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“THE VICTORIOUS LIFE”

It appears to have been early observed that the mills of the gods grind very slowly: and hasty spirits have been only partially reconciled to that fact by the farther observation that they do their work exceedingly well. Men are unable to understand why time should be consumed in divine works. Why should the almighty Maker of the heaven and earth take millions of years to create the world? Why should He bring the human race into being by a method which leaves it ever incomplete? Above all, in His recreation of a lost race, why should He proceed by process? Men are unwilling that either the world or they themselves should be saved by God's secular methods. They demand immediate, tangible results. They ask, Where is the promise of His coming? They ask to be themselves made glorified saints in the twinkling of an eye. God's ways are not their ways, and it is a great trial to them that God will not walk in their ways. They love the storm and the earthquake and the fire. They cannot see the divine in “a sound of gentle stillness,” and adjust themselves with difficulty to the lengthening perspective of God's gracious working. For the world they look every day for the cataclysm in which alone they can recognize God's salvation; and when it ever delays its coming they push it reluctantly forward but a little bit at a time. For themselves they cut the knot and boldly declare complete salvation to be within their reach at their option, or already grasped and enjoyed. It is true, observation scarcely justifies the assertion. But this difficulty is easily removed by adjusting the nature of complete salvation to fit their present attainments. These impatient souls tolerate more readily the idea of an imperfect perfection than the admission of lagging perfecting.

THE PURPOSE OF THE AGES*

That remarkable and unique phrase, "in the heavenlies," occurs no less than five times in the Epistle to the Ephesians. It is found only in Ephesians. "The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ hath blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies" (i. 3). God raised Christ "from the dead, and made him to sit at his right hand in the heavenlies" (i. 20.) God "raised us up with Christ and made us to sit with him in the heavenlies" (ii. 6). God called the church into being "to the intent that unto the principalities and the powers in the heavenlies might be made known the manifold wisdom of God" (iii. 10). The church of God is summoned to "wrestle not against flesh and blood but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world-rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenlies" (vi. 12).

Clearly the phrase denotes not a locality, but a "supramundane, supra-sensual, eternal order," a spiritual realm that encases and surrounds our physical universe. It is "the sphere of the ruling forces of the universe, of all the spiritual activities, that immaterial religion, that unseen universe," which lies behind the world of sense. "In it great forces are at work, forces which are conceived of as having an order and constitution of their own, as having become in part disordered forces, which are opposed to us and wrestle against us. Forces, however, over all of which, be they evil or be they good, Christ is finally to be enthroned and we in him." Ephesians is the epistle of the heavenlies, "the Alps of the New Testament." The apostle Paul in this epistle climbs a lofty mountain-peak and takes a far-reaching view of the valleys of the past, the present and the future lying beneath him; and running through all these valleys and joining them together he sees the

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shining river of a divine purpose that is to be realized in Christ through the Church. Or, to change the figure, Ephesians tells of a golden chain, whose links run through all time, bind all time and the eternity that follows, back to the eternity before time was. Ephesians unrolls before us the divine panorama of the ages. Paul takes his stand by the throne of God and looks down upon the events of history. From the standpoint of that throne he gives a spiritual view of history. The word "spirit" or "spiritual" occurs thirteen times in Ephesians. The inspired apostle carries us behind the stage on which the events of history take place, and shows us an unseen yet real and mighty Kingdom, more real and more powerful than any of the Kingdoms of earth. He gives us a glimpse of the eternal and world-wide purposes and movements of God. "Ascending into these lofty regions, he views the Church in relation not to time but to eternity, not to the nations of the world but to the universe at large." This is what is meant when we call Ephesians the epistle of the heavenlies.

Another significant expression in Ephesians, well worthy of our careful attention, is the word "mystery," which occurs six times in this brief epistle. The word is found twenty times in Paul, all told. He uses it sixteen times to express the thought of the universality of the Church, the incorporation of the Gentiles in the body of Christ, the union of both Jew and Gentile in one society. He employs it four times to express special truths in the Christian revelation. That is to say, Paul uses the word "mystery" sixteen times in the general sense of the universality of the Church; and of the sixteen occurrences of the word in that general sense six are found in this one Epistle to the Ephesians. Ephesians is pre-eminently the epistle of the mystery. It uncovers the greatest and deepest and dearest secret that ever lay in the divine mind and heart, namely, the formation of a church in the Jewish Messiah that should be one and universal. This secret is called "the mystery of God's will according to his good pleasure which he pur-

posed in Christ" (i. 9); it is called "the mystery" (iii. 3); "the mystery of Christ, which in other generations was not made known unto the sons of men" (iii. 4); "the mystery which for ages has been hid in God" (iii. 9); "the mystery of the gospel," for which Paul was an ambassador in chains (vi. 19-20). Ephesians proclaims that the supreme secret of God, the root philosophy of the universe, "the one far-off divine event to which the whole creation moves," is the formation of the Church in Christ.

A third key-expression in Ephesians is the word translated "dispensation." It is found six times in Paul, and three times in Ephesians alone. The apostle speaks of "a dispensation of the fulness of the times to sum up all things in Christ" (i. 10). He reminds his readers that they have surely heard "of the dispensation of that grace of God which was given me to you-ward" (iii. 2). He declares that his life-work was "to make all men see what is the dispensation of the mystery which for ages hath been hid in God" (iii. 9). In each instance Paul uses the word to denote the carrying into effect of a prior purpose, an eternal purpose. The word in Ephesians conveys the specific idea that the appearance of the Church in history is the carrying out into effect of a purpose that had for ever been in the mind and heart of God.

Paul refers to the "Gentiles" five times in Ephesians, and each time he employs the word to emphasize the thought of the universality of the Church, the admission of all men to the blessings of the gospel. Dean Farrar says of Ephesians: "It is the most sublime, the most profound, the most advanced and final utterance of Paul's gospel to the Gentiles." It gives the ripest and final results of Paul's thinking concerning the universality of the Church. When we recall the fact that in I. Corinthians, "the Gentiles" are mentioned only three times and only once in II. Corinthians, we readily see that Ephesians may well be called "the Epistle of the Gentiles."

I desire to call your attention to one other significant expression in this epistle. I refer to the word "purpose." 'Tis true, it occurs only twice, but it is employed both times in a very significant connection. In its first occurrence (i. 11) Paul declares that the Church was fore-ordained, "according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things (literally, who energizeth the universe) after the counsel of his will." Here the apostle asserts that the formation of the Church is one among the many purposes of God. In the second occurrence of the word Paul advances to a profounder truth, and declares that the making of the universal Church in the Jewish Messiah is not merely one among the many divine purposes, but is the central purpose of God in history. God brought the Church into being "according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord" (iii. 11). Note that the phrase, "the eternal purpose," is literally "the purpose of the ages," which means the purpose running through the ages, the purpose that binds the ages into one whole; the purpose that guides, controls, directs all events of history unto one final goal. All other purposes, all other enterprises, all secular happenings are made subservient to this one supreme purpose, namely, the formation of an universal Church in Christ Jesus; and in the interests of this pre-eminent purpose the whole world is governed. The appearance of the Church in history is no subsequent emendation of the plan of creation; it is the eternal forethought, the all-controlling thought, the beginning, the middle and the end of all God's ways and works. Everything else in history is only a tiny whirlpool or eddy near the bank, while the great central stream of history is the Church. God, the great constructor of the universe, has through all the centuries been unrolling the panorama of the ages in fulfillment of his eternal purpose to build in His Son one universal and everlasting Church. The forming of this Church is "the fulfillment of all hopes, the perfection of all philosophy, