

# *Epistle to the Ephesians*

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**(1985 Study)**

The following notes on the Epistle to the Ephesians were compiled from a Bible study led by Bro. Frank Shallieu in 1985. They should be utilized with the following understanding:

1. Each paragraph preceded by **“Comment”** or **“Q”** (an abbreviation for **“Question”**) was introduced by someone other than Bro. Frank.
2. The original study did not follow a prepared text but was extemporaneous in nature.
3. Although the transcriber tried to faithfully, with the Lord’s help, set forth the thoughts that were presented in the study, the notes are not a verbatim rendering and, therefore, should be considered in that context.
4. Finally, Bro. Frank did not review the notes for possible errors that may have inadvertently entered the text.

With this disclaimer in mind, may the notes be a blessing as a useful study guide.

# EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS

(Study led by Bro. Frank Shallieu in 1985)

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

This epistle, written to the church at Ephesus in Asia Minor, was addressed in an authoritative manner from the *Apostle* Paul, appointed not by the will of man but “by the will of God.” The Greek word *kai*, translated “and,” can mean “even,” and does so in this context. “To the saints which are at Ephesus, *even* to the faithful in Christ Jesus”; that is, the Epistle to the Ephesians was addressed to one, and the *same*, class. Paul’s manner of address becomes clear when the entire epistle is read, and we get a feel for the *reason* it was written. It takes a while to get to the point because Paul gave an introduction, told how he was thinking of the Ephesians, said he was concerned for their welfare, etc.

Paul was in prison under house arrest in Rome when he wrote this epistle, the date being about AD 64. This first imprisonment lasted for two years. Since he was executed in AD 66-68 under Nero, following his second imprisonment, the epistle was written near the close of his ministry, a ministry that lasted about 33 years. Evidently, he had inherited a lot of money and was a Roman citizen. While under house arrest, he had visitors and was able to witness, even converting some of Nero’s household.

Paul originally visited Ephesus on his second missionary journey, which was relatively early in his ministry. Therefore, this letter was written many years later. In the letter, Paul gave *overall* advice that was carefully considered. Not emotional or contemporary, the advice was meant for posterity.

Paul’s second visit to Ephesus, which was during his third missionary journey, lasted for three years. Hence he was well acquainted with the brethren in that city. When he was returning to Jerusalem on this last missionary journey, the elders of Ephesus met him by the seashore. An emotional farewell followed. Paul remained in Jerusalem for a while and then was taken to Rome by boat and put under house arrest, from which he wrote this Epistle to the Ephesians.

Chapters 18 and 19 in the Book of Acts provide helpful background information. Parts of these chapters will be considered in the commentary of the next chapter.

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

Paul gave his customary address.

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

The theme of the Epistle to the Ephesians was to give primacy to the *Heavenly Father*. Other epistles may emphasize Jesus’ role but not this one. “Blessed be the *God and Father* of our Lord Jesus Christ.” The term “heavenly places in Christ” reminds us of the Tabernacle.

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

**Eph. 1:5 Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,**

Verse 4 shows the time period in which the Church was premeditated by God: “*before the*

foundation of the world [Greek *kosmos*].” In God’s plan, the Lamb was slain *before* Adam was created, and the Church was premeditated at the same time. This epistle contains such noble and sublime thoughts that it is easy to forget the main reason Paul wrote it.

Verses 4 and 5 are a reminder of Romans 8:29,30, “For whom he [God] did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he [the Son] might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he [God] did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.” God premeditated a *class* to be like Jesus that would have the same motivation and character and be holy and blameless in love. “He hath chosen us ... that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: Having predestinated us.”

God predestinated a *class*, not individuals, yet He foreknows which individuals will ultimately be of the 144,000 (Rev. 7:4; 14:3). However, God does not tamper with free moral agency. The individual has to make the decision to consecrate and try to make his calling and election sure. And in fact, God would not call an individual who could not make the grade by divine grace and power, but whether he or she will be a more-than-conqueror is up to each individual (Rom. 8:37). Nevertheless, God knows in advance who will be faithful. This foreknowledge helps Him to know when to call someone else. If He had to wait until each one failed before calling another, it would take much longer than 2,000 years to get the 144,000.

The distinction with regard to the predestination of a class versus the foreknowledge of who will become members of the Little Flock is difficult for many to grasp. It is hard to make a persuasive argument with those who confuse *class* predestination with *individual* predestination. Not only does God know the end *from* the beginning, but He knows the end *before* the beginning.

If God did not have this prerogative and ability, He could not know in advance the day and the hour that the Church will be complete. Also, He would not have known in advance that 11 apostles would prove faithful, Judas would fail, and Paul, the replacement, would be faithful. God had to have the chess game, so to speak, so perfectly organized and planned in advance that all of the pieces would fall into place. There is a *very high concept of thought* in the Epistle to the Ephesians.

Verse 5 states that God “predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself.” In one sense, then, all of the consecrated are “adopted” children. We were once the children of Adam, the children of disobedience—sons of fallen humanity. But when we were accepted in Jesus, we gained a new relationship as adopted sons of God. By the will of *God*, we were adopted.

**Eph. 1:6 To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.**

By His grace, *God* has accepted us in Jesus.

**Eph. 1:7 In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;**

According to *God’s* grace, we have redemption through Jesus’ blood and the forgiveness of sins. The *Father* continues to be given the primacy. *God* is the Author of the plan; it is *His* Son, *His* children, *His* will, and *His* predestination.

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

“Prudence” means “insight.” God “hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and insight.”

**Eph. 1:9** Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself:

God’s plan is *completely His*. The sole originator, He did not incorporate thoughts from someone else. The J. B. Phillips translation has “the secret of his plan” instead of “the mystery of his will.”

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

**Eph. 1:11** In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:

“In the dispensation of the fulness of times” will be at the end of the Kingdom, that is, in the ages of ages. At that time, all of the holy angels, the reclaimed angels, and the willing and restored of humanity will be gathered together. God will gather them together in, or through, Christ.

Consider the order before some of the holy angels sinned. In other words, if it is God’s purpose, in the future, to gather together “all things in Christ,” what was the condition in heaven prior to the fall? Under God were two archangels, who were followed in rank by the angels. Jesus was an archangel at that time, not a divine spirit being. As God’s spokesperson, he was the Word, the Logos. He had a very honored and exalted position, but the rest of the holy angels were not “in him.” To use a modern term, there was no organization chart. “In the dispensation of the fulness of times,” all intelligent beings will realize that Christ is underneath the Father, and all who worship Jesus will be, as it were, worshipping the Father.

It is one thing to have an organization chart and another thing to have the heart *in sympathy* with that organization plan. There must be a chain of command for an organization to function with any degree of efficiency. Today many are dissatisfied with the chain of command at their respective places of employment. The future gathering of all things into one in Christ will be more than just an organization chart, for the Son will be seen unanimously as that *worthy* Lamb! The hearts of *all*, both in heaven and in earth, will be in *full sympathy* with the Father’s selection of His Son, through whom all are gathered. This gathering would not be possible if, first, the *depth* of Jesus’ love had not been revealed—the depth of his dedication, character, humiliation, etc. Moreover, all will see The Christ, Head and body, as worthy.

All who are worthy of life will be gathered together into *one family*. They will all, including the world of mankind, be “sons” of God. With *heart*, as well as with voice of assent, all beings will agree with the future arrangement in Christ under God. “In the dispensation of the fulness of times,” God will be “all in all” (1 Cor. 15:28). Incidentally, in the *present* life, no one is indispensable in God’s arrangement. However, once one makes his calling and election sure, he is indispensable.

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

The Church has no inherent merit to attain to the divine nature, but God places a high priority on the exercise of *faith*. God is *so appreciative* of those who, in the present life, forsake the world and dedicate their lives to Him through Christ that if they remain faithful, they will attain to the *highest possible position* in the universe under Christ. This is a wonderful thought to keep in mind. Those who are faithful will be unto “the praise of his [God’s] glory.”

It is encouraging to realize that the *great Heavenly Father* recognizes our little devotion to Him. His very name should fill us with awe and reverence.

God had a purpose in mind in having Paul address this letter to the Ephesians, which starts with the high and exalted theme of pointing out the Father as the Author of the plan, grace, etc. The purpose for the letter will come out as we proceed. Usually these grand, exalted thoughts in the beginning cause us to overlook the purpose when it is revealed later.

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

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

A sequence is shown: (1) *hearing* the Word, (2) *trusting* in Christ, (3) *believing* into Christ (consecration), and (4) *being sealed* with the Holy Spirit (Spirit begettal). Since trust is a form of faith, “trusting in Christ” can be described as “having faith in Christ.” The expression “the gospel of *your* salvation” indicates that the letter was particularly addressed to the Ephesians.

Being “sealed with that holy Spirit of promise” is receiving the “earnest of our inheritance,” or the *down payment*, the balance being the future payment beyond the veil to the faithful. Paul was saying that the initial sealing of the Holy Spirit, plus the progress of the Ephesians up to the point of the address of this letter, was like a down payment or a precursor of added blessings to come to the faithful.

The term “holy Spirit of *promise*” indicates that receiving more of the Holy Spirit is *conditional* based upon *obedience*. The Father is faithful to *His* end of the contract, but we must fulfill *our* part in order for the contract to come to fruition.

There is still another aspect of the “sealing.” A seal is a mark showing ownership. Just as a seal is gradually imprinted in wax, so the Father’s character is to be imprinted in us. Since paraffin is hard like a rock, heat must be applied to soften it. Therefore, both heat and pressure are necessary, and that statement is true for the Christian as well. Just as the wax must be soft for the seal to make an impression, so we must be humble and submissive for Jesus’ character to be impressed on us. As the wax cools, it hardens like a rock. Accordingly, the hardening represents crystallization of character. We must be sure the right seal—that of *Jesus’* character—is making the impression in our “wax.” We must *understand* his character in order to have it impressed on our hearts.

With regard to the term “the purchased possession,” the Holy Spirit is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the entire Church unto the praise of God’s glory.

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

Paul went to Ephesus twice, he went nearby, he went to Jerusalem, and then he went to Rome and house arrest. While in Rome, he apparently heard from visitors about the love and faith of the Ephesians. Enough time would have elapsed for him to hear proof of their faith in Jesus and their love for all of the saints. Paul sent this letter back to the Ephesians by the hand of Tychicus, who was from Asia (Eph. 6:21; Acts 20:4). Tychicus was probably the one who brought him news of the faith and love of the Ephesians.

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

In testimony meetings, we often hear the statement “Please pray for me as I pray for you.” The speaker may not even know half of the brethren in the room, so the words are vague and rather meaningless. If we are undergoing a real trial (or someone we know is), it is preferable to pray *by name* for the individual.

With Paul, the matter was different. He was responsible for the founding of these churches, and he knew the brethren in a more intimate sense. He had actually been there, suffered with them, and helped nurture them. As Paul prayed for the Ephesians as a church, he no doubt called to mind and mentioned various individuals by name. Hence his statement was meaningful. Elsewhere Paul said the weight of all the churches was upon him, showing that he took the responsibility very seriously. Sometimes his prayers were with tears, much crying, and supplication.

**Eph. 1:17 That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him:**

Verses 17-23 give the substance of Paul’s prayer for the Ephesians as *new creatures*. He was concerned lest they slip back into the world. Since Paul had spent three years in Ephesus, he knew the brethren there quite well and felt a concern, for in his absence, many things could happen. For example, false teachers might arise with injurious views.

Wisdom, revelation, and knowledge all pertain to understanding. What is the difference? “Wisdom” is the application of knowledge *already received*. “Revelation” is *new* knowledge and understanding appropriate for a situation that arises. Paul prayed not only that the Ephesians would grow in knowledge and understanding but that in emergencies which might occur, God would help them by opening up new thoughts. “In the knowledge of him” probably refers to knowledge of God. The *Diaglott* has “in the *full* knowledge of him.” Paul was praying for the Ephesians’ growth and greater understanding.

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

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

**Eph. 1:20 Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places,**

Verses 17 and 18 have a similarity of emphasis on wisdom, revelation, understanding, and enlightenment. The *Diaglott* has “the eyes of your *heart*” instead of “the eyes of your understanding,” the significance being understanding in an *appreciative* sense—appreciative understanding. What was Paul’s purpose? He was praying for the Ephesians as new creatures and for their growth and development as such, but if they could *really feel the power* of such a grand hope, the growth would automatically take place. It is *God’s calling*, and the saints will inherit *glorious riches*.

The Apostle John gave a related thought in 1 John 3:3, “And every man that hath this hope [of the high calling] in him purifieth himself.” True hope is not just a belief but something we are deeply anchored into. Real hope is a furtherance of faith, an extension of faith. If we have real hope, we will automatically be energized into development. Hope is the second step: (1) faith, (2) hope, and (3) love. Hope is a development, not just a wish or wishful thinking. True hope is very real.

In order to truly appreciate the Epistle to the Ephesians, we must read it as a *whole*. After we study the epistle verse by verse, we will review it as a whole to get the Apostle Paul's theme.

Paul was trying to get the individual convert to put his hand in the hand of God. Knowledge is necessary, but this is knowledge carried further. We should feel that God is *personally* involved in our making our calling and election sure. We will become members of the Little Flock if this hope is properly anchored in our soul. We are called to be part of *God's family*.

In verses 18-20, Paul wanted the Ephesians to know (1) the *hope* of God's calling, (2) the glorious *riches* of the inheritance, and (3) God's exceeding great *power* to help them be faithful. In short, God exercises hope, riches, and power to those who come to Him through Jesus.

In verses 17 and 18, Paul stressed wisdom, revelation, understanding, and enlightenment. Then he changed his emphasis to hope, riches, and power, and he concentrated on God's POWER. If we could really grasp what is potentially ours in connection with the high calling, we would be energized. We would be *driven* to make our calling and election sure. God's great power is individually available to help us.

The power that God exercised in raising Jesus from the dead to a position at His own right hand all began with consecration. That resurrection power was exercised not only at Jesus' baptism, when he was begotten of the Holy Spirit, but also at his literal resurrection and then again when he ascended on high. The same is true with us. At consecration, we begin to walk in *newness* of life; we are *raised* in Christ Jesus; therefore, we should walk as children of *the day*. There is a power now in our lives, in the present life, but if we allow that power to develop more and more, it will pull us right through death to the first resurrection. God's power begins to work in us at consecration, it energizes us in our consecrated walk, and then it lifts us through death at the end of our course if we are faithful. Paul was talking about the power of *mature Christian development*.

At consecration, we are filled with the enthusiasm of "first love" (Rev. 2:4). We should not let this love cool off as discouragements and hard experiences come. The "first love" can develop beyond the initial spontaneity and mature to a consummation. We go beyond head knowledge to experimental (proven) knowledge. God's power works in us from consecration "death" to actual physical death and being raised beyond the veil. It all starts with consecration.

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

Just as Jesus was given a name above all other names (except the Father's), so his faithful followers will share his exaltation and honor. Examples of "every name that is named ... in this world" are the most famous people in the present life such as Einstein, sports figures, and government rulers. The 144,000 will have known and publicized names and power far exceeding any others in this present evil world (or before the Flood). Those comprising the Little Flock will be known throughout *eternity*. Little nobodies in the present life will ultimately end up with names recognized by all. They will have reputations above all others except God, Jesus, and other members of the Little Flock. The Christ, Head and body members, will have names above the Ancient Worthies—above Moses, Abraham, Daniel, etc. Although seemingly unbelievable, this exaltation is attributable to *God's power*. The names of the Little Flock will also exceed "every name that is named ... in that [age] which is to come."

**Eph. 1:22** And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church,

**Eph. 1:23** Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.



Verses 22 and 23 are a reminder of 1 Corinthians 15:28, “And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.” At the end of the Millennium, Jesus will turn the Kingdom over to God, who will then be all in all.

Antecedents for the pronouns in verse 23 are as follows: “Which is his [Jesus’] body, the fulness of him [God] that filleth all in all.” Jesus is the Head of the Church, and the Church is Jesus’ body. However, the combination of The Christ (Head and body) will be the fullness of *God*, who “filleth all in all.”

*God* placed Jesus in the exalted position, but at the end of the Kingdom, Jesus will give the Kingdom to the Father and become subservient so that *God* will then be all in all. The Epistle to the Ephesians emphasizes *God* and His dealing with the Church.

We are trying to get the fullness of God in us now—a crystallized Godlike *character*. (Jesus is a pattern of God, so a Christlike character is a Godlike character.) Knowledge is necessary for character development. In order to please God, we must know what He wants us to do. The Word of God instructs us, tells what the graces of the Spirit are, and so forth. *Applying and obeying* that knowledge lead to crystallization of character—a character *fixed* in Godlikeness.

The ultimate fullness of God’s being “all in all” is, in sequence, God, Jesus, the Church, the spirit strata, and human beings. God’s will will be done in heaven and on earth, from top to bottom. But here in Ephesians, Paul concentrated on the calling of the Church, those who “first trusted in Christ” (verse 12).

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

The supplied words “hath he quickened” fit in with the thoughts expressed in chapter 1. Or the translators could have gotten the thought of quickening from verse 5 in this chapter: “[God] hath quickened us together with Christ.”

Paul had prayed that the Ephesians might know the hope, the riches, and the power in store for the faithful Christian. It was like talking to embryos in the womb at the quickening phase. The begetting, an initial stage, would be the acceptance of Christ. However, the quickening phase shows signs of life, movement, energy, and a fetal heartbeat. It shows not merely progress but much greater *hope*. There is *development* at this point.

One who consecrates must come to the quickening stage in order to get life on any plane. But for one to get the highest reward of divine nature, progress must continue until the individual reaches the fullness of his potential. Paul’s concern and motivation in writing the epistle were that the Ephesians *not go back to the world*. In addition, Paul saw that a problem was developing, as will be seen later. He was deeply disturbed, yet because he started the epistle with such an exalted theme, we can lose sight of his *real motivation*.

Paul wrote with great care, and his efforts were exhausting. Every word counted. When we consider, too, his poor eyesight and the difficulty in obtaining parchment and ink, his dedication is apparent.

**Eph. 2:2 Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:**

**Eph. 2:3 Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our**

**flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.**

In speaking of the Ephesians' past, Paul included himself in the "children of disobedience: among whom also we all had our conversation [conduct] in times past." He was saying, "In times past [that is, prior to consecration], we fulfilled the desires [the wills—King James margin] of the flesh and mind."

Satan is the "prince of the power of the air," the prince of demons. Why did Paul say "of the air"? This age is the "present evil world," and the demons have been confined to *tartaroo*, or earth's atmosphere (Gal. 1:4). Except for those who know about Christ, all are considered to be of their "father the devil," hence "children of disobedience"; that is, a powerful influence is being exercised over the earth by the demons in the invisible spiritual atmosphere above us (John 8:44). Satan is the prince among demons in earth's atmosphere. *Previously*, we were under this influence, being "children of wrath" as others are, but we were miraculously extricated—just as strongly as the Israelites were extricated from Egypt in the Exodus. God took us out of that darkness, power, and control into His marvelous light—into an escape from Satan's dominion (1 Pet. 2:9). Jesus is in another area of earth's atmosphere, and we are now under that influence. We must be on guard lest the wicked one again touch us or get us back under his dominion. Satan is allowed much liberty during this permission of evil, that is, up to certain limitations, for God exercises providences on behalf of individuals, nations, and events that Satan cannot interfere with. As long as we remain in the circle of God's love, we are protected (Jude 21).

**Eph. 2:4 But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us,**

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

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

God is rich in *mercy and love* toward us. But the astounding thing is that He loved us "even when we were dead in sins," that is, *before* we consecrated. To repeat, God loved us even before we took the step of consecration—when we were dead in trespasses and sins. For such a statement to be made shows that God sees some potential in those who go on to consecrate; hence He favors them with the opportunity to get out of the quagmire of sin. God provides a way of escape through Jesus. We are saved "by grace."

This reasoning, based on verses 4-6, shows that God knows those who will consecrate. Thus He can exercise some providential care over them years before they come to that decision. Prior to conversion, a providence operates over such individuals.

God "hath quickened us ... and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." The term "heavenly places" reminds us of the Holy in the Tabernacle. The measurements show that one had to be in a kneeling or sitting position in order for the furniture to be of benefit. With the Holy being 10 cubits, or 15 feet high, the disproportionately low Prayer Altar and Table of Shewbread were a startling contrast. (No measurement was given for the Candlestick.)

Moses was instructed to build the Tabernacle according to the pattern shown to him on the mount (Exod. 25:9). Not only were the component parts of the Tabernacle given to Moses in vision, but also the assembled parts, the completed structure. Just as Moses saw the Tabernacle in this elevated manner, so Christians, as the antitypical Moses, understand spiritual things as

part of their heavenly calling. The world walks horizontally on the surface of earth, while true Christians walk on an elevated plane.

**Q:** With “together” being used three times in verses 5 and 6, was Paul trying to emphasize the oneness of Jew and Gentile in Christ?

**A:** Yes. In fact, this theme seems to pervade all of the trouble spots that Paul saw in the ecclesia. He wanted the Ephesians to have faith and love.

Our relationship is “with Christ,” “in Christ,” and “through Christ” before God can technically acknowledge us in a more formal sense (Eph. 2:5-7,10). However, that does not mean God’s providence is not exercised over us earlier.

**Comment:** In one sense, at the moment we consecrate and are begotten by the Holy Spirit, we are made alive because we become a new creature. Yet there is a further quickening, or making alive, subsequently.

**Reply:** Yes. There are two pictures, and the Apostle Paul used them in different places. One epistle emphasizes the fetus in the womb; another starts with the babe already born and shows his growth to teenage years, young manhood, and maturity. And there are two different deaths and resurrections. (1) Before consecration, we walked around dead in trespasses and sins. When we came to a knowledge of the truth, it was as if a resurrection had taken place to newness of life. (2) Going into the tomb and the change to spirit nature are another death and resurrection. Moreover, there are two justifications and two consecrations depending on what standpoint we are discussing.

However, verse 6 is clearly talking about the present life. Being raised to sit in heavenly places in Christ is likened to going from death to life. This “quickening” occurs later on, not at the moment of consecration. In other words, this quickening is likened to the quickening of the natural fetus, which occurs in the fifth month. Basically, this epistle was addressed to those who had already consecrated, to “the faithful in Christ Jesus” (Eph. 1:1). Paul acknowledged how he was pleased to hear of their faith and love thus far, but he hoped they would progress further by experiencing the power, or feeling, of the richness of God’s grace.

Quickening can occur many years after begetting by the Holy Spirit, or it can occur very quickly, in the first year. The timing depends on how the individual responds to God’s calling. Some consecrate and then become lethargic or stagnant for a number of years. Then an experience triggers them and they become a burning torch unto death. Quickening operates differently in different individuals, but the quicker, the better, for then one is more apt to make his calling and election sure. When there is a delay, other factors can come in and perhaps even drive one back into the world—a dangerous situation. Obviously, Stephen was quickened very quickly in order to make his calling and election sure in three years.

**Comment:** The explanation about lethargy would answer the brethren who conclude one is not consecrated because he shows no signs of Spirit begetting. Some could be in this lethargic condition, and that does not release them from their consecration vows.

**Comment:** Many do not understand what backsliding means. It is dangerous to say, “Maybe God did not accept your consecration.” We should not even suggest such a possibility. Some are looking for a way out, and they would welcome such words. Fallen human nature wants to justify itself and find some excuse for wrong behavior. There are times when a wrong should be acknowledged.

**Reply:** In his Epistle to the Hebrews, Paul criticized those who were still on the milk of the

Word, whereas, for the length of time they had been consecrated, they should have been eating meat (Heb. 5:12-14).

**Eph. 2:7 That in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.**

This verse is the conclusion to verse 6. The purpose of being raised up together in heavenly places in Christ is that in the ages to come, God will show the “exceeding riches” of His grace and kindness toward the Church, which was developed through Christ.

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

Paul reflected, “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God.” What is the “gift of God”? Is it grace, faith, or salvation? The words “it is,” which are italicized in the King James, are supplied and should be deleted. All three—grace, faith, and salvation—are the gift of God. The offer of salvation is a gift.

There are two kinds of faith: natural and spiritual. Spiritual faith comes by hearing the Word of God. “So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Rom. 10:17). Natural faith says that there is a God and that He is the rewarder of those who diligently seek Him (Heb. 11:6). Before consecration, we did not know who or where God was, but in our heart we felt that He existed. One either is or is not born with this kind of faith. Paul said, “All men have not [natural] faith” (2 Thess. 3:2). Those who consecrate develop a second kind of faith: spiritual faith.

We must have natural faith to begin with, for without this faith, it is impossible to please God. He allows those who have natural faith to have the Word of God, an enlightenment of mind, spiritual faith. Spiritual faith is a gift received by God’s grace. As an illustration, when Jesus asked, “But whom say ye that I am?” Peter replied, “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.” Jesus said, “Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven” (Matt. 16:15-17). Notice that *God* had revealed this fact to Peter. Although millions in a “Christian” nation say that Jesus is the Son of God, it is another matter to truly, *from the heart*, think and believe this. For those who do, *God* has revealed Jesus’ identity to them. The revelation is a manifestation of His mercy, whether or not one goes on to consecrate.

Therefore, grace, faith, and salvation are *all* gifts of God, but of the three, if it is necessary to single out one, grace is probably the gift of God because of Paul’s frequent use of that term. Faith is the means, salvation is the end, and grace is the supplied element. Hence all three are a manifestation of the gift of God. We work out our salvation—it is our *own* responsibility—but, nevertheless, God’s *grace* and mercy are extended all the while we are working out that salvation (Phil. 2:12). In addition, the just “walk by *faith*” (2 Cor. 5:7; Rom. 1:17). Faith is *essential* and cannot be separated out, and so is God’s grace—from beginning to end. And ultimately, to those who make their calling and election sure, *salvation* is a gift too, even though it is worked out. *God’s* handiwork is seen all the way through—through grace, faith, and salvation. “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights” (James 1:17).

Stated another way, all three—faith, grace, and salvation—are *coessential*. It is hard to extract one from the other, for they are all a part of the one process that adds up to God’s gift, which is available to those who can realize it, consecrate, and prove faithful.

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

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

“For we are his [God’s] workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them [in the good works].” While Paul said, “Not of works,” he also said, “Unto *good* works.” This concept agrees with the thought of James that faith *without* works is dead, and is thus in vain (James 2:20). James emphasized the *work* aspect, whereas elsewhere Paul stressed the *faith* aspect. But in two epistles, Paul combined both thoughts, showing the co-relationship of faith and works.

**Comment:** “Walk” seems to be a theme of Paul in this epistle. “Walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called” (Eph. 4:1). “Walk not as other Gentiles walk” (Eph. 4:17). “Walk in love” (Eph. 5:2). “Walk as children of light” (Eph. 5:8). “Walk circumspectly ... redeeming the time, because the days are evil” (Eph. 5:15,16). There is a great responsibility for those who consecrate to walk not as they formerly did but according to their new course of life.

Ephesians, as an epistle, is trying to stir us up through *encouragement*. In other places, Paul stressed admonition again and again. Here he held up the *tremendous and awesome goal*, and then tried to *encourage and incite* us. In other words, he de-emphasized admonition in his Epistle to the Ephesians. Actually, we need both encouragement and admonition to be well rounded out, but Paul had a burden on his heart that he was trying to express to the Ephesians, as will be seen later on in this epistle.

The word “ordained” in verse 10 is rendered “prepared” in the *Diaglott*. Paul was saying that there is a prepared course of good works if we *walk* faithfully in Jesus’ footsteps. God “ordained” that we should follow a certain course.

**Comment:** Paul used the term “good work(s)” several times. Some “profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every *good work* reprobate” (Titus 1:16). “In all things showing thyself a pattern of *good works*” (Titus 2:7). Jesus “gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of *good works*” (Titus 2:14). “Put them in mind ... to be ready to every *good work*” (Titus 3:1). “Maintain *good works* for necessary uses” (Titus 3:14).

**Reply:** In other words, elsewhere, such as in his Epistle to Titus, Paul explained what he meant by the term “good works” in Ephesians 2:10.

Before proceeding, we will co-relate a portion of the Book of Acts to Paul’s letter to the Ephesians, as follows.

### Acts 18

Paul went to Ephesus at the end of his second missionary tour in approximately AD 54-55.

“And Paul after this tarried there yet a good while, and then took his leave of the brethren, and sailed thence into Syria, and with him Priscilla and Aquila; having shorn his head in Cenchrea: for he had a vow.

“And he came to Ephesus, and left them there: but he himself entered into the synagogue, and reasoned with the Jews.

“When they desired him to tarry longer time with them, he consented not;

“But bade them farewell, saying, I must by all means keep this feast that cometh in Jerusalem: but I will return again unto you, if God will. And he sailed from Ephesus.

“And when he had landed at Caesarea, and gone up, and saluted the church, he went down to Antioch.

“And after he had spent some time there, he departed, and went over all the country of Galatia and Phrygia in order, strengthening all the disciples.” (Acts 18:18-23)

This was Paul’s first trip to Ephesus. He preached in the synagogue and was fairly well received. The Jews wanted him to stay, but he determined the Lord’s will was for him to go to Jerusalem. However, he said he would return. Note: *Jews* were the ones who heard him at this time. Paul probably stayed about a week.

“And a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, and mighty in the scriptures, came to Ephesus.

“This man was instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in the spirit, he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John.

“And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue: whom when Aquila and Priscilla had heard, they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly.

“And when he was disposed to pass into Achaia, the brethren wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him: who, when he was come, helped them much which had believed through grace:

“For he mightily convinced the Jews, and that publicly, showing by the scriptures that Jesus was Christ.” (Acts 18:24-28)

Subsequently, in Paul’s absence, Apollos, a Jew, came to Ephesus and eloquently explained the Scriptures. However, he knew “only the baptism of John.”

### Acts 19

“And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples,

“He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost.

“And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John’s baptism.

“Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.

“When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

“And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied.

“And all the men were about twelve.

“And he went into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months, disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God.” (Acts 19:1-8)

Paul returned to Ephesus a short time later to find that Apollos, in telling that Jesus was the Messiah, had preached only *John’s* baptism to the Jews. Hence those who had accepted Jesus and consecrated had received John’s baptism. In the meantime, Apollos had left and gone to Corinth, so he was not at Ephesus at this time.

Upon his return to Ephesus, therefore, Paul had the Jews rebaptized—into Christ this time—in order for them to receive the Holy Spirit. Note: Both Paul and Apollos had preached in the synagogue, so their converts were mostly Christianized *Jews*, and they needed *Jesus’* baptism. Paul preached in the synagogue for three months.

“But when divers were hardened, and believed not, but spake evil of that way before the multitude, he departed from them, and separated the disciples, disputing daily in the school of one Tyrannus.

“And this continued by the space of two years; so that all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks.

“And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul:

“So that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them.

“Then certain of the vagabond Jews, exorcists, took upon them to call over them which had evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, We adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preacheth.

“And there were seven sons of one Sceva, a Jew, and chief of the priests, which did so.

“And the evil spirit answered and said, Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye?

“And the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, and overcame them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded.

“And this was known to all the Jews and Greeks also dwelling at Ephesus; and fear fell on them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified.” (Acts 19:9-17)

After preaching in the synagogue for three months, Paul went to the school of Tyrannus to preach for two years. (In all, Paul was in Ephesus for a total of three years.) The school was probably an open amphitheater for public use. Now Gentiles were becoming converts, and they eventually outnumbered the Jewish Christians.

Also, Paul began to develop a reputation. “God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul.” Attention was attracted to Paul through this God-given ability. As a result, *many* came to hear him.

“*All* they which dwelt in Asia [Minor] heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks,” through Paul. In other words, all residents of Asia Minor had some cognizance of Paul’s preaching of the new religion pertaining to Jesus. This statement shows how diligent Paul was, how zealously he worked for two years without the aid of modern conveniences,

media, and communication. Such was his service in the school of Tyrannus.

“And many that believed came, and confessed, and showed their deeds.

“Many of them also which used curious arts brought their books together, and burned them before all men: and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver.

“So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed.

“After these things were ended, Paul purposed in the spirit, when he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia, to go to Jerusalem, saying, After I have been there, I must also see Rome.

“So he sent into Macedonia two of them that ministered unto him, Timotheus and Erastus; but he himself stayed in Asia for a season.

“And the same time there arose no small stir about that way.

“For a certain man named Demetrius, a silversmith, which made silver shrines for Diana, brought no small gain unto the craftsmen;

“Whom he called together with the workmen of like occupation, and said, Sirs, ye know that by this craft we have our wealth.

“Moreover ye see and hear, that not alone at Ephesus, but almost throughout all Asia, this Paul hath persuaded and turned away much people, saying that they be no gods, which are made with hands:

“So that not only this our craft is in danger to be set at nought; but also that the temple of the great goddess Diana should be despised, and her magnificence should be destroyed, whom all Asia and the world worshippeth.

“And when they heard these sayings, they were full of wrath, and cried out, saying, Great is Diana of the Ephesians.

“And the whole city was filled with confusion: and having caught Gaius and Aristarchus, men of Macedonia, Paul’s companions in travel, they rushed with one accord into the theatre.

“And when Paul would have entered in unto the people, the disciples suffered him not.

“And certain of the chief of Asia, which were his friends, sent unto him, desiring him that he would not adventure himself into the theatre.” (Acts 19:18-31)

Conversions resulted in the burning of expensive occult books. In other words, these were *thorough* conversions.

The Temple of Diana was at Ephesus. Demetrius, a maker of statues of Diana, was stirred to anger when he heard Paul’s preaching because the business trade of Ephesus was adversely affected. Paul had taught that icons and shrines made by *human* hands were *not* gods and thus were *not* to be worshipped. In his opposition to Paul, Demetrius mentioned this reasoning. He realized that the preaching of Christ undercut the worship of Diana.



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

**Eph. 2:12** 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:

The “covenants of promise” are the Abrahamic and the Law covenants. The Abrahamic Covenant was made with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Israel). Although it will ultimately include all the families of the earth, only these few individuals and the nation of Israel had benefited from it at that time. Paul’s teaching showed that this covenant is to be far more embracing and that even the Jew is not identified with the spiritual aspect unless he obeys the covenant and exercises faith in it. The Law Covenant was added to the Abrahamic Covenant 430 years later.

“Remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh.” Here Paul specifically addressed *Gentile* Christians. The Epistle to the Ephesians as a whole was addressed to both Jew and Gentile Christians, but in chapter 2, Paul especially wanted to help the Gentile converts. He wanted to strengthen their faith.

**Eph. 2:13** But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.

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

Both Jewish and Gentile Christians are made one through Jesus. The “middle wall of partition” is a reference to the Temple of Herod, which kept Jews and Gentiles separate, for Gentiles could not go beyond the (outer) Court of the Gentiles.

The “middle wall of partition,” the barrier between Jew and Gentile, was figuratively eliminated through Christ. God’s exclusive dealing with Israel ended in AD 36. From then on, there has been no more barrier, for all are one in Christ. Stated another way, the spiritual “middle wall of partition” was broken down in AD 36, when Cornelius, the first Gentile convert, was begotten by the Holy Spirit.

From one standpoint, Gentile Christians were proselytes to the new religion of Christ, which had originated among the Jews. In the Ephesian class were Jews according to the flesh who had accepted Christ. However, there was a “barrier” tendency—the attitude that something was different between a Gentile Christian and a Jewish Christian. The sensitivity to this imagined difference had to be eliminated. The faith structure of both had to be based on Scripture. Paul spoke *strongly* with statements such as “The wall is broken down” and “There is no male or female, Jew or Greek ... in the body of Christ” (Gal. 3:28 paraphrase). Paul could speak boldly because he was sure he was right from a scriptural standpoint.

Gentile proselytes to Judaism had been confined to the Court of the Gentiles, and now this separation was happening to a certain extent in the minds of some with regard to the *Christian* faith. This distinction had to be eliminated, for it was *wrong* to perpetuate a difference into Christianity.

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

**Eph. 2:16** And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby:

Jesus made of Jew and Gentile “*one new man.*” Paul was speaking of the Church as a *collective* body, which was composed of many, many individuals, both Jew and Gentile. Stated another way, a *mixed* group of Jews and Gentiles was made into “one new man.”

Jesus “abolished ... the law” to only *believing* Jews. To unconverted Jews, the Law was and is still binding. The only way a Jew gets out from under the Law is by acceptance of Christ and consecration. He must die to his former condition and be *reborn* through baptism into Christ.

The coming of Jesus Christ was a remarkable breakthrough. The Cross of Christ is the centerpiece in the plan of God. Through his faithfulness to the ignominious death on the Cross, Jesus brought to light life and immortality and made “one body” of male and female, Jew and Gentile, bond and free (2 Tim. 1:10). The character of the individual is what is important—being conformed to the image of God’s dear Son is the standard.

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

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

The sublime feature is God Himself, the Author of salvation, who called the Church into true *unity* through the Holy Spirit as “one new man,” that is, 144,000 body members conformed to and under one Head, Christ Jesus.

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

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

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

Paul’s words had a unifying effect, for he was saying that converted Jews and Gentiles were equal in Christ. Both were in the family of God through Christ.

**Comment:** We usually think of a foundation as being on the bottom, but here Jesus, the chief cornerstone, is at the top of a pyramid structure.

**Reply:** Two perspectives were used here. The Church is built upon the *foundation* of the gospel of Christ and the teachings of the apostles and the Old Testament prophets. In addition, the Church is built *up* into Christ, the chief cornerstone, in whom all the building is fitly framed together; that is, the building goes up on an angle to match the perfect pyramid stone at the top. Other pictures elsewhere also show Jesus as the foundation down below. For instance, he said he would build his Church upon this “rock,” and “other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ” (Matt. 16:18; 1 Cor. 3:11).

**Comment:** As in Ephesians 1:10, Paul used the illustration of a pyramid here. “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.”

**Reply:** Yes, that will be true in the finished picture. Here Paul was talking about the *unified* body in the present age, which is gathered, or “fitly framed together,” growing into a building, into a “holy temple” in Christ.

**Eph. 2:22** In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.

Jewish and Gentile Christians are built *together* for a habitation, or dwelling place, for *God* through the Holy Spirit. There is no differentiation between the two in Christ. The Holy Spirit works, cutting out of the “mountain,” the earth, “without [human] hands” the stone that will smite the image (Dan. 2:45). Like the invisible activity of the wind, the Holy Spirit develops and unifies the “stone” class, The Christ. Stated another way, this great power, the Holy Spirit, forms a single stone.

In the illustration of the building of Solomon’s Temple, the stones were brought to the Temple site already quarried, shaped, polished, and fit for their designated positions. God calls individuals for the 144,000 according to a particular niche He has for each one. If that spot is not filled by one individual, it will be filled by another individual along the same lines for a work, or a purpose.

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

Verse 1 is a valuable clue as to the circumstances under which the Epistle to the Ephesians was written. Paul was *literally* a prisoner in Rome under house arrest when he wrote this epistle.

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

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

Paul was given a “revelation” (singular) at his initial conversion. He had been an enemy, a virulent opponent of Christianity, when his conversion came. Paul, the *persecuting Pharisee*, became a faithful Christian from the time that Christ was revealed to him. The incident of Paul’s conversion was quite well known by now, whereas his other revelations were not nearly as well known. Word of his conversion had spread.

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

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

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

Verses 2-6 show that it was Paul, more than any of the other apostles, who helped, in a practical sense, the understanding of the mystery hid for ages: “That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, ... and partakers ... in Christ by the gospel.” The mystery was “Christ in you, the hope of glory,” and this calling was open to Jews and Gentiles alike (Col. 1:27).

Although it is true that Peter was involved in the conversion of Cornelius, he lacked the structural depth of scriptural understanding that Paul had, as evidenced by the fact he later dissimulated and had to be reprimanded by Paul. In the incident, recorded in Galatians 2:11-14, Peter was eating with some Gentiles up at Antioch. When Jews came in, he withdrew and separated himself, feeling ashamed and fearing them which were of the circumcision. Paul had to rebuke him. And although Peter was given the dream of a sheet let down from heaven containing both clean and unclean animals, and thus was the first apostle to be informed that the high calling was open to the Gentiles, he did not have the scriptural basis and reasoning for

the change (Acts 10:9-16). Again it was Paul who had to help the other apostles understand this matter from the Scriptures. Therefore, Paul could say, “It is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit” (verse 5).

At the time of Paul’s conversion, Jesus said to him, “Go thy way: for you are a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the *Gentiles*, and kings, and the children of Israel” (Acts 9:15 paraphrase). In other words, Paul was told by *direct* communication that the wall of partition was to be broken down. He was to preach the message of Jesus to *Gentiles* in order to convert the willing, hearing ears.

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

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

Paul was a minister of the gospel. *God’s* “power” (the Holy Spirit) working in him enabled him to speak with boldness, strength, influence, and success. He was effectual because *God* helped him.

In verses 2 and 3, Paul referred to his initial conversion. Then he mentioned his responsibility to deliver the gospel to the *Gentiles*; that is, this former zealous *persecutor* of Christians was now a minister of the gospel. To a large extent, news of his conversion went in advance of his ministry. Paul subsequently preached to the Ephesians in person, and now, some years later, he was writing to them: “You know how *in the past*, such and such happened.” Paul had labored in Ephesus for a total of three years—longer than in any other area—and was successful in bringing many into the truth by *God’s* grace and help.

Paul said he was “less than the least of all saints,” yet elsewhere he said he was not one whit behind the “chiefest” of the apostles (2 Cor. 11:5). How do we harmonize these two statements? In verse 8, Paul was referring to his *former* condition, *prior* to conversion, when he thought he was serving *God* but was mistakenly persecuting Christians. In the other citation, where Paul said he was not a whit behind the others, he was referring to his *subsequent* development *after* conversion.

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

The term “beginning of the world [Greek *aionion*]” means “from the ages.” In other words, the “fellowship of the mystery,” which is “Christ in you, the hope of glory,” and includes *Gentiles* as well as Jews, was hidden from before even *Jesus’* creation. *Gentiles* are on a par of equality with Jews in the body of Christ. A *mixed* class of Jews and *Gentiles* have the hope of the high calling.

How can the word “all” be explained—“to make *all* men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which ... hath been hid”? In “due time,” that is, in the Kingdom Age, others will be made aware of the mystery (1 Tim. 2:6). Verse 9 had a present fulfillment back there with Paul, but the fulfillment is ongoing. The word “men” is supplied and should be omitted, for angels are included in the statement. Knowledge of the mystery is primarily a lesson now to Christians and to fallen angels who repent and take a stand for righteousness; eventually, in the Kingdom, it will be a lesson to the world.

The phrase “by Jesus Christ” is spurious and, therefore, should be omitted. *God* created all things including the New Creation.

With regard to the word “mystery,” the Messiah is a *multiple* seed, composed of 144,000, as well as a *mixed* seed, comprising Gentiles and Jews. Stated another way, it is *one kind* of seed, which is taken from all nations and tongues.

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

The J. B. Phillips New Testament in Modern English reads, “The purpose is that all the angelic powers should now see the complex wisdom of God’s plan being worked out through the Church, in conformity to that timeless purpose which he centered in Christ Jesus, our Lord.”

God’s wisdom and plan are being revealed to the fallen aspect of the “principalities and powers.” Prior to the Flood, the disobedient angels materialized and did as they chose, for it appeared that God was powerless to stop the rebellion, but when the Flood came, they were imprisoned in chains of darkness. Hence the fallen angels did see a judgment take place, but at that time, they did not see a *plan* for the permission of evil.

In regard to the gospel, mankind does not see the real purpose. The angels, however, have a much better vantage point. Unless they are incorrigible, they can now see that the permission of evil, as well as the development of a *Church class*, fits into a prepared plan. This revelation gives *hope* to the imprisoned angels who are not incorrigible. They would see the permission of evil as the much diversified wisdom of God and realize that if they repent and take a stand for God and righteousness, there is the possibility of their reinstatement to favor. They see God’s wisdom for them. Thus the enlightenment of the gospel—of the “mystery”—is not only for the consecrated of this age but also for the possible retrieval of those in the “principalities and powers.”

The angels, from their vantage point, can see the flaws and faults of a Christian, as well as the good points. The incorrigible angels try to exploit the faults, while the repentant and holy ones see the Christian struggle to resist temptations. The angels saw the Crucifixion and Jesus’ resurrection, and they also saw the resurrection of the sleeping saints. Thus the knowledge, which the world does not yet have, can be very helpful and instructive to the angels.

**Eph. 3:11 According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord:**

The *Diaglott* uses the expression “a plan of the ages” instead of “the eternal purpose.” Thus verse 11 would read, “According to a plan of the ages which he [God] purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord.” The title of Volume 1, *The Divine Plan of the Ages*, is based on this Scripture, that is, on God’s plan of the ages.

**Eph. 3:12 In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him.**

In Jesus, through his merit, we have boldness and confidence to approach the throne of grace.

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

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

When Paul was in Ephesus, he certainly was persecuted, and when he taught in the school of Tyrannus, he had disputation (opposition) daily (Acts 19:9). Those who not only heard the disputation but were rightly exercised were added to the church at Ephesus.

Paul was saying, “The sufferings I encountered on your behalf should not discourage you, for we are called to endure sufferings, and the sufferings should result in your development and encouragement. I am not ashamed of the sufferings. For the very cause of sufferings, I bow my knees to the Father. Do not be discouraged because I am not discouraged.” Paul desired that the Ephesians “faint not.”

The “tribulations” in this context were Paul’s sufferings and persecutions at Ephesus, for example, disputations in the school of Tyrannus. Paul said, “I have fought with [figurative] beasts at Ephesus” (1 Cor. 15:32). While there he suffered great bitterness, opposition, and persecution.

The phrase “of our Lord Jesus Christ” is spurious. The Epistle to the Ephesians shows the primacy of the Father.

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

“Of whom [God] the whole family in heaven and earth is named.” When created, the holy angels were called the “sons of *God*.” Those who did not sin under the severe test in the days of Noah are still considered such. The trial on the angels was severe because it appeared that God lacked power to correct, punish, etc. To be faithful, the angels had to have innate confidence in Him. Those who passed that test have *everlasting* life.

Angels and mankind (that is, Adam) were all from God originally. When created, they were perfect and Godlike—and hence were called “sons of God” (Gen. 6:2; Job 38:7). The willing and obedient of the human race in the Kingdom will again be called “sons of God” when they attain perfection (Rev. 21:7).

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

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

Paul wanted the Ephesians to be strengthened to be able to take a stand on their own. They had been nurtured for a while. Now Paul prayed that they had come to that state where they could take a stand as necessary. That is why with mother and child, there comes a time when a separation should occur and the child is considered an adult. A feeling of motherhood and fatherhood throughout life is fine as long as the parents do not override the adult children, for the latter must be considered separate entities. Paul desired that the Ephesians might be strengthened to the point where they would be strong in the Lord and the power of *His* might.

Christ dwells in our hearts not literally but by *faith*. It is like our fighting the good fight of faith, which is fought not with literal carnal weapons. The *inner* man is strengthened, not the outer man. *Faith* would be the muscles and power of our fight, for we overcome the world by our faith. And we must be “rooted and grounded [developed] in love.”

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

Do all saints comprehend the breadth, length, depth, and height? No, for that is the ideal we are trying to grow into. A way to understand verse 18 is to liken it to letting down a cable into the sea. By letting an international cable go out and out, and seeing it go down and down but not resting on the ocean floor, we have a greater appreciation of the awesomeness of depth. To spiritually comprehend the breadth, length, depth, and height of God’s power and love, we

should meditate on His power in the heavens and on all His works of nature, His ability to know our innermost thoughts, etc. We cannot *fully* plumb the heights and depths, but we should strive to understand as much as possible. On this side of the veil, we grasp these to a greater or lesser extent but not fully.

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

“The love of Christ ... [sur]passeth knowledge.” None of us can have more love than Christ. Apart from God, he is the best example or manifestation of the operation of love.

“That ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.” Vessel sizes vary from one individual to another, but we hope to be filled; that is, we hope the vessel grows larger and larger so that the fullness will expand. This portion of verse 19 could also be expressed: “that ye might be filled with Godlikeness.” In other words, we are to be filled as much as possible with *Godlikeness*.

The combined thought of verses 18 and 19 is that we should try to *grow* into a comprehension of *Christ’s love*, for it is *awesome!* Not all Christians grasp the concept of his love as they should, but we can spiritually try to discern it. We grasp the comprehension in part in the present life, to a greater or lesser extent.

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

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

“Unto him [God] be glory in the church by Christ Jesus.” With the sublime level of thinking, especially the secret, or mystery, of what God’s intent has been, Paul got so excited that he summed up as in a prayer: “Thanks be to God for His goodness to us, for doing *exceeding abundantly* above all that we ask or think. Amen!” “Throughout all ages, world without end” means into the illimitable future, into the ages of ages, which, we believe, have to do with different universes. God has named all the stars, and with each one, He has a plan and purpose.

## Acts 20

“And after the uproar was ceased, Paul called unto him the disciples, and embraced them, and departed for to go into Macedonia.

“And when he had gone over those parts, and had given them much exhortation, he came into Greece,

“And there abode three months. And when the Jews laid wait for him, as he was about to sail into Syria, he purposed to return through Macedonia.

“And there accompanied him into Asia Sopater of Berea; and of the Thessalonians, Aristarchus and Secundus; and Gaius of Derbe, and Timotheus; and of Asia, Tychicus and Trophimus.

“These going before tarried for us at Troas.

“And we sailed away from Philippi after the days of unleavened bread, and came unto them to Troas in five days; where we abode seven days.” (Acts 20:1-6)

This chapter in the Book of Acts tells of Paul's later activities with some from Ephesus. When he left Ephesus, he went north to Macedonia by boat. There he visited Philippi and then went on to Greece, where he stayed for three months. He intended to go to Syria by boat, but when he realized an ambush had been prepared, he changed his itinerary and returned to Macedonia. Paul ended up in Troas in Asia Minor. Incidentally, at that time, northern Israel and all of Lebanon were part of Syria.

“And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight.

“And there were many lights in the upper chamber, where they were gathered together.

“And there sat in a window a certain young man named Eutychus, being fallen into a deep sleep: and as Paul was long preaching, he sunk down with sleep, and fell down from the third loft, and was taken up dead.

“And Paul went down, and fell on him, and embracing him said, Trouble not yourselves; for his life is in him.

“When he therefore was come up again, and had broken bread, and eaten, and talked a long while, even till break of day, so he departed.

“And they brought the young man alive, and were not a little comforted.” (Acts 20:7-12)

Paul restored to life a young man who had gone to sleep during a long sermon and fallen down from a third story. Paul's sermon lasted all night and until daybreak. It was customary for meetings to be held on the first day of the week, Sunday, because after his resurrection, Jesus appeared to the disciples on Sundays. “To break bread” meant to have a meeting and fellowship, plus probably to eat together.

“And we went before to ship, and sailed unto Assos, there intending to take in Paul: for so had he appointed, minding himself to go afoot.

“And when he met with us at Assos, we took him in, and came to Mitylene.

“And we sailed thence, and came the next day over against Chios; and the next day we arrived at Samos, and tarried at Trogyllium; and the next day we came to Miletus.

“For Paul had determined to sail by Ephesus, because he would not spend the time in Asia: for he hasted, if it were possible for him, to be at Jerusalem the day of Pentecost.

“And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church [to meet him].” (Acts 20:13-17)

Paul left at dawn after preaching *all night*, and *walked* to another destination while Luke and seven others sailed. They met him at Assos. Why would Paul have walked? Possible reasons are that he met someone, paid a visit, or had personal fellowship. At Miletus, he summoned the Ephesian elders to meet him to say farewell.

“And when they were come to him, he said unto them, Ye know, from the first day that I came into Asia, after what manner I have been with you at all seasons,



”Serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears, and temptations, which befell me by the lying in wait of the Jews:

“And how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shown you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house,

“Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.

“And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there:

“Save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me.

“But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.

“And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more.

“Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men.

“For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God.

“Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.

“For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock.

“Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.

“Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears.

“And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.

“I have coveted no man’s silver, or gold, or apparel.

“Yea, ye yourselves know, that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me.

“I have shown you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.

“And when he had thus spoken, he kneeled down, and prayed with them all.

“And they all wept sore, and fell on Paul’s neck, and kissed him,

“Sorrowing most of all for the words which he spake, that they should see his face no more. And they accompanied him unto the ship.” (Acts 20:18-38)

Paul’s first visit to Ephesus was short. His second visit lasted three years. On his third visit, which was off the mainland, he met the elders of Ephesus. Verses 18-38 cover his last discharge to those elders. Paul included a brief review of his three years at Ephesus. During that time, he had spoken *publicly* for three years to Jews and Gentiles and gone house to house to give *personal* instruction, all the while being in jeopardy of Jews who were trying to harm him. Paul had been *fearless* in doctrines as well. He had declared the *whole counsel*, regardless of opposition, if the truths were necessary for the hearers’ growth. And Paul had supported himself and *those with him*.

In addition, Paul warned the elders that false teachers of error would come in from the *outside*, and some would arise from *within*, bringing trouble along *doctrinal* lines. Paul said he would not see the elders again, and an emotional, tearful farewell followed.

In his epistles, the Apostle John carried on, or continued, this warning. John was a much *stronger* personality than is generally thought. His epistles are greatly misunderstood.

A footnote in the *Diaglott* for verse 28 is helpful. For the end of the admonition “Take heed therefore unto yourselves ... to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood,” the footnote has “feed the Church of God, which he acquired by the blood of his own [Son].” In other words, *God* purchased the Church with the blood of Jesus.

Paul wanted to get back to Jerusalem by the Day of Pentecost. The Holy Spirit had mechanically moved brethren in every city to speak prophetically of bonds and afflictions that awaited him in Jerusalem. That did happen, and he ended up being shipped to Rome, where he was imprisoned under house arrest.

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

Paul was a prisoner under house arrest in Rome when he wrote this letter.

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

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

Earlier Paul gave counsel that Jews and Gentiles are *one* in Christ and are not under the Law. Jews and Gentiles should forbear “one another in love” and “keep the unity of the Spirit in ... peace.” Ultimately, *all* in heaven and in earth will be brought into unity under Christ (Eph. 1:10). Since that is the objective, Jews and Gentiles, in their dealings with each other, should exercise forgiveness and forbearance and not allow the issue about the Law versus faith and grace to cause a conflict; that is, they were not to let conflict divide them.

**Eph. 4:4 There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling;**

There is “*one* body” of Christ composed of many individuals, both Jew and Gentile. “*One* [Holy] Spirit” operates in all in Christ, both Jew and Gentile. In other words, there is a *family* relationship in God in Christ. Christians are “called in [the] *one* hope of [their] ... [high] calling.”

**Eph. 4:5 One Lord, one faith, one baptism,**

There is “*one* Lord [Jesus].” We know that “Lord” in this context refers to Jesus because the Father is mentioned separately in verse 6. “*One* faith” was taught by Jesus and the apostles. There is “*one* baptism” into Christ for both Jew and Gentile. Stated another way, the *same* baptism applies to both.

Paul testified to both Jews and Greeks (Gentiles) of “repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ” (Acts 20:21). Repentance is in the “*one* baptism” for both Jews and Gentiles. In addition to being a baptism of death into Christ, baptism implies repentance. In other words, the baptism of repentance is not necessarily John’s baptism. At Pentecost, Peter told 3,000 *devout* Jews to repent and believe on the Lord *Jesus Christ* (Acts 2:5,37-41). Therefore, Jesus’ baptism incorporates both thoughts: repentance and death into Christ.

Death to sin and self-will embraces a number of things, among which is repentance. Paul’s common approach in declaring the gospel message was to stress repentance toward God and faith toward Jesus, that is, consecration into Jesus. Notice that Paul did not just say, “Repent,” but, “Repent and believe into Christ.” Repentance *only*, under John’s baptism, would have been only a half step. *Christ’s* baptism was required for both Jew and Gentile.

**Eph. 4:6 One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.**

The highest reverence is due to the Creator Himself, the Author of the plan of salvation: “*One* God and Father of all.” God is above all, through all, and in all Christians, both Jew and Gentile. Verse 6 can be stated in a personalized manner: “The Great God, who is above all and through all, is in *you personally*.”

In verses 4-6, Paul used a practical approach. It is helpful to take “one hope, one faith, one baptism” as a creed, for one of these categories will answer an existing problem. For example, the Society has added an earthly calling—namely, a restitution hope, the hope of an earthly resurrection—and thus has not held to the “one baptism.” Also, with only “one baptism,” there is no baptism to righteousness.

**Eph. 4:7 But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.**

In the early Church, mechanical gifts were given at baptism—tongues, unusual memory, and prophetic utterances, for example—but this is also true today in an *inward* way. All who consecrate, whether they realize it or not, have at least one gift, or *talent*. We should search for that talent so that we can be a blessing to the Lord’s people. And many have more than one talent. The principle is, “Let a man examine himself” as to his talent(s) (1 Cor. 11:28).

**Q:** If we see a talent in another brother or sister, whether or not the individual recognizes it, should we encourage the use of that talent, especially when an opportunity arises?

**A:** Yes.

**Q:** In view of Acts 20:28-30, where Paul, some years *before* writing this letter to the Ephesians, had warned the elders of Ephesus about an outside element coming in, as well as some among the Church arising, both causing *divisions*, was he now giving additional advice about unity and oneness because there had been time for the wrong spirit to percolate?

**A:** Yes. The outside element had already begun to infiltrate, and Paul knew that trouble was brewing. However, he was not saying that brethren *must* stay together regardless of doctrine. Rather, he was expressing the hope, the desire, that they would dwell together in unity as far

as possible. If one, as a new creature, sees that he or she is either in jeopardy or being undernourished, it would be proper to meet elsewhere because our ultimate hope is to make our calling and election sure. We are trying to work out our salvation, and time is running out.

**Comment:** Paul said, “For there *must be* also heresies [sects, divisions] among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you” (1 Cor. 11:19).

**Reply:** The divisions manifest to *God* which brethren are taking the proper stand. In fact, the majority of brethren may judge the matter the other way and consider the *right* stand to be the *wrong* one. But it is *God's* approval we desire. Taking the proper stand is a manifestation to God and to angels.

**Comment:** There are sins of omission and commission. If we divide for the *wrong* reason or fail to divide when a *principle* is involved, our course is disapproved of the Lord.

**Eph. 4:8** Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.

**Eph. 4:9** (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth?

**Eph. 4:10** He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.)

**Eph. 4:11** And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;

**Eph. 4:12** For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:

“When he [Jesus] ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.” Although Jesus ascended up on high, he was not absent from his Church. Just as Paul was physically absent from Ephesus, being under house arrest in Rome, but was writing a letter giving counsel and advice, so Jesus at his First Advent went into death and then was raised and ascended up on high, from where he counsels and assists his Church by giving apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers to minister to their needs in his absence. These “gifts” have been given, and the Apostle Paul was subtly suggesting that he was one of these “gifts.” Stated another way, this very epistle was one of those gifts being channeled to the Ephesians. Paul made this point in a gentle and tactful manner.

The objective of these ministries (and specifically Paul’s ministry) was to perfect the Church to achieve the pyramidal effect spoken of earlier (Eph. 1:10). All things will be gathered under Christ, who is under God.

Paul’s saying that Jesus “ascended up far above *all heavens*” is an interesting expression. God dwells in “*the heaven of heavens* [plural]” (Deut. 10:14; 2 Chron. 6:18; Neh. 6:9). In addition to earth’s atmosphere, there are other universes and planes of being, but God resides in *His* heaven, far above all the others. Psalm 148:4 reads, “Praise him, ye heavens of heavens, and ye waters that be above the heavens.”

Verse 11 lists the categories in a sequence of *descending* importance: apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers. There were only 12 “apostles” (Rev. 21:14). The term “prophets” includes the messengers to the seven churches, only two of whom were apostles: Paul, John, Arius, Waldo, Wycliffe, Luther, and Russell. “Prophets” would also include teachers

of teachers, as it were. These would be advanced far beyond the ordinary teacher, having an insight of blessing that comes from the Lord. A “prophetic” aspect might be included, but if so, it would be *more* than just a mechanical function such as Agabus had (Acts 11:28).

“Evangelists,” who are public expounders, have the ability to espouse the cause of Christ in a *public* manner. Being adept at public oration, these have far-reaching ministries that embrace other locales. They travel around and thus have *more* than just a local ministry with private witnessing. Philip was an evangelist and possibly also Apollos (Acts 21:8).

**Q:** Would an apostle embrace all of the other terms, going in descending order?

**A:** Yes, generally speaking.

**Comment:** Bro. Russell was a “prophet,” and hence also an evangelist, a pastor, and a teacher.

**Reply:** The principle is the same with the various natures. Consider the divine nature. Not only is this the highest nature, but it comprehends everything below it. One cannot go higher than the level in which he resides.

The word etymology for “pastors” comes from pasturing a flock, that is, from the thought of a shepherd over a flock. Pastors, who are better able to give advice than “teachers,” give comfort, advice, admonition, etc. Teachers, on the other hand, may have ability in a relatively restricted area, even though they are very talented.

In summation, all of the “gifts” listed in verse 11 have been given with the primary purpose of establishing a maturity of development in the saints (“the fulness of Christ”—verse 13) so that they may inherit the prize of the high calling. The different levels help to achieve the objectives listed in verse 12: perfecting the saints, doing the work of the ministry, and edifying the body of Christ.

**Eph. 4:13** Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:

Jesus gives counsel to his Church so that all might come to “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 is the objective of the calling of the Church.

With regard to “unity of the faith,” Jewish and Gentile Christians were to be *one* in the body of Christ. Both were *fully acceptable* to God in Christ. Hence unity of purpose, compassion, and acceptance of one another were (and are) essential.

Paul also presented a *future* aspect with regard to *maturing* into the full stature of Christ. The hope (“till we *all* come”) was that all in the ecclesia might make their calling and election sure, that all might attain the Little Flock. Although highly unlikely, such attainment was theoretically possible.

We can attain the “unity of the Spirit” (verse 3) sooner than the “unity of the faith,” for the latter is reached only when we mature into the stature of the perfect man in Christ Jesus. The “unity of the [Holy] Spirit” is a *means* to an end. If we do not have the right attitude, the right spirit, and the right understanding of principles, we will not attain the stature desired. Knowledge is necessary, but what kind of knowledge? We need knowledge of the Lord, of the duties and responsibilities of a Christian, of the high calling, etc.

Based on verse 12, “for the edifying of the *body* of Christ,” Paul was thinking of a *corporate*

body of Christ in verse 13, not of individuals. His desire was that the body of Christ be perfected. When we think of the man of God versus the “man of sin,” the latter is a corporate body of believers in a false system, or religion (2 Thess. 2:3). The man of God is The Christ, a corporate body of believers in a true religion. We pray for the Church to be completed as an evidence of our *desire* for the accomplishment, even though we *know* it will be.

“Unto the *measure* of the stature of the fulness of Christ.” The “fulness of Christ,” would be the corporate body of Christ. The same thought is expressed by the measuring rod used to measure the “temple of God” (Rev. 11:1). That rod is the standard which each individual of the body of Christ, and then the corporate body, must match.

**Eph. 4:14** That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;

Verse 14 points out a problem in the church at Ephesus. Paul had warned the elders in his last farewell (Acts 20:17-38) that some would enter from *without* and some would arise from *within* with false doctrines. Paul instructed the elders to be shepherds of (not lords over) the flock because the class would be assailed from within and without.

“That we henceforth be no more *children*.” Not only should we “desire the sincere *milk* of the word” that we may grow thereby, but as we mature, we should be able to assimilate the strong *meat* of the Word so that we will not be “tossed to and fro” and blown about by “every wind of doctrine” (1 Pet. 2:2). “Sound doctrine” pertains to *principles* of living the truth (that is, moral conduct) plus theology (1 Tim. 1:10; 2 Tim. 4:3). “Doctrine” includes both thoughts.

Those involved in the deception in Ephesus were knowledgeable. Paul said they “lie in wait to deceive”; that is, they knew what they were doing. They intended to mislead, misguide, and deceive to their own advantage one way or another. Paul had warned about “grievous wolves” entering in and not sparing the flock—that they would *intentionally* mislead the flock to their advantage (Acts 20:29). “Wolves” eat, devour, and appropriate the flock.

“Sleight of men” is hypocrisy. A magician uses “sleight of hand.” Some nominal ministers do not believe in certain Bible teachings, such as the Virgin Birth, yet they continue in the role of minister. They will privately admit they do not believe the Bible is the Word of God, yet they pass themselves off as reverends, as representatives of the Word. This is a form of hypocrisy, or sleight of hand, in that they misrepresent what they stand for and really believe. In the *Diaglott*, “sleight” is translated “trickery.” The terms “sleight of men” and “cunning craftiness” suggest a degree of *willfulness* in the misrepresentation, which will incur a severer penalty.

**Eph. 4:15** But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:

To speak the truth “in love” means to speak the truth in honesty and sincerity, that is, without hypocrisy. “Speaking the truth in love” is contrasted with the deceit of verse 14. We are to speak the truth sincerely in connection with our *own* profession, as well as have a sincere regard for and interest in the spiritual prosperity of others.

False representatives of the gospel are usually *self*-centered and not really interested in the welfare of the flock—hence the reason for Paul’s advice to the elders of Ephesus in Acts 20. Elders should be concerned as shepherds for the interests of the flock they represent. Others may profess interest, shake hands, and embrace, but they are superficial.

“That we ... may *grow up* into him [Christ] in all things” (verses 14 and 15). Verses 3-6 are a

beautiful summation of the Christian standard as a test of other doctrines.

**Comment:** Paul repeatedly put an emphasis on *growth* (not stagnation) for the Christian. We are “built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets,” and we are a “building fitly framed together,” *growing* into a holy temple (Eph. 2:20,21). Here again is the thought of being *built up*. The Christian walk is to be a perfecting *process*, a maturing *development*, a measuring up to a standard or stature. “Grow up into ... Christ.”

**Eph. 4:16** From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.

Paul used the illustration of a human figure with the head (Christ) ruling, controlling, and guiding the other members of the body (verse 15). Then there is the *communal* aspect of the body. “The whole body ... maketh increase ... unto the edifying of itself in love.” The believer should have a communal interest in others as well as self. The desire is that *all* will be edified and grow up to this standard of love.

“Every joint supplieth.” If we lost a finger, we would be conscious of that loss. However, if we did not have the right spirit, the loss of a finger might not mean a thing, spiritually speaking. Thus there should be a *mutual* desire for the development and growth of both oneself and others.

**Eph. 4:17** This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind,

“Henceforth walk not as other *Gentiles* walk.” The predominant membership of the church at Ephesus now seemed to be more Gentiles, numerically speaking. On Paul’s first visit, the membership was predominantly Jewish.

**Eph. 4:18** Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart:

The minds of Gentile non-Christians were darkened. They were alienated from the knowledge of God “because of the blindness [hardness] of their heart.” A right heart attitude is necessary for one to be receptive to truth. It is interesting that the *heart* can be blind. We usually associate blindness with the mind.

**Eph. 4:19** Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.

“Who [unconverted Gentiles] being past feeling [of *conscience*].” Their conscience was hardened, or seared, so that they were not sensitive to the enormity of their sinful deeds. They worked their uncleanness “with *greediness*,” that is, with purely *self-interest* and *self-centered* greediness. This was one of the wolfish characteristics of which Paul warned the Ephesians.

**Eph. 4:20** But ye have not so learned Christ;

**Eph. 4:21** If so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus:

**Eph. 4:22** That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts;

**Eph. 4:23 And be renewed in the spirit of your mind;**

**Eph. 4:24 And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.**

Evidently, some in the church at Ephesus were reverting to, or lapsing back into, former habits and conduct unbecoming to the Christian faith. No doubt much had happened and lay behind Paul's statements of which we are not fully informed.

Paul was saying, "You have heard and been taught the proper understanding." In other words, he had laid a lot of groundwork in Ephesus in trying to help the brethren to understand all about Christ, the calling, etc. He had even gone door to door to give private instruction to those in special need of encouragement and assistance. And of course he had preached boldly and openly in public.

The word "conversation" in verse 22 means "conduct." Many went right back to the quagmire of sin they had left only a short time before.

"Put on the new man [the new creature], which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." Paul gave *God* the credit. First, *God* calls and chooses the individual; then Christ subsequently instructs and provides the example.

**Eph. 4:25 Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another.**

"Lying" is a form of craftiness and deception. At work, for example, one might compliment the boss to his face and then speak derogatorily of him to others as soon as he leaves the room. Such conduct would be wrong and a form of deception and lying. We should speak the same both in front and behind the back of an individual.

Misrepresentation is another form of lying. We are to "speak every man truth with his neighbour"; that is, be honest in what we say and do, both publicly and privately. Another form of misrepresentation would be to have two personalities; that is, we should not put on a front when we are with brethren and then act differently when we are with the world.

**Eph. 4:26 Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath:**

There are two kinds of anger. *Improper* anger is always wrong, whereas *righteous* indignation is proper. Verse 26 is discussing righteous indignation. The *Diaglott* reads, "When angry, do not sin." But even righteous indignation should be done *constructively*, that is, where we are trying to help the individual avoid a pitfall that could cause long-term damage to him as a new creature. Righteous indignation should be based on a *real interest* in the other person's welfare. In other words, anger should be sincere brotherly love and not self-righteous or self-serving. Self-justification is not a proper motive for anger.

In any event, the responsibility lies with the one who is angry, for the sun should not go down on his wrath. In other words, the one who manifests righteous indignation should not get out of control emotionally. The anger should be constructive.

The very words "be ye angry" imply righteous indignation, but when this happens, we should be on guard not to sin. Proper anger needs to be controlled lest it do permanent damage to the one who is supposed to be helped. We must search our heart for the *reason behind* our words and actions, making sure that ill will and malice are not the real reason. If we have a grievance toward someone along *another* line and an opportunity is afforded where we can really lace



into him, we are probably manifesting ill will or malice.

**Q:** If a principle has been violated—if a real wrong has been done—and others will not recognize the wrong, does that mean we should automatically drop our feeling of righteous indignation and just say, “Well, I know I did the right thing”?

**A:** No. The advice given here is general. Paul was talking about the *general* deportment and conduct of a Christian. There are exceptions, as discussed elsewhere, where forgiveness cannot be extended without repentance.

**Comment:** That is where the concept of “love” has gotten all out of whack. The thought is that everything must be smoothed over and ironed out *regardless* of principle. In 1 Corinthians 5, the class even *gloried* in their spirit of forgiveness. Paul rebuked the brethren for their attitude, and a disfellowshipping followed.

**Comment:** Hebrews 1:9 says to *love* righteousness and *hate* iniquity as Jesus did.

**Reply:** That attitude is essential for making our calling and election sure. We are to encourage righteousness in self and others. David had a “perfect hatred” (Psa. 139:22). In other words, we are to hate that which God hates and love what He loves. Certain things are obnoxious to Him.

**Q:** If the anger is righteous indignation, then why can’t the sun go down on our wrath?

**A:** Anger may be justifiable, but the *emotion* that goes with it is wrong. Strong language may be used, and out-of-control actions may occur that surprise us. That aspect is wrong, for our anger should be based on facts and *principle* only, and not on emotions attached to that principle. The bitterness, wrath, etc., portion is wrong.

**Comment:** However, that does not mean we should go to the individual who has seriously transgressed and say we are sorry for the outburst, for the anger was righteous indignation even though emotional. We should go to the *Lord* about the emotions. Wrong anger is another matter, however. In that case, we need to go to the individual.

We should be stirred up when principle is violated, but we should also have a forgiving attitude—and manifest it readily—if proper steps are taken. Jesus can forgive unto the uttermost if the forgiveness is done scripturally. Others may view our attitude as cold and unloving, but to be faithful, we must adhere to principle.

**Eph. 4:27** Neither give place to the devil.

The New American Standard Bible reads, “Do not give the devil an opportunity.” Any slip or lack of growth gives him an opportunity to enter. “Sin lieth at the door” (Gen. 4:7). Satan watches for the area in which a person is most liable to be controlled.

**Eph. 4:28** Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.

Paul was saying, “Steal no more, and work with your hands.” It is hard to believe that such counsel was necessary, but since Ephesus was a sinful environment, the brethren there needed advice to be wary of their walk.

**Q:** Would a form of stealing be to not work and yet expect to be supported by others? This would not be outright stealing but a pretense of serving the Lord and then making others feel obligated to pay for food and lodging.

**A:** Yes. We should not make others feel obligated to support us either in the Lord's work or otherwise. Sponging is wrong. Sometimes people work on the consciences of others, trying to make them feel it is their duty to give financial support, hospitality, etc.

**Q:** Is there any connection between this chapter and Paul's counsel to the elders of Ephesus with regard to watching out for wolves coming into the ecclesia and also arising from within? Were the elders lax in not giving admonitions to the Ephesian brethren about their daily walk?

**A:** Evidently, yes. The advice in this letter pertains to *principles*, which can also be called "doctrine," or teachings (see verse 14). Some of the Ephesians were not walking properly and needed admonitions along the line of *principles*; namely, "Be honest, upright, kind, tenderhearted, and forgiving; do not be deceitful or angry." Paul's advice pertaining to character development comprises much of the epistle.

**Comment:** Usually the advice in Paul's epistles applies very much to today. Hence present-day elders, especially the prominent ones, should be careful not only in their own lives but also in giving proper admonitions to the brethren. The standards should not be loosened in any way.

**Eph. 4:29** Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.

"Corrupt communication" would be trivia and nonedifying conversation as a *habit*, as well as profanity, of course. Trivia is a waste of time and, therefore, should not be dwelled on. Some things may not seem corrupt, but if *practiced*, they are nonedifying and a waste of time.

In this epistle, Paul talked to the Ephesians as if each were an elder and thus an example to others. He was addressing the class as individuals. "[Speak] that which is good to edify profitably [see KJV margin], that it may minister grace unto the hearers."

**Eph. 4:30** And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.

The "day of redemption" is the day of resurrection or awakening or, from a practical standpoint, when one finishes his course. At the point a person is faithful unto death, his destiny is fixed (Rev. 2:10).

The "sealing" is *progressive* as God's character is impressed. At Spirit begetting, we are "sealed" with the Holy Spirit of promise, which is an earnest, or pledge, of what will be ours if we are faithful to the end of our course. What starts at Spirit begetting should be a *continuous* process—that is, unless we "grieve" the Holy Spirit by lapsing back into sin, worldliness, etc. In that case, the process is slowed down, halted, or lost depending on the degree of disobedience and willfulness.

"Sealing" is used in a variety of ways in Scripture. For example, the "sealing" in verse 30 is not the same as that of Revelation 7:3,4 where only 144,000 are sealed. In Ephesians 1:13 and 4:30, the seal applies to *all* consecrated believers whether or not they attain the Little Flock. One cannot back out of this contract. Earlier Paul was saying that some in Ephesus were lapsing back into their former condition. It is dangerous to fall back into the world. If we give up our consecration, the result is Second Death. We are sealed to this cause and purpose until we have finished our course. All of the other points are true—the seal is an impression, it is character development, and it is progressive. But in addition, once the commitment is made, we cannot back out of the sealing.

How could we “grieve” the Holy Spirit? Sinning against conscience is the major ingredient. Our conscience needs to be instructed, but if something seems wrong to us, then we should refrain, even though, in reality, it may not be wrong. If we violate conscience, the act is not of faith but of sin.

There are many ways we can grieve the Holy Spirit, such as worldliness, not redeeming the time, not assembling together, and willfully putting ourselves in a situation of temptation or an unholy environment. But with all of these violations, conscience is involved. For example, one *knows* he is missing meetings, but he ignores conscience.

All of the consecrated grieve the Holy Spirit to a greater or lesser extent. Otherwise, we would have the Holy Spirit *in full* as Jesus did. However, the Great Company grieves the Spirit more than the Little Flock. When we grieve the Holy Spirit, we get seedling thoughts that prick our conscience. These should not be ignored.

**Eph. 4:31 Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice:**

Verse 31 describes the *wrong* kind of anger. Anger is not necessarily malice, which, being ill feeling, is nastier. Anger can be proper or improper, but malice is always wrong and unjustifiable. Five kinds of malice are listed: bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking.

**Eph. 4:32 And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you.**

Verse 32 describes the *general disposition* to be possessed by the Christian. We are to forgive where principle is not involved. Otherwise, the other party must recognize the wrongdoing in order to be forgiven. To forgive where one does not repent only encourages the person in a wrong course. Therefore, we should have the disposition of tenderheartedness and forgiveness, but the exercise of these must be according to the Lord’s Word.

“Even as God ... hath forgiven you” is the qualifier. We repent and ask God for forgiveness. Others should also ask when they have seriously transgressed.

“Forgiving one another.” There are different levels of forgiveness depending on who the “one another” is. For example, allowances are made for the unconsecrated and even for the newly consecrated, who are babes in development. Hence there are gradations of forgiveness.

Verse 32 gives a *general* rule. Because God has forgiven us, we want to have the disposition to forgive others, but standards and principles cannot be compromised just because we want to be merciful and forgiving. Conditions are attached to forgiveness.

Paul gave examples here of manifestations of the Holy Spirit: kindness, tenderheartedness, and a forgiving spirit. Olive oil, which pictures the Holy Spirit, is an unguent, a lubrication factor or smoothing agent, an illuminator, etc. The *general* disposition of the Holy Spirit is one of healing, instruction, medicine, food value, and light. Bitterness, wrath, clamor (arguments in the ecclesia), malice, and evil speaking grieve the Holy Spirit.

**Eph. 5:1 Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children;**

**Eph. 5:2 And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour.**

“Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved

us.” Why did Paul use this analogy? Generally speaking, the Epistle to the Ephesians is slanted more to God as the *Author* of all blessings, directing the priority of praise to Him. Way before the beginning of creation, God had a plan in mind (Eph. 1:4; 3:9-11).

**Comment:** Usually we think of following in *Jesus’* footsteps, but Paul went a step higher here: “Be ... followers of *God*.”

**Reply:** From the Christian standpoint, Jesus is pictured as either an elder brother among brethren or as the Bridegroom with an espoused virgin (a husband-wife relationship). But verse 1 goes higher, to the *Father*, whom Jesus followed.

**Comment:** The *Diaglott* has, “Become therefore *imitators* of God.”

**Reply:** Yes, and Jesus said, “Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect” (Matt. 5:48).

We are to “walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour.”

**Q:** Verses 1 and 2 emphasize Christ’s love for the Father being so great that he sacrificed himself for us. Is this thought to be extended as follows? If we are following God as dear children and walking in love as Christ did, is the implication that, with the *oneness* of the body, we should sacrifice *ourselves* for *one another*?

**A:** That is true as long as principle is not violated. Personal preference can often be sacrificed.

Jesus gave himself for us, but that offering and sacrifice were *to God* (“for a sweetsmelling savour”). Our dedication to God should lead us to a life of sacrifice and a life of pleasing Him. Our daily walk should be in harmony with our love for God. In proportion as we regard God, we will try to please Him.

Christ is our example. *He loved the Father so much that even though he did not understand all matters, he came down here and died on behalf of the Church.* True, he had an interest in the future Church and humanity, but basically speaking, his *fealty to God* was the sum and substance of his devotion. His offering and sacrifice showed and proved his dedication to *God* (rather than to humanity and the Church). In other words, *God is the Author of the plan.* He is the One who so loved the world that He gave His only Son. True, Jesus also had a love for the world and his future Church in order to actually come down here and obey the Law and submit to being nailed to the Cross, but the whole plan was initiated by *God*. It was *His* thinking that Jesus imbibed, or caught the spirit of, because of his respect for his Father. If we love a person and highly regard him, we begin to think and act like that person.

Jesus did love us and give himself for us, but the basic motivation was a response to the suggestion of God to come down here and die. Jesus did not presume to be the High Priest, but he was called, as Aaron was, to this purpose (Heb. 5:4). The Epistle to the Ephesians goes one step higher and centers everything in God in a special sense.

**Eph. 5:3** But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints;

The Christian is to put away fornication, all uncleanness, and covetousness. If we love and reverence God—if we are fully committed to Him—we will avoid anything that pertains to evil. The “fornication” of verse 3 is literal immorality along physical lines. Sexual activity outside marriage is heterosexual. “Uncleanness” is a broader term that includes homosexuality.

One translation says, “A person should not have a dirty mind.” Our thinking, musing, and meditation should be pure. “Covetousness” is envy, desiring what someone else has, greed.

The Apostle John wrote, “By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and *keep his commandments*” (1 John 5:2). If we really love God and Christ, we *prove it* by our conduct and thinking—by avoiding circumstances that might entice us. We prove our love for God by obeying Him.

Because we are of Adam’s race and thus imperfect, wrong thoughts will enter our mind, but we must guard against entertaining them. It is one thing for the birds to fly over our heads, but it is another matter for them to make a nest in our hair.

Fornication, uncleanness, and covetousness are *not once* to be named among us, as happened in the church at Corinth (1 Corinthians 5). How can we, as a group, stop or prohibit someone from committing fornication? If it occurs, we are to deal with it and follow the scriptural procedures for disfellowshipping. One does not maintain his Christian standing if he habitually engages in fornication.

What is the significance of the word “named”? It has the thought of “become known.” “Let it [such a sin] not be once named among you, as becometh saints.” Suppose such an incident occurs among the consecrated. If the class shows their abhorrence and disgust, the public could not blame them; that is, the public could not “name” the sin as being in the class. The actions of the ecclesia would show that the sin was completely foreign to them as a responsible group. If the class did not take a strong stand, then the sin would be “named” among them because they would be held accountable for the continuance and toleration of such a condition. When the class properly and scripturally follows the disfellowshipping procedure, the vulgar sin will not be misunderstood as being tolerated or “named” among them. If *false* love covers up such a condition and does not scripturally deal with it, then the sin is “named” among the class. In other words, the sins are not known among us if we take the proper stand.

**Eph. 5:4 Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks.**

In addition, we are to avoid “filthiness,” that is, bad language (cursing), derogatory innuendos, lewd comments, etc., in conversation. “Foolish talking” should be avoided as a *habit*. A joke can have its place, but we must be careful to use it prudently. Jokes should not be introduced into discussions of a serious, somber, sensitive nature. “Jesting” is ridicule. Jesting could take the form of pantomime and mimicking others in a degrading and derogatory manner.

Many jokes that the world tells make fun of one group or another—either a religion, an ethnic group, a race, or a mental or physical condition. Such mockeries are wrong and should be avoided.

“Which are not convenient.” Paul was saying to avoid things that are not becoming, consistent, or fitting.

“But rather giving of thanks.” We are to give thanks for the Lord’s bounties, mercies, truth, and love and for avenues of escape from the particular problems enumerated in verses 3 and 4. God has given us not only truth to feed on but also other pleasures and thoughts. We can be thankful the narrow way is not all negative. We are given positive values to offset what we might otherwise be involved in. We give thanks for being able to feed on edifying matters and the Scriptures.

**Eph. 5:5 For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who**

**is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.**

There is a correspondency between the categories listed in verses 3 and 5. The acts of a “whoremonger” are “fornication.” An “unclean person” commits “uncleanness.” A “covetous man, who is an idolater,” is guilty of “covetousness.” How is covetousness a form of idolatry? An idolater so intensely desires something that he makes an idol of it, and attention is distracted from the Lord and His Word. Those who are of these categories have no inheritance in the Kingdom.

Why did Paul use the term “kingdom of Christ and of God”? Why did he mention both the Father and the Son? Again we point out that the Epistle to the Ephesians especially honors God. The Kingdom is really God’s, but He turns it over to Christ for the thousand years. By mentioning the Father here, Paul showed that *God* is the One highest in authority. The Father is above *all*, even Christ.

The same criteria will apply to the world in the Kingdom. “But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death” (Rev. 21:8). In either age—for Christians now and for the world later—these sins, if unrepented of, mean Second Death. To feed on and become incorrigibly associated with any of these sins would merit Second Death. The standards for life are the same in any age.

**Eph. 5:6 Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience.**

In other words, “Let no man deceive you” about the necessity for avoiding all of the sins categorized in verses 3-5.

**Q:** Since Paul warned the elders of Ephesus when he met them on the isle of Miletus, was there a lowering of standards in the Ephesian church in Paul’s absence? Apparently, some were returning to the deeds of the flesh, and they were misleading the class into thinking they could compromise with sin.

**A:** Yes, that came out more noticeably in the Apostle John’s day. After Paul and Peter died, John became the outstanding apostle. He wrote somewhat along the line of what Paul was warning about here. Also, there were other writings in history, contemporaneous with John’s epistles and composed by other members of the early Church, that developed another type of theology, which was erroneous. The writings tried to distinguish between the new creature and the old creature. They said that the new creature was the real individual and that the old creature was the vessel in which the new creature resided. They further reasoned that the new creature was not held accountable for the deeds committed by the old creature. This reasoning was carried to such an extreme that the person could engage in all sorts of immoralities yet be considered excused or justified because the deeds were attributed to the old creature. This philosophy became a form of religion. Two or three splits occurred in the early Church at this time, all more or less following this type of thinking. The adherents contended that the Christian can live according to the flesh but walk according to the spirit. But Paul reasoned otherwise. The Christian’s daily walk and conduct affect *both* the new and the old creature, the inner as well as the outer man.

Sometimes an expression is used that, if pursued as a philosophy, could be dangerous; namely, “It is not what is on the outside that matters but what is on the inside.” This type of thinking can be very deceptive, for it is the seedbed for justifying immoral deeds in the new creature. It *does matter* what the outer man does, even though God judges us according to the inner man. The inner man should have influence over the outer man, with the result that there is more and

more improvement the longer we are in the school of Christ.

“For because of these things [fornication, uncleanness, covetousness, etc.] cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience.” Paul was warning not to let the spirit of the world enter the Church. We should not become partakers of evil with the world, who are characteristically “children of disobedience.” Because of their deeds, the great Time of Trouble will come on them. And if the spirit of the world enters the Church, we will be partakers of the wrath of God along with the “children of disobedience.”

This thought harmonizes with the first and second chapters of Romans, which pursue the theme that there is justification for the wrath of God to come upon men because all have the light of both conscience and nature to condemn them. The world went into all forms of uncleanness and should have known better.

**Eph. 5:7 Be not ye therefore partakers with them.**

“Be not ye therefore partakers with them [the children of disobedience].” If any of the consecrated loosen their walk, they lose their identity with the children of God and become children of the world again.

**Eph. 5:8 For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light:**

Notice the different verb tenses: “For ye *were* [in the past] sometimes darkness, but now [at the present time] *are* ye light in the Lord: [so] *walk* [now] as children of light.” In times past, we were “darkness,” but now we are “light in the Lord.” Therefore, we “walk as children of light.”

**Eph. 5:9 (For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth:)**

Verse 9 is a parenthetical thought. The Holy Spirit is light. The *Diaglott* states that the fruits of the light are goodness, righteousness, and truth. If we walk as children of the light, we will develop these fruits.

With goodness, righteousness, and truth being fruits of the Holy Spirit, the thought is “*all* goodness and [*all*] righteousness and [*all*] truth.” These do not contradict the fruits of the Spirit listed elsewhere because, for example, “*all* goodness” embraces *many* fruits of the Spirit.

**Eph. 5:10 Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord.**

When the parenthetical thought of verse 9 is excluded, the combined thought of verse 8 and verse 10 is, “Walk as children of light, proving [or searching out—*Diaglott*] what is acceptable unto the Lord.”

**Eph. 5:11 And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.**

The Christian is to have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness *no matter where they are found*. If the unfruitful works of darkness start to encroach upon the Christian in the world (for example, at work), he has to shun or avoid them. The same would be true if unfruitful works of darkness were found in the Church. Sometimes there should be verbal disapproval, but not in every instance. Each case has to be weighed separately.

**Eph. 5:12 For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret.**

It is a shame to talk in detail of the things that are done in secret by the children of disobedience (in the world). We were called out of the world, so we should not let the world get back in the ship. The ship is in the ocean, but the ocean should not come into the ship.

Some things are so obnoxious that we should not discuss them in detail. Rather, they should be discussed only in a detached manner. Psychiatrists wrongly encourage dwelling on such matters to the minutest detail.

**Eph. 5:13 But all things that are reprov'd are made manifest by the light: for whatsoever doth make manifest is light.**

John's Gospel sounds a little like this statement but uses the word "judgment." When the Holy Spirit came, it revealed the works of darkness.

**Eph. 5:14 Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.**

The pronoun "he" should be "it," referring to a "hymn." The New English Bible and the Jerusalem Bible say that a "hymn" is the origin of these words. In other words, an ode or hymn was well known among early Christians, and Paul was quoting words from that source: "Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." We, too, sometimes quote a hymn when it beautifully expresses a thought in a concise way. In principle, verse 14 could also be a quote from Isaiah 60:1, although that Scripture applies to Israel. The determining factor is whether "he" or "it" is correct. With "it," the quote would be from another saying, ode, or hymn. If "he" is correct, the reference would be to God and thus a quote from His Word.

