHRISTIAN IS ALWAYS PRAYERFUL, AND ESPECIALLY FOR HIS FELLOWS. (Vers. 18—24.) The fight in which a Christian is engaged is *not* for his own hand. It is a fight for a common cause, and in the struggle we are never alone. It is a fight for the most part upon our knees. But as we wrestle, it is not for personal blessings only or chiefly, but for blessings to be conferred on others too. Our own garden is best kept when we can think of other gardens too. Hence Paul claims an interest in the Ephesians' prayers, believing that they will fight their battle best if they remember him. And thus as the Epistle closes we see how Christianity emancipates us from self, and makes us pray with a large public spirit and with our eye on the common weal.—R. M. E.

VERS. 1—4.—*The duties of children and parents. I. DUTY OF CHILDREN.* "Children, obey your parents." 1. *Sphere in which the obedience is to take place.* "In the Lord." It was said in ch. v. 21, as determining the character of the whole subjection that there is between human beings, that it is to be "in the fear of Christ." That is to be interpreted as meaning that, in each case, Christ is to be regarded as the authority (behind the visible) before which those who are subjected are to bow. The husband, we have seen, represents Christ (so far as it goes) to the wife. And so the parents represent Christ to the children. And then only can the children obey in the Lord when they regard their parents as placed over them in the Lord. In baptism parents acknowledge that their children belong to the Lord as standing over them. And, in accordance with this, children are to look to their parents as standing in the place of Christ to them, and to obey them as though they were obeying Christ. 2. *Natural ground of the duty*

"For this is right," There is a relationship founded deep in nature between parents and those to whom they have given being. This is associated with an affection which is one of the most beautiful things in our nature. The strength of the parental affection qualifies the parents for being placed in authority over their children. And the filial affection leads the children to look to their parents as the natural source of authority over them. 3. *Scriptural confirmation.* "Honour thy father and mother." This is the fifth commandment, and is wider in its range than obedience to parents. *Contents of fifth commandment.* (1) *Children are to honour their parents by treating them with proper respect.* Children are to respect their parents on the ground of their superior age. We are commanded to rise up before the hoary head, and honour the face of the old man. So children should show reverence to their parents because of their years. And those years are associated with *superior attainments*. A big ship leaving for another land needs to be cautiously piloted out of the dock and past the other ships in the harbour or river, away beyond the bar, and, it may be, through the channel, until it is out to the open sea. Men of special knowledge need to be employed for this, that the ship may not get on to the sandbanks or on to the rocks. So children in their inexperience, their ignorance of the shoals and rocks and seamanship, need to be piloted by the superior wisdom of their parents until they are out to the open sea of life. And it is right that they should think of themselves with humility, and treat with respect those who are appointed their guides. There are certain natural signs by which this may be shown—a readiness to give place to them, to give them the best seat, to be silent when they speak, a tone of deference (while at the same time of confidence), and a certain courtesy in address which is not inconsistent with familiarity. When Solomon on his throne saw his mother approaching (inferior though she was to him in one relationship), he rose to meet her, and bowed himself unto her, and caused a seat to be set for her on his right hand. It would be well for children (who are sometimes inclined to be rude to their parents) to take an example from the wise king. "Cursed be he that setteth light by his father or his mother." "The eye that mocketh at his father, and despiseth to obey his mother, the ravens of the valley shall pick it out, and the young eagles shall eat it;" that is, something terrible shall overtake him who dares to make light of his parents. (2) *Children are to honour their parents by showing gratitude to them.* How much are children laid under obligation to their parents! There was a time when they were entirely helpless, could neither walk nor speak, and, but for the care of parents, they would have perished. And parental cares for them do not soon cease. How they need to be watched, to be kept out of harm's way! And when they are sick, how they need to be attended to day and night! The mother needs to labour on all day in the house (sometimes when she is not strong) to keep things right for them. And the father needs to go out and work that he may provide shelter, and clothing, and food, and schooling for them. The children are not in a position to know all the sacrifices their parents make for them, and the amount of thought that is bestowed on them, and the prayers that are put up for them. But they are receiving daily marks of their kindness, and they should receive these, not as though they were entitled to them, but with feelings of gratitude ever fresh. They will never have on earth better friends, greater benefactors, than Christ has given them in their parents. And let them value the gift. (3) *Children are to honour their parents by being obedient to them.* This is the point on which stress is laid (as though it summed up the command) by the apostle. There is nothing by which children can better requite all the trouble that their parents have had on their account than by their obedience. This is the most beautiful flower that there can be in their character as children. It is true of them (as of those who have not come out of the childish state) that they are creatures of *impulse*, and inclined to seize upon present gratification, without thinking whether it is for their good or not. Parents, as preferring their future happiness to present gratification, must lay commands on them, and the commands should be felt to be easy as coming from those who are at the same time heaping kindness on them. Obidion should be prompt to obey. They should not wait until they are threatened. They should not yield with a grudge. They should not think of opposing their untutored wills and crude wishes to the disciplined wills and ripe judgments of their parents. Let them honour their parents by giving them all obedience. (4) *Children are to honour their parents by being helpful to them.* There are little services which, from an early

age, children can render to their parents. They should be pleased even to leave their play to run an errand for them. They should not grudge doing things about the house to relieve an overworked mother. Sometimes sick parents have been thrown on their children, and then it has been seen what little hands can do. Some parents have a very hard struggle, and children may relieve them of much care and save them not a little expense by taking care of what takes money to replace. There are some children who only think how much they can get out of their parents (do not think whether their parents can afford it, or have to want to give them). Children who wish to honour their parents will be unwilling that they should want for them, and will think how much they can save to their parents of labour and expense. (5) *Children are to honour their parents by placing confidence in them.* Parents and children are friends, and there is nothing on which friendship more hinges than confidence. Parents are intended to know all that their children do, and it is wrong for children to conceal anything from them. If they wish to undertake anything, let them ask their parents' consent. Let nothing be done on which they would not wish their parents' eyes to rest. If they have done wrong, let them frankly come forward and confess their faults, and ask forgiveness. But let there be no concealment, no artifice, no untruthfulness. Children who practise deceit on their parents are likely to form character according to one of the most detestable types. All will come to regard them with distrust. (6) *Children are to honour their parents by attending to their instructions.* Children are to take full advantage of the provision made by their parents for their education; but their duty does not end there. They are to lend a ready ear to their parents when they talk to them, especially about serious subjects. They should love to hear the story of Christ and his love. They should not turn away their ear when their parents tell them what dispositions they are to cultivate, what temptations they are to shun, what company they are to keep, what books they are to read; when they tell them to be respectful, truthful, honest, kind, and above all dutiful to their Father in heaven. "My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother. For they shall be an ornament of grace unto thy head, and chains about thy neck." *Promise annexed to the fifth commandment.* "Which is the first commandment with promise, that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth." It is no longer the land of Canaan that is mentioned, as it was when the promise was first given. The whole earth (not merely the heavenly Canaan) is to be regarded as the land of promise now for God's people. The promise is not to be understood as absolutely guaranteeing long life to dutiful children. For there are some who die in childhood and who have not been less exemplary than those who get the blessing of a longer life. "The good die first," it is said, and there is truth in the saying. Some who have been early taken away have exhibited a singular sweetness and a ripeness beyond their years. Still, it is true (apart from other considerations that may come in) that long life is promised to children who honour their father and mother. And we can see how God (in his ordinary providence) works towards this end. Those who are dutiful to their parents are likely to grow up good members of society. They are not likely to bring their life to an untimely end in disgraceful quarrels or by crime. They are not likely to shorten their days by intemperance or by idleness. They are likely, too, to grow up good members of the Church, and may have their lives prolonged to them because of their usefulness. When Peter's life was in danger, prayer was made without ceasing of the Church unto God for him. And his life was spared because of its felt valueableness. So if we interest people in us, by services rendered to them, their good wishes and prayers may go to our days being lengthened out for us.

II. **DUTY OF PARENTS.** Fathers are addressed; mothers might have been addressed as well. But one class only being mentioned it is those who represent the others. 1. *Negatively.* "And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath." Parents have not a right to act as they please toward their children. They are responsible to him who has placed them over their children, and are bound to act in his spirit. Parents provoke their children to wrath when they give them a *sense of wrong*. (1) *By over-commandment.* Parents have a right to exact of their children; but there are limits to what is to be exacted of them. To heap command upon command, prohibition upon prohibition, is not to accomplish the end aimed at. When the requirement is more than can reasonably be rendered, it becomes vexatious. The children lose the

sense of their ability to obey, and under compulsion are provoked to wrath. (2) *By unreasonable blame.* It is true of children that they need a great amount of encouragement. And where it is deserved it ought to be freely bestowed. To bestow it where it is not deserved is to encourage unreality. Faults (at least the more serious, where they are numerous) are to be dealt with. But extreme care must be taken never to impute blame undeservedly or tentatively to children. There should be no hint of blame unless there is sure ground to go upon. For if children are stung with a sense of injustice, then, provoked to wrath, they are apt to think that they may as well do the things with which they are credited. (3) *By passionateness.* Children can understand a burst of indignation for some serious offence, and are the better for it. But they are also quick to understand when their parents lose command of themselves and punish beyond what the offence deserves. This is carefully to be avoided, for passionateness provokes passionateness; the passionate father makes a passionate son. 2. *Positively.* "But nurture them in the chastening and admonition of the Lord." Such nurture is to be understood as a tender plant needs. If it is to be brought to any perfection, then it needs to be suited as to soil, as to exposure, as to temperature, as to nourishment, as to protection from insects, as to its particular habits. So parents have tender plants given them in their children to rear up, sometimes exceptionally tender, but tender in any circumstances. They have to keep them from the storms and blasts that would wither them. They have their physical development carefully to watch over. Their intellectual development, too, needs great care, that they may not grow up stunted. And especially has care to be bestowed on the nurture of their spiritual powers. (1) *This nurture is to have a distinctively Christian character.* The appliances mentioned are described as being "of the Lord." That is, they are such appliances as those acting for Christ should use. They are to be used toward Christian ends. They are to be used toward the children being trained up as Christians. Parents are to train up their children as those committed to their care by Christ. They are to train them up for Christ. They are to indoctrinate them with Christian truth. They are to seek to attach them, not merely to themselves, but through themselves to Christ. They are to seek that their whole being may be subject to and centre round Christ. (2) *The Christian appliances.* (a) *Chastening.* It is difficult (apparently impossible) to get words in the English language to represent the two words that are in the Greek original. They are in a general way to be distinguished as *discipline by power* and *discipline by reason*. This distinction is effected in the words which are used in the Revised translation ("chastening and admonition"), but by an undue limitation of the meaning. The first word is more than discipline by punishment; the punishment is accidental, or what is only occasionally to be resorted to in discipline. It is rather all that drilling which a parent gives his children in virtue of the executive (magisterial) power which is placed in him. He has certain rules by which he goes in training his children, and he has got the power to enforce them. The first lesson he has to teach them is that he is their master. And so they are, at first, purely in his strong grasp. In vain is all their resistance. As soon as they can lisp words they must use them in prayer. They are passive in his hand, and he can make them utter what he pleases. He makes them observe simplicity, restraint, good manners in eating, that they may not learn to make too much of the pleasures of the table. He makes them say "grace before meat," that they may learn betimes from whom all table-comforts come. He makes them attend to their lessons, that they may know that they have got to work and not to be idlers. He makes them be select as to their companionships, that they may not get out into evil associations. He appoints certain hours for the house, that they may learn order and punctuality. He does not ask them if they will go to church, but he makes them go to church with him. That is the kind of drilling that is meant here, and when it is necessary it must be backed up by chastening, or judicious punishment for good. (b) *Admonition.* This is also a word of too narrow a meaning. The Greek word means generally an appeal to reason. This commences at a later stage, viz. when intellect begins to open. It is not necessary that a parent should always explain to a child the reasons of his procedure. But it is important that, as a rule, children should have explained to them the evil of the course they are asked to avoid, and the advantages of the course they are asked to follow. And if they evince a tendency to any evil course, it is right that they should be remonstrated with or reproved. The importance of an appeal

to reason is that it has in view the emancipation of the children from parental authority. The time has to come when they have to go from under their parents, and be thrown upon their own responsibilities and resources. And it is all-important that, when they go out to the world and meet its temptations, they should be fortified with good habits and reasons which they have in their minds for a course of sobriety, of industry, and of godliness. Parents, then, should feel their responsibility with regard to the proper up-bringing of their children. This responsibility is great in view of the evil that is so natural to them, and in view of the evil example with which they are surrounded. They should see to it that they are first of all Christians themselves, leading a Christian life before their children. They are especially to see that they are Christians in the *methods* which they use with their children.—R. F.

Vers. 5—9.—*The duties of servants and masters.* I. DUTY OF SERVANTS. "Servants, be obedient unto them that according to the flesh are your masters." The Revisers have shown good judgment in retaining "servants" here, and putting "bond-servants" in the margin. For though "bond" (the same word) is in the eighth verse distinguished from "free," yet the thought requires a modification of the meaning. It would be pedantic to translate in the sixth verse "bond-servants of Christ" (or elsewhere, "Paul a slave of Christ"), for slavery is the idea we exclude from the service of Christ. And this wider use of the word is favoured by the word not being used for "masters" which conveys the idea of *despotic authority*. Further, the principles laid down have no exclusive reference to slaves. They are such as would have had force if this perverted form of service had never existed. It is right, then, to use a word which covers all forms of service. It is true that (owing to the carrying out of the apostolic principles, and generally the influence of Christianity) times have very much changed. There is almost nowhere now bondage on the one side and absolutism on the other. The relations between masters and servants are of a freer nature, and depend on reasonableness on both sides. This being the case, it is to be desired, not that self-interest or class-interest should rule these relations, but the principles here laid down by the apostle.

1. *The grounding of the duty.* "With fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ." (1) *The master is representative of Christ.* Four times are servants reminded of this. The apostolic exhortation is saturated with it. A very unworthy representative the despot of the household or slave-holder (in the very conception of the thing, apart from personal qualities) was. But the apostle does not stigmatize him as a usurper, a pretender, and call upon the slaves to rise and cast off his despotism. Strange to say (having him principally in his mind), he regards him as legitimately filling the place of Christ. That is to say, underneath all that slave-holding (whatever it was) there was still a representation, a true representation, of the authority of Christ, before which the slave was to bow. And that was going to the root of the matter. It was more decisive and penetrative than if he had asked them to be reconciled to the evil of their position on the ground that Christ had suffered greater evil when in the world. He refused to regard the relation as disannulled by the accident of despotism; in the master according to the flesh (whoever he might be) he saw a real representation of the authority of Christ, and he called upon them to render obedience unto him as unto Christ. All cannot be masters. For disciplinary purposes, some are servants and some are masters, and some both servants and masters. In the early and Middle Ages there were men who were carried away with a frenzy of obedience. Those words, "I am among you as one that serveth," seemed to put a bad mark on the master state, and to mark out the servant state as not only the safer, but the grander, more Christ-like state of the two. And so they put themselves under superiors, begged in Christ's name to be ruled, and thought they approached Christ when they performed the most menial duties. It must be understood that the state which with Christ carries the blessing is that (whether of master or servant) which is not self-sought, but in which Christ sees fit to place us. (2) *The appropriate disposition toward the master as the representative of Christ.* "With fear and trembling." The slave was to fear and tremble before his master, not because that despotic master of his was able to put him in chains or to take away his life, but because he represented an authority above backed by boundless power, which was able to deal with him, and would righteously deal with him, for neglected duty. That being the ground, the duty remains unmodified.

The workman is to fear and tremble before his master, the domestic is to fear and tremble before her mistress, not because the master or mistress is better born, or has more wealth, or has a title (for in that there is little to cause fear and trembling), but because he or she represents an authority in heaven that in no case is to be trifled with. "In singleness of your heart." That is to say, the servant must give the *reality*, and not the *semblance* of service. And the only ground on which this can be thoroughly secured is by regarding his service as done unto Christ. 2. *Fault to be avoided.* "Not in the way of eye-service, as men-pleasers." The word translated "eye-service" seems to have been of the apostle's own coining, and is strikingly descriptive. The *eye-servant* is one who takes the rule of his action from the eye of his master. His object or motive (as expressed in the word "men-pleasers") is to get credit for whatever he does. Such a person may work with a will when he thinks of the master's eye being upon him, and expects that it will be put to his credit. Even in such a case the principle is wrong. It would lead him to "scamp" his work when he thought that his master's eye was not on him, and that he would not be made to suffer for it. Could it be secured (which it cannot be) that the master's eye was always on the servant, and that the servant always got credit for what he did, yet work done on such a principle (whatever it may be in political economy), from a Christian point of view is radically wrong. 3. *Positive excellence to be sought.* (1) *In relation to work.* "But as servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart." The servants of Christ must apply the principles of Christ to their work. According to the teaching of the apostle, a servant's thought is not to be this—how little work he can get off with; nor this, in the first place (though it is an important consideration)—what is the will of his master; but this—what is the will of God, i.e. what does God expect of him in amount, in excellency, to be rendered to his master. Having found out this, he is to do his work, not in the spirit of drudgery, but with a true, it may be an ardent, love for it, as it is here put—"from the heart." To do the will of God in this way may sometimes require not a little Christian courage. In these days there are trade-unions, combinations among the workmen, with the view of protecting their rights. Though unobjectionable in principle, yet (like other combinations) they may sometimes be dominated by selfishness, and act tyrannically. And a Christian workman may be in the position of choosing between the will of God and incurring the opprobrium of his fellow-workmen. If he is worthy of his master's Master, he will not, to please his fellow-workmen, give stinted, heartless work, but he will brave the consequences of doing his duty, saying, "I must obey God rather than man." (2) *In relation to his master.* "With good will doing service, as unto the Lord, and not unto men." A servant may not be able altogether to approve of the treatment he receives. What is exacted of him (and what he cheerfully renders, as being the will of God) may be unjust. Nevertheless, as a Christian, he is to keep up good feeling toward his master. He is always to respect him because of his position. More than that, he is to have "good will" toward him, that good will which (as the angelic doxology shows) is so much of the essence of the gospel. And he is not merely to have good will toward him as a man, but good will also toward him in the particular relationship in which he is placed to him as his master. And he is to have this good will toward him, not on worldly grounds, nor on purely rational grounds, nor on purely theistic grounds, but specially on Christian grounds. "As unto the Lord," and not unto a master by himself or out of relation to the Lord. That is to say, he is to bear good will toward his master as being (by no figure of speech, but in very fact) the Lord's representative, and thus, it may be said, for the Lord's sake, and further, that the Lord's ends in the relationship (so far as he is concerned) may be served. 4. *Encouragement to duty.* "Knowing that whatsoever good thing each one doeth, the same shall he receive again from the Lord, whether he be bond or free." The *slave*, or bondman, here referred to (and very common then) was considered to be entitled to nothing. His earthly receivings were very meagre, unless in lashes when he came under the displeasure of his master. The apostle, then, is to be understood as holding out to him this encouragement (for he names him particularly, that there may be no mistake), that, if he did his work in a Christian manner, then he would be a receiver, equally with the free man—he would be a receiver, if not on earth, yet in heaven; he would receive from the Lord Jesus Christ himself. He who saved his soul as well as that of the free man, and put both on the same

platform of privilege, would see to it that no smallest piece of work done to an earthly master for his sake (overlooked here) would go unrewarded in heaven. And the same thing is to be said of the *free servant*; for he also is particularized. It is true that if he is guilty of eye-service, if he "scamps" his work, that will be put against him in heaven, and there will be a day of reckoning for his evil thing, for his bad work; his life-work has lost in quality, in measure by it, and his reward will most unmistakably be curtailed—it will be so much the less for that idling of his master's time, that soulless work, that grudge in his heart to his master (for upon such things as these shall judgment be passed, by such things shall destiny be affected). But if, on the other hand, a servant, even in the humblest position, grasps his opportunity, and seeks to be regulated in his work by the will of God, and cherishes good will to his master, then, in encouragement (as before in principle), he is made independent of such a variable element as a good or a bad master, his getting his rights or his not getting his rights; he can feel that he has to do with a Master with whom there is no inequality, and who will see to it that whatsoever good thing he doeth, what he does unobserved or what he does under the menaces of his fellow-workmen, shall be rewarded.

II. DUTY OF MASTERS. 1. *Positive statement of duty.* "And, ye masters, do the same things unto them." Though they stand differently in the relationship (servant to master and master to servant), they are to do the same things, the regulative principles being the same. (1) *In relation to work.* As the Christian servant is to be regulated by "the will of God" in the work rendered, so the Christian master is to be regulated by the will of God in the work required. There is that which (in the Divine balances) is fair between them. It cannot be got at by selfishness on the one side and selfishness on the other, which is often made a trial of strength. If harmony is to be attained, it can only be by both, with Christian disinterestedness, agreeing to bring themselves (in what is required and what is rendered) to the Divine standard. (2) *In relation to servant.* As there is to be "good will" toward the master, so there is to be good will toward the servant. The master may not find the servant what he would like him to be. He may have to reprove him for eye-service or for careless service under his eye. But he is always to have good will toward him, as placed under him by Christ. He is to show his good will by seeking to make him comfortable in his position. Especially is he to use his influence with him on behalf of his higher well-being. In the name of Christ, then, let good will be met by good will. Education alone is ineffectual. It has sometimes been found that, with the spread of education, there has been an embittering of the relations between masters and servants. It is wrong, however (as not a few do), to blame education for this. It may be said that, if these relations cannot stand educative influences, then they are not what they should be. And the conclusion to be drawn is, not that we are to dispense with education, but that those relations can only be thoroughly maintained by reasonableness and genuine good feeling on both sides. And Christians are not to give up the problem in despair, but ought to be prepared to demonstrate to the world that it is possible, on Christian principles, for masters and servants to work together in harmony. 2. *Fault to be avoided.* "And forbear threatening." "The too familiar threatening" is the idea conveyed in the Greek. It was the ready resource of persons possessed of irresponsible power. Slaves were made to work under fear of the lash. And, though masters have not so much in their power now, yet the power that they have (there is generally an advantage in their circumstances compared with their servants) they are not to abuse. It is those who are deficient in the right management of their servants, in reasonable dealing, especially in that good will which is so necessary to management, that take to the clumsy, coarse method of threatening. Power must sometimes be put into execution against servants; but to hold threats over their heads, to treat them with clamour, with insult, or with something worse, is not worthy of the Christian master. 3. *Word of warning.* "Knowing that both their Master and yours is in heaven." Christ is represented as the Master of the slave. There was a wrong involved (apart from any harsh treatment he might receive) in the very fact of his being a slave. He is represented as the Master of the slave-holder, too, i.e. of the man who was so unenlightened as to hold slaves. As the Master of them both, he would see to things in the end being righted between them. The Christian master still is to be influenced to do what is just and proper by his servants by the consideration that Christ is the

Master of his servants as well as his Master. And in the righting that is to take place, for every advantage that the master has taken of his servant, for every harsh speech and threatening word he has used toward him, he will suffer everlasting loss. "And there is no respect of persons with him" (i.e. with Christ). There is a real distinction between master and servant, proprietor and tenant. What is adventitious may gather round it, but the essential thing is that Christ has not ordained equality here, but has placed his authority in some, and has subjected others, and has thus given rise to mutual obligations and trial and the formation of character in connection with these obligations. But though a real distinction, it is not to be carried beyond what there is really in it. After all, it is only to last through the present earthly economy. It is destined to be obliterated with other time-distinctions. And meantime Christ does not respect a person less because he is a servant, or more because he is a master. He has an equal interest in them as both included within the sweep of his work, as having taken him as their Saviour and Master. He has an equal interest in them in the relationship in which they stand to each other. And if they do their part equally well, one in the position of servant and the other in the position of master, then he will see to it that they will be equally rewarded.—R. F.

Vers. 10—20.—*Panoply of God. Conclusion of Epistle.* "Finally, be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of his might." In drawing the Epistle to a close, the apostle falls back on a form of expression he had used in the first chapter. There he showed that he had a high admiration of "the strength of his [the Father's] might which he wrought in Christ," and which was proved by Christ being raised from the state of the dead "far above all rule, and authority, and power, and dominion." Here his admiration is (with little variation) of the strength of his (the Lord's) might. He views that as being at the command of all who are in Christ, and his injunction is that, as it is at their command, it should actually be communicated to them to make them strong, and indeed invulnerable, as the Lord's servants should be. He now puts his exhortation under the special aspect of *the panoply for the Christian conflict* which is presented at length. "Put on the whole armour of God."

I. NEED FOR THE PANOPLY OF GOD. "That ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil." "The wiles of the devil" points to the fact that our adversary does not work by open methods. He does not rest his cause on its absolute reasonableness. Rather is he conscious of its indefensibility in reason, conscious too of his being conquered by Christ; and hence he has recourse to ways of making men believe that they have reason on their side, when they are really under the delusion of error. We do not have things put before us in their true character. There are illusory views of life which are presented to us. There are fallacies with which we are plied, in our reading, in our intercourse with men, or from our own hearts, the danger of which is that they chime in with our natural inclinations. What are these but the wiles of the devil? And there lies the need for our being armed as warriors, at every point, with the armour of God.

II. PARENTHETICAL CONFIRMATION OF THE NEED. 1. *Negatively.* "For our wrestling is not against flesh and blood." Wrestling serves to call up the idea of close personal encounter, but otherwise, in accordance with the context, we are to think, not of the mere wrestler, but of armed warrior against armed warrior. "When Greek meets Greek, then comes the tug of war." In the contests, from which the apostolic language is taken, there was a certain equality between the combatants. It was man confronted with his own flesh and blood, and he might hope, in the life-and-death struggle in which he engaged, to come off victorious. But such equal conditions do not exist in the spiritual warfare in which we engage. We are not confronted with beings like ourselves; it is not our own flesh and blood that we are pitted against. 2. *Positively.* "But against the principalities, against the powers, against the world-rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places." To show the need for being properly armed, the apostle gives a bold description of the foes with which we have to contend. As to their rank, they are powerful chieftains (principalities and powers). As to their domain, it is "this darkness," which is world-wide. As to their essence, they are not encumbered with clay, but are spirits. As to their number, they are hosts, vast multitudes. As to their character, they are wicked, their

inveterate disposition is to seek to work our ruin. As to their haunt, as it was before hinted at (rather than dogmatically taught) as the air, so here it is the heavenly or super-terrestrial places. The general effect of the description is that, men ourselves, we are unequally matched in having to fight against superhuman powers.

III. FURTHER RECOMMENDATION OF THE PANOPLY. "Wherefore take up the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and, having done all, to stand." The evil day is not to be viewed as a special season of temptation. It may be more or less so, but it is always the day of temptation with us. We are assaulted even when we are engaged with holy things. We are assaulted by those formidable enemies of ours who are ever busy. We must, therefore, take up the whole armour of God, that we may be able to withstand the assaults made on us, and, having done all things pertaining to the conflict, to stand (and not to be left prostrate on the field).

IV. THE PARTS OF THE PANOPLY. 1. *The girdle*. "Stand therefore, having girded your loins with truth." In preparing for the conflict the first thing the warrior had to do was to gird up his loose flowing robe, that his energies might not be scattered, but collected into a unity. The girdle which binds the energies of the Christian combatant is truth. About the end of the eleventh century, great multitudes, known as Crusaders, girded themselves to go and deliver the holy sepulchre from the possession of the Saracens. It was not the girdle of truth which bound them; for God never meant them to spend their energies in that form. And it was not an object which kept them from flagrant irregularities in the pursuit of it. The object which the Christian combatant is to have before him is not to have mere romance, but truth, binding truth, in it. That truth may be said to be connected with Christ's tomb, but not in a mere realistic way. It is imperatively demanded, now that Christ has conquered on the cross, and that conquest has been attested by an empty tomb, that in his Name souls everywhere should be delivered. And the Christian combatant does not gird himself to get possession of some sacred place or of some sacred relic, but to help men who are in the present guilt and thralldom of sin toward their deliverance. 2. *The breastplate*. "And having put on the breastplate of righteousness." The idea in righteousness is that of a right relation to the Law of God. Righteousness worn as a plate over the heart is to be understood rather as *the mind conscious of right*. The Christian combatant is to be jealous over himself with a godly jealousy. He is to have nothing to do with insincerity, but is to study reality. He is not to have selfish motives, but is to be thoroughly disinterested. He is not to have feelings of grudging malice, but is to be just and compassionate. He is to be especially fired with a desire to glorify God. The man who is conscious of this may be said to have righteousness as a breastplate. 3. *The sandals*. "And having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace." The Christian combatant, having girded himself in the cause of truth, and being conscious of no unworthy feeling, is next to put on the gospel sandals. It is that by which he is enabled to carry the good message. For that also belongs to the work of the battle-field. He puts on his shoes for the holy war. But in that war he is not always closing with his adversary. There are times when he has to follow up an advantage. Nay, his great business may be said to be to get his message delivered, to cry aloud so that Satan's captives may hear. The message which he has to deliver is a message of peace. He fights, not for fighting's sake, but that the times of peace may be ushered in. And as he thinks of his message, and enters into the spirit of it, his sandals become promptitude, alacrity (according to the idea here); he becomes swift-footed and speeds on with his message. 4. *The shield*. "Withal taking up the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the evil one." As the Christian warrior runs swift-footed with his message of peace, there are fiery darts thrown at him. When any one is eminent in the Christian conflict, Satan is likely to raise up against him traducers. Those who do not believe in disinterestedness are sure to make out that he is serving himself. Those who do not believe in earnestness in religion are sure to circulate evil reports of him. It is worse when, in the very intensity of his spiritual feeling, he is laid open to temptations from his lusts. Or it may be that his very success lays him open to the temptation of spiritual pride. So it was when he who had been victorious in many a spiritual conflict was tempted (it is said that Satan provoked him) to number the people. And the dart thrown at him

took effect, and was fiery enough in its consequences. What the Christian combatant is to do, when he is thus assailed, is not certainly to under-estimate the force that is brought against him, but it is also by faith rightly to estimate the force that is placed at his service. What can he do against the principalities and powers and the fiery darts they send out for his destruction? If he look to himself, he can do nothing. But he looks away to the power which placed Christ above all the principalities and powers, and he places it as a shield between him and the fiery darts, and in it their fire is quenched, their force is lost. 5. *The helmet.* "And take the helmet of salvation." The helmet is not, as in 1 Thess. v. 8, the hope of salvation, but salvation itself, *i.e.* salvation enjoyed. The Christian has an important piece of defensive armour in the assurance of salvation. The Lord rebuked Satan, and encouraged Joshua the high priest (Zech. iii. 2), by pointing to him as one of his saved ones. When one can think of grace going out toward him in the changing of his position to all eternity, he can feel triumphant; he has salvation as a helmet on his head. 6. *The sword.* "And the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God." The Bible is the sword of the Spirit. Furnished it is by the Spirit; for it was under the inspiration of the Spirit that the Word was written. And, as the Spirit inspired men to write it, so it is only he who can enable men to make a right use of it. To this we may apply the words of the hymn—

"God is his own interpreter,
And he will make it plain."

In the temptation of our Lord, what Satan did was to misrepresent the character of the Father, to put a gloss upon Scripture. And what our Lord, in meeting the temptation, did was to confront him with the pure truth, and the truth opposed to his deceptions. And he was so skilful in the use of this sword that he could fix upon the particular Scripture that suited the occasion. And the Christian combatant, too, must not only see the truth, but the truth for the occasion, the truth that slays his doubts, that exposes the fallacies with which Satan would compass his destruction. And he must be able to do this in connection with some sure, incisive word of Scripture. That is the offensive weapon, the weapon which carries the war against the adversary. This Christian combatant who has been described is what every Christian is bound to be. The Church militant is to have, in every one of its members, a combatant. And the apostle lays stress upon every one taking the *whole* armour (and not merely some of its parts). No one, for instance, is a worthy combatant who feels no responsibility in the carrying of the gospel message. If we would have the strength our Captain would see in us, we must use all the pieces of the Christian armour.

