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A COMPARISON OF EPHESIANS WITH COLOSSIANS

**A Thesis presented to the
Faculty of Concordia Theological Seminary**

**in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of**

Bachelor of Divinity

by

Martin Haendschke

**Concordia Seminary
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Approved by

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INTRODUCTION

In beginning a study of these two epistles of St. Paul one begins to understand what is meant by the "unfathomable wisdom of God." As one delves deeper into the text, one must certainly realize that our human wisdom is indeed puny and inadequate; in fact, not even worthy to be termed wisdom! However, this is not to be a dissertation on the wisdom of man, nor is it in the least way to indicate that man can fully understand these great truths of Scripture as we find them in these two beautifully written epistles, but it is to attempt in a small way a comparison between the doctrines and general construction of these two sections of Holy Writ. With a prayer to the Holy Spirit to grant wisdom and insight into the greater and fuller understanding of the Epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians let us begin our study by taking up the Isagogical part.

I. ISAGOGICAL MATERIAL

In order to understand more fully the situation and conditions under which these two letters of St. Paul were written, it would be well for us to begin our survey by considering the two cities which were the home of the two congregations receiving them.

1. Colossae.

We read in Davis' Bible Dictionary, page 144:

"Colossae is a city of southwestern Phrygia, in Asia Minor, lying on the river Lycos not far east of its confluence with the Meander. It was originally on the trade route from east to west and was a place of much importance. (Herod. vii, 30. Xen. Anabasis I, ii. 6). The road system was changed and the neighboring cities of Laodicea and Hierapolis (Col. 2, 1; 4, 13) distant ten and thirteen miles respectively, surpassed it in position and wealth, and the importance of Colossae declined. It was, however, like Laodicea, famous for its fine wool, and retained municipal independence under the Romans. A Christian community grew up at Colossae under the ministrations of Epaphras and later of Archippus (Col. 1, 7; Philemon 2). Of this church Philemon was an active member, and also Onesimus. (Col. 4, 9; Philemon 2)."

Col. 2, 1: For I would that ye knew what great conflict I have for you, and for them at Laodicea, (and them in) and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh.

Col. 4, 13: For I bear him record that he hath great zeal for you and them that are in Laodicea, and them in Hierapolis.

Col. 1, 7: As ye also learned of Epaphras our dear fellow-servant, who is for you a faithful minister of Christ.

Col. 4, 7: All my state shall Tychicus declare unto you, who is a beloved brother, and a faithful minister and fellow-servant in the Lord.

Col. 4, 9: With Onesimus, a faithful and beloved brother, who is one of you.

Philemon 2: And Archippus, (a faithful) our fellow-soldier, and to the church in thy (Philemon's) house.

2. Ephesus.

A city of Lydia on the western coast of Asia Minor at the mouth of the river Cayster, nearly midway between Miletus on the south and Smyrna on the north. Situated at the junction of natural trade routes, and near a far-famed shrine of an Asiatic nature goddess, whom the Greeks identified with Artemis, its growth was assured. In the eleventh century B. C. the town was seized by the Ionians, a section of the Greek race. Ephesus became one of their chief cities, one of the twelve belonging to a confederation and itself the capital of Ionia. About 555 B. C. the city submitted to Croesus, king of Lydia, whose capitol was at Sardis, but it soon fell under Persian domination. When the victories of Alexander the Great overthrew the Persian Empire, Ephesus came under Greek-Macedonian rule.

Hitherto it had been confined to a low alluvial plain liable to be flooded. About 286 B. C., however, Lysimachus extended it to an adjacent eminence which the water could not reach. By this change of location the temple of Artemis was left outside of the city walls. In 190 B. C. the Romans, after defeating Antiochus the Great at Magnesia, took Ephesus from him, and gave it to Eumenes II, king of Pergamos. On the death of Attalus III of Pergamos in 133 B. C. it reverted to them, and eventually became the capitol of the Roman province of Asia. In A. D. 29 the city was much damaged by an earthquake, but was rebuilt by the emperor Tiberius. Many Jews with Roman citizenship resided at Ephesus and maintained a synagogue (Antiq. xiv. 10, 11 and 13; Acts xviii, 19; xix, 17); and Paul, on his way to Jerusalem, toward the end of his second missionary journey, paid a short visit to the place, preached in the synagogue, and left Aquila and Priscilla there, who continued the work (Acts xviii, 19-21). On his third journey he labored at Ephesus at least two years and three months leaving the city after the riot was stirred up by Demetrius, a maker of small silver models of the temple, who found his craft endangered by the preaching of the apostle (Acts xix, 1-41). Paul left Timothy behind to prevent the church from being corrupted by false doctrine (1 Tim. 1, 3). Subsequently returning from Europe and unable to revisit Ephesus, he

summoned the elders of the church to him at Miletus (Acts xx, 16. 17). Tychicus was afterwards sent to Ephesus with the Epistle to the Ephesians written by Paul while in the military captivity in Rome which accorded him much freedom. (Cf. Davis, Bible Dictionary, pp. 211-212).

Acts xviii, 19: And he came to Ephesus, and left them there: but he himself entered into the synagogue and reasoned with the Jews.

Acts xix, 17: And this was known to all the Jews and Greeks also dwelling at Ephesus.

1 Tim. i, 3: As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine.

Acts xx, 16. 17: 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.

3. Epaphras and Epaphroditus.

Epaphras is a shortened (name) form of the name Epaphroditus, but the name being a common one, there is no need to identify the two.

The facts concerning the person of Epaphroditus are the following:

Phil. 2, 25-30: Yet I supposed it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother, and companion in labor, and fellow-soldier, but your messenger, and he that ministered to my wants. For he longed after you all,

and was full of heaviness, because that ye had heard that he had been sick. For indeed he was sick nigh unto death: but God had mercy on him; and not only him only, but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow. I sent him the more carefully, that, when ye see him again, ye may rejoice, and that I may be the less sorrowful. Receive him therefore in the Lord with all gladness; and hold such in reputation: because for the work of Christ he was nigh unto death, not regarding his life, to supply your lack of service toward me.

Phil. 4, 18: But I have all, and abound: I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things which were sent from you.

- 1) He is called brother, companion in labor, fellow-soldier by Paul.
- 2) He was the messenger of the Philippians.
- 3) He worked seriously in Rome and was sick nigh unto death. On that account the Philippians were distressed he was "Full of heaviness".
- 4) He evidently carried the epistle to the Philippians.

Concerning Epaphras the facts are:

Col. 1, 7: As ye also learned of Epaphras our dear fellow-servant, who is for you a faithful minister of Christ.

Col. 4, 12: Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, always laboring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God.

Philemon 23: Epaphras, my fellow-prisoner in Christ Jesus.

- 1) He is called fellow-servant, faithful minister by Paul.
- 2) He was a native and inhabitant of Colossae.
- 3) As Paul's representative he very likely founded the church there.
- 4) His zealousness for Laodicea and Hierapolis is indicated by the fact that he very likely founded the churches there.
- 5) He is called the fellow-prisoner by Paul which indicates that he probably stayed in Rome for some time.

CONCLUSION:

Since Epaphras is associated with the congregations on the Lycos River and Epaphroditus is connected with the congregation at Philippi; since the two are about three hundred and fifty miles apart; since they seem to have been at Rome about the same time, but one remaining there much longer than the other; since the name was a very common one, these seem to be different men.

4. Date and place of writing.

Undoubtedly both these epistles were written from Rome during Paul's first military imprisonment there. Colossians was first, with Ephesians following immediately upon it, for they were both born by the same Tychicus. The exact date of this first imprisonment as nearly as can be determined by the extant evidence is the year 62-63 A. D. In substantiation of this view we submit the following evidence:

1) In both epistles Paul is referred to as being a prisoner for the sake of the Gospel.

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

Col. 1, 24: Who now rejoice in my suffering for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church.

Col. 4, 18: The salutation by the hand of me Paul. Remember my bonds. Grace be with you. Amen.

2) Tychicus, the bearer of the letters, will bring exact information concerning Paul's welfare and allay their fears.

Eph. 6, 21-22: But that ye also may know my affairs, and how I do, Tychicus, a beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, shall make known to you in all things: whom I have sent unto you for the same purpose, that ye may know our affairs, and that he might comfort your hearts.

Col. 4, 7-8: All my state shall Tychicus declare unto you, who is a beloved brother, and a faithful minister and fellow-servant in the Lord: whom I have sent unto you for the same purpose, that he might know your estate, and comfort your hearts.

3) The description of his captivity identifies it with that mentioned at the end of Acts (namely his first Roman captivity). He had his apostolic assistants with him; he could send out missionaries; he was not confined to prison but could preach the Gospel freely.

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

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

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

Col. 4, 3: That God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds.

Col. 4, 11: These only are my fellow-workers unto the kingdom of God, which have been a comfort unto me.

The opposing view, namely that of Schulz, Schott, et alii, that these letters were written by the apostle during his earlier imprisonment at Caesarea submits as its first proof the contention that according to Philippians it is very improbable that the persons mentioned as being with Paul in his imprisonment could have been in Rome. Disproving this point is the following evidence:

a) Aristarchus and Luke made a journey to Rome at this time.

Col. 4, 10: Aristarchus, my fellow-prisoner, saluteth you.

Col. 4, 14: Luke, the beloved physician, and Demas greet you.

b) Timothy and Mark were asked to come to Rome in the second letter to Timothy.

Col. 1, 1: And Timotheus our brother to the saints.

Col. 4, 10: And Marcus, sister's son to Barnabas.

2 Tim. 4, 9: Do thy diligence to come shortly unto me.

2 Tim. 4, 11: Only Luke is with me. Take Mark, and bring him with thee: for he is profitable to me for the ministry.

This letter was written very soon after Paul's arrival in Rome. Also, it is very improbable that Timothy should be asked to work so close to Paul in Caesarea. At this time Timothy was pastor of the congregation at Ephesus, another strong proof against the Caesarean theory.

c) Tychicus was undoubtedly in Rome, because of the reference made in 2 Timothy 4, 12: And Tychicus have I sent to Ephesus.

d) Onesimus, the runaway slave would more probably have had opportunity to flee to Rome, because it was much closer and there was much more trade between Asia Minor and Rome than between Palestine and Asia Minor.