**Q:** Would verse 14 be the same principle as Romans 12:1? That text, "Present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service," applies to both the unconsecrated (urging them to consecrate) and the consecrated (urging them to live a life of daily sacrifice throughout their consecrated life). Here Paul could have been saying to the unconsecrated, "Awake," and to the consecrated, "You have a responsibility to walk circumspectly, for consecration is a *continued* walk in righteousness."

**A:** Yes.

**Eph. 5:15 See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise,**

**Eph. 5:16 Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.**

**Eph. 5:17 Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is.**

We are to redeem the time for things that are edifying, worthwhile, and fitting for the Christian. Verses 16 and 17 should be combined, as in the following paraphrase: "Redeem the time, because the days are evil. Be wise and understand what the will of the Lord is." In other words, we should make good use of the little time that is left, especially now at the end of the age. We are to be wise in the use of time and not waste it on unprofitable matters and on former practices.

**Eph. 5:18 And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;**

The "wine" is literal as well as a reference to the spirit of the world. It is reasonable to say that the wine is literal because other literal practices were mentioned in verses 3-5. Verse 18 does not say, "Do not take wine—period." The thought is, "Do not take excessive wine." Moreover,



the Christian is to be filled with the Holy Spirit, not the spirit of the world.

**Eph. 5:19 Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord;**

Paul was saying to speak to one another and to ourselves (as individuals) in these things. With the Greek word *kai* (“and”) meaning “even,” psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs are reasonably synonymous. David and others wrote the “psalms,” which can be read or sung. “Hymns” are songs. All three terms are a way of singing and making melody in our heart to God.

**Q:** Here at the end of the age with so much dispensational truth due, aren't we more apt to speak to one another about doctrinal matters and prophecies? Is verse 19 a *general* rule for all Christians down the age, for in the Dark Ages, Christians had very little truth? “Hurt not the oil and the wine” was the command under the Third Seal (Rev. 6:6). Christians at that time had just the basics. Their fellowship would have been equally as valuable in the Lord's eyes because of the circumstances, but it was on a different level than much of our fellowship today.

**A:** Yes, that is true, especially as we get nearer the end of the age. While hymns and spiritual songs are certainly always a part of worship, and should be retained, we discuss dispensational subjects today more than in the past. It is like what Hebrews 10:25 says about fellowship, which is all the more important as we see the day approaching. “Fellowship,” the communication of thought between Christians, would include doctrine and intimate communication on subjects meaningful to us at this time.

Verse 19 is general advice applicable to the Church all down the age. The babe can at least follow this instruction. He may not know advanced doctrine and truth, but he can speak and edify others and self with psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs.

Several Protestant denominations spend a great deal of time singing and relatively little time in doctrinal investigation. The singing is inspirational, but it does not develop one doctrinally. Doctrine is needed for growth.

**Eph. 5:20 Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ;**

Again the Greek *kai*, translated “and,” should be “even.”

**Eph. 5:21 Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.**

The submission of verse 21 pertains to the ecclesia; that is, *mutual respect and consideration* should be given to one another in the ecclesia. Submission would mean giving in on certain matters where principle is not involved. We should have mutual consideration for others “in the fear [reverence] of God” lest we ourselves be rejected by Him.

**Eph. 5:22 Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord.**

**Eph. 5:23 For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body.**

The assumption in verses 22 and 23 is that both husband and wife are consecrated. However, even if one is not consecrated, this principle should be followed as far as reasonably possible. To “submit” means the wife should respect and obey the husband in matters not involving conscience. Verse 21 spoke about intercommunal fellowship in the ecclesia, but now Paul was

discussing communication and fellowship between husband and wife, which is a different relationship. If both are consecrated, there is an even deeper signification.

Husband and wife should recognize the mutual needs of one another, even in sexual matters. Paul was talking very delicately about the physical needs as he comprehensively treated *all* matters. Consideration should be given—the wife to the husband and vice versa (compare verse 24). Spiritual, temporal, and physical needs are all included here.

Jesus is the “saviour of the body” in the sense that he is the Caretaker of the needs of the Church and will effect a salvation.

**Eph. 5:24** **Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing.**

Verse 24 is a strong statement, yet just because two are consecrated does not mean that the wife should be so submissive to her husband that she does not develop her own personality and analysis of Scripture. There might develop quite strong differences in doctrine or even in daily walk. In other words, verse 24 does not advocate rubber-stamp thinking by the wife. The *ideal* is given here—where the wife can so respect her husband’s analysis of Scripture that she falls in line with his thinking. However, such is not often the case, or if it is, it should not be.

If there is a difference of opinion, the manner in which the wife expresses her opinion is important. She should not be pushy and act like the head of the house. She could start, “The way I have understood the Scripture to teach is...” And the power of suggestion can be used *both* ways: wife to husband, and husband to wife. Due consideration should be given by each to the needs of the other.

Since Paul gave advice elsewhere to marry “in the Lord,” the counsel here in Ephesians was general advice to the consecrated (1 Cor. 7:39). Today many consecrate *after* marriage and thus do not have a consecrated spouse. But back there, in the early Church, the opposition to the Christian was so strong that usually either (1) both were consecrated or (2) the unconsecrated spouse separated to avoid persecution.

Today we are living in very peculiar times with regard to the marriage relationship. In fact, many just live together. We should not interpret verses 22-24 from this narrow concept of our day. These verses are *general, overall* advice for the Gospel Age where both husband and wife are consecrated. If only one is consecrated, then, as already stated, this advice should be followed as far as reasonably possible.

“Let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing.” Paul was not saying that husbands have *carte blanche* in every single thing. This is a *general* statement. Certainly a violation of principle against God and/or conscience cannot be included.

**Eph. 5:25** **Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;**

**Eph. 5:26** **That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word,**

Just as Jesus wants those of his Church, or Bride, to make their calling and election sure, so the husband should have the same solicitous regard for the wife’s development as a new creature. And the wife, on the other hand, should recognize that the husband needs help and consideration too, both physically and spiritually, the latter being the higher of the two.

Verses 25 and 26 show Christ’s solicitous behavior toward his spiritual body—his desire to be

constructive, to edify, to build up. The verses express a *mutual* respect for one another in the *highest* sense of the word. Since our desire toward the fellow members of the body should be to see them make their calling and election sure, how much truer this should be with husband and wife, the closest relationship this side of the veil.

Since none of us are perfect, none of us can perfectly follow these rules in their entirety (verses 21-33) whether consecrated or not. However, we should not forget or lose sight of these values. One who is consecrated will be judged more strictly than one who is not consecrated.

To balance the counsel in Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians, he said, "Marriage is honourable in all" (Heb. 13:4). Although he said it was better not to marry, he also said it was better to marry than to burn. Nevertheless, there would be "trouble in the flesh" (1 Cor. 7:8,9,28). Paul was saying that we are imperfect, that there is no such thing as the perfect marriage in the present life. But the closer we can come to the ideal described in his letter to the Ephesians, the more trouble will be eliminated. The fifth chapter of Ephesians helps us to see where we are wrong and to admit that we have fallen short in some respect. Without a standard and principles, we would get more and more careless and disrespectful and thus disregard the rights and considerations of others.

The women in certain regions of Asia Minor, especially Ephesus, tended to overstep their bounds because of the emphasis on Diana worship. With "Diana of the Ephesians," the woman was idolized, creating an imbalance (Acts 19:28).

In the Syrian and Jewish ecclesias, the Orthodox Jewish background did not lead to this excess in women. Therefore, time, circumstance, and place had a bearing on the messages to the different ecclesias. Each epistle was addressed to a specific ecclesia, and the lessons we learn in studying them help us with our own needs and faults today.

**Eph. 5:27 That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.**

A "wrinkle" comes from inactivity, from sitting on our robe or sleeping in it. A "spot" is a fault or a sin not repented of. Spots get on our robe of Christ's righteousness, but the spots can be cleansed if repentance and the asking of forgiveness follow. If not, the spot becomes a stain, and the longer the stain remains without an attempt to remove it, the more difficult removal becomes.

We get spots and/or wrinkles continuously. That is why we need to ask *daily* for forgiveness of God through Jesus—or even more often. If a stain sets and remains for too long, it becomes more and more a part of the garment itself. Then fuller's soap is required—so strong it almost *burns* the stain off—and the garment has to be beaten and thrashed very hard in the stain area. But a *daily* cleansing removes the stain more easily—from both the wrinkle and the spot. The beating and the thrashing picture the hard experiences we receive if we resist gentler correction, discipline, and advice.

**Eph. 5:28 So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself.**

Verse 28, a practical illustration, is getting closer to a reference to the Garden of Eden.

**Eph. 5:29 For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church:**

**Eph. 5:30 For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.**

“For we are members of his body.” The rest of verse 30 is spurious.

**Eph. 5:31 For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh.**

Jesus referred to this principle in Matthew 19:5 when speaking of marriage and divorce. It is a quote from Genesis 2:24. The son leaves the parental home, marries, and starts his own family. Separating from the parents and beginning another family unit are encouraged as normal behavior approved of God, even though Paul said that to live a life entirely dedicated to the Lord in the single state is the highest form of service. But few can live a celibate life, and a vow of celibacy is extremely difficult to keep for several reasons. Other Scriptures should be considered. One should examine himself and his own needs in this regard. Marriage is preferable to burning.

Physical relations are part of marriage. Husband and wife are to be *one flesh*. There should not be a withholding or a reserve by one party in regard to the physical needs of the other. And children, as the product of marriage, should be encouraged under normal relationships. Paul was even more blunt in his First Epistle to the Corinthians where he advised coming together often lest one be tempted. “They two shall be one flesh” also refers to physical intimacy. But *outside* of marriage, such relationships are fornication.

**Eph. 5:32 This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church.**

To the world, this ideal marriage being a picture of Christ and the Church truly is a mystery. They would not understand it, for many in the world enter marriage on a selfish basis. All the while, Paul was drawing a spiritual lesson. As it is with physical matters, so it is with spiritual matters; namely, there should be the desire to build up the new creature. Christ is the Husband and the Head, and the Church is the wife and the body. Just as Christ sacrificed himself for the Church, so the husband should sacrifice himself for the wife.

**Eph. 5:33 Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband.**

Although there is a *mutual* responsibility, these verses seem to put a little more emphasis or burden on the husband for initiating this ideal relationship (verses 23, 25, and 33). The husband should love his wife so that, or in order that, she can reverence him. As the head of the family, the husband is more responsible than the wife. Even when one party is not consecrated, there should be mutual consideration and regard for the interests of one another. In fact, the consecrated spouse (whether husband or wife) has the greater responsibility, but if both are consecrated, the husband has the greater responsibility.

**Eph. 6:1 Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right.**

Verses 1-4 apply to the parent-child relationship where one or both parents are “in the Lord.” The Bible is written for the consecrated. Its instructions are for the development of the consecrated and those who are tending in that direction.

In this context, the account does not say that the children are in the Lord. The child is simply instructed to obey his or her *consecrated* parent(s), “for this is right.” Colossians 3:20 reads, “Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is wellpleasing unto the Lord.” “In all things” does not mean 100 percent, for something might be a violation of conscience. Also, we do not know the age of the child under parental care. Is the child 16 years old or perhaps 18? In other words, there can be exceptions to this admonition for obedience.

“Obey your parents” is the *general* rule. The thought is, “Obey your parents in the Lord” as long as they follow the Lord’s precepts. If, when one reaches the age of accountability, he feels that what his parents are asking is not what the Lord would want, then conscience would rule. Sometimes parents ask unreasonable things in the estimation or judgment of the child, but the child has to suffer them unless there is a real violation of conscience. A parent may give wrong advice, but again the child should obey. The child will be rewarded by the Lord for obedience, even though the demand is unreasonable. Such obedience is pleasing to Him, as long as it is not obedience to do wrong.

The family arrangement specified here pertains to being in the Lord. The general admonition is for the child to obey his parents to the extent they are following the *Lord* and *His* principles.

**Eph. 6:2 Honour thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise;**

**Eph. 6:3 That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth.**

“Honour thy father and mother” is one of the Ten Commandments (Exod. 20:12), but why did Paul call this one the “*first* commandment,” especially when the *First* Commandment is to love God with all the heart, mind, soul, and strength? The Ten Commandments can be summarized into two commandments: (1) Love God and (2) love neighbor. However, the closest of all “neighbors” would be our parents. Therefore, in loving our neighbor, we should start with our personal family first. Stated another way, to honor father and mother is the *primary* commandment of the “neighbor” aspect.

Verse 3 is the “promise.” The thought is helped by a change in punctuation: “Honor thy father and mother, which is the first commandment, with the promise that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth.” In other words, the promise is that “it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth.”

Although the Ten Commandments were given to the *nation of Israel*, most of them also apply to the Christian. Six of the commandments pertain to *actions* in dealing with a “neighbor”—love your neighbor as yourself, do not steal, do not lie, do not commit fornication, etc. All of these pertain to dealings with a neighbor, with somebody else. Our “neighbor” can be our own parents, relatives, an actual neighbor, a coworker, etc.

But notice what Paul was saying to the *Christian*. Obeying the commandment to honor father and mother carries the promise that it may be well with the child and the child may live long on the earth. How startling that this *principle* operates in the *Christian family*! If a child is obedient to his parents and pleases God in this matter—even though some demands may be very unreasonable—God will reward him. The child will be less apt to be cut off in death.

We should keep in mind that verses 1-3 were presented from the standpoint of the *unconsecrated* child. The epistle was written to consecrated parents, who instruct their children as to what the Lord’s will is. Considered a part of the family, the unconsecrated child is reckoned of the Lord through the consecrated parent(s) and is given special providences until the age of accountability. At that point, he is on his own. If a child lives long, he may eventually consecrate. The greatest blessing is for a person to live long enough to come to his senses and realize the value of consecration with the reward of the highest honor to be given, namely, being part of the Bride of Christ. Thus, again, verses 1-3 are a *general* principle. If children are obedient, there is a better chance they will live on to the point where God will favor them with certain providences that, hopefully, result in consecration. This explanation is one facet of the subject.

In Deuteronomy 5:16, the word “prolong” is the key thought, and it reinforces the principle: “Honour thy father and thy mother, as the LORD thy God hath commanded thee; that thy days may be *prolonged*, and that it may go well with thee, in the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.” If the child obeys the providences and consecrates, great blessings await him. If the providences are unheeded, then the blessings go to someone else. Acts 2:39 expresses the principle: “For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.” If the children are not responsive, the privilege goes to someone else. There is a prolongation of opportunity—but for *how long* is the question.

There is another facet to this subject. A child of consecrated parents who does not consecrate can still form a *good* character for getting life in the Kingdom on earth. Obedience to parents helps a child develop a good character, whereas rebelliousness *may* jeopardize that child’s future life. Resentment, disobedience, and disregard can so affect character development that one may ultimately lose *all* life, including life on earth, restitution.

The thought is sometimes presented that the special favor and providences granted to a child of consecrated parents, who is thus tentatively justified, can continue on into adulthood, even though the “child” does not consecrate, as long as he maintains a “righteous” character. Furthermore, it is said that this favor can continue right on into the Kingdom. However, this thought does not seem scriptural. Character formation is entirely separate from the maintenance, or continuance, of providence *after* the age of accountability. All keep on forming characters, but not all continue to receive special providences *unless* they consecrate.

The one who turns down the opportunity to be espoused to Christ in the present life will not be given special favor in the next age. There will be no special favors or rewards for turning down the offer now. Such individuals will be on a common basis with the majority of mankind. Of course, having already tried to develop a righteous character will be to one’s credit in getting life here on earth, but if rewards are given in the Kingdom besides those to the Little Flock, the Ancient Worthies, etc., they will be given to those who respond quickly and heartily when they hear for the *first* time. Thus character development is one thing, and rewards, favor, and providence are another.

**Q:** What about those who hear the truth and are not called? Since the general call has ended, God is handpicking those whom He calls. Some children of the consecrated may not be especially called but still want to live a righteous life. What about them?

**A:** They should still obey their parents up to the age of accountability, and even beyond that point, they should honor father and mother. However, there are *degrees* of honor based on the character and acts of the parents.

If another person is to be called, the Bible says that God will choose among the children of the consecrated first. Thus if a child hesitates or delays too long, God could pass him by for another family, and another, etc., and eventually go to the world if none respond. Therefore, even if a “child” is not called, when God does call, it will be one in the right heart condition, hungry and thirsting for righteousness.

**Q:** If the “child” of consecrated parents desires and tries to live a righteous life, wouldn’t it be almost automatic for him to know that consecration is the next step? And even if the number were filled, it is recommended that a person consecrate anyway, knowing that the Lord has rewards in reservation for those who love Him.

**A:** However, there has to be an *inner* persuasion for one to consecrate. Jesus said, “Sit down and count the cost” (Luke 14:28 paraphrase). We should realize before we make a commitment of consecration that we really mean business—that it is a wholehearted commitment.

Consecration should not be the result of a negative situation, for example, being embarrassed into it or peer influence. We should not make a decision because of what others think or do or pursue. Consecration should be voluntary. The Lord loves a cheerful giver, and one who enters consecration with the right attitude will be especially blessed—and have a running start, as it were.

**Comment:** Wanting to live a righteous life does not automatically lead to consecration. In other words, consecration is not necessarily the next logical step. Many in the world lead noble lives based on principles.

**Reply:** Those who come from unconsecrated families are another subject. There is no question that such who live uprightly are developing good characters. But the Scriptures under discussion relate to the children of consecrated parent(s). An adult who was raised in a consecrated family and does not go on to consecrate and is not contemplating consecration is not tentatively justified.

**Eph. 6:4** And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

“And ye fathers, ... bring them [your children] up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.” Verse 4 qualifies the obedience of the children. Parents have a responsibility to instruct a child “in the nurture and admonition of the Lord,” and the child should obey.