V. THAT WHICH ACCOMPANIES THE USE OF THE CHRISTIAN ARMOUR. 1. *Prayer.* "With all prayer and supplication, praying at all seasons in the Spirit." We are not to think of "all prayer" as a separate weapon. We are rather to think of it as that which conditions the right use of the whole armour. Without prayer we cannot gird ourselves for the conflict, but are cumbered as with loose robes. Without prayer we cannot have that purification of motives, that rectification of life, which the conflict demands. Without prayer we cannot have swift-footedness in carrying the gospel. Without prayer we shall not have faith to ward off the enemy's darts. Without prayer we shall not be able to lift our head in the assurance of our salvation. Without prayer we shall be unskilful in the use of the Word. Constant use and prayer, then—that will keep the helmet from being dulled, the sword from being rusty. But: (1) *Prayer must not be mere repetition.* "And in praying," says our Lord, "use not vain repetitions, as the Gentiles do." If we are bent on having our request from God, it will come up again and again, and under new aspects. Prayer is using arguments with God, and, as our mind works on our need, we shall ever be discovering new grounds on which to press our request. So, while we are to have prayer for ourselves and prayer for others (supplication), it is to be *all* prayer and supplication, *i.e.* to say, it is to have that variety which comes from an abundance of life, from active thought and feeling, and not that sameness which comes from lifelessness. (2) *Prayer must not be irregular.* The apostle teaches that it is to be connected with all seasons (to vitalize them, to redeem them from unprofitableness). It is true that we are not always in a mood for praying; but let us keep the appointed season. Prayer is one of the means by which we are to get into the right mood. And

if we keep to our plan from a sense of duty (though our feelings are cold), and when the time comes round fall on our knees before God, then may we expect liberation from our unspiritual moods. (3) *Prayer must not be from self.* "Praying in the Spirit," it is said here, and there is the same association in Jude 20. Prayer is dependence, and we have the influences of the Spirit on which to depend in prayer. We can only pray aright, under the impulse of the Spirit, when the Spirit indeed makes intercession for us. And, therefore, we should look to the Spirit to put the right desires within us and to give us right words. 2. *With petitions for ourselves we are to blend petitions for others.* "And watching thereunto in all perseverance and supplication." The apostle is here carrying forward his thought into a special channel. While we are to take heed to be persevering in praying for ourselves, we are to be especially persevering in praying for others. And the ground of that may be that our prayers are apt to be characterized by selfishness. We may go on praying for ourselves; but we too soon give over praying for others. We unwarrantably (and to our own detriment) contract the circle of prayer. (1) *Circle of supplication.* "For all the saints." That is not the outmost circle; for it is said in 1 Tim. ii. 1, "for all men." But the apostle is here presenting the matter under a special aspect. It is this, that the combatant is to remember his fellow-combatants. Every combatant has his peculiar difficulties, his weak points. But, if he feels the struggle to be hard for himself, that should put him in sympathy with all others, to whom (in their own way) it is hard too. And he should manifest that sympathy by beseeching God to make their armour bright, to hold them up, to give them to win the day, wherever they are appointed to fight. (2) *Special member of that circle.* "And on my behalf." (a) *Special prayer he wishes them to offer for him.* "That utterance may be given unto me in opening my mouth, to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel." That is to say, boldness of utterance, whenever he was called upon to open his mouth in preaching the gospel. This was the great accomplishment of the apostle, that he could preach the gospel. And he here discovers the secret of it. He put it clearly before his own mind, and got others interested in his object, so that they helped him by their prayers. (b) *Special reason for the prayer.* "For which I am an ambassador in chains; that in it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak." *Reason of his office.* He girded himself to save souls. He kept strict watch over his heart. He was swift-footed in proclaiming the message of peace. And as he sped from place to place, the fiery darts were thrown at him. Satan stirred up the Jews against him; men said that he was mad. But he interposed the shield of faith; he held up his head in the assurance of pardon. And he used the sword of the Spirit against many a heresy which threatened the peace and prosperity of the Church. It was of great consequence that there should be preserved to such an ambassador the courage of his office. *Reason of his position.* He was at the time in chains. He was in a condition, therefore, when his courage would be specially assailed. John the Baptist, in the gloom of his dungeon, gave way to doubts of Christ's mission. The apostle's liberty was not so much restricted. That the liberty he had might be well used by him, that he might speak boldly as he ought to speak, he would have them make that the subject of their prayers for him.—R. F.

Vers. 21—24.—*Affairs of the apostle.* 1. *Why he does not enter on them.* "But that ye also may know my affairs, how I do, Tychicus . . . shall make known to you all things." He knew that they would be anxious to have some account of his affairs. He would have given them a written account but for the fact that Tychicus, the bearer of his letter to them, would be able to give them (and others too, it is implied) a more detailed account by word of mouth. We have already remarked on the absence of the personal in this *catholic* Epistle. The one exception is the introduction of the name of Tychicus, and it is introduced to account for the absence of details about himself. In the Epistle to the Colossians, along with the same reference to Tychicus, there are numerous salutations. It favours the hypothesis of this being a *circular* letter (intended for a circle of which Ephesus was the centre), that none are conjoined with the apostle in sending salutations (the apostle alone may have been known to all the Churches), and none are singled out as special objects for salutation (as in the one Church of Colossæ). 2. *Qualifications of Tychicus.* "The beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord." In Acts xx. 4 he is classed as an Asiatic. If he did not, then, belong to

the same city (Trophimus associated with him was an Ephesian), he belonged to the same province, as those to whom he conveyed the letter. Of more importance than his country was his Christian character, for which the apostle vouches. He limits his consideration to the Christian sphere (where Christ appoints and animates), and, within that sphere, Tychicus was both a beloved brother and faithful minister. He had those qualities of heart which attached men to him, an important element in a mission. He had also those qualities of conscience which, as they made him fit to be entrusted with the gospel, also made him fit for the special service required of him. 3. *Definite statement of the object of his mission.* "Whom I have sent unto you for this very purpose, that ye may know our state, and that he may comfort your hearts." A servant of the Church, he was, in the first instance; but he was sent by Paul on this special errand. He was not only to communicate information to them regarding Paul, but also regarding Paul's companions in Rome. Through what he communicated, he would comfort their hearts. For the precise bearing of this we are left to conjecture. He might be able to tell them that the health of Paul and of such a fellow-prisoner as Aristarchus was not suffering from their confinement. He might be able to report that not only Paul, but all of them, were remaining steadfast in the faith of Christ. He might be able to announce some increased liberty in the preaching of the gospel. He might especially be able (with communicated apostolic fervour) to report the preaching of Paul, and himself to present the gospel as the means of comfort.

DOUBLE BENEDICTION. 1. *First benediction.* "Peace be to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ." *The source from which blessing is invoked* is (as at the beginning of the Epistle) God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. There is given both the First Cause and the Second Cause. It belongs to God the Father (to whom can it more belong than to him?) to bless his children. Christ is the Second Cause, by whom God made the worlds, by whom also he redeemed and blesses his people. He is, therefore, also invoked as the Source of blessing. (1) *First blessing.* "Peace be to the brethren." We are to understand "peace" here, as at the beginning of the Epistle, in the sense of freedom from unrest, as being under the loving care of God. It may mean freedom from persecution, if that is lovingly arranged by God. It may also mean freedom from internal dissensions, if God sees fit to grant that. There is a limitation in the scope of the blessing compared with the language of the following benediction. We are not to understand it as peace to the whole Church of Christ, but rather peace to the brethren to whom, in turn, the Epistle was to be sent round. (2) *Second blessing.* "And love with faith." The apostle (as he has done throughout) presupposes faith, but not as a fixed quantity. Rather does he invoke it in its higher degrees, and, at the same time, invoke love as its concomitant. Let love not lag behind, but let it keep pace with faith. If we turn believingly to God as our Father and Christ as our Saviour, we should also turn affectionately to the brethren. Let there be love (in all its beauty) to manifest the reality and activity of our faith. 2. *Second benediction.* "Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in uncorruptness." *The blessing.* "Grace." This is to be understood as in other places. Let there be the outflowing of the Divine compassion. Let there be every fitting manifestation of the Divine favour. *The scope of the blessing.* As to its form, it is *catholic*. It excludes selfishness and denominational jealousies, and takes in the whole circle which Christ acknowledges. As to matter, there are two things pointed to. (1) *The grand characteristic of the Christian is love to the Lord Jesus Christ.* The Christian is one who (appealed to by the Saviour) can say with Peter, "Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee." Such an affection as God has put into the nature of the child, of the parent, such (in its personal character, in its tenderness, in its strength) is to be our affection to Christ. Such a virtuous affection (as distinguished from natural affection) as we have toward the brethren, such, purified and heightened, is to be our affection toward the Master. The ground of virtuous affection is moral goodness, and especially one form of it, viz. *holy benevolence*. We love a man who, besides being conscientious, is filled with universal good will. So we love Christ because (with all dutifulness) he is the perfection of all unselfishness and benevolence toward men. In estimating his character (as an object for our love) we must take into account *his rank* in the universe, viz. that he was the Son of God. If a king and one of his subjects were both voluntarily to go into slavery for the purpose of redeeming

their country, the sacrifice would be regarded as greater on the part of the king than on the part of his subject. There may be the same patriotism; but there is something to be put down to the rank. So all that Christ was and did is enhanced in proportion to the height from which he descended. It was not simply love to man in a human position, but love that made infinite descent to burn in the human soul of Christ. We must also take into account the *public capacity* in which he acted. He was not rendering such help as we personally may render to one another. But he was the Christ, the appointed Representative of all mankind. He had all our interests on his hands. His character comes out in the whole of his life. He evinced a universal benevolence: "Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out." He was called the Friend of sinners. He loved men apart from their outward surroundings and natural capacities; he loved them as sinners in need of salvation. Especially does his character come out at the last. He went (in suffering the desert of sin) under that which is called the hiding of the Father's countenance. And it was not only dauntless trust in God, but unquenchable love to men, that maintained him there. He went down to the lowest depths for us (in experience the most terrible), that he might carry us with him to the heights. (2) *An indispensable element is pointed to in our love to Christ.* "In uncorruptness." There is a spurious love to Christ, which is founded on his sufferings without reference to their spiritual meaning. "I wept when the waters went over his soul." Such love, as it is not well founded, so also is it transient. The closing climactic thought in this great catholic Epistle is that our love to Christ is to have an immortality, an incorruptibility. As there was a deathless principle in his love to us, so there is to be a deathless principle in our love to him. It will have of this, according as it is founded on the real excellence of Christ. The purer and clearer our conception of his transcendent benevolence and beneficence, the more will our love have of undying and ever-unfolding beauty.—R. F.