The second contention of the opposing view is, that Paul could not have received such exact information concerning the congregations which were so far away from Rome. However, if some of the men whom Paul asked to come to Rome had just come from Asia Minor, which we have every reason to believe, they could have brought these messages. Though little corroborated evidence can be submitted to substantiate this view, nevertheless, it does not follow that the view is necessarily incorrect, and as yet there is just as little proof for the assertion that this was impossible. In conclusion, let it be said that Paul had much more opportunity and leisure time in which to write these two profound epistles while in Rome. While in Caesarea this opportunity was lacking entirely.

Acts 28, 31: Preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him.

Acts 24, 35: And he commanded a centurion to keep Paul, and let him have liberty, and that he should forbid none of his acquaintances to minister or come unto him.

From these two Bible passages we see that Paul had perfect freedom and hence much opportunity to do what he wished and send out those whom he wished.

For the sake of completeness it would be well to consider another theory which has recently been propounded concerning the place from which Paul wrote his Captivity Epistles. Although the same reasons asserted in disproving the Caesarean theory also disprove this new belief that these letters of Paul were written in Ephesus, nevertheless, out of deference for other men's opinions, it would be well to list the reasons for this theory:

Argument for the Ephesine origin of the Captivity Letters

1) Case of Onesimus.

Onesimus fled from Colossae -- more probable that he went to Ephesus than to Rome, where detection would be sure.

2) Paul's promise to visit Philemon soon (asks him to prepare a lodging).

This would be understandable, if Paul was not far away. He wished to protect the slave Onesimus from harsh treatment.

3) The plan of Paul while in Rome was to go to Spain, Rom. 15, 24-28. In the Captivity Letters Paul desires to go east to Colossae.

4) Epaphras.

He came from Colossae to consult Paul. Would a man travel 1,000 miles to get advice?

5) The great number of Paul's followers mentioned as being imprisoned with him.

In Ephesus he was surrounded by workers.

6) Relations of Paul with the Philippians.

a) The Philippians sent a collection to Paul.

b) Epaphroditus, the bringer of the collection, becomes ill.

c) A letter or messenger informs the Philippians about the illness of Epaphroditus and they become alarmed.

d) A letter comes from the Philippians telling about their concern.

e) Paul sends a letter to the Philippians stating that Epaphroditus was well.

Note the extended correspondence!

The house of Caesar mentioned Phil. 1, 13 was the praetorium of the provincial capitol and not necessarily Rome.

5. Concerning the EN EPHESO.

Many people give to the Epistle to the Ephesians an encyclical character depriving it of its individuality and force. They claim that it was just a general letter to be circulated among the congregations of Asia Minor. This view has arisen because of the textual criticism which points to the fact that the words ἐν Ἐφέσῳ are missing in some of the manuscripts. Also Marcion maintained that this letter was encyclical, despite the fact that practically all of the other Church Fathers living at the same time accept its address to the congregation at Ephesus. Since such a view would destroy much of the beauty and purpose of the letter, we cannot and will not accept this view, unless conclusive evidence can be shown to warrant such a change. In protection of our view we state:

1) The first and foremost evidence for our view is the fact that the entire New Testament Church recognized this letter as addressed to the Ephesians.

2) During his second missionary journey from Corinth and Jerusalem Paul undoubtedly founded this congregation. He had many close friends there, such as Aquila and Priscilla (Acts 18, 19ff.). The second visit shortly thereafter was a stay of about two years during which time his work was blessed greatly (Acts 9, 7ff.); many times

he reproved some of the brethren in love (Acts 20, 31); his departure from the Ephesian elders was very moving (Acts 20, 17-38). All these events show that Paul had every good reason to write specifically to Ephesus.

3) The statements of the old Church Fathers on this subject:

- a) Irenaeus adv. haer. V, 2. 3. "καθώς ὁ μακάριος Παῦλος φησὶ ἐν τῇ πρὸς Ἐφεσίου ἐπιστολῇ, ὅτι μέλη ἐσμὲν τοῦ σώματος Cf. Eph. 5, 30. (Cf. adv. haer. V, 8 with Eph. 1, 13).
- b) Clemens Alexandrinus Paedag. I, 5 (ed. Potter, p. 108): "γαργύρατα δὲ Ἐφεσίου χάριτων ἀπεκάλυψε τὸ ἱερότατον, ὡς τις λέγων, μέχρι κατετήσωμεν οἱ πάντες etc."
- c) Tertullian c. Marc. V, 17: "Ecclesiae veritate istam epistolam ad Ephesios habemus emissam."

4) Also the Syriac translation of the Bible has the usual heading for this letter: to the Ephesians.

5) (Cf. Kretzmann's New Testament in the Light of a Believer's Research, pp. 95-94). The introductory sentence of the epistle surely did not read , for that would be almost nonsensical in view of the manner in which the apostle at other times designates his readers. If the Holy Ghost had intended this letter for an encyclical letter, He would undoubtedly have given the names of all the congregations as He does in 1 Pet. 1, 1 and with regard to the seven letters of the Apocalypse.

6) Though the words en Epheso are missing in Codices B, and in Codex 67, of the twelfth century, they are found in all the other ancient manuscripts as well as in the most ancient manuscripts now known.

7) The entire ancient Church has designated the letter as that addressed to the Ephesians, as, for instance, the Canon Muratori, Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, Ignatius, and others. Cf. 3).

8) The testimony of Tertullian, formerly thought to have been adverse to the traditional view, has upon closer examination been found to speak in favor of the letter as directed to Ephesus. Further witnesses are Jerome, Basilus the Great.

9) The argument e silentio can at best be only a supporting argument and should never be permitted as primary.

6. Occasion for the writing of the letter to the Colossians.

Epaphras had recently joined the apostle (Col. 1, 8: As ye also learned of Epaphras our dear fellow-servant, who is for you a faithful minister of Christ, who also declared to us your love in the Spirit), and his report of the church prompted the writing of the letter. This report of Epaphras, though not the report of a tale-bearer, revealed that false teachers were

threatening the Church. By teaching false doctrine concerning asceticism, ritualism, and angelology, and a mystic, incipient gnosticism, they were undermining the faith of some believers. Undoubtedly these false prophets were Judaizing Jews bent on wreaking havoc in the church of Christ, claiming to have a greater and higher wisdom than Paul. They had a theosophical tendency which was very dangerous and needed prompt attention from the apostle. Hence the doctrinal section is very pronounced and most important. Paul spends much time on emphasizing the supremacy of Christ in order to combat the contention of these false prophets that angels as superior beings were to be accorded the same worship. Against their asceticism he teaches spiritual morality. The epistle is naturally Christological. It shows especially Christ's preeminence and the sufficiency of His work of salvation.

Col. 2, 8: Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world and not after Christ.

Col. 2, 18: Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind.

7. The occasion for the letter to the Ephesians.

"Alford: 'The object of the epistle is to set forth the ground, the course, and the aim and end of the Church of the faithful in Christ. He speaks to the Ephesians as a type or sample of the Church Universal. The Church's foundation, its course, and its end are his theme alike in the larger and smaller divisions of the whole epistle. Everywhere the foundation of the Church is in the will of the Father; the course of the Church is by the satisfaction of the Son; the end of the church is the life in the Holy Spirit.'

The Church of Ephesus was made up of converts partly from the Jews and partly from the Gentiles (Acts 19, 8-10: 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.). Accordingly, the epistle so addresses a Church constituted. Ephesus was famed for its idol temple of Artemis or Diana, which, after its having been burnt down by Herostatus on the night that Alexander the Great was born (355 B. C.) was rebuilt at enormous cost, and was one of the wonders of the ancient world. Hence, perhaps, have arisen Paul's images in this epistle drawn from a beautiful temple; the Church being in inner beauty that which the temple of the idol tried to realize in outward show." (Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown, Commentary, p. 341). Kretzmann, Commentary: "There was no immediate, urgent reason which caused Paul to write this epistle, as, for instance, in the case of those addressed

to the Corinthians and the Galatians. His object was merely the desire to strengthen and establish the congregation at Ephesus and with it the daughter congregations in the entire region, to remind the Asiatic Christians of the great mercy and honor which they owed to Christ, and of which they should be conscious at all times, and to urge them to fulfil their calling as followers of Christ with all earnest endeavor."

3. The bearer of these letters.

There is no difficulty here, for it is stated explicitly that Tychicus is the bearer of these letters. He was to bring these letters to the congregations, give them the news concerning Paul, allay their fears concerning his captivity, and comfort their hearts. At the same time he had another mission to fulfil, namely to escort the run-away slave, Onesimus, back to his master.

II. DOCTRINAL SECTION

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

Col. 1, 14: In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins.

Here is one of the most comforting statements of Scripture, for we have the vicarious atonement stated clearly: "Through his blood", not by any work of ours. The concept of redemption, a releasing effected by payment of a ransom, deliverance from the retributive wrath of a holy and just God and the merited penalty of sin carries out the thought of the grace involved in our redemption. We have merited only wrath and punishment, but Christ has erased this charge against us with His holy precious blood. Whenever we fall aside from the path, we can always remember that in Christ we have full redemption. Then, when Satan plagues our conscience with despair, we can show him our release given and effected by Christ, our Savior.

The text also adds the comfort that we definitely have the blessings of redemption. Christ has shed His blood for us; we have been freed from the prison of sin, death, and the devil.

The text also states that this ransom is sufficient, for it in itself, without any help on our part, through the riches of His grace, works our redemption. The blood of Jesus Christ, His (God's) Son, cleanseth us from all sin. The doctrine of the vicarious atonement of Christ here shines in its full glory and true light, namely that it is a work of pure, unmerited grace.

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.

Translation: In the arranging for the completeness of times to bring together all in Christ that are in the heavens and on the earth.

Col. 1, 20: That in him should all fulness dwell; and having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth or things in heaven.

Translation: And by him to reconcile all things to himself having made peace by the blood of his cross, by him whether the things on the earth or the things in the heavens.

In the Ephesians passage especially the thought is brought out, that in Christ we have the Head of the Church and also the unity of this same Church. In the dispensation of the fulness of times, namely in the divine counsels of God concerning mankind from eternity, all those in Christ would be gathered together in Him. This is another comforting reference to our election in Christ. We elect are to be one, gathered together in Christ. This is the doctrine of the unity of the Church in contradistinction to the perverted papal view of this doctrine. The Church is one Church with Christ as the corner-stone, the one Head unifying the Church universal.

The thought of the dispensation of times is to be compared to the arrangement of a household. God is the ruler and dispenser of the affairs of the household, and what He has arranged has been and is being carried out at various periods of the world.

The "all" of both passages are a comfort to us, telling us again of the universal grace of our loving heavenly Father. God is not limited to this earth, but His power embraces both the things of this earth and the things and persons in heaven. Shows the sovereignty of God over all things.

Christ is the representative of God carrying out this plan for the Father decided upon from all eternity. This good and gracious will of God was carried out by Jesus and a perfect reconciliation was effected by our Savior between us and Himself.

Considering the background of Colossians in this respect, we note that this refers to the all-sufficiency of Christ's atoning sacrifice for the sins of the world. No angel (as the incipient Gnostics taught who were threatening the faith of the congregation at Colossae just at this time), no man (as the proponents of work-righteousness of all ages and all countries have taught) can effect this reconciliation, but the blood of Jesus' cross alone, the atoning sacrifice of the God-man, Christ, can effect this perfect reconciliation with Himself and with God. No longer will there then be a difference between

the kingdom of grace and the kingdom of glory, in fact, no longer are we estranged from our Heavenly Father, but we are brought into close and constant communion with both Jesus and our Maker by this sacrifice. Peace has been declared between God and us by this sufficient ransom paid in full by the blood of Jesus.

In Christ we have the *πληρωμα* of God; all of the divine essence, attributes, and counsels of God dwelt in Him and are manifested through Him. He is the gracious vessel that contains all the loving actions and decisions of the Godhead toward mankind.

All this was done alone through the blood of the cross. The blood of the cross of Calvary is made the central doctrine from which our entire redemption hinges. This is the ransom which was required by a just and holy God, this is the supreme sacrifice which was brought by our loving Savior when He gave His life freely for the sins of the world.

By Christ, through Christ, and in Christ God now gathers and will continue to gather all things unto Himself in the one Church universal. By the sovereign will of God our Lord and King is here recognized as the almighty Ruler of the kingdom of power, the kingdom of grace, and the kingdom of glory. But especially we can now state with David (Cf. Psalm 5, 2: Hearken unto the voice of my cry, my King, and my God),

"Hear my prayer, O my King and my God," and we can know that by the divine and eternal decree of God He is empowered to answer our beseeching. He is our King through all eternity, ruling the paths of our life, guiding us in the paths of righteousness, leading us back to His fold when we, as wandering sheep, oftentimes stray and are lost. Our Sovereign has also effected our salvation, He alone is responsible for the manifold blessings bestowed upon us.

Eph. 1, 15-17: Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him.

Translation: On this account I also, having heard concerning your fidelity in the Lord Jesus and your love of all the saints cease not giving thanks for you making mention on your account in my prayers that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of majesty, may give to you the spirit of knowledge and instruction in the knowledge of him.

Col. 1, 3-4: We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which ye have to all the saints.

Translation: We thank God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, always praying for you having heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and love which you have to all the saints.

In both passages the Sonship of Christ from eternity is stated very clearly. Jesus is the Son of God, for He is the true Son of the Father. The motive for the thanksgiving of Paul is the same in both cases; namely the faith of these people in their savior, Jesus Christ, and the love which they had and showed toward their fellow-believers, the saints.

The apostle carried the trials and the sins of his people, as well as praise and thanks in their behalf, before the throne of God's majesty. This he did without ceasing, constantly. In this day and age we, as pastors, should follow the example of Paul and carry the needs of our people before the Lord in prayer without ceasing, constantly placing before the kind and loving heavenly Father who has promised to answer prayer all the trials and needs of our members. In this respect it would be well for us to pray the Lord's Prayer all-inclusively, keeping in mind the specific needs of our congregation in conjunction with our own needs and trials. Luther, the great Father of the Reformation, on days in which he had an almost insurmountable amount of work to finish, tells us that in order to finish this work and meet his obligations successfully would have to pray three hours instead of his usual one. From this section of Holy Scripture and from the example of such great theologians as Paul and Luther we must learn that the pastor's life must be a life of prayer, not only for ourselves, but also for those immortal souls entrusted to our care in spiritual matters.

Paul recognized and was thankful for the faith of these saints because it was in evidence, the fruit of their faith was evidenced by the numerous good works and the good report which could be given concerning them. Thus our fruitful faith will be evidenced by a Christian life crowned with works of love and will give joy to the spiritual shepherds of the soul.

The prayer of Paul is compared to a sacrifice bearing before God all the needs, trials, and thanks of his flock. These unremitting efforts in behalf of the flock entrusted to the spiritual shepherd is the mark of a faithful pastor.

The Trinity of the Godhead is here very much in evidence. All three persons are directly mentioned: The Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Jesus, the Son of the eternal Father, and the Spirit -- the Spirit who bestows upon us (1) the knowledge of the evangelical truth, (2) the knowledge disclosing what and how great are the benefits of salvation, and (3) the deep knowledge of God, of His holy will and of the blessings which He has bestowed and constantly bestows on men through Christ Jesus, our Savior and King. Jesus is the Kurios, the Lord of the New Testament covenant. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of wisdom and knowledge in the thorough understanding of Him.

The love which Christians show toward each other and which is referred to here, is the unselfish and undying devotion for one another of the same faith in Christ Jesus. This is the outgrowth of our faith and cannot be selfish, but is fashioned after the love of God in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself.

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.

Translation: Being given understanding as respects the eyes of your hearts that you might know what is the hope of his calling, what the fulness of the glory of his eternal blessedness in the saints.

Col. 1, 27: To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

Translation: To whom God did will to make known what the riches of the glory of this mystery among the nations (Gentiles) which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

By combining these two precious passages we have the whole purpose of the preaching of the Gospel. The sole aim of all Gospel preaching is, and must be, Christ in us, the hope of glory. The first part of the passage points out clearly the complete inability of man to know heavenly truths, for they are brought to him only when God enlightens his eyes and makes known unto him these precious truths. God imbues us with saving knowledge, He enlightens us spiritually by opening the darkened eyes of our souls and shows to us the great Christian hope which depends upon the gracious invitation of God to us to embrace the salvation of the kingdom of God.

The picture here again, as in numerous other sections of Scripture, depicts the darkened condition of the souls of men still dead in trespasses and sins, the utter natural depravity of mankind. After showing to us the utter hopelessness of our natural status, after holding before us the awful picture of

ourselves in the mirror of the Law, God then, in the very same passage, holds out the sweet comfort of the Gospel. The darkness becomes flooded with the light of the Eternal (Phos) Light, Jesus, who comes into this darkened realm of sin and death to bring spiritual enlightenment and comfort to our hearts.

Both comforting sections of Scripture refer to the riches of God's grace, the fulness of God's glory, all of which goes to show us the unlimited grace and mercy which He shows toward us. The glory of our salvation is stressed and with justification, for we can have no greater badge of honor, no greater distinction on earth and in heaven, than the name of our dear Savior. This great glory includes also the hope of our calling into the inheritance of the saints, namely our final salvation and entrance into the heavenly home which Jesus is even now preparing for us in heaven. When our God called us with an holy calling, He at the same time awakened in us the hope of this calling, namely the hope of eternal life. Human understanding is very fallacious, often duped into searching only the transient pleasures of this world, but the understanding enlightened by the grace of a kind and loving heavenly Father knows what is really of importance, the inheritance in the saints. This glory is termed "the glory of his inheritance in the saints."

This glory of the true Christian lies in the true Church here upon earth into which he has been called through faith in Christ Jesus. There is where he finds all things of true worth upon this earth. The Church is the only lasting thing in this passing world, and by storing up his hope in the glorious Church of Jesus Christ against which even the gates of hell shall not prevail, we have an eternal hope incorruptible, undefiled, that fadeth not away.

Universal grace and salvation are stressed by including the nations, the Gentiles, in this glorious hope of the Christian's calling. This is not a restricted gift of God to a chosen few who are better than the rest of mankind, but it is a gift meant for all, if they will only accept it. In the Old Covenant these glorious and gracious gifts of God were offered to the Jews alone as a rule, but now, in the time of the New Dispensation, after our savior had done away with this Old Covenant, we can all be sure of the hope of our heavenly calling through Christ Jesus.

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.

Translation: Which he effected in Christ by rousing him from the company of the dead and appointed him on his right in the heavenly places.

Col. 2, 12: Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.

Translation: Having been buried with him in baptism, in which also ye were raised with him through the faith of the working of God who raised him from among the dead.

It is a great comfort to know that in our behalf our kind and loving heavenly Father is exerting the same energy, the same power which He used in raising our Savior from the dead. This is the all-powerful might of our omnipotent God and hence we can be assured of our eternal salvation. Naturally these classic passages of Scripture state clearly the resurrection and the exaltation of Jesus, Son of God and Son of Man. The resurrection of Jesus, being an act possible only to the omnipotence of God, is somewhat a concrete measuring stick for our puny finite minds and help us to understand somewhat the energy which God exerts in our behalf. However, the passages are used in slightly different connections. The Colossians passage refers to this mighty active power of God in respect to baptism in particular when God calls or awakens us from the spiritual sleep or death in which we are be nature. The Ephesian's mentions this gracious and ununderstandable energy in connection with the general operation of faith in our hearts by God.

The Ephesian passage brings out the session of Christ at the right hand of God the Father, clearly explaining it to be not a local sitting on the right hand of the Father, but the fact that God has appointed, set Him at His right hand, that is, has conferred upon Jesus the kingdom by making Him a partner in God's universal government. This appointment of God took in all of the universe and Christ is certainly declared Ruler of all things. Knowing that our Savior is also our Ruler, how can true believers in Jesus have cares and worries about the morrow? Christ, our King, notices and marks even the fall of a sparrow and we can be confident that He who loves us so dearly as to give His life for us, will certainly watch over us. As our Ruler, our Lord has power over all things and therefore can and will help us at all times. The biblical statement does not say that God exalted Jesus to His right hand as the Son of God only, but this honor and glory of the state of exaltation was also participated in by the human nature of our Lord. The fact that this is not a local abode is brought out by the description of the place as "the heavenly places". This is the technical term for the abode of God and the angels. Since God, as well as the angels, are spirits, a definite locality can not be the meaning. The attempt of rationalizing Christians to confine Jesus to a place because of His session at the right hand of God and thus say that the Real Presence is impossible in the Lord's Supper does not consider this fact.

It is very much of a comfort to know that God is using the same power in our behalf and for our interests which He used in raising His Son from the dead. Assured of the fact that this powerful energy of our heavenly Father is working for our salvation, we can know absolutely that we are already saved from the clutches of sin, death, and the devil. We can also draw upon this mighty power of our God to help us in all our troubles and needs, and especially can we call upon His gracious energy to fight the good fight of faith, to overcome the numerous weaknesses of our own flesh, and to finally obtain the victory from the evil force constantly battling against us. With this divine power alone can we persevere unto our end.

Eph. 1, 21-23: Far above all principality, and power, and might and dominion and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: and hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

Translation: Above all principalities and spiritual potentates and power and lordship and every title named not only in this age but also in that which will come, and put all things in subjection under his feet and gave Him as the Head over all to the church.

Col. 1, 16-19: for by Him were all things created that are in heaven and that are in the earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him, and for Him; and he is before all things; and by him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have preeminence.

Translation: because by Him were created all things, the things in the heavens and the things upon the earth, the visible and the invisible, whether thrones, or lordships, or principalities, or authorities: all things by Him and for Him have been created. And He is before all,

and all things in him subsist. And He is the head of the body, the church; who is the beginning, firstborn from among the dead, that He might be in all things holding the first place; because in Him all the fulness was pleased to dwell.

These powerful passages are directed especially against all forms of Subordinationism and Kenoticism which attempt to rob our beloved Savior of His divine majesty and power. Jesus has supreme authority over all things both in this world and in the world to come, both in this age and in all ages to come, both over earthly and spiritual potentates. The fulness of His divine power is without boundary, without limitation of any kind. Our Lord is the supreme Head of all kingdoms, the kingdom of power, the kingdom of grace, and the kingdom of glory. These kingdoms include all places and all ages.

This fulness of power makes all things subject to the King of Zion. This all powerful King is given as the Head of the Church to guard and protect it throughout the ages. When the entire earth is in an upheaval and it seems as if there is nothing stable, the Church of Jesus Christ will stand fast, for it is grounded on the mighty Ruler of all things. This is God's gracious gift to the true Church here upon earth, our King Messiah, who rules all things in majesty.

The preeminence of Jesus is not only that of place, but also of time. Jesus Christ is truly the Son of God, for He is the firstborn from among the dead. By virtue of

the fact that our Savior had the full power and majesty of the Godhead, also according to His human nature, death has no hold over Him, neither can death govern or conquer Him. This divine authority of our Lord embraces especially His Church on earth. Christ's preeminence over all things in the heavens and on earth finds its consummation in the fact that He is the Head of the Church. This fact was proclaimed by the act of God in raising Jesus from the dead and thus proclaiming Him especially the chief Cornerstone of His Church upon earth.

The fulness of our Savior is again brought out and modified by the clause "the fulness of Him that filleth all in all". Christ is indeed a vessel filled with the entire Godhead, and the blessings of God's gracious mercy and kindness to us all. In Jesus is embodied all of the glorious acts of our kind and loving Father for our temporal welfare as well as for our eternal salvation. In Him dwells the fulness of the divine essence bodily, the sum total of all the divine decrees and acts of the Godhead for mankind. This includes not only the salvation of the world, making of Christ merely a god-like man who has gone on before to show us how we can be saved by our own efforts, but it includes all of the counsels and acts of God, creation, redemption, preservation, and final salvation. There can be no doubt in our minds that here is a passage which positively states that Jesus is the Son of God, that in Him dwells the divine essence also according to His human

nature. This passage thus proves the all-sufficiency of the ransom paid by Christ, for, being God Himself incarnate in the flesh, Jesus could and did redeem all men from their sins by paying a sufficient price. The blood of Jesus Christ, the Son of God made flesh, WAS INDEED THE ONLY SACRIFICE acceptable to God in payment for the sins of the world.

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

Translation: And you being dead in misdeeds and offences.

Col. 1, 21: And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He hath reconciled.

Translation: And you once being alienated and enemies in mind by wicked works, yet now he reconciled.

Cf. also Eph. 2, 12: That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers of the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.

Translation: That at that time you were separate from Christ, estranged from the community of Israel, and strangers of the covenants of the promise not having hope and without God in the world.

Cf. Also 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.

Here we have a group of passages and phrases showing the depraved nature of natural man, It seems as if Paul wrote these passages just to combat synergism in all forms, both gross and fine. Certainly God, in His allwise counsel, gave us this revelation to show us clearly that we are helpless to aid either in our conversion or final salvation. God is the sole Author and Finisher of our faith and our salvation.

The abysmal difference between man and God is accentuated by our sins and misdeeds, which constantly stand as an offence to our just and holy heavenly Father. By nature we are attracted to sin and vice, and for this reason we build up an enmity against God which is founded on our offences. First the picture is used of a wanderer on an unknown path who persists in falling beside this pathway. Every deviation from the way will lead him farther astray, and as these deviations increase he will be hopelessly and helplessly lost in an unknown world. Even as a weary stranger loses all sense of direction and becomes panic-stricken when he discovers that he is far astray from his path and is in the midst of a dense forest and is therefore quite helpless to find his own way, even so natural man is hopelessly lost in a dense maze of sin and hate. Another picture presented to us is the representation of an archer who is attempting to hit a target. When he shoots far astray, he misses the mark entirely. We sinners are by nature archers who inevitably shoot far astray of the mark of holiness which God has set up for us in the Law; in fact we cannot even come near to the perfection which a just and holy God demands of us, for before Him all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags. Because we are by nature hopelessly lost, because we cannot even come close to the mark of holiness, therefore we are dead to God and His holiness. The picture of death is also one of hopelessness. A dead man has absolutely no power to move a muscle in his body which has

ceased to live. Death deprives us of all ability to protect ourselves, or, for that matter, to help ourselves. Even so, by nature, we are just as unable to help ourselves in our salvation.

The picture of our natural depravity is brought out by such expressions as "being alienated and strangers and enemies of God by your wicked works." As strangers we could never hope to enter our heavenly home and expect to find there a place reserved for us! As enemies we could never hope to find a joyful reception when we reach the end of our earthly journey and wish to enter the gates of the heavenly Zion! We have alienated ourselves from the presence of a loving God, we have declared war on Him by constantly sinning, we have betrayed any friendship with him by our wicked lives, how can we expect God to receive us? And "yet now he hath reconciled us". God has indeed reached down from heaven to save us from the doom which we have brought upon ourselves. Here is the essential difference between a religion of hope and a religion of hopelessness. Man by nature cannot and will not reach up to God, but God must reach down and save us by grace alone.

Further descriptions of our natural depravity illustrate ever more clearly the unlimited riches of God's grace and mercy. The apostle considers the worst element of man in his natural state the fact that he must live without Christ.

This certainly is true, for Jesus is truly the embodiment of God upon earth and without Him man must be without God. That would mean an exclusion of all hope, all love, all true joy, in short, everything in life that makes it livable! No wonder the philosophy of natural man is one of hopelessness! Living without Christ is nothing less than a living death, and thus the apostle has described it.

Being strangers from the covenant of promise the natural man can have absolutely no hope. The glorious promises of God for our temporal and especially our spiritual welfare comprise all the hope and joy, all the truth and peace on earth. Without these earth becomes a hopeless mass of struggling mankind without aim or purpose, ever-striving but never getting anywhere.

Paul tells us that man is spiritually blind, because of "the blindness, i.e. callousness, of his heart". The heart of man is covered with a large layer of fat and callous which prevents this heart from being approached or touched by anything. Man, himself, has built this wall of calloused fat around his heart by his constant sin. His understanding is in complete darkness, and unless it is illumined by the light of the precious Gospel, by the Light which was sent also to lighten the hearts of the Gentiles, his heart and understanding will remain in darkness until God condemns it to everlasting darkness in hell. This is the vivid picture which the apostle draws for us, not only to show us our

utter helplessness, not only to depict our depraved natures for all those who think that they can do something toward their own salvation, but especially to clearly portray the unfathomable grace and mercy of our heavenly Father who has saved us despite our blindness, ignorance, and enmity.

Eph. 2, 5: Even when we were dead in sins, hath he quickened us together with Christ (by grace are ye saved).
Translation: We also being dead in sins hath he made us alive together with Christ (by grace are ye partakers of salvation).

Col. 2, 13: And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses.
Translation: And you being dead through offences in the uncircumcision of your flesh he quickened together with him having forgiven us all the offences.

Both of these passages again stress the utter depth of natural human depravity. In this passage Paul softens the harshness of the judgment by including also himself, and at the same time he stresses the all-inclusiveness of this natural spiritual death. We are all sinners, and hence we are all under the same condemnation. These are some of the gems of Scriptures, for in a few well-chosen words Paul preaches a whole sermon with the Law and the Gospel correctly distributed. No statement can bring out more fully the awful and hideous truth of our natural depravity than comparing it to the grim Reaper who strikes terror into all human hearts. Death is a hopeless and terrible state concerning which all is mystery. The only thing certain about death is that no one can be of any assistance to himself while dead,

neither can he ever change his state once he has died. This is naturally a type of our complete helplessness in the state of spiritual death, in which we exist by nature. No more than a dead man can raise himself from the dead, no more than a corpse can protect itself from any harm perpetrated upon it, no more can we by nature assist in any way to save ourselves from sin, death, and eternal damnation.

However, after Paul draws this picture of our state of utter spiritual helplessness, he then holds out to us the glorious Gospel message in all its sweetness. "God has quickened us with Christ." What comfort this sweet sentence gives to every Christian heart! Our heavenly Father has quickened us together with our dear Savior. What comfort can we not derive from knowing that God is exerting the same almighty power for our salvation that He used in raising His dear Son from the grave and proclaiming Him Ruler of all things. This blessed passage which informs us that we are quickened together with Jesus goes into the divine mystery ever more deeply by stating this truth as it does, for thereby we can also rejoice in the same full measure, for we are partakers of this together with Him. perhaps it would be easier to understand this great truth if we considered it in the light of Scriptures which tell us that in our Savior, Jesus Christ, we live and move and have our being. This is the full connotation of this glorious

passage. Our Lord was not satisfied in making us mere recipients of His grace and blessings, but He has made us fellow-partakers with Him in all that He has done for us.