How are children provoked to wrath? Parents nag them and try to force them into a Christian life when they are content to just lead a moral life. Sometimes parents think they have all the answers and refuse to listen to an opposing viewpoint, or they do not say they are sorry when they are wrong.

The parents should not make *unreasonable* demands. The demand may or may not have anything to do with consecration. When parents try to push their children to make decisions, resentment is built up in the child. Some parents make their little children sit through all-day conventions—all discourses. The children are forced to sit for these long sessions and listen to *adult* instruction from the platform. This goes on for years. As a result, when the children become of age, they reject consecration and/or the truth. They are turned off because their parents were too rigid. As little children, they appear “ideal,” but then they bolt when they grow up. Parents should be reasonable.

In Volume 6, the Pastor said parents should inform children why they are being punished so that the experience will be *constructive*. Children appreciate the parents’ willingness to reason with them, even if they are punished. To just give orders right and left without explanation creates a robot-like effect until such time as rebellion may take place. Personalized instruction and consideration are important. Otherwise, the child’s character could actually be damaged. However, in spite of abuse, there are some remarkable cases where unusual children develop, but these cases are the exceptions.

**Comment:** Parents should not do the types of things that will cause their children to be angry. Sometimes the parents are aware of what will anger their children, but they want to force their own will in the matter rather than find another way to accomplish the same obedience. Parents should think in broader terms of how an action or words will affect the child’s character.

**Reply:** That is the ideal way.

Notice that the emphasis is on “nurture” ahead of “admonition.” In other words, flexibility and consideration are important. Nurturing implies *tenderness* (like a babe suckling at the mother’s

breast) and concern for the *welfare* of the child. Some natural parents are better along this line than consecrated parents.

Colossians 3:21 reads, “Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be *discouraged*.” Some children would become discouraged, others wrathful. Different temperaments react differently, but both are adverse reactions. According to Young’s *Analytical Concordance*, “provoke” means to irritate beyond measure.

**Eph. 6:5 Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ;**

Verses 5-8 are admonitions to servants in the Lord. Christian servants were not to seek their freedom. However, if freedom was granted, they could certainly take it. If followed, this advice would keep Christians from getting involved in civil rights movements or political causes that create upheavals in society.

There was a tendency for new Christians back there to think their liberty in Christ extended to obtaining freedom from their masters. But the issue was not to be forced. Unless freedom was granted voluntarily, the Christian was to remain in the situation in which he was when the Lord called him.

The Christian servant was not to serve reluctantly but was to render service to his master with a new attitude: “as unto *Christ*.” An application today would be to render work unto our employer as though we are serving the Lord. The same would be true regarding household duties (washing dishes, cleaning, etc.). All should be done as unto the Lord—not grudgingly.

The servant-master relationship was quite prevalent at the time Paul gave this advice. The point was not to seek freedom as a slave but to serve even better than before. Otherwise, unnecessary reproach would be brought on Christianity. If those who became converted started to rebel against the established order, the cause of Christianity would suffer. Civil rights and other issues would be introduced, and these would distract from the main preoccupation of a Christian, namely, to make his calling and election sure.

If a Christian slave followed this advice and obeyed much more enthusiastically, diligently, and quickly than before, others would look on Christianity not as a threat but as something to be desired, and they would not find fault with the Christian religion. In fact, the master might wonder what accounts for the change, and be persuaded thereby to become a Christian himself. The principle is the same for a consecrated wife. If she pleases her husband, who knows but that the husband may eventually consecrate too? Noticing what the power of Christianity can do in a person’s life can be a powerful witness.

**Eph. 6:6 Not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart;**

As Christians, we are not to put on a false front or say one thing to a person’s face and another behind his back. We should be cooperative and obedient where no principle is being violated. We should do the best we can, with a good conscience toward God, as if He or Christ were our Master. “Eyeservice” is similar to lip service.

**Eph. 6:7 With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men:**

Paul repeated the same thought from different angles to make sure we get the point. We are to work not grudgingly—not as if it is against our will—but “with good will ... as to the Lord, and not to men.” We are not to fawn upon a person, however. We might think we are working as



unto the Lord yet really, because of our attitude, lead the individual we are serving to think we adore him rather than the Lord. The serving should be done in an impersonalized manner; that is, work should come from the goodwill of our heart but not on too intimate a basis. We serve well because of the *Lord*, not because of the individual.

**Eph. 6:8 Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free.**

Eventually God will reward Christians who follow this advice. Perhaps the reward will come sooner, but if not, it will come sometime.

What do the words “bond or free” have to do with context? This message, which started in verse 5, was addressed to servants. Verse 9 was advice to masters. *Bondservants* were bound to a master, whereas *free* servants were more like employees in their relationship to employers. A “servant” in *either* circumstance should perform in order to please the Lord and then rest and trust in God’s providence to grant a reward, sooner or later, for obedience.

**Eph. 6:9 And, ye masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening: knowing that your Master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with him.**

In the final analysis, all Christians are servants to the Master. If we appreciate that relationship, then a Christian “master” in the secular life should have the proper attitude toward others.

Verse 9 reminds us of the Parable of the Unmerciful Servant (Matt. 18:23-35). Mercy was shown to a servant, but he, in turn, was unmerciful to another servant who came to him under similar circumstances. The first servant refused to forgive the debt and did not remember the mercy extended to him previously. The same “rules” that are applied to self should be applied impartially to others.

**Eph. 6:10 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.**

Verse 10 begins another situation—general advice to the Christian to put on the whole armor of God. We are reminded of Philippians 4:13, “I can do [endure] all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.” By ourselves we are nothing, but with *his* strength, we can achieve spiritually.

Subsequent verses amplify how to “be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.” The Lord gives us the weapons of both offense and defense. It is up to us to use them. Generally speaking, the “power of his might” would be the defensive armor. The strength of the Lord is needed to obey the advice just given for *various* circumstances (servant, master, parent, husband, wife, redeeming the time, walking as children of light, etc.).

**Eph. 6:11 Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.**

Notice the emphasis: “Put on the *whole* armour of God”; that is, pay attention to acquiring every item comprising that armor. There is a tendency to concentrate on the things we like, sometimes to the exclusion of another necessity. We could buckle on three or four pieces of armor, yet because one piece is neglected, God would not consider us properly armed. *All* of the armor is needed so that we can stand against the wiles of *Satan*. Otherwise, Satan will find the weak spot(s).

We must defend against Satan and the fallen angels (verse 12), Satan being the *most* wily. *Unseen* enemies are extremely dangerous, and we fight the *invisible* foe. The principle is

illustrated in *reverse* with David and Goliath. The giant was fully clothed with armor—a big shield and a tremendous spear—but little, unarmed David defeated him when Goliath laughed. The laugh left a chink, a little slit, in the armor. When Goliath threw back his head to laugh, his forehead was exposed. As Christians, we are to be fully armed, but Satan will find the chink if it exists. And even if we are fully armed, prayer and watchfulness are needed (verse 18). Incidentally, in addition to putting on our *own* armor, we have a responsibility to help others put on armor.

**Eph. 6:12** For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

Since we do wrestle against flesh and blood, the thought is that we wrestle not against flesh and blood *merely*, or *only*, but *chiefly* against the invisible powers. The Church has human opponents, but they are nothing in comparison to the spiritual powers.

The term “spiritual wickedness in high places” refers to leaders in the nominal Church system. Of course the term can also be considered in the usual way as “wicked spirits,” or spirit beings, in exalted positions. Not only do invisible spirit beings exercise power and influence, but also invisible things are conceived in secret by leaders in the false Church. When enemies in high places in the nominal system devise nefarious schemes in secret, we are unaware of those schemes and thus are unprepared for them. We have no defense because they are sprung on us suddenly. This warfare is almost like fighting invisible spirit beings.

Jesus said the scribes and Pharisees were of their father the Devil because they schemed in darkness behind closed doors for Jesus’ demise. In antitype, the Church will have similar experiences. Satan, the archenemy, has spiritual agencies and angels at his beck and call, as well as willing servants in the false nominal system.

The *Diaglott* interlinear reads, “With the spiritual things of the evil one in the heavenlies,” that is, “in the [nominal] heavenlies.” A conspiracy is coming in the near future in the church-state hour of power (Rev. 17:11,12). Hence we must be prepared against the unseen and the unpredictable. We *need* the armor, and it must be put on piece by piece until we are *fully* clothed. We cannot just put the armor on at the last minute. To be faithful, we must be *fully* clothed and in *readiness* BEFORE the occasion arises.

**Eph. 6:13** Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

The *whole* armor, which is to be put on *in advance*, is mentioned the *second* time. The purpose is so that we “may be able to withstand in the evil day,” that is, in the future hour of power. In principle, all Christians all down the age have needed the armor, and they were blessed proportionately as they put it on according to their ability and the understanding then due. As much as possible, all Christians, to be faithful, have to be armed with Scripture and a Christlike character and be prepared against any eventuality. However, from the *collective* standpoint, the “evil day” refers to the true Church’s hard experience in the near future.

The “evil day” is the “hour of temptation,” from which the sixth Church was kept (Rev. 3:10). At a specific point in time in the seventh Church, the evil day will occur.

“Having done all [having put on all the armor], ... stand.” Not only should all the armor be put on, but the Christian is to *stand in readiness* against the opponent. In the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus said, “*Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak*” (Matt. 26:41). The *watchfulness* aspect is being emphasized here.

Having put on the armor, stand in readiness for whatever will occur. One will not be ready without the *whole* armor. Since armor is heavy, just standing in the armor is a feat. After putting on the armor, the danger is a measure of spiritual fatigue, wanting to sleep, etc. When danger lurks in warfare, this behavior is not appropriate.

**Eph. 6:14 Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness;**

How are one's "loins girt about with truth"? With a girdle, belt, or band, a person who is about to labor lifts up and secures his garment so that it is not in the way. But notice that Paul was talking mostly about the body. First, the Christian is to get into the suit of armor, but in addition, there is weaponry for defense. Therefore, girding the loins is simply a tightening of the belt *after* the armor is *already on* so that the armor really fits and the Christian is ready for action. Now he will not get entangled when the warfare comes.

The girdle of *truth* is used to pull the armor closer to the body. Therefore, the belt is *separate*. First, the armor is put on. Then the armor is tightened with the girdle. Next comes the *separate* breastplate, which is put on by dropping it over the head. A shield, a helmet, and a sword will subsequently be handed to the Christian (verses 16 and 17). Stated another way, the body suit of armor is one thing, but that is not enough. Just having all these plates like eggshells overlapping one another comes first, but then the girdle of truth and the breastplate, etc., are needed. Although the breastplate fits over both the chest and the back, the *front* is the significant portion.

The loins are the *seat of strength* in an individual. The hips, or loins, can bear the most weight, and the *truth* is the source of our strength. The instruction is to put on the whole armor, and when that is done, to *stand* (verse 13). The instruction continues: "Stand therefore, having your loins [the lower part of the torso] girt about with truth" (verse 14). The weight and the strength of a person are needed in order to stand.

**Comment:** The "breastplate of righteousness" refers to our justification. Dispensationally speaking, we are warned by the Parable of the Wedding Garment to have on the robe of Christ's righteousness (Matt. 22:11-13).

**Reply:** Yes, there is a relationship to the breastplate.

The breastplate is over the chest (the heart), and in warfare, it is vital to keep this area wound-free in order to continue the fight. We fight the "fight of faith," but there are also the *deeds* of a Christian life—*living in harmony with the truth* (1 Tim. 6:12). Not only is a Christian to be justified by faith, but "faith *without* works is dead" (James 2:26). Thus both faith and inner works (a strengthening of the body, as it were) are needed. Justification by faith is essential, but works must accompany that faith. We must live in harmony with truth as well as have the knowledge of truth, realizing that God is dealing with us not according to the flesh but according to the spirit (our heart, will, and intentions).

How does the Adversary usually puncture the breastplate of righteousness? He finds and attacks the weak spot and also uses discouragement. If he is successful, the result is that the Christian gives up the narrow way. Instead of giving up, the Christian should fight the discouragement and try to rectify the weakness.

The word "breastplate" is the Greek *thorax*, which is also used in the expression "the breastplate of faith and love" (1 Thess. 5:8). In other words, the breastplate has two aspects: (1) justification by faith and (2) love. Faith is a great defensive part of the armor for warding off discouragement. Faith and love are both *inner* qualities, while the breastplate, which is *without*,

is seen by the enemy. What is the admonition? “Resist the devil, and he will flee from you” (James 4:7). If Satan sees that we are spiritually strong in certain areas, he probably will not attack us there but will look for more vulnerable areas.

**Eph. 6:15 And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;**

Why did Paul use the word “preparation”? It takes *time* to understand the “gospel of peace.” Spiritual “homework” must be done before the test; that is, we are to *prepare* for the test.

Just because we have all of the armor on does not mean we should go out looking for a fight. We should not have a chip on our shoulder. If we get a big head, the danger is that we will knock someone out with the truth.

The armor is chiefly *defensive* against the wiles of Satan and the other evil spiritual powers. Having the gospel of *peace*, we should not deliberately walk into trouble. Jesus gave instructions to the disciples when he sent them out to witness, saying in effect, “When you enter a house, pray that peace and blessing will abide thereon, but if there is an adverse reaction, shake the dust off your feet and go on to the next city” (Matt. 10:12-14 paraphrase). If there was little hope of finding converts, they were not to stay for a fight but were to go on to an area with more receptive ears. They were not to walk (use their feet) deliberately looking for a fight. In other words, the primary motive of the Christian should be the gospel of peace, but we are to be prepared for questions or confrontations that may arise. We should be prepared to give a ready answer to one who may oppose us.

**Q:** If the main purpose of putting on the whole armor is to stand in the evil day yet future, there will come a time when to peaceably sit back might mean we would lose our crown. How would verse 15 be applied in view of these expectations that a faithful witness will have to be given and the penny used?

**A:** If one is *assailed* by the enemy, he will have to stand and not run. Just as Jesus knew his time had come, so the feet members will realize it too. Previously, Jesus evaded opposition—he left—but at the end of his ministry, as the date approached in which he was supposed to die, he deliberately walked into the trouble. He knew the particular Passover on which he would be put to death.

“Make straight paths for your feet” means to avoid situations and/or temptations where we know we have a weakness that could be inflamed or encouraged (Heb. 12:13). The same principle applies here—*except* when it is the *due* time to act. The main purpose of the gospel is to find all the members of The Christ, whoever and wherever they are. But as the trouble at the end of the age draws closer and closer, we will see that the times are not propitious for the calling and development of such a one. In other words, there will come a time when the door is about to be closed. At that point, we would not be looking around for new converts—not under the tremendous pressures that will be brought to bear in the not-too-distant future. But we do not know the exact day and hour in advance when we must stand. In the meantime, we are to put on the armor, the girdle of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, and the sandals of the preparation of the gospel of peace. Of course, as with Jesus, the voice may be raised and animated, but we are to make sure there is no ill will or feeling toward the person being addressed, the one who may be our adversary. The thrust of the confrontation should be on the issue being discussed, not on or against a personality. Thus we are to be shod with the sandals of peace and pray that we may remain humble and have the spirit of Christ, realizing the necessity of standing up for the truth and even “fighting” for it at the end of the age.

**Eph. 6:16 Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.**

“Above all” signifies “in addition” to the rest of the armor. In other words, Paul was not saying that the “shield of faith” is the most important, for all of the armor is needed. Rather, the shield of faith was a type of shield above all. Many warriors had a strap with a circular shield about 24 inches in circumference with which they could parry blows as in a prize fight. The thought is that the shield of faith is large and covers almost the entire body. With this body shield, the Christian can quench all of the darts from whatever angle they come. When the enemy charged, those in the front lines of battle were most liable. Holding their shields, the forces were like a movable fort as they walked forward. Today riot police often use similar shields that act like a buffer and protect against unruly crowds that throw bottles, stones, and other objects. Accordingly, the Christian in the front line is to have a large shield of faith.

The “fiery darts,” which are to be quenched, are insidious little doubts, qualms, and fears. For example, in the Garden of Eden, Satan made suggestions to Eve through the serpent, implying that God was withholding desirable information by forbidding the eating of a particular kind of fruit. Suggestions and innuendos can be powerful, insidious, and dangerous. The only way to quench them is to be prepared by knowing, through a *development* of faith, that God is with us.

“The wicked [one]” is Satan, and his darts are darts of disbelief. The Christian is assailed with doubts both without and within. Satan and all of his supporters, unseen powers, are cooperating in warfare to defeat Jesus Christ. The spirit mediums back at the time of the French Revolution knew about the confrontation to occur at the end of the Gospel Age. Just as Jesus has his plans, so Satan and his cohorts have plans and have been preparing for a long time for this final battle. It is known that there is to be a mortal struggle at the end of the age. Satan knows that Jesus’ victory is predicted, but he does not believe it. Therefore, he is using all of his strategies to be successful in withstanding the success of the Kingdom work of Christ.

**Eph. 6:17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:**

“Take the helmet [*hope*] of salvation.” The helmet protects the intellect, but that intellect should be infused with the theme of the hope of salvation. We should hope and pray that we personally are right with God, that what we are doing is correct, and that our standing with the Father and the Son is maintained. If our *personal* hope of salvation wavers and does not hold like an anchor within the veil, then we are open for all kinds of assault and invasion—*mortal* invasion—from the enemy (Heb. 6:19). When hope becomes a part of the Christian character, the individual is truly looking forward to his salvation. Stated another way, he is ready for his change; he is ready for death.

We all start as little babies of faith, but we grow in grace, faith, knowledge, hope, love, and the various fruits of the Spirit. Of the three steps of faith, hope, and love, the second and third steps, hope and love, are very close together. In the beginning of our consecration, we had hope that we would get a reward for faithfulness unto death in the present life, but this hope becomes more mature as we develop. Here in the sixth chapter of Ephesians, other qualities were mentioned first: the belt of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, the feet shod with peace, and the shield of faith. Paul did not mention hope until verse 17. The hope we usually think of in Scripture is the earlier hope, but Paul was talking about the *later* hope of salvation, which is very helpful for protecting the mind.