Vers. 1—4.—*Children and their parents.* "Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honour 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. And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." In the preceding paragraph the apostle had treated of the relative duties of husbands and wives; here he directs attention to the *relative duties of parents and children.*

I. THE DUTY OF CHILDREN. The words lead us to consider the nature and reason of the obligation which children owe to their parents. 1. *The nature.* The duty is: (1) "Obedience." "Children, obey your parents." This duty has its limitation. When, for example, the command is impracticable, it is not binding. When the parent makes demands surpassing the child's capacity, he is a tyrant, and the child is free from the obligation. Or when the command is morally wrong, when it clashes with the rights of conscience and the claims of God, obedience to it is no duty, but would be a sin. The duty is obedience rendered in a Christian spirit. "In the Lord." Any conduct towards parents, mankind in general, or to the great God, that is not inspired with love to Christ, has *no virtue* in it. All acts to be acceptable to God must be done in the name and spirit of his blessed Son. (2) "Honour." "Honour thy father and mother." That is, reverence them. This implies, of course, that they are *honour-worthy*. It is, alas! often the duty of children to abhor and despise the character of their parents, because of its falsehood, intemperance, profligacy, and crime. Paul supposes parents to be what their relation to their children and God demands—pure, generous, and noble. Such parents are to be honoured. Not to honour them is to dishonour God. 2. *The reason.* What is the reason for this obedience and reverence? (1) Because it is right. "For this is right." Nature teaches the rectitude of it. There is implanted in every child's mind the feeling that he is bound to obey and reverence his parents. This feeling of obligation in some form or other is universal. The Bible teaches the rectitude of it. It was engraven by the finger of God on the tables of stone; it was inculcated in the teaching and exemplified in the life of Jesus Christ. (2) Because it is expedient. "That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth." A happy and a long life depends upon it. Children who are regardless of their filial duties will be regardless of all others, and rendered liable

to fall into those habits of depravity which will render their life a misery, and cut short their days on the earth.

II. THE DUTY OF PARENTS. The duty of parents is here set forth in two forms, negatively and positively. 1. *Negatively*. "Ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath." The temper of a child is of transcendent moment; it is that which determines his character and destiny. To act upon that temper in its opening years so as to fret and sour it is to do an incalculable mischief. Against this evil it is the duty of parents strenuously to guard. Petty interferences, trivial prohibitions, incessant chidings, and an irritable spirit, are the things in parental conduct which "provoke children to wrath." 2. *Positively*. "But bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." Train their faculties, bring out their latent powers, teach them to think with accuracy, to love with purity, to act with adroitness and promptitude. Do this by admonishing them "in the Lord." Let the lessons of instruction and warning be drawn from the existence, the life, the character, and the teachings of the Lord. The child's faculties cannot be developed apart from God. Secular education is a contradiction in terms; it is as great a solecism as a sunless vegetation. Let parents look well to the minds of their children. The farmer who neglects the culture of his fields will soon have his acres overrun with thorns and briars and noxious weeds; and the parent who neglects the culture of his child will soon discover evils far more hideous and disastrous.

The following from the quaint pen of smart old Fuller will be read with interest and profit on the subject:—"The good parent. He sheweth them, in his own practice, what to follow and imitate; and, in others, what to shun and avoid. For though 'the words of the wise be as nails fastened by the masters of the assemblies' (Eccles. xii. 11), yet, sure their examples are the hammer to drive them in, to take the deeper hold. A father that whipped his son for swearing, and swore himself whilst he whipped him, did more harm by his example than good by his correction. He doth not welcome and embrace the first essays of sin in his children. Weeds are counted herbs in the beginning of spring: nettles are put in pottage, and salads are made of eldern buds. Thus fond fathers like the oaths and wanton talk of their little children, and please themselves to hear them displease God. But our wise parent both instructs his children in piety and with correction blasts the first buds of profaneness in them. He that will not use the rod on his child, his child shall be used as a rod on him. He allows his children maintenance according to their quality. Otherwise it will make them base, acquaint them with bad company and shocking tricks; and it makes them surfeit the sooner when they come to their estates. It is observed of camels, that having travelled long without water through sandy deserts, *implentur, cum bibendi est occasio, et in præteritum et in futurum* ('when they find an opportunity they fill themselves both for the past and the future'); and so these thirsty heirs soak it when they come to their means, who, whilst their fathers were living might not touch the top of their money, and think they shall never feel the bottom of it when they are dead. In choosing a profession, he is directed by his child's disposition, whose inclination is the strongest indenture to bind him to a trade. But when they set Abel to till the ground, and send Cain to keep sheep; Jacob to hunt, and Esau to live in tents; drive some to school, and others from it; they commit a violence on nature, and it will thrive accordingly. Yet he humours not his child when he makes an unworthy choice beneath himself, or rather for ease than use, pleasure than profit. If his son proves wild, he doth not cast him off so far but he marks the place where he lights. With the mother of Moses, he doth not suffer his son so to sink or swim but he leaves one to stand afar off to watch what will become of him (Exod. ii. 4). He is careful, while quenched his luxury, not withal to put out his life; the rather, because their souls who have broken and run out in their youth have proved the more healthful for it afterwards. He moves him to marriage rather by argument drawn from his good than his own authority. It is a style too princely for a parent herein to 'will and command;' but, sure, he may will and desire. Affections, like the conscience, are rather to be led than drawn; and it is to be feared, they that marry where they do not love, will love where they do not marry. He doth not give away his loaf to his children and then come to them for a piece of bread. He holds the reins (though loosely) in his own hands; and keeps, to reward duty and punish undutifulness. Yet, on good occasion, for his children's advancement, he will depart from part of his means. Base is their nature who will not

have their branches lopped till their body be felled; and will let go none of their goods, as if it presaged their speedy death; whereas it doth not follow that he that puts off his cloak must presently go to bed. On his death-bed he bequeaths his blessing to all his children. Nor rejoiceth he so much to leave them great portions as honestly obtained. Only money well and lawfully gotten is good and lawful money. And if he leaves his children young, he principally nominates God to be their guardian; and, next to him, is careful to appoint provident overseers. *The good child.* He reverenceth the person of his parent, the old, poor, and froward. As his parent bore with him when a child, he bears with his parent if twice a child; nor doth his dignity above him cancel his duty unto him. When Sir Thomas More was Lord Chancellor of England, and Sir John his father one of the judges of the King's Bench, he would in Westminster Hall beg his blessing of him on his knees. He observes his lawful commands, and practiseth his precepts with all obedience. I cannot, therefore, excuse St. Barbara from undutifulness, and occasioning her own death. The matter this: her father, being a pagan, commanded his workmen, building his house, to make two windows in a room. Barbara, knowing her father's pleasure, in his absence enjoined them to make three, that, seeing them, she might the better contemplate the mystery of the Holy Trinity. Methinks two windows might as well have raised her meditations, and the light arising from both would as properly have minded her of the Holy Spirit proceeding from the Father and the Son. Her father, enraged at his return, thus came to the knowledge of her religion, and accused her to the magistrate, which cost her her life. Having practised, then, himself, he entails his parents' precepts on his posterity. Therefore such instructions are by Solomon (Prov. i. 9) compared to frontlets and chains (not to a suit of clothes, which serves but one, and quickly wears out, or out of fashion), which have in them a real lasting worth, and are bequeathed as legacies to another age. The same counsels observed, are chains to grace, which, neglected, prove halters to strangle undutiful children. He is a stork to his parent, and feeds him in his old age. Not only if his father hath been a pelican, but though he hath been an ostrich unto him, and neglected him in his youth. He confines him not a long way off to a short pension, forfeited if he comes in his presence, but shows piety at home, and learns as St. Paul saith (1 Tim. v. 4) to requite his parent. And yet the debt (I mean only the principal, not counting the interest) cannot fully be paid. And therefore he compounds with his father, to accept in good worth his utmost endeavour. Such a child God commonly rewards with long life in this world. If he chance to die young, yet he lives long that lives well; and time misspent is not lived, but lost. Besides, God is better than his promise, if he takes him a long lease, and gives him a freehold of better value. As for disobedient children: if preserved from the gallows, they are reserved for the rack, to be tortured by their own posterity. One complained that never father had so undutiful a son as he had. 'Yes,' said his son, with less grace than truth, 'my grandfather had.' I conclude this subject with the example of a pagan's, which will shame most Christians. Pomponius Atticus, making the funeral oration at the death of his mother, did protest that, living with her three score and seven years, he was never reconciled to her, *se nuncquam matre in gratiam rediisse*, because there never happened betwixt them the least jar which needed reconciliation."—D. T.

VERs. 5—9.—*Servants and their masters.* "Servants," etc. There are two thoughts underlying these verses. 1. *The existence of social distinctions amongst men.* There are masters and servants, rulers and subjects. These distinctions are no accidental phases of society, they grow out of the constitution of things. Diversity in the temperaments, tastes, capacities, and circumstances of men give rise to masters and servants. 2. *The one spirit which is to govern men of all distinctions.* The rich and the poor, the sovereign and his subject, the master and the servant, are under an obligation to be animated by the same moral spirit, and controlled by the same moral consideration. "All in all things should do the will of God from the heart."

I. THE DUTY OF SERVANTS. The duty of servants, of course, is obedience. "Be obedient to them that are your masters." But the obedience is here characterized. 1. It is obedience in *bodily matters*. "According to the flesh." Their service is limited to secular concerns, things that have reference to the material and temporal interests of their masters. They were to give their muscles, and their limbs, and their contriving

faculties, but not their souls. "Consciences and souls were made to be the Lord's alone." 2. It is obedience *honestly rendered*. "With fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart"—"not with eye-service." These expressions mean that there should be no duplicity, no double-dealing, but downright honesty in everything. A servant is bound to be honest towards his employer. He has no right to be lazy or wasteful. He has contracted to give, on certain stipulated conditions, his energies and time to promote the secular interests of his master. 3. It is obedience *inspired with the religious spirit*. They are to regard themselves in everything as the servants of Christ, and are bound to do the "will of God from the heart." In everything the authority of Christ must be held as supreme. Whatsoever is done in word or deed should be done all to the glory of God. 4. It is obedience which, if truly rendered, *will be rewarded of God*. "Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free." The faithful servant may feel that the wages he receives from his earthly master are unjustly inadequate. Yet the great Master will award to him at last an ample compensation. Whatsoever good thing he has done, however trivial, shall meet its reward at last. The good thing must be rewarded. Goodness carries evermore its own reward.

II. THE DUTY OF MASTERS. The way in which masters should exercise their authority is here indicated. 1. They are to exercise it *religiously*. "Ye masters, do the same things unto them." "The same things," as we have said, do not mean the same work, but the same spiritual attributes. Servants are to be honest and respect the will of God in all; the masters are here bound to do "the same things." Both are to be under the domination of the same moral spirit. 2. They are to exercise it *magnanimously*. "Forbearing threatening." Though the servant may by accident, or, what is worse, by intent, by omission, or by commission, try severely the temper of his master, his master should forbear threatening. He should show his right to be a master by governing his own soul. The man who takes fire at every offence, whose eyes flash with rage, and lips mutter threats, is too little a creature to be a master. He has no licence from Heaven to rule either children, servants, or citizens, who is not magnanimous in soul. 3. They are to exercise it *responsibly*. "Knowing that your Master also is in heaven." They are amenable to God for the way in which they use their authority. The master has the same Lord as the servant, and they must stand at last together at the great tribunal. To that Master all social distinctions vanish in the presence of moral character. "Neither is there respect of persons with him."—D. T.

Vers. 10—20.—*Soul-militancy*. "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord," etc. The subject of these words is *soul-militancy*, and they bring under our notice *the soul's foes, the soul's strength, the soul's weapons, and the soul's religiousness*.