Finally it would be well to note that the apostle, in pointing out the great change wrought in man by a loving heavenly Father, recognizes only two stages in the conversion of man. Before conversion man is absolutely, helplessly dead in trespasses and sins, but he is made alive, quickened (refuting all efforts on his part to save himself) by God who uses the same almighty power for this work that He used to raise His only Son from the grave. This naturally excludes all intermediate stages of any kind in conversion; there can be no *acti praeparatorii*, no acts preparing us to receive the grace of God; God knows no *meritum congrui*, a merit before conversion in the view of which God rewards one by bestowing blessings upon him and converting him, but before we are children of God, we are dead! No synergism or *gratia infusa* is possible, for God alone, by grace, quickens us from spiritual death to spiritual life; our heavenly Father alone can free us from the bonds of spiritual blindness.

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

Col. 2, 12: Buried with Him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with Him through faith of the operation of God, who hath raised Him from the dead.

Translation: Having been buried with Him in baptism, in which also you were raised up with Him through the faith of the working (of the power) of God who raised Him from the dead.

This great mystery, the fact that we are actually partakers together with our blessed Savior in His glorious resurrection from the dead, is further carried out in these two sections. This blessed experience is naturally our permanent property, and hence constantly at hand to be used by us whenever we begin to waver or doubt. At such a time we can know and be fully assured that God is exerting the same almighty power in our behalf that He used to raise our savior from the grave. It is to be noted that the apostle uses the past tense in describing our condition of blessedness. In other words, we are already in possession of these glorious blessings. We need no longer be sad and sorrowful, for we are assured that we are saved persons.

However, this passage goes even a little farther into this mystery of God by telling us that already we have been made to sit in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. Even now we are partakers together with Jesus of the heavenly, spiritual life of complete joy and happiness. Certainly we must glorify and praise our gracious heavenly Father, who, in His divine

mercy and love, has seen fit to bestow upon us already here on earth the joy of heaven! To all these blessings there is but one condition: they are all possible only in Christ Jesus. As long as we are in Him, we are in full possession of all of these gracious gifts of God. For this reason we must certainly keep in mind that our entire life must be not only consecrated to our dear Lord and Master, but must be in Him. This mystical union between the Savior of the world and us poor miserable sinners is certainly beyond the grasp of our puny, finite reason, but this is actually the relation of Jesus to us, for Scriptures point this out very clearly. How, then, can a Christian, knowing that his Savior is in such close and constant communion with him, sin against God and grieve his Lord and Master? The answer lies in the fact that not all Christians keep this truth constantly before their eyes, and for this reason Paul finds it necessary to repeat this unfathomable blessed fact.

The apostle also uses this opportunity to refer to the Sacrament of Holy Baptism. He definitely points out Baptism as a sacrament by relegating to it the power of raising us up from our spiritual death. This is as great a miracle of God almighty as the resurrection of Jesus. By Baptism we become actual partakers together with Him in His death and resurrection. Not only do we derive the benefits from these experiences, but we ourselves feel, go through these same

experiences. Great is this mystery and far beyond our understanding, but blessed is the person who actually lives through the truth of this statement!

All this is possible only by the mighty working of God. This is a fact to be noted well. We can add absolutely nothing to this entire work, but are blessed only with experiencing it. What a blessed lot is that of a Christian, because of this! Especially during the Lenten season must we keep this in mind and actually live through the ordeal and final victory of our Savior at this time.

The faith, the conversion wrought by Baptism is entirely the work of God and is prompted by grace alone. No worthiness can be found in us, for we are indeed by nature sinful and unclean.

The almighty power of God referred to in the resurrection of Jesus and in our conversion must not be misunderstood, for it is the omnipotence within the restrictions, the contingencies of God's own essence.

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

Translation: Having abolished in His flesh the law containing the precepts in the form of decrees, so that he might transform the two into one in himself a new kind of man, making peace.

Col. 2, 14: Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross.

Translation: Having expunged completely the legal instrument in the decrees against us which were adverse to us, also it he has taken out of the midst, having nailed it to the cross.

Christ has invalidated completely the Law as a means to salvation. The Law is the enmity which man has built up between himself and his God, for it is because of this Law that man realizes his own impurity and unrighteousness in the face of the holiness of a just and holy heavenly Father. For this reason man has declared war upon God and wants to know absolutely nothing of Him. The Law referred to is naturally the Law which God gave to Moses called by our text the "ordinances" or precepts, in short, the demands made upon man, the conditions whereby he could win his own salvation. There is also this consideration - the Law of Moses included only the Children of Israel, for a part of the Law was the Ceremonial Law of Israel. Christ has removed this Law which has stood as a barrier and partition between the Jews and the Gentiles. All men, both Jews and Gentiles, now have access to the salvation which Christ has earned for the whole world. Thus all the nations of the world are united under this one banner in the Church of Jesus Christ.

All barriers are now removed by our Savior. This Jesus accomplished in the flesh, according to His human nature. Only God was able to perform this miraculous deed of tearing down the partition of the Law, only the one true God could abolish the Law entirely and thus remove the enmity between God and man; and Christ, the God-man, according to His flesh, did this. This is a very strong point against all claims of Subordination or Kenoticism. Christ, also according to His human nature, is truly God almighty incarnate in the flesh. The phrase "in the flesh" also tells us the mode of fulfilling this gracious act. Christ abolished the Law by His entire sojourn here upon earth from His incarnation through His life, suffering, and death, to His glorious resurrection when His work was completed and sealed by the heavenly Father.

In this passage Paul also wishes to stress somewhat the fact that we are no longer bound by the Law but have the privilege of Christian liberty. The Law is now abolished for us, and as the apostle later states, no man can now judge us in respect to meat, or drink, or the sabbath-days, etc. for Christ has freed us from these laws and ordinances.

The legal document which was once signed by the condemning handwriting of our heavenly Father, namely the Law of God, has been entirely blotted out by the atoning sacrifice of our Savior. This statement is filled with comfort for us, because it tells us that the sacrifice of Jesus was all-sufficient.

Our guilt is entirely expunged, wiped away. The accusation of sin against us has been absolutely stricken from the books. It is not a partial blotting out, not a blotting out of only the terrible sins committed by men, but it is complete and all-inclusive. The whole debt has been wiped out and we are free from all the charges brought against us by a just and holy God.

This document accusing us justly with sin and having the condemning signature of God almighty, has been paid for by being nailed to the cross of Christ. For this reason we can now all sing with joyful hearts: "In the cross of Christ I glory", for the cross of Calvary upon which the Lamb of God was slain, was the instrument eradicating entirely the charges brought against us. Christ, being nailed to the cross in our stead, experienced for us the pangs and tortures of our sins. The charge to be laid at our feet was instead placed upon his conscience and He became virtually the only sinner upon earth in our stead. Jesus was the sin-bearer for the sins of the world.

Eph. 2, 20ff.: And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone; in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.

Translation: Those built up upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the cornerstone, in whom all the building (all parts of the building) being framed together will grow into a holy church in the Lord in whom also you are built into one whole, the habitation of God in the Spirit.

Col. 2, 7: Rooted and built up in him, (Christ), and stablished in the faith as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving.

Translation: Having been rooted and built up in Him, and being confirmed in the faith, even as you were taught abounding (being more than enough) in it with thanksgiving.

This is one of the ⁱlocus classici in the entire Scriptures, and at the same time one of the most comforting messages of God to us. Our communion of saints, our dear Church is not built upon the shifting sands of human reason, nor is it dependent upon the caprices of some worldly ruler, but is based upon the apostles and prophets, the inspired servants of God, and Jesus Christ, God Himself, is the cornerstone supporting the entire structure. We can know from this glorious revelation that our Church will stand fast and the gates of hell cannot prevail against it, for it is the Church of Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world.

Many exegetes think that Paul, humanly speaking, had in mind the glorious temple of Diana at Ephesus. This beautiful building was indeed one of the wonders of the ancient world and a marvel of engineering. As Paul marveled at the ingenious structure of this temple he was naturally led to think of a far superior temple, namely the invisible building of all believers from all ages, fitly framed together, and finding its base upon the inspired holy writers with God Himself supporting the entire building as its cornerstone.

In drawing this picture Paul wishes to bring out the very close fellowship which every Christian must have with his Savior, thus growing in spiritual life on the foundation laid by the prophets and the apostles. In fact, it is only through the writings of these servants of God that we were gathered in to the Church of Christ here upon earth, either by hearing the precious Gospel message contained in the sacred writings of Scriptures preached, or by reading them ourselves, or by a Sacrament based upon these words.

However, although the apostles and prophets have a very important place in this glorious edifice, nevertheless the keystone, the cornerstone, is by far more important. The keystone upon which the whole Church depends is Jesus, the Savior of all mankind. Our Church is built upon the Rock of Ages and will never pass away, though the earth tremble and though the mountains be cast into the midst of the sea.

This picture also shows us that Christ is constantly with us. Without the cornerstone a building cannot stand, and Christ here assures us that He will constantly be present personally, for through His servant Paul He tells us that He is our Cornerstone.

We are all a section of the holy temple of God. This does not mean that we lose our identity, nor does it mean that as long as we are associated with a church that we are fitly framed together. This is not the picture which comes to our minds when we think of a building well erected. Each stone is chiseled and prepared for its place. They are not thrown together haphazardly, but each one has its definite position and service. Thus we are each to have our definite place and task. Not all the stones can have the smooth surface and fine polish necessary to be displayed on the front section of this glorious edifice, but some have to be roughly-cut, solid rocks to give firmness to the entire structure. Wherever a Christian is placed in the Church of Christ, be it in a prominent position or be it in a secluded place, he must deem it a privilege to be a part of this blessed edifice and perform his service to the best of his ability.

Paul goes even farther in his picture and tells us that, although we are a part of the glorious structure of the Church, nevertheless we are at the same time a temple of the Holy Ghost in ourselves. This is both a privilege and a duty. God abides

in us, makes His home in our hearts. This is indeed an honor and a privilege to have our loving God dwelling with us constantly, comforting us in our distress, bringing us peace in turbulent, soul-trying times, and leading us to Himself in heaven. However, this entails also a duty on our part. We must make our hearts a fitting abode for such a heavenly guest. There can be no room for God and filthy thoughts; God cannot abide in a heart filled with sin; the Holy Ghost and Satan are bitter enemies and certainly cannot dwell under the same roof. Therefore, by the power of the Holy Spirit who is eager to dwell in us, we must make our hearts pure and clean.