**Q:** Is this hope our looking forward to meeting Jesus Christ and being introduced to God?

**A:** Yes, that is a real hope. We want to grow stronger and stronger in this desire so that we are ready in our heart with fervency. For one who truly has the hope of salvation, it is hard for Satan to insert a fiery dart through the steel helmet.

Faith, hope, and love are three cardinal ingredients in the Christian's armor, as set forth below:  
 Breastplate of the *love* of righteousness  
 Shield of *faith*  
 Helmet of the *hope* of salvation

Our hope of salvation is based not on credulity but on an *intellectual* understanding of God's Word and promises and knowing they are *sure*. This hope is based on *faith* rather than on credulity. Our hope is increased if, in searching our heart, we *know* we have *tried to comply* with the terms of these promises. We should properly apply the instruction and intellectual concepts in the Word. Salvation comes in proportion to obedience. "To obey is better than sacrifice [works]" (1 Sam. 15:22). Intellect is involved, but the intellect is that we are complying with the concepts received from meditating on God's Word.

The "sword of the Spirit" is the Word of God. All the other armor is more or less defensive, but the sword is offensive. The sword suggests an intellectual confrontation at the end of the age. We have more light now. Therefore, the individuals at the forefront—whoever they might be—will be *assailed* with doctrine in the future. Thus we need a good deal of faith and knowledge as a helmet in order to be sustained. We will not be able to convince the majority, but we *must have confidence* in our relationship with the Lord. Otherwise, we will be "goners" in that battle.

When we compare verses 14 and 17, we see that there is a difference between having our loins girded with truth and having the sword of the Spirit. Having our "loins girt about with truth" is putting on the armor of God with sincerity of purpose and truthfulness. This aspect applies to our *personal* application of truth, whereas the "sword of the [Holy] Spirit," the Word of God, pertains to our use of the truth toward *others*. The belt girding the truth around our robe and body means our *own* steadfastness and the application of truth in our *own* life. But in addition, we are to have the sword ready to use or thrust out suddenly and more aggressively when certain situations arise. We need to use the truth with others as well as to buckle on our own defensive armor. The sword is used for both parrying a blow and thrusting. We defensively try to stop the death stroke, and we also act offensively.

**Eph. 6:18 Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;**

Still more is needed: *prayer* and *watchfulness*. We are to pray not only for self but also for others in the body. Although we may be a loner when assailed in the future, we will know that others are also being assailed. Therefore, in our prayers, we will be thinking of the standard of truth—not just of self but of others in the same situation. We will be praying for them, and they will be praying for us. This way there will be a unity in the future Gideon-like stand for truth, even though all are physically separated.

It is interesting that the emphasis on others is inserted here. The rest of the chapter stresses what *we* ourselves must do—we must put on the whole armor—but now, in addition, we are told to pray for the other brethren *and with perseverance and supplication*. This is not a perfunctory instruction for prayer (not a "pray for me as I pray for you" request) but, as far as possible, a *personalized* prayer command.

As conditions get worse in the future and the numbers begin to dwindle, individuals will be more recognized as being under duress and pressure. Some we will not know, but those we do know can be very specifically prayed for with supplication. "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much" (James 5:16).

**Q:** Should the “watching” also be done for others, for “all saints”? If we see someone going into a pitfall, is there a responsibility?

**A:** Yes. In a battle, a post is set as a watchman. The one who sees danger alerts his comrades also. We can alert another brother from a personal standpoint, one on one, or a group can do the alerting. We are in this *together*, and *togetherness* is emphasized here. We are to both *pray for others* and *watch on behalf of others*. In other words, we are to watch and pray for *self*, and we are to watch and pray for *others*—and with perseverance and supplication.

**Q:** How do we watch for others?

**A:** We will answer that question from a *doctrinal* standpoint. How do we doctrinally watch for others? We are to supply information as we see the battle approaching. As in a literal battle, we should share “combative skills.” One teaches another what to do and what not to do. If we believe from the heart that the church-state hour of power is coming, and if we know others do not, we cannot be a hammer, but we can certainly let our viewpoint be known scripturally. We can warn and advise as we see the events approaching, but when the actual battle comes, it will be too late to warn others, for we will be too busy ourselves. In the *heart* of the battle, it is hard to pray, supplicate, and watch on behalf of others, but these actions can be done beforehand—even the night before when we see the issues arising. Maybe we personally will not be involved in that particular issue, but we will feel a *common bond* of being in this together when we see another party being brought to the fore for a certain trial and experience. We will pray for that brother or sister in a very pertinent fashion. And we will pray that when our turn comes, if it is to come, that we will be faithful too. This spirit and power will be realized by the *Elijah class* and them only, whoever they are. Jesus endured his trials alone, but this bond of feeling and togetherness will be quite a blessing to the saints, even though there will still be the individual stand. Jesus had a very depressing moment in the Garden of Gethsemane, but he was succored and strengthened.

At present, part of the watching is being aware of what our brethren are going through so that we can be more persevering in prayer and supplication for them. If we develop this attitude now, then in the trials at the end of the age, we will feel more of that camaraderie and bond. Periods of persecution draw the faithful closer together. The flesh is not rewarded, but the inner man is.

**Eph. 6:19** **And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel,**

Now Paul reflected on his own situation in writing this epistle. He was saying, “Pray for me that I may be faithful in my commission. I realize my responsibilities, and I intend to fulfill them, but I still need your prayers.”

**Eph. 6:20** **For which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.**

Paul was an “ambassador in bonds,” that is, under house arrest in Rome. He was chained and he had a guard. This was his first imprisonment in Rome. Both his first and his second imprisonments were under Nero.

Verses 19 and 20 show Paul’s *humility*. He gave good, strong counsel to others, and now he showed he was not above his own advice. He had spoken boldly for years, yet he asked, “Pray for me that I may speak boldly.” Acts 28:30,31 tells that Paul was under house arrest for two whole years, receiving all who came to him and preaching and teaching “with *all confidence*.” Thus he did speak boldly while “in his own hired house [while under house arrest].”

Probably Paul's father had died during his earlier arrest in Israel when he pleaded, as a Roman citizen, for trial before Caesar. Paul traveled by boat and arrived in Rome, where he was placed under house arrest, which was given only to privileged prisoners. He had the means and the money to afford house arrest. Obviously, he could witness better than if he were in a dungeon, and he wanted to continue the public witness as long as possible.

**Eph. 6:21** But that ye also may know my affairs, and how I do, Tychicus, a beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, shall make known to you all things:

**Eph. 6:22** Whom I have sent unto you for the same purpose, that ye might know our affairs, and that he might comfort your hearts.

To relate about his welfare, affairs, and circumstances and to bring this letter, Paul sent Tychicus to the Ephesians. Tychicus had to travel a great distance in order to comply with this request—all the way over to Asia Minor. (At the same time, he delivered a letter to the Colossians.) Paul wanted Tychicus to comfort the hearts of the Ephesians with the information he was delivering.

**Eph. 6:23** Peace be to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul wished peace to the brethren, and love with faith, from the Father and the Son.

**Eph. 6:24** Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen.

He also desired grace for all who loved Jesus “in sincerity,” that is, for all brethren who were really immersed. The thought was not that brethren had to be scholars but that they had the truth and were fully absorbed in it. The word “sincerity,” from the Greek *aphtharsia*, means “incorruption.”

**Q:** What are the overall questions or lessons from Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians that were hinted at earlier in the study?

**A:** Since Colossians is related to Ephesians and both letters were delivered by Tychicus, we will weave the lessons into the Colossians study. It would take too much time now to develop the main point.

## Review of Epistle to the Ephesians

### Chapter 1

Paul called attention to the fact that he was an apostle “by the will of *God*”; that is, his apostleship was not predicated on an election by man, such as took place just prior to Pentecost when the disciples elected Matthias to take the place of Judas. Also, some of the Ephesians felt that laying hands on Paul and Barnabas made them equal. With both being prominent and dedicated to the Lord, Paul's apostleship did not have the proper emphasis and priority with these brethren. Therefore, Paul deemed it necessary to state that his authority came from God Himself. Later in the epistle, he referred to the revelation he had on the way to Damascus.

After the usual salutation, Paul launched a very *sublime* theme. Instead of giving pertinent advice for the problems there in Ephesus, he told about the mystery of God—that an elect body, or Church, is being called. God predestinated the calling of The Christ in His mind before ever the world began.



Paul enlarged on the thought that the calling of this mystery class includes Gentiles as well as Jews. Many Jewish Christians adopted a superior attitude, but Paul showed that *all are one* new man in Christ in the predetermined calling.

Among other things, the Ephesians were great believers in magic, mysteries, and curious arts. However, Paul was so influential that the brethren brought their magic books and burned them, destroying a quantity worth 50,000 shekels, a considerable sum of money.

With the exalted theme, Paul was trying to replace the mysteries the Ephesians had previously been immersed in. People seem to like to get beyond mundane things and delve into the spirit world, the afterlife, etc. Paul wanted to replace these former thoughts by the *truth*, which is even stranger than fiction. What God intends to do is *way beyond* man's conception. Paul was replacing their previous ideas with something far grander yet somewhat along the same lines. Thus he spoke of the "mystery." In the Book of Revelation, the "seven stars," the seven messengers to the Church, are called "a mystery" (Rev. 1:20). In Ephesus, the first period of the Church, Jesus was seen standing in the midst and calling attention to the Church as a light bearer, and Ephesus was an ecclesia of light. Paul alluded to this fact later in his epistle.

Paul emphasized that Jesus is the Head of the Church, but in the city of Ephesus, Diana was the leading character and goddess. Paul replaced this imagery with a *man* instead of a woman. According to tradition, the Virgin Mary died at Ephesus, so the cult of Mariolatry conveniently followed the cult of Diana.

Paul told about the mystery of God—that it involves a man instead of a woman and that the "man" is really a composite body, of which Jesus is the Head and the body is the Church, with the body members being both Jews and Gentiles. Next Paul told about the riches of God's grace in the calling—that God wanted Paul to reveal to the Ephesians the richness of His grace.

## Chapter 2

Paul reminded the Ephesians they were previously children of wrath. As Gentiles, they were without God and without hope. Their darkness exceeded that of the Jew, who was brought up with the covenants and had some enlightenment. The Gentiles were "strangers from the covenants" and "aliens [outcasts] from ... Israel," but now they were in the body on *equal* terms with the Jew. Paul was thus trying to eliminate the conflict in this class between Jewish and Gentile Christians. All things being equal, because of their background, the Jewish Christians would have been more advanced, but they could not presume this or have a superior attitude. Paul said, "I came to you Gentiles from afar. God sent me to you aliens to enlighten you with the gospel of Jesus Christ."

Then Paul told about *another* building. In Ephesus was the Temple of Diana, one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World, but Paul spoke of a better and more glorious "temple" God is purposing to build. This temple will be made up of *individuals*, a *class* (not one woman), and it is *God's* workmanship. To the contrary, with the Temple of Diana, the people contributed money and labor, and other nations sent gifts—it was a product of *man's* imagination and adornment. But *God* is the Architect of His temple, and it will be *far more glorious*. Paul did not say all of these things in his epistle, but the brethren living in Ephesus knew the circumstances. Ephesus was revered and called the "light of the world." It was believed that the statue of Diana in the temple had fallen down from heaven. But in Jesus' case, he not only came down from heaven but *ascended* (Eph. 4:10). The stone statue was a *dead* idol, whereas the *living* Jesus came down here and dwelled among us as God's Son.

## Chapter 3

The "revelation" occurred when the risen Lord appeared to Paul on the way to Damascus, effecting his conversion. Paul said that God had instructed him to take the gospel to the

Gentiles. He was trying to make the Ephesian Gentiles feel that they had just as great a legacy on the truth as the Jewish Christians from the Holy Land itself.

There was disunity in this class and even clamoring and tumult, so Paul's reasoning with regard to the Gentiles being "fellowheirs" was needed. A lot was behind Paul's choice of the word "fellowheirs" because of the disunity and undercurrent in the class.

Paul told the brethren not to faint because of his afflictions. He was not troubled by his persecutions, and neither should they be troubled. His attitude was, "It is my privilege and glory to suffer. I am happy to suffer in order to transmit this information to others."

Paul desired that Christ might dwell in their hearts by faith, and that they would be rooted and grounded in love and not have continual contention, disruption, and disunity. He was saying, "There is a motive in the calling; namely, God wants you to be *established* in the truth."

#### Chapter 4

Paul went to a more *personal* exhortation with regard to problems in the class and besought the brethren to "walk worthy of the vocation" wherein they were called. This exhortation was necessary because their former life was immoral. There was cheating in business, for example. With Ephesus being a noted commercial and "religious" center, people came from all over the Roman Empire and wanted relics or souvenirs attesting that they had been to the Temple of Diana. The making of relics provided numerous job opportunities for the Ephesians, and many lived on profits from tourism because of the Temple of Diana. Greed and covetousness, as well as the practices of the temple worship, were sinful. Temple priestesses called "virgins" were actually a form of prostitution but *without* an evil connotation in the heathen worship.

One phrase in the epistle became the seed thought of Gnosticism, which, among other things, said the Christian does not have to worry too much about the natural life, for immorality is not that important. They maintained that the new creature is what counts. After Paul died, Gnostics took his writings on the distinction between the spirit within us and the fleshly vessel to justify their wrong thoughts. They excused the flesh by saying that the new creature was not responsible for it, for God views us according to the spirit.

In the ecclesia at Ephesus, an Alexandrian Jew was causing problems by introducing Eastern theosophy and amalgamating it with the Christian religion. He was a converted Jew but had a Grecian background from Egypt. Paul said, "Do not be deceived! You are to walk *worthy* of being a Christian—both in your own family and outside in the world." Paul told about the relationship of husband and wife, parents and children, master and slave. Since the Christian represents God in the world, he should walk circumspectly as an example of the truth. The Christian is not to be careless in his daily living.

Paul wanted the Ephesians to have unity in the Spirit. He gave a beautiful and simple definition of the dogma of Christ and of God that consisted of seven parts. Its very simplicity is deceiving in that the seven parts are far-reaching.

1. There is *one* body—that is God's objective.
2. There is *one* Spirit in our midst. We should all try to have the same mutual desire.
3. There is *one* hope of our calling.
4. There is *one* faith.
5. There is *one* baptism.
6. There is *one* God and Father of all.
7. There is *one* Lord (Jesus).

Not only are these seven parts simple criteria of the hope, ambition, and drive of the Church, but also God gave gifts to the Church. Moreover, *each* of the brethren could testify that he had

received an additional gift. When Christ went to heaven, he gave gifts to men. The “gifts” include apostles and prophets, and Paul was one of those apostles, that is, one of the “gifts.” The very advice he was giving was a gift (although, of course, Christians also had mechanical gifts in the early Church).

The purpose of all this was “till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God,” no longer being “children tossed to and fro ... with every wind of doctrine.” No more should there be lasciviousness, uncleanness, or greediness in the Church. These sins should *not once* be named among Christians. The old man was to be put away. The Ephesian brethren were to speak truthfully to one another, not let the sun go down on their wrath, and steal no more. It is understandable that there is excitement in connection with the study of truth, but Christians must be careful that no seed or root of bitterness carries over to the next day. These admonitions were given because such things *were happening* in the church at Ephesus. We see examples of this today—where a nation is corrupt and full of bribes from top to bottom. Corruption is a way of life, so if one does not conform, he stays at the bottom stratum of society. After a while, as bribery becomes an inbred culture, it is not seen as wrong. “Everybody does it” is the cliché.

Finally, Paul exhorted the Ephesians to be considerate, tenderhearted, and kind to each other. As far as possible, they were to try to be peaceful in their mutual gatherings.

### Chapter 5

Paul told the Ephesians to walk in love as God’s dear children. Again he warned against fornication, uncleanness, and covetousness. He said, “You are light in the Lord, so *walk* as children of *light*.” Ephesus was known as the “light of the world,” but that light was *Diana*. People came to her for happiness, instruction, and a good time, but the Christian was to have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness and, instead, was to reprove them. The Christian was not just to take a negative, quiet stance but was to actively *reprove* at times.

Paul admonished the Ephesians to *awake from sleep*, and in worldly associations, they were not to become drunk with wine. Christians are to be circumspect and shun former practices. Instead of wine, they are to be filled with the Spirit of God, that is, with instructions from the Scriptures. In both private and public life, the Christian is to be submissive, reasonable, and pliable—where principle is not involved.

### Chapter 6

The personal instruction continued. Paul closed out the epistle with the admonition to put on the full armor, the *whole* armor, of God. This theme is in both Colossians and Ephesians, showing that, just as with us, when letters are written by one individual to others, certain thoughts and phrases are repeated because they are contemporaneous with our thoughts and feelings of the moment. Thus there are similarities between Paul’s letter to the Colossians and his letter to the Ephesians—the language, the thinking, etc.

The considerable detail of putting on the armor reflected that Paul was a prisoner stationed near the Praetorian guard in Rome. Daily he could see the guard marching with their armor paraphernalia, and thus he drew the analogy of how, spiritually speaking, the Christian soldier should also be armored and protected from the enemy. We need all this armor to stand against *unseen* powers, as well as the wiles of Satan himself.

Among the armor, Paul inserted the admonition to have the “feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace.” Often when one prepares for battle, he assumes the language of the battle, but while the Christian is a soldier, he is to be careful that the combativeness is not unnecessarily used; that is, he should not look for a fight. He is not to be contentious and then try to justify his actions by saying he is standing for the truth. The weaponry of the Spirit, not

carnal weapons, is used in fighting the good fight of faith. While the armor application is beautiful for the Christian, it should be used, as far as possible, in peace.

That concludes the review of Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians with insight into the conditions, the peculiar circumstances, and the Christians who dwelled there.