I. THE SOUL'S FOES. "We wrestle not against flesh and blood." The passage teaches the following things in relation to the antagonists of souls:—1. They are *spiritual* personalities. They are *spiritual*, not "flesh and blood." They exist apart from matter—apart from all animal incarnations. They are *personalities*. We cannot accept the interpretation of those who regard Paul as speaking here only of evil principles. If language means anything, personal agents are here indicated. *A priori* reasoning renders the existence of such beings probable; human experience and the Bible place their existence beyond all reasonable doubt. 2. They are *wicked* personalities. "Spiritual wickedness," or, as the margin has it, "wicked spirits." They are out of sympathy with God; they are in bitter and practical hostility to all that is Divine, benevolent, and happy. 3. They are *diverse* personalities. They differ in their make and their rank; they are not all of the same nature and measure of faculty, nor of the same rank in the universe. There are "principalities," "rulers," and "powers" amongst them. Some, as compared to others, may be as wasps to vultures, as mosquitoes to dragons. 4. They are *organized* principalities. They are under one head, here called the "devil." "That ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil." There is one gigantic intellect that manages and marshals the whole: he who seduced our first parents, he with whom Christ battled in the wilderness—the Satan of God, the Apollyon of man. These hosts of evil spirits are not left to themselves; they are welded together by one master intellect. "Devil with devil damned firm concord

hold." They are managed by force and fraud, all of them. The passage suggests that under his control they act: (1) *Craftily*. Hence the expression, the "wiles of the devil." All his movements are cunningly methodized, for such is the meaning of the word "wiles." These evil spirits attack us in ambush; they steal upon us slyly and stealthily. (2) *In darkness*. "The rulers of the darkness of this world." Where do they reign? Where ignorance spreads her gloom: in the cold region of atheism where the mental energies are benumbed, and in the tropic realm of superstition where the soul is stirred into an agony of fear and scared with the horrid forms of its own creations. Amidst the gloomy recesses of ignorance they rear their throne; through the districts of intellectual darkness they prowl about in search of their prey. They reign where depravity beclouds the heart, where passion is stronger than principle, the senses than the soul, the love of the world than the love of God; whether that be amidst the districts of heathenism or civilized life, in the marts of business, the temples of devotion, or the flowery scenes of gaiety and pleasure. They enshrine themselves amidst the benighted chambers of an impure imagination, they haunt the atmosphere of pollution, impregnate it with their spirit, causing it to stimulate the unrighteous zeal of the selfish, to fire the passions of the carnal, and to swell the vanity of the ambitious and the proud. They reign where sorrow and suffering darken all. They delight in misery. The wretchedness of the indigent, the sighs of the distressed, the groans of the oppressed, and the agonies of the dying gratify their malignant natures.

II. *THE SOUL'S STRENGTH*. "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might." The soul requires tremendous strength to grapple successfully with these mighty spirits of evil. What is the strength required? It is nothing less than *Divine*. It is to be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. But what kind of Divine strength is required, for strength of all kind is from the Lord? Is it *muscular*? No. Samson, with his herculean physical force, fell beneath these spirits; an evil genius touched him, and the giant fell as a child. Is it *mental*? No. Men of the greatest intellect and of the loftiest genius have not been able to stand for a moment before these spirits. It is not by this "might or this power" that souls can stand before these infernal hosts. It is *moral* strength. 1. *The strength of faith in the Absolute*. Faith in that which changes not, which is true to man as man, which is independent of times and circumstances—faith in the Everlasting. With this faith men participate in the omnipotence of God, work wonders, and dare the universe. Men, through this faith, have "subdued kingdoms," etc. 2. *The strength of love for the supremely good*. Love, when it is fastened even upon the frail and the imperfect, gives strength to the soul—strength to nerve a mother for the most trying services, strength to brace a patriot for the thunders of the battle. But when centred upon the eternally Good, its strength is increased a thousandfold; it gives the soul a power that "never faileth," a power that "endureth all things." 3. *An invincible attachment to the right*. To "be strong in the Lord" is to be strong in sympathy with the right. It is to prefer the right with hell to the wrong with heaven. It is this moral strength alone that will enable us to "stand against the wiles of the devil," and to battle successfully with the host of wickedness. This strength makes a man more than a conqueror, enables him to glory in tribulation and shout triumphantly in the agonies of death.

III. *THE SOUL'S WEAPONS*. The panoply is here described. It consists of two parts—the defensive and the offensive implements. 1. *The defensive implements*. What is the defensive? "Truth." This is the girdle which belts the loins with strength, and binds all the other parts of the panoply together so as to protect all the vital parts. "Righteousness." This is the "breastplate." The man who lacks integrity can offer no successful defence to the foe; the dishonest man is vulnerable at every point. "The gospel of peace." This, like the boot of the old Roman conqueror, makes the soldier firm in his step and terrible in the echo of his tread. "Faith." This is the "shield," protecting the whole body. Faith, not in creeds, but in Christ, is the true shield of moral soldiery. "Salvation"—that is, the hope of salvation. This is the "helmet." As the helmet guarded the head of the Roman soldier, the hope of salvation protects the soul. Let despair come, and the head of the soul is wounded and the whole system endangered. 2. *The offensive*. What is the offensive? "The sword of the Spirit." The true soul has not only to stand its ground, to maintain its position, to keep its territory, but to advance, to extend its boundaries, to prosecute an

invasion; it is to conquer all other souls to Christ, and the weapon is the "Word of God." This is the sword by which the Christian soldier has to cut his way from soul to soul through the whole world: "For the Word of God, is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword," etc. (Heb. iv. 12). God's Word is the truth that slays error, the love that slays selfishness, the right that slays the wrong, the happiness that slays the misery of the world.

IV. THE SOUL'S RELIGIOUSNESS. Religiousness, viz. a conscious dependence on God, lies at the foundation of all true soul-militancy. A man can do nothing rightly or successfully in spiritual soldiery who is not religious in the very spirit of his being. Religiousness is the only soil in which man's spiritual faculties can grow into heroic vigour. In materialism they wither; in mere intellectualism they are only skeleton at best; in religiousness they are like the tree planted by the rivers of water,—their roots are in the Everlasting, they drink into them the very life of God. Religiousness, in one word, is the source that supplies the muscle and the instinct that gives the skill in true moral warfare. It teaches our "hands to war and our fingers to fight." This religiousness is here described by the apostle in these words, "Praying always with all prayer and supplication for all saints," etc. These words are so true to the original and so obvious in their significance that they call for no minute examination. They show us how this religiousness in the soul of the true spiritual soldier is to express itself; and it is to do so: 1. In prayer. "Praying always with all prayer," or, as Ellicott has rendered it, "with all prayer and supplication praying always in the Spirit." The words teach us: (1) That the prayer is to be comprehensive. "With all prayer and supplication." All kinds of prayer, expressed and ejaculatory, private and social. Prayer is not so much a service as a spirit, not so much an act as a sentiment. Hence we are commanded to "pray without ceasing." Consciousness of dependence on God, which is the very essence of prayer, should run as a living current through the whole of our life. Our whole life should be an unbroken litany. (2) That the prayer is to be Divine. "In the Spirit." That is, under the influence of the Divine Spirit, who is to make intercessions for us with groanings that cannot be uttered. There is no true prayer that is not dictated by this Spirit. Man's great care should be to lay his soul open to the Divine. If a man would have his body crave healthily for food, he must drink in as much as possible the fresh air of God; and if he would have his soul crave for spiritual food, he must breathe into his spiritual nature the breath of the Divine. (3) That the prayer is to be watchful. "And watching thereunto." The soul has its moral moods. It has seasons favourable for culture, weathers for launching out on the deep. Its duty is to watch for these moods—watch the motions of the Divine Spirit upon the heart. Watch, as Elijah did on Carmel, for promising signs in the heavens. (4) That the prayer should be persevering. "With all perseverance." We are to be instant in prayer. Our Saviour taught the duty of importunate prayer in the parable of the "unjust judge." Importunity is needed, not to influence the Eternal to mercy, but to prepare our hearts rightly to receive his gifts. 2. In prayer for the good in general. "For all saints." The apostle would not have them merely to pray for themselves. He who prays exclusively for himself never prays at all. His prayers are but the breath of selfishness. Paul required them to pray for "all saints"—saints of every intellectual grade, of every social position, of every ecclesiastical sect, of every theological school, of every kingdom and every tribe. Why for all saints? Because all saints are members of the grand army battling against the common foe—against the "principalities of evil," etc. The more force, courage, skill, each member of an army possesses, the better for the cause, the more likely the victory in whose advantages all participate. The battle of Christianity is a common battle—a battle against error, wrong, and depravity everywhere. All saints are engaged in it, and they should be prayed for. 3. In prayer for gospel ministers in particular. "And for me, that utterance may be given unto me." Why does Paul wish them to pray for him? Is it that he might be liberated from prison? No. He was now, he tells us, an "ambassador in bonds." The clanking chains of the prison hung heavily on him, and one would not have wondered if his first request had been to the Ephesians to pray for his bodily deliverance. But this he does not. He is too absorbed in the cause of Christ and universal happiness for this. What he prayed for was that he might be enabled

properly and successfully to preach the gospel. "That I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel," that is, the gospel that was once a mystery. The preaching of the gospel was God's grand instrument for restoring the world to intelligence, dignity, and happiness, and because of that, he desired to do it in the most effective way. There are several remarkable things in these words. (1) Paul was an *ambassador* from heaven—God's messenger sent to proclaim restoration to lost humanity. The grandest commission this. (2) God's *ambassador* from heaven *in bonds*. Wonderful that the great King, whose word could have shivered Rome into atoms, should have allowed his ambassador to have been in chains. But so it is; and we shall have an explanation ere long. (3) God's ambassador from heaven in bonds, *losing all idea of his own personal sufferings, in the desire to help his race*. Though a prisoner at Rome, he was permitted to preach (Acts xxviii. 30, 31). And as a prisoner he wanted to discharge that high mission in the most effective way. For that he prays. A true gospel minister has a right to ask the prayers of Christians for him *particularly*. Like a general in the army, he has the most responsible position, the most arduous task. Failure in him may turn the tide of battle in favour of the foe. Prayer, then, is a necessary qualification of spiritual soldiership. The victory cannot be won without it.

"Restraining prayer, we cease to fight;
Prayer makes the Christian's armour bright;
And Satan trembles when he sees
The weakest saint upon his knees."

Even the great Commander of all the legions of the good recognized the mighty power of prayer during his struggles on this earth. "Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?" As if he had said, "With one breath of prayer I could bring the mighty battalions of eternity to my aid."—D. T.

Vers. 21-24.—*Types of transcendent virtues*. "But that ye also may know," etc. In these verses we have three types of transcendent virtues—a type of *elevated friendship*, a type of *spiritual benevolence*, and a type of *Christian catholicity*.