Paul portrays another picture. We are pictured as sinking our roots of faith not in some shiftless doctrines of men, not in the sand of some philosophic theory, but deep into our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. He is certainly the only firm foundation. He alone is the life-giving soil which can and does nourish our faith. Upon Him alone we are built up and made firm, established in our faith. Only with such a foundation can we endure unto the end and thus be saved. The truth of this fact has been taught to us throughout our lives by the apostles and prophets who furnish our foundation by pointing us to the Keystone of the Church, the life-giving Soil of eternal life, our beloved Savior.

Because of the numerous blessings and privileges which come to us as parts of this glorious Church of Christ, we have every reason to give thanks to our gracious and loving heavenly Father, who, in His all-wise, merciful counsel, desires us to be saved and makes our salvation possible. This must be a constant function of our lives. As long as there is a breath in our bodies, we, as blessed members of the Church, must give thanks and pray without ceasing. We must remember that prayer includes not only requests, but also many thanks;

Eph. 3, 1-3 and 5: For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, if ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward; how that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words) ... 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.

Translation: On this account I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, if you have heard of the administration of the grace of God which is given to me for you (in order to bring it to you), so that according to the revelation the mystery was made known unto me, as was written before briefly ... which was not made known by other people unto the sons of men as it is now made manifest unto his holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit.

Col. 1, 23-26: If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the Gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister; who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church; whereof I am made minister according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfill the word of God; even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints.

Translation: If indeed you continue in the faith founded and firm, and not being moved away from the hope of the gospel, which you heard, which were proclaimed in all the creation which (is) under heaven, of which

I Paul became servant. Now I am rejoicing in the sufferings for you, and I am filling up that which is behind of the tribulations of Christ in my flesh for his body, which is the church (assembly of Christians), of which I became a minister (servant) according to the administration of God which is given me towards you to complete the word of God, the mystery of which has been hidden from ages and from generations, but now was made manifest to the saints.

These glorious passages of these two captivity letters of Paul throw a bright light upon his ministry as a fitting example for the present-day ministry to be modeled after. He begins the discussion by telling the Christians that he is a prisoner of Jesus Christ for them. As a prisoner of Jesus Christ he is in bonds, because of his fearless confession and preaching of his crucified Savior. However, this suffering is considered by the apostle as a privilege, and is described further as a substitutionary suffering for the Gentiles. This is actually the meaning which Paul wishes to convey to the recipients of these letters, namely that he is actually suffering in their place, for them. Whereas they were living in comparative safety Paul was suffering in prison for the sake of his Savior. Here again we can apply the picture of the Church of Jesus Christ upon earth as a complete body. If one of the organs is diseased or suffering, the entire body is actually suffering because of this. When one of the organs ceases to function in its proper manner the task of this organ is relegated to another section of the body. Thus in his suffering, Paul tells the Christians at Ephesus and Colossae that he is taking upon himself this suffering and imprisonment

for them. Really all the Christians should be imprisoned, but Paul, as their spiritual shepherd willingly suffers this incarceration for their sakes. This spirit of self-sacrifice must naturally be in the mind of every consecrated minister of the Gospel. In the good fight of faith pastors must be found in the front ranks, in the thickest of the fray. If there is any suffering to be done, they should be the first to step forward and receive this persecution with rejoicing!

Paul, as a steward of the mysteries of God, administered unto the Ephesians the grace of God by causing them to hear the blessed Gospel message. Note that Paul states, that the dispensation (administration) of the grace of God was given to him expressly for this purpose, namely to bring the Gospel to all men, to "you-ward". He was the steward of the mystery of God, the manager, whose duty it was to dispense this blessed gift to all men, and especially to those who came under his direct influence, his flock. This administration of the grace of God is also the express duty of every pastor today. Upon the shoulders of every pastor is placed this adjudication, that he is responsible for the spiritual welfare of his flock, and hence must dispense unto them the mystery of the grace of God. To Paul this duty was conveyed by direct revelation from God; to the pastors of today this duty is given by the revelation from God which he must diligently study in order to prepare himself for his glorious calling. The direct statement of Paul that he received the knowledge of the mystery of God's

grace by revelation is in itself a powerful proof for the inspiration of the Bible according to our view. This infinite knowledge, far beyond the grasp of any finite mind, must have been verbally revealed to Paul in order that he could bring this glorious knowledge to others.

The mystery that was made known to Paul in this particular case was the wonderful mystic union between Jesus and the believers in the Church. This union is beyond our human knowledge, and we cannot even attempt to rationalize concerning it, but we do know that through it we are in a close communion with our dear Lord and Savior, so that all of His power and might are made available to us to draw upon whenever we need them in our fight of faith. This mystic union is so close that we can even go so far as to say that in Christ we live and move and have our being. We are as closely associated to our loving Savior as one member of the body is to its head. Once a Christian can come to the full realization of this truth, he will be able to live the life which is truly Christ-centered.

This knowledge of a gracious and merciful God was not revealed unto the sons of men before this time, not even to the Jews who knew essentially a stern heavenly Father who had imposed upon them a code of moral and ceremonial laws. Only occasionally was He revealed as a God of love and mercy by Messianic prophecies bringing new hope to the Jews of the Old Covenant. Today we have a clear view of this mercy of God as it is powerfully portrayed in the picture of our suffering

Savior. The Old Testament Jews had only signs and symbols of this gracious mercy of God. This is a section of anthropology which brings out clearly again the essential difference between all man-made religions and the religion of revelation from the true God. Whereas all man-made religions are based on the principle that a stern and just God must be placated somehow and turned away from the punishment which He intends to mete out upon poor miserable mankind, the true revealed religion shows us a God of mercy and love who has not only condemned us for our wickedness, but has also provided a Savior to redeem us from our condemnation and judgment.

Upon the ministry of the Church is placed the responsibility to keep their flock with the faith. This they can accomplish not by their own personality or eloquence, but solely by grounding and settling all their hearers in all the truths of Scripture. Their sermons must be Christ-centered and must flow from the deep conviction of their own hearts, so that the people will gladly come and be moved by the spiritual truths which are given voice in the pulpit of their church. Through their regular attendance in the Church of God they will truly become firmly grounded in Scriptures and will be equipped with an unwavering faith for all times. However, Paul specifies that they must be grounded in all the truths of Scripture. Even as Paul treated all the important doctrines in full for the spiritual salvation and growth of his flock, so every pastor must systematically and efficiently teach all the truths of Scripture.

The truth which impresses itself upon us in this passage of Scripture is the fact that close fellowship means necessarily that we also suffer for our Savior. Even as Paul was glad to suffer for his Lord and Master, even as the martyrs of old were joyful in their afflictions, so today we should welcome the opportunity to suffer for Jesus. Regardless of the form in which this suffering presents itself to us, we must take it upon ourselves willingly and consider it a privilege to become a cross-bearer for our Savior who walked the Via Dolorosa for our sakes and gave up His lifeblood on Calvary for our sins.

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.

Translation: Of which I was made a minister according to the gift of the grace of God given to me according to the energy of His might.

Col. 1, 29: Whereunto I also labor, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily.

Translation: Whereunto also I labor striving according to his working which works in me power.

Our sufficiency, as pastors, must certainly be of God, for we, of ourselves, certainly cannot wage successful warfare against the strong threefold power of darkness, sin, death, and the devil.

Paul introduces this thought by bringing in the fact that our glorious calling, the ministry, is a gift of God. In close connection with this idea is the fact that God has made us ministers, even as once Paul was made an ambassador of Christ. By nature we are unwilling to know and to serve

our Savior, and would be found among the bitter enemies of the children of God, even as Saul of Tarsus once was, but God, in His grace and mercy, forces upon us the conviction of the truth of the Gospel by the effectual working of His power.

The full energy of our omnipotent Maker is to be used in our ministry. We must not be satisfied in fulfilling what we think is enough and then seek our own pleasure, but we must be drawing constantly upon the divine energy of our heavenly Father, who can and does grant us renewed strength and energy to work ever more diligently in the enormous field which is ripe for the harvest. We can be confident of this power which our God places at our disposal, for it is the same almighty power which God exerted in the creation of the world. According to this effectual working of God we must do our pastoral duties to the very best of our abilities. God requires our best at all times, and as faithful servants, we will serve both our Savior and our fellowman with all the energy and power that our loving Father in heaven has granted us.

However, in this section of his captivity letters, Paul describes not only the glorious truth that we are ministers of the Gospel by the grace of God, and that the divine energy of God exerted at the creation of the world is at our constant disposal, but also the intensity and source of our labor as pastors.

In order that we may be filled with true ardor for the blessed message which we are spreading, in order that we may be fearless witnesses to the truth, and not be constantly apologizing for the truth that makes us free, we must labor, not lean on the shovel. This means a wearying working to the point of exhaustion. We must be engaged in a persistent battle with Satan and at the same time with our flesh which seeks to turn us away from such strenuous work. The tendency is for us to say: "I have done enough; let the other fellow work a while", but that cannot be the spirit of a true minister of the Gospel. However, this will be the final result, if we wish to depend upon our own ability in our fight with Satan. Our only hope of victory in this life-long battle is to depend upon the divine energy furnished us by our gracious God above. Only when we are armed with the Spirit's sword and with the shield of faith can we hope to ward off the burning darts of the Evil One and hold the field against our arch enemy.

This power of God which our heavenly Father works in us on the battle field is an explosive, overcoming power which suddenly and certainly vanquishes the old Evil Foe. Not even the gates of hell can withstand the explosive shock of this brilliant, dazzling explosion which completely overcomes all of the mighty powers of darkness.

Eph. 3, 8ff.: Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; and to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ.

Translation: Unto me who am the lesser among the least of all the saints is given this grace to make understandable to the Gentiles the incomprehensible riches of Christ; and to illuminate the dispensation of the mystery hidden from eternity in God who created all.

Col. 1, 27: To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

Translation: To whom God did will to make known what the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

Paul begins this thought in humility, calling himself the lesser among the least of all the saints. This must also be our spirit as ministers of the Gospel. Our office is one of service and true humility; there is absolutely no room for conceit and selfishness in our glorious calling. Paul emphasizes his unworthiness of this office when he states that this is a "grace given unto him". We are just as unworthy, and must deem it a privilege of God to receive this grace, that we should go and preach this great mystery among the nations of the world.

The apostle then expands upon the duty which is incumbent upon himself. He is to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ. This incomprehensible mystery of God, that He should show such great mercy and love to undeserving damned sinners through His dear Son, Jesus Christ, is to be the keynote of all preaching, both at the time of Paul as well as today and to

the end of time. This gracious truth is an inexhaustible fountain of wisdom, and the more we ourselves drink of this water of life, the deeper will be our insight into the incomprehensible mystery of God, and the more we can be able to make these glorious truths understandable to the people who hear this Word of God. Although we can never hope to comprehend with our reason the unfathomable mystery of our salvation, nevertheless we can study and search the Scriptures diligently, so that we can unfold before the nations the mystery of our salvation.

Our preaching must not be a mere imparting of knowledge to our listeners, but we must illuminate the truths of Scripture. Only by special illumination from God, granted to us by His Holy Spirit, can we hope to cast light upon these deep mysteries of God for our people. Therefore we must constantly pray for this special illumination and be constantly engaged in searching the Scriptures.

This mystery is hidden from us by our natural animosity toward God. As we gradually loosen the bonds of union between God and ourselves by sinning, we lose our spiritual light, and the truths of Scripture again become hidden in God. Before we were children of God, all of the truths of our salvation were hidden from us in God. We could not and did not know of the mercy and grace which moved our Father in heaven to send His only-begotten Son upon earth to suffer and die for the sins of the whole world.

However, we can also say that the brilliant light of this truth was hidden in the Old Testament. Here the Law was the main precept, and God's mercy and love were revealed chiefly by types and prophetic promises. But now, in the New Testament Church, all the types and prophecies are fulfilled in Christ Jesus, who is joined to us all by the incomprehensible mystical union. He, Himself, dwelling in every one of us, is a sure pledge and hope of the glory, the consummation which is to come.

Eph. 4, 2-4: With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling.

Translation: With all lowliness of mind and mildness, with longsuffering, enduring with one another in love, being filled with zeal for the guarding of the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace; one body and one Spirit, just as you are called in one hope of your calling.

Col. 3, 12: Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering-forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any.

Translation: Put on therefore, as elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of compassion, a kindly disposition, humility (a proper submission to others), meekness, long-suffering-bearing with one another and forgiving yourselves, if any against any have a complaint.

These passages depict the close communion which the saints, the believers and followers of Christ should have with one another. We should all realize that in forgiving the sins of our brother, we are forgiving a sin of which we can easily fall a prey to at any time. If we keep this fact in mind, it will not

be very difficult for us to practice Christian charity to our fellow believers.

This forgiving must indeed be done in all lowliness and meekness. We can never have the spirit of condescending to forgive a sin which our spiritual brother or sister has committed, for we all know that we are open to the same temptations and the same probability of sinning in the same respect. We have a beautiful example of the humility in which this forgiveness must take place in our Master upon the cross of Calvary. There we see our suffering Savior asking God to forgive His oppressors, for they knew not what they were doing. We also, must ask God to forgive the sins of our brethren in the same manner, and we ourselves must practice this same meek and unselfish type of forgiving. No matter what excuses may seem to hinder our forgiving our brother, Christ puts all of these differences aside and tells us that we must bear with one another, for we are all filled with frailties which must be borne and tolerated by others in the Church.

In addressing these Christians, the apostle calls them and us the elect of God referring to our blessed state in Christ Jesus.

The first qualification of an elect person in Christ is lowliness and meekness, and rightly so, for only an unselfish gentleness of disposition, ever ready to serve others and making no unjust demands from fellow-Christians can receive the gracious gift of God's salvation in the right spirit. A Christian should not be one who is easily embittered or offended at the frailties and shortcomings of the brethren, but much rather should be ever-willing to practice Christian charity and put the best construction on everything. We cannot be like the wicked servant who was only too willing to be forgiven by his lord and freed from his debt, but who would not forgive his fellow-servant a small debt under any circumstances. We must be ready to practice patience at all times, and this must occur, not grudgingly, but in love. Even as Christ loved us and was patient with us, forbearing and forgiving us countless sins, so we must bear with our brethren in love.

Christ asks this of us, in order that the unity of the Church may be preserved. We must be truly concerned and anxious about preserving this oneness. It must not be a mere outward unity dependent merely upon toleration of one another, but it must be deeply rooted in mind and heart. We must be truly one in everything, one in mind and one in spirit. The unifying agency of this Church of Christ upon earth is the bond of peace.

This one spirit is further described as being an expression of the one body of Christ. Even as we are all joined together with Christ through the mystical union in the Church, so we must also be closely united with one another in the same spirit, the same mind and heart.

As elect of God we are called in the scope of only one hope, the hope of our eternal salvation. The moment that that hope was aroused in our hearts, we were among the reborn, regenerated, elect of God. This is the one hope that must actuate all members of the Church, and for this reason also we are united. In this one hope we must live, and move, and have our being. This hope must actuate all of our thoughts and actions.

Not only does this section bring out the great virtues of a true Christian, but it also emphasizes the resultant patience which bears the frailties and shortcomings of fellow-Christians, which otherwise might prove to be a disrupting element in the Church. This unity of all Christians in mind and heart is brought out very well in another passage written by St. Paul, namely 1 Cor. 1, 10: Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.

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

Translation: But confessing firmly in love we will grow into him with reference to all things, who is the head, Christ.

Col. 2, 19: And not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God.

Translation: And not holding fast the Head, from whom all the body by the joints and the bands being supplied and knit together affects the increase of God.

Only by holding fast to Christ and His all-sufficient atonement, only by confessing Him firmly in love can we become spiritually mature approaching our Savior. It is God's will that we strive to get as close as possible to Christ, and this is the only way in which we can achieve such progression. We have but to look at the great leaders of the Church to see a living and vivid example of such miraculous spiritual growth, possible only in Christ Jesus. We must follow their example and walk with God all our life, exercising our prayer life to its fullest extent and being on guard constantly, watching for sin, especially our own particular pet sins.

These passages again accent our own helplessness, for we are vessels into which God pours His strength. All our help must come from the Lord, by ourselves we are easy prey to Satan.

We must hold fast to Jesus at all times. That is true religion, all other attempts at sanctification are mere religiosity. Only thus can the Church grow to its fullest measure in the Lord. We are all supplied with spiritual strength from our Head, Jesus Christ. Every member of the Church must be fed and grow thus. If this connection is severed, spiritual life will die.

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

Translation: That you put off according to the earlier manner of life the old man being so corrupt according to the lust of deceit.

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.

Translation: Every bad speech let not come forth out of your mouth, but rather the good thing necessary for edifying, so that it may give grace to the hearers.

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

Translation: All bitterness and aroused feeling and anger, and clamor (raising of angry voices) and slander should be removed from you with all malice.

Col. 3, 8-10: But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. Lie not to one another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; and have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him.

Translation: But now, put off also you all things, wrath, indignation, malice, blasphemy, foul language out of your mouth; do not deceitfully lie to one another, having put off the old man with his deeds, and having donned the new who being renewed into knowledge in accordance with the image of Him who created him.

As Christians God demands that we change our mode of life completely. Paul places the old sins and lusts which fill the heart of the sinful, natural man into a marked contradistinction to the new, regenerated man who now lives in us. We must all leave behind us those sins which are directly associated with our old man, such as deceitful slander and lying, angry raising of our voices, filthy language, including also smutty "jokes" and lewd literature, all the filthy, lewd, obscene sins which the world delights in.

Much rather we are to conduct ourselves in such a manner that we ourselves may be edified, as well as bring this grace to our brethren. By our life we must not only grow spiritually ourselves, but we must thereby promote the growth of others, so that they too can increase in Christian wisdom, piety, holiness, and happiness.

Very definitely the apostle frowns on every form of angry quarreling and describes its stages until one becomes as an angry snorting bull. Of this we must definitely beware!

Eph. 4, 32 - 5, 1: And be ye kind one to another, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you. Be ye therefore followers of God as dear children.

Translation: But be ye benevolent towards one another, as compassionate ones forgiving one another just as God forgave you; therefore become imitators of God, as esteemed children.

Col. 3, 12-13: Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.

Translation: Put on therefore as elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; bearing with one another and forgiving yourselves, if any against any should have a complaint, even as Christ forgave you, so also you.

Here Paul continues the picture of the sanctification of the believer, the elect of God, the beloved and esteemed child of God, only this time from a more positive point of view. Whereas before he stressed what sins should be absolutely foreign to a Christian, now he brings out very clearly and forcefully the virtues of the true follower of Christ.

We must be tender-hearted, mild, pleasant, and benevolent, freely and willingly granting forgiveness to one another. Paul sweeps aside all possible excuses for quarreling by the statement: if any have any complaint with another -- whatever the grievance may be, children of God must never give vent to their anger. We must constantly develop a warm-hearted, kind, gentle, forbearing nature, always keeping the example of Jesus before our eyes. As sons of God we must also be imitators of our heavenly Father seeking to become more like

Him in spirit. Even as He forgave us through our Savior, so we, with the same love and gracious mercy, should forgive those who trespass against us. And as we constantly die to sin and become more like our God, then we are certainly growing spiritually. It is this spiritual growth which will draw us ever closer to our Savior, make us more like Him, and fill us with love and faith. The more we strive to approach our great Pattern, the more perfect in faith we will become.

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

Translation: Therefore observe accurately (be careful) how you walk about, not as unwise, but as wise (men).

Col. 4, 5: Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time.

Translation: In wisdom (caution) towards those without, ransoming the time.

We are here exhorted to live a life which is in accordance with the divine wisdom which God has bestowed upon us. No longer are we to be filled with the vain platitudes of this world, no more are we to utter the blasphemous and ignorant philosophies of men, but we are to announce the wisdom of God by our lives. Especially in respect to the unchurched must we use this special measure of wisdom which our heavenly Father so graciously bestows upon us. Those who are without are constantly watching our lives, and if we redeem, ransom our time, counting every moment as a precious gift from God, they cannot help but realize that we are filled with divine wisdom.

For this reason we, as Christians, must carefully weigh everything that we do; never must we act upon the spur of the moment, for we may be sending some soul to eternal damnation because of our lapse into the foolishness of this world.

Caution, prudence, and wisdom must be our watchwords of life, we must not grasp at the first thing that is displayed to us as good, we must not make snap judgments concerning the important matters of our life, but we must shop around with our time, finding the best possible use for our talents and time and then using them to every possible advantage, not for ourselves, but for our Church and for those without who are yet to be won for the kingdom of God.

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

Translation: Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and composing in your heart to the Lord.

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

Translation: But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives to husbands in all things.

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.

Translation: And for me, so that to me may be given the word in the opening of my mouth, in boldness to make known the mystery of the Gospel.

Col. 3, 16: Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your heart to the Lord.

Translation: The word of Christ let dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs with grace singing in your heart to the Lord.

Col. 4, 1: Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal; knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven.

God here stresses the relationship of Christians toward one another. In the first place we must be filled with joy. As an expression of this joy we are to sing and make melody in our hearts composing and rejoicing in our hearts to the Lord. Here is a liturgical guide, for there are three types of musical composition mentioned: 1) psalms -- namely the psalms of Scripture rendered verbatim and set to music; 2) hymns -- based on Scripture but not necessarily verbatim; 3) spiritual songs -- anthems, not necessarily hymns at all, but beautiful compositions glorifying the God who has given us the gift of music. The important thing is that all of these forms of worship, including these musical compositions, must come from the hearts of the Christians.

This sincerity is then voiced by Paul inasmuch as it makes him bold and fearless to preach the Gospel, to make known the mystery of the Gospel.

We must always remain humble in all our service and relations with one another, for Christ is our Master and our Judge.

Eph. 6, 18-20: Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints; and for me that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the Gospel, for I am an ambassador in bonds; that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.

Translation: Through all prayer and supplication praying at every time in the Spirit, and watching in this in all persistence and supplication for all the saints, and for me, that to me may be given the word in the opening of my mouth, in boldness to make known the mystery of the Gospel.

Col. 4, 2: Continue in prayer and watch in the same with thanksgiving.

In both of these passages Paul makes reference to his captivity. He stresses the fact that he is making use of his time in prayer for all the saints. This prayer is voiced in the Spirit, for the Spirit alone can work such a constant desire for prayer in our hearts. To the pastor is given the gift of interpretation of God's Word, and in order that he may be able to proclaim this Word with all boldness and confidence, as it ought to be preached, the pastor must follow the example of Paul given us in these verses and ask his people to pray for him also in this respect. Paul especially was in need of such supplication and prayer just at this time, for, as Tychicus informed the Colossians, Paul was a prisoner for the sake of his Savior. Because he confessed Jesus, Paul was now in bonds, but he asks the saints to pray for him that he might continue to fearlessly proclaim Jesus. Paul never forgot that first, last, and always he was an ambassador of his Savior, and therefore he asks his flock to pray for him, so that he might receive the needed strength to preach the word boldly,

in keeping with apostolic commission. Paul accents the fact that we must pray thus for all believers, a watchful and constantly prayerful attitude which has in mind the needs of all believers under all circumstances of life. This is a duty which is especially incumbent upon us as leaders in the Church of Jesus Christ.

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.

Col. 4, 7: All my state shall Tychicus declare unto you, who is a beloved brother, and a faithful minister and fellow servant in the Lord.

Here Paul informs the recipients of the letter that he is sending information concerning his present condition by his fellow servant, Tychicus.

In this brief statement of the apostle, he pays the highest possible compliment to Tychicus, calling him a beloved, esteemed brother, and a faithful minister in the Lord. Paul could have given this pastor no higher recommendation.

We also, as pastors of the flock placed in our spiritual care, should seek to win such a recommendation from our God. That should be our highest reward, that we can be called faithful ministers in our Lord. We must never do things for our own benefit, out of selfish consideration, but we must always work in keeping with the dignity of our high calling. We have the blessed privilege of serving our Savior here upon earth,

and our highest reward should not be our own gain and glorification, but the witness that we have been faithful ministers in the Lord. To this end let us labor and study hard, so that we may truly be worthy of such praise. Then our Lord will meet us as we enter the gates of heaven and say unto us: "Well done, thou good and faithful servant."

Besides these parallels in the two captivity letters of Paul under consideration, we have the Table of Duties contained in both which are almost verbatim in agreement with each other. These are worthy injunctions and exhortations to husbands and wives, children, fathers and mothers, masters, servants. The principles set forth in them all is, that at all times Christians must constantly follow the example of the beloved Savior. If we live a life of love, if we heed the warnings which Jesus gives us in respect to the devil and our flesh who are constantly waiting for us to give way to sin and anger, then we know that we are living in accordance with God's Word.

This Table of Duties is a wonderful and condensed resume of the relation of the Christian family and household. Obedience to them is a sure way to a happy home and every Christian should be based on these divine principles.

III. CONCLUSION.

After considering the passages in these two Epistles of Paul we must certainly have come to the conclusion that a lifetime of study could not exhaust the riches of divine knowledge contained in these two gems of the Bible. The spiritual guidance and words of divine wisdom contained therein are truly a means whereby a Christian can be strengthened and equipped to meet any emergency in the battle with sin, death, and the devil. A wealth of spiritual knowledge is contained in these Letters and whoever spends fruitful hours of study in the divine garden of this message from God will agree with me when I say that such study is indeed redeeming the time, for nowhere else could any man spend his time more profitably. The Christian who reads these words must be filled with the desire to follow the exhortations of Paul. Every child of God who prayerfully goes through these wonderful letters will be ruled by the law of Christian love, friendship, warm-heartedness, charity, and patience; he will be strengthened to flee from all things which are connected with his Old Adam, his original sinful state; and, above all, he will continue to grow spiritually, gradually approaching his Savior and his God.

Concerning the relation between these two Epistles of St. Paul there can be no doubt as to their similarity. However, De Wette claims that Ephesians was merely a copy of Colossians carried out to greater length. This we deny, because our study shows us clearly that each letter has its own

individuality. However, if our own study does not convince us, we have the corroboration of many others. Such noted exegetes as Meyer, Harless, Wiessler, Olshausen, and Stoeckhardt definitely disagree with De Wette's statement. Meyer-Schmidt-Kommentar ueber den Epheserbrief says:

"Indess erklart sich diess hinreichend daraus, dass die Abfassung des einen Briefes der des anderen rasch gefolgt ist, so dass Paulus noch voll und durchdrungen war von den zuvor ausgesprochenen Ideen, Warnungen, und Ermahnungen. Dies fuer des Apostels unwuerdig zu erklaren, ist voreilig, da wir von ihm kein anderes Briefpaar haben, welches so gleichzeitig und aus so gleichem Ideenkreise hervorgegangen waere. Ist aber allerdings gar Manches, was auch der Kolosserbrief enthaelt, in unserem Briefe wortreich dargestellt, so ist in ihm auch Manches gehalten."

(E.g. cf. Eph. 1, 15-17 with Col. 1, 3-4; Eph. 2, 16 with Col. 1, 20; Eph. 4, 32 with Col. 3, 12ff.)

That the Letter to the Colossians was undoubtedly written first is held by most exegetes. Since Paul had an urgent need to care for in Colossae and wrote concerning the slave Onesimus to Philemon, it would only be natural for Paul to write these two important documents first and then, since they were to be sent by Tychicus, he also added a Letter to the Ephesians, since he was filled with his glorious message. Stoeckhardt holds this view, as do also Meyer, Harless, Neander, and Olshausen. We read in Neander, Geschichte der Pflanzung usw., vol. 1, p. 524, 4th edition:

"Und daraus erhellt auch, dass er den Brief an die Kolosser zuerst unter diesen beiden geschrieben hat; denn in demselben zeigen sich uns diese Gedanken in ihrer urspruenglichen Entstehung und Beziehung, wie sie durch den Gegensatz gegen jene in diesem Briefe von ihm bekaempfte Sekte hervorgerufen wurden."

The similarities have been brought out throughout the thesis, but it might be well to see what other men have to say on this subject. Before others are cited however, let us consider a few general comparisons. Concerning the Jews and Gentiles we note that a) fellowship between them is established by the eternal purpose of God to save all men and the whole idea of Christian faith; b) universal salvation is shown as absolutely necessary because of universal depravity; c) circumcision is definitely done away with, thus breaking down the last barrier between Jews and Gentiles.

Concerning the office and person of Jesus we see that Col. 1, 16 carries the Savior's Lordship back to the beginning of all things. Eph. 1, 10 makes the reconciliation effected by Christ's death include all things and carries back His Lordship, or Headship of the Ecclesia to a primordial choosing of its members in Him, Eph. 3, 14.

The contrast between the two Epistles with respect to the Holy Spirit is very marked throughout.

The relation of Ephesians to Colossians:

Similarities

1. Same words and expressions occur repeatedly.
2. Passages identical in thought and language.
3. Passages identical in thought, but the expression is varied.

4. There are others where the topic is more fully handled than in the other.
5. Passages in which topics follow in the same order.

Dissimilarities

1. In Colossians we have a particular letter to a particular congregation in reference to peculiar circumstances, whereas in Ephesians these features are missing.
2. Ephesians is more doctrinal than practical, whereas Colossians is just the opposite.
3. Colossians warns the church against false philosophy. Ephesians -- "the great design unfolding the glories of redemption for both Jew and Greek; designed to be the great medium for the manifestation of the grace and wisdom of God to all intelligent creatures."
4. Topics discussed in one and not the other.
5. Ephesians much more unified than Colossians.

We read in Davies, The Epistle of St. Paul to the Ephesians, the Colossians, and Philemon, page 7:

"Both were written at very nearly the same time by the same author. It is when we are considering the doctrinal substance of the Epistles that this conclusion forces itself upon us most irresistibly as the true one. These two letters are twins, singularly like one another in face, like also in character, but not so identical as to be without a strongly marked individuality."

Lightfoot; Biblical Essays, page 395: "The one is the general and systematic exposition of the same truths which appear in a special bearing in the other."

The International Critical Commentary tells us:

"It is impossible even to glance over these two Epistles without being struck by the many similarities and even verbal coincidences between them. On the other hand, the Epistle to the Ephesians differs markedly from its twin Epistle in the absence of controversial matter such as forms so important an element in the other." P. xxiii.

These opinions, as the expression of distinguished scholars in this field, speak for themselves. It is quite unnecessary to mention the very apparent conclusion which we must have reached by this time. These Epistles were undoubtedly written very shortly one after the other from Rome, with the Letter to the Colossians and to Philemon preceding the Epistle to the Ephesians.

It is with reluctance that I must give up the interesting study which has engrossed my attention for such a long time, and I do so realizing full well that I have barely scratched the surface in my study of this section of Scriptures. May the future grant me both the time and the opportunity to devote infinitely more time on this precious section of God's Word.

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Also made use of Prof. Kretzmann's class notes which were dictated in the course for Ephesians and Colossians.