I. A TYPE OF ELEVATED FRIENDSHIP. Paul here does two things which show the purity and the worth of his friendship. 1. *Introduces a noble man to his friends*. Some are very anxious to keep their friends to themselves, and, if possible, to monopolize their thoughts and their hearts; and some, if they introduce a friend at all, only those of an inferior type. Paul introduces Tychicus, "a beloved brother and faithful minister." You cannot confer a greater benefit on your friends than to commend to their confidence a noble man; the gift of such a man to them is more valuable than lordly estates or mighty kingdoms. 2. *He introduces a noble man to their friendship entirely for their own advantage*. There are those who introduce men to their friends for the sake of getting something for them; but not so in this case. Paul does not ask them to do anything for Tychicus; nor does he ask them to send back through Tychicus any favour to him. He sends Tychicus in order to serve them in two ways. (1) To satisfy their anxieties as friends. They would naturally be anxious to know something concerning the "affairs" of the man who lived and laboured in their city for three years, and around whose neck their fathers fell in tears when he bade them adieu. They would like to know how this their father in Christ fared now a prisoner in Rome. To satisfy the natural craving of their hearts, he now sends Tychicus; he would tell them all. I should like to have seen Tychicus deliver this letter, and to have heard the thousand eager questions. (2) To promote their happiness as Christians. "And that he might comfort your hearts." Paul knew well the trials to which the Church at Ephesus was exposed, both from Jews and pagans. He knew they wanted comfort. The letter he sent abounded with comforting thoughts, and he knew that a loving brother like Tychicus would skilfully and efficaciously apply the healing balm. Here is—

II. A TYPE OF SPIRITUAL BENEVOLENCE. Paul's heart goes out in well-wishing. And what did he wish for his brethren at Ephesus? No secondary favours, but the highest blessings from God the Father and his blessed Son. 1. *Divine peace*. "Peace be to the brethren." Mark where the peace comes from—"From God the Father and

the Lord Jesus Christ." There is a peace that does not come from that source—a peace that comes from the devil, a moral stagnation of soul, something like the stillness of that murky atmosphere that nurses and forbodes the thunder, the lightning, and the hurricane which spread devastation over sea and land. The peace of God is: (1) Peace of an approving conscience. (2) Peace of conscious security. (3) Peace of accordant affections. (4) Peace of harmonious activities. 2. *A conjunction of love and faith.* "Love with faith." There is a love and also a faith that are not of Heaven. Divine love and faith are always united in a good man. Divine faith "works by love," works by love as the labourer works by the sun. These are the blessings spiritual benevolence desires for men, and they are in truth the germs of all good. Give me these, and I want no more. Out of them my Paradise will bloom; they are the nebulae which will one day encircle me with the brightest of heavens. Give the race these, and soon all crimes, sufferings, discords, miseries, will cease.

III. A TYPE OF CHRISTIAN CATHOLICITY. "Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus"—love him purely, love him in reality, love him as he ought to be loved. Wherever they are, in whatever land, of whatever tribe or kingdom, happiness to them. The language of modern sects is—Grace be to all them that are Baptists, Methodists, Independents, Episcopalians, etc. The language of the true Christian catholicity is—"Grace be to all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ," of all creeds or no creed, Churches or no Church.

CONCLUSION. Here end our reflections on this wonderful Epistle. Our walk through this section of the great garden of truth, whose aromas have refreshed, whose beauty has charmed, and whose objects have challenged our thoughts and excited our devout admiration, is now ended. Should others follow our footsteps with keener eyes and finer senses, more apt to discover the beautiful and the good, they will be able to discover for themselves, and reveal to others, much more than we have done. When we began our walk we were afraid that we should meet some of those grim Calvinian dogmas which certain theologians assured us were there, but we never met their shadow. There are no theological weeds and thistles here. All is free and fresh as nature, as fitted to the human soul as light to the eye and breath to the lungs.—D. T.

Vers. 1—4.—*Children and parents.* Christianity purifies and elevates family life. It is supremely natural, orderly, and reasonable in the treatment of domestic affairs. We meet with frequent allusions to families and households in the New Testament. The order and health of the home are clearly recognized as of primary importance. This is seen in the treatment of parental relations.

I. THE DUTIES OF CHILDREN TO THEIR PARENTS. 1. *The duties.* (1) *Obedience.* A condition of subjection is necessary and right for childhood. Children must be taught to reverence an authority above them and to yield their will to a higher will. Thus the first principle of what, in after life, must be the fundamental relation to God, is instilled. Children should obey, for the very sake of obedience, orders for which at present they see no reason, and from which they can foresee no good results. But there is a limit to obedience. "Obey your parents in the Lord." When parents command what is plainly contrary to the will of Christ, disobedience becomes a duty. (2) *Honour.* It is not enough to obey in act. Love and reverence should be found in the heart of children. It is most injurious for children to lose reverence for their parents. They are themselves degraded when this is the case. 2. *The grounds* on which these duties to parents are enforced. (1) It is *right*. This comes first. It is an appeal to conscience. No obedience or honour can be of worth when only low, selfish motives prompt the performance of filial duty. (2) It is *profitable*. In the long run the principle that underlies the ancient promise of the fifth commandment is abundantly exemplified. Family life is the root of social order. When this is corrupt that will be upset. Good domestic habits are the safeguards of the best kind of conservatism. The most frightful revolutions are those that begin at the family hearth.

II. THE DUTIES OF PARENTS TO CHILDREN. The family relation is reciprocal, and so are the duties of parents and children. It is most unreasonable to expect the children to discharge their share of domestic duty if parents, who have so much larger knowledge and experience and whose example is the most powerful instructor of their children, fail in theirs. To stern Roman fathers the Christian view of parental duty

was novel. Even now it is too little regarded. 1. *The negative duty.* "Provoke not your children to wrath." While strictly enforcing necessary commands, parents should be most careful not to lay on the shoulders of their children unnecessary burdens. Obedience is hard enough under the best of circumstances. Especially is it desirable not to provoke childish irritation by hasty, harsh manners when a wiser, kinder method might be more efficacious in securing obedience and respect. 2. *The positive duty.* "Nurture them in the chastening and admonition of the Lord." The parent is the spiritual guardian of his children. He cannot delegate to another the responsibility that God will some day call him to account for. In caring for their children's health, happiness, and worldly prospects, etc., parents are often least anxious about the most essential point, the spiritual welfare of their family. Let it be remembered that the first requisite in training children for Christ is that the parents should be themselves his disciples.—W. F. A.

Vers. 5—9.—*Servants and masters.* The early preachers of the gospel were wise in not provoking futile and fatal attempts at a social revolution by denouncing slavery. Nevertheless, they laid the foundation of that revolution and secured its peaceable and bloodless accomplishment. Slavery could not permanently survive the establishment of the principle of Christian brotherhood. Meanwhile under the then existing circumstances Christianity taught certain necessary duties of slaves and masters, the essential ideas of which apply to so much of the present state of society as is at all analogous to that of the first century.

I. *THE DUTIES OF SERVANTS.* 1. *The duties.* (1) *Obedience.* The position of service, whether forced as in slavery or freely accepted as among us, implies obedience. Indeed, where the condition of service is voluntarily entered upon for the sake of adequate payment the duty is so much the stronger. The disobedient servant commits a double sin; he is unfaithful to his engagement, and he is robbing his master of unearned wages. (2) *Singleness of heart.* Half-hearted service is semi-disobedience. (3) *No eye-service.* How common is this degrading and dishonest habit in all walks of life, from that of the maid who is idle when her mistress is away, to that of the statesman who works for what will win the applause of the multitude to the neglect of the real welfare of the nation, or the preacher who preaches popular sermons to catch the ear of the congregation and hides unpopular truths that men much need to hear! (4) *Serving the Lord.* We are all to serve Christ in our daily work. This consecrates the most menial task. 2. *The reward.* Gross injustice characterized the old-world treatment of slaves, and tempted to disloyal service. This injustice will not be seen at the great reckoning. The slave will be as fairly judged as his master. The lowliest work will win as high a reward as the most pretentious if the motive is equally good. Here is an inducement to faithfulness in little things.

II. *THE DUTIES OF MASTERS.* It was hard to teach a slave-holder his duty. Yet it is fair to observe that in many households the rigour of servitude was much softened, and kinder and more humane relations maintained than those that sometimes characterize our modern commercial connection of workman and employer, relations out of which all humanity seems to have vanished. It is interesting to see that in the New Testament a hired servant is considered to be worse off than a household slave (e.g. Luke xv. 17). 1. *The duties.* (1) *Fairness.* "Do the same things unto them." The duties are reciprocal. Masters have no right to expect more devotion to their interests from their servants than they show to their servants' interests. (2) *Kindness.* "Forbear threatening." It is cowardly to use the power of the purse, as old masters used the whip, to gain an unfair advantage over a servant. In the end sympathy and genial friendliness will secure the best service. 2. *The motives.* (1) Servants and masters have one common Master. Both are alike servants of Christ; both must give account to him of their stewardship. (2) Christ will judge without respect of persons. The advantages of social superiority are but temporary. They will be of no use at Christ's judgment.—W. F. A.

Ver. 10.—*Divine strength.* As the Epistle draws to a close, St. Paul gives emphasis to the requisition of Divine strength by singling it out for a final word of exhortation. The doctrinal principles of the earlier chapters lead up to the practical duties of

the later, and these several duties to the need of Divine strength wherewith to discharge them in face of the assaults of evil.

I. **CHRISTIANS ARE EXHORTED TO BE STRONG.** Spiritual strength is decision of character and force of will. Religion centres in our will and character. Unless there is strength, fixity, determination, and energy, then all our elaborate thinking and all our beautiful sentiments are worthless. 1. Clear belief in the gospel is not sufficient. We may believe intellectually, but if we are too weak to act according to our belief that counts for nothing. 2. Feelings of love to Christ are vain if they do not inspire us to faithful service and sacrifice. 3. Passive reliance on Christ will not avail us unless we have also the active faith that puts forth spiritual strength in obedience to his will. We are not only to flee to the refuge in Christ. We are to go forth to battle in the open field. And then we are not only to be endued with Divine armour, but first to be made strong ourselves. First comes the exhortation to be strong, and only second that to arm in the Divine panoply. It is only the strong man who can wear this armour. 4. It is our duty to be strong. Weakness is not merely a calamity to be bewailed. It is a sin to be repented of. It leads to our falling into temptation and our failing in duty.

II. **SPIRITUAL STRENGTH IS A DIVINE INSPIRATION.** We cannot be strong by merely willing to be so. A wish will not convert the feeble body of the invalid into the robust frame of a healthy man, nor will a wish give to the weak soul fixity of character and energy of will. The body must gain strength through nourishing diet, bracing air, exercise, etc. So spiritual strength arises from feeding upon Christ in faith and prayer. 1. There is *might* in Christ. He is the Lion of the house of Judah. 2. Christ puts forth that might. The strength is the might in exercise. The oak is strong, but passive, and therefore it can do nothing for us. The horse, though less strong, puts forth his power in action, and so works for us. Christ's great might is not a mere latent force. It flows out in energy. 3. This strength is ours by our union with Christ. "Be strong *in* the Lord." We must, therefore, be in Christ in order that we may have this strength, and the more close our union to Christ becomes the more vigorously shall we be supplied with his strength.—W. F. A.

Ver. 12.—*The foe.* The Christian life is a warfare. In order to wage this successfully we must understand the nature of the foes we have to contend with, because the weapons and armour will have to be selected according to the character of the attack that is made upon us.

I. **THE NATURE OF THE FOE.** 1. *Negatively considered.* (1) *Not material.* Imagination has given the tempter a material form, e.g. in the legends of St. Anthony, because it is so much easier to grapple with the most fearful enemy that can be seen and touched than with an invisible, intangible foe. But our foe is not of flesh and blood. The subjugation of the physical world is easy compared with the task of conquering this invisible enemy. (2) *Not human.* It is hard enough to think of the obstructive and tempting influence of bad men. But we have something worse to resist. We are attacked by an unearthly army. The black tide of hellish sin surges against the shores of our human world and bespatters us with its withering spray. 2. *Positively considered.* (1) *Spiritual.* The fact that the word "immaterial" has come to mean "unimportant," is a striking proof of our earthly-mindedness. The spiritual world is the most real world. These spiritual foes are the most truly existing enemies we can ever meet. Our experience of them is in spiritual attacks, i.e. in temptations. (2) *Dominant.* They are "world-rulers," they are in "heavenly" (or high) places. When St. Paul wrote this Epistle evil was uppermost in the world. Is it not also supreme in many regions now? We have to oust the forces that hold the field and to storm the citadel.

II. **THE CHARACTER OF THE WARFARE.** Mediæval armour is useless before rifle-bullets. Old castle walls are no protection against modern artillery. Nor will modern cannon drive back noxious gases. Sennacherib's hosts were powerless before that invisible angel of God, the pestilence. So the foe in the Christian warfare determines the character of the armour and weapons and the tactics to be pursued. 1. *Negatively.* (1) *Physical force* will not serve us. Samson's strength is of no avail against temptation. Money, material resources, scientific skill, are useless. This is the age of steam,

steel, and electricity. But such things give us no help in subduing greed, lust, and self-will. (2) *Human influence* is vain. Arguments, threats, and promises; influences of authority and of sympathy; appeals to the reason, the feelings, and the conscience;—these methods that affect our fellow-men do not touch the awful foes we have to contend against. 2. *Positively.* (1) *Spiritual armour and weapons* are needed, i.e. truth, righteousness, the preparation of the gospel of peace, faith, salvation, the Word of God, prayer (vers. 14—18). (2) These must be *obtained from God*. They constitute “the whole armour of God.” There is nothing in the armoury of human resources, physical or intellectual, that is adequate for meeting the dread spiritual foes of our warfare. The Christian warrior must be a man of Divine strength girded about by Divine graces.—W. F. A.

Vers. 13—17.—*The whole armour of God.* I. CHRISTIANS NEED TO BE ARMED. Aldershot cannot dispense with Woolwich. The army must be equipped before it can take the field. The knight must don his coat of mail and draw his sword if he is to make any use of his martial skill and prowess. So the Church must be prepared for the great conflict with unbelief, worldliness, and immorality. The individual Christian must be armed to meet temptation and to win a triumph. Many a sanguine young Christian soldier has fallen shamefully through rushing rashly into the fray without due preparation.

II. THE REQUISITE ARMOUR MUST BE DIVINE. “Armour of God.” 1. *Provided by God.* We cannot forge our own armour. Our own resolutions, like home-made weapons, will be sure to betray some weakness and clumsiness. The Christian armour consists of God-given graces. The pilgrim had his armour given him at the house “Beautiful.” 2. *God-like.* A steel breastplate is no protection against a poison-cup. The character of our defences must be spiritual and holy, like the character of God, in order that we may be able to withstand great spiritual foes.

III. IT IS NECESSARY TO SECURE A COMPLETE SUIT OF ARMOUR. “The whole armour.” We are assailable in every part of our nature. It is useless to be only half-armed, for the subtle tempter is sure to aim his dart at the most vulnerable spot. We are all inclined to make much of favourite graces and to fortify ourselves against certain selected sins. Where we think ourselves most secure we are likely to be most open to attack. It will not be sufficient to be sound on all points but one. Achilles was said to be vulnerable only on the heel. But that was enough. His one weak place was fatal to him. God knows both the variety of foes we have to face and the different susceptibilities of our own constitution, and has provided complete armour accordingly.

IV. THE CHRISTIAN ARMOUR IS VARIOUS IN KIND. 1. *Defensive.* (1) We have first to be braced and girded by a firm grasp of the eternal verities of the faith. Looseness of conviction is a fatal source of weakness. Truth being the girdle we are not to embrace it, but it is to encircle us, i.e. we not to be satisfied with holding the truth, we must let the truth hold us. (2) Our heart must be protected by righteousness. An evil conscience, with sin unrepented, unforgiven, and unamended, is fatal to future firmness. (3) We must be active in spreading the gospel of peace. (4) Where we have not sufficient resisting power in our own persons let us trust the defending grace of God. Then if the breastplate of righteousness is thin, the shield of faith held before it may still protect us. (5) Salvation in part secured, in whole promised, will help us to hold our head erect in calm confidence. 2. *Offensive.* We have not only to stand the shock of the enemy's blows; we have to return them. The necessary weapons are supplied from the Divine armoury. (1) *The Word of God.* This is the sword of the Spirit, because God's Spirit inspired it and now gives it edge and penetrating power. Christ used this sword in his temptation. We resist evil by dwelling on Divine truths. (2) *Prayer.* In the garden Christ prayed and Peter slept; in the house of Caiaphas Christ was faithful and Peter fell.—W. F. A.

Vers. 18—20.—*True prayer.* The arming and fighting referred to in the previous verses are to be accompanied with praying. Prayer is as necessary as action. The part of Moses on the mount was at least as important as that of Joshua on the plain. Consider the character and object of true prayer.

I. THE CHARACTER OF TRUE PRAYER. 1. *Earnestness.* What a ring of vehement

intensity sounds through the apostle's words! Here is a man who believes in prayer and is greatly anxious to secure it. It would be wonderful if some prayers were answered. When the prayer does not affect the heart of the suppliant how can it touch the heart of God? A half-hearted prayer can bring no blessing from heaven because it is too feeble even to reach heaven. 2. *Spirituality*. We must pray in the Spirit. Our own thoughts must be spiritual and we must seek the inspiration of God's Spirit to give light and life to our praying (Rom. viii. 26). 3. *Independence of hindering circumstances*. "At all seasons." Prayer is always in season. But we are not always inclined to pray. Yet when we least desire to pray prayer is most necessary. 4. *Watching*, in order that our prayers may be apposite to the occasion, that we may discern the Divine response, and that we may be roused to renewed earnestness in face of the dangers and needs of the times. 5. Earnest prayer will be persevering prayer. It need be so, for God sometimes delays his reply to test our faith.

II. THE OBJECTS OF TRUE PRAYER. 1. *On behalf of all saints*. We should pray for all mankind, but especially for those who are of the household of the faith. Christian brotherhood should be seen in prayer. Mutual prayer is the greatest bond of union in the Church. 2. *For any in trouble*. St. Paul, the "ambassador in chains," seeks the prayers of his friends. He in Rome can find comfort from the prayers of Christians in Asia. It would be well if, instead of condemning our brother when he falls before temptation, we would pray for him while he is in it. 3. *For the spread of the gospel*. St. Paul is not so anxious that prayer should be offered for the alleviation of his harsh imprisonment and for safe deliverance from the hands of his foes, as for grace to be faithful and bold in his declaration of the mystery of the gospel—a noble, self-forgetful request. If the Church at home believed more in the efficacy of prayer and practised it more earnestly, the missionary abroad would be more successful in his work.—W. F. A.

Ver. 24.—*The notes of a true Christian*. This benediction differs from the benedictions with which all other Epistles of St. Paul close in one respect, viz. while on every other occasion the second person is used, here the blessing is described in the third person. Elsewhere we read, "Grace be to you," etc. Here and here only we read, "Grace be with all them," etc. This variation is in keeping with the catholic character of the whole Epistle, which is much concerned with the unity of the Church. It is a rebuke to the narrowness of Christians who care only for the prosperity of their own community, and even labour to win adherents from other Christian denominations or regard the prosperity of neighbouring congregations with the jealousy of a tradesman for a rival shop-keeper. How miserably low, narrow, worldly and unchrist-like is the competitive Christianity of our day! St. Paul prays for a blessing on all true Christians. In doing so he describes the essential character of such men: they "love our Lord Jesus Christ in uncorruptness." The question has been so much abused and misunderstood that it is quite as important to point out what is not requisite as what is requisite.

I. WHAT THINGS ARE NOT REQUISITE IN MEN IN ORDER THAT THEY MAY BE REGARDED AS TRUE CHRISTIANS. 1. *External badges of unity*. We need not speak the same shibboleth, practise the same external habits, etc. The test is internal. 2. *Agreement in theological opinion*. Men may love the Lord Jesus Christ while they differ profoundly on many points of doctrine. 3. *Uniformity of ritual*. Love may express itself in various voices, from the shouting hallelujahs of a crowd of street revivalists to the elaborate anthem of a cathedral choir. If the love is there we have all that is essential. 4. *Unity of Church order*. Equal love for Christ may be found in Churches that observe the greatest variety of discipline. The proud bigotry of orthodoxy will have to be greatly humbled when many a despised sectary proves his right to a higher place in the marriage feast because he has possessed a warmer love for his Lord.

II. WHAT IS REQUISITE IN ALL PEOPLE WHO ARE TO BE REGARDED AS TRUE CHRISTIANS. To "love our Lord Jesus Christ in uncorruptness." 1. The first essential is *personal attachment* to Christ. Our assent to a creed, diligent performance of devotional exercises, and connection with a Church fellowship count just for nothing if we are not in living relation to Christ. What think ye of Jesus? How does your soul's affection regard him? These are the primary questions. 2. This attachment is to be one of *love*. A cold devotion of conscientious but heartless duty will not suffice. Happily, Christ does inspire love in his disciples by his wonderful loveableness,

his love to them, his great sacrifice of himself. 3. This love must be *uncorrupted*. A corrupted love is one that is lowered by selfish thoughts. If we only love for what we are to receive our love is, of course, worthless. If, therefore, we only turn to Christ in selfish anxiety to be delivered from trouble to secure certain benefits, if this be the secret of our apparent warmth of devotion, the thing is a mockery. They love in uncorruptness who love purely, unreservedly, simply. The idea also implies a permanence of devotion. It is not a mere passing emotion, stirred, perhaps by a sentimental hymn, but a deep, strong affection that outlasts time and persists through all our varying moods, and shows itself in action, and, when occasion requires, in sacrifice.—W. F. A.

HOMILETICAL INDEX

TO

THE EPISTLE OF

ST. PAUL TO THE EPHESIANS.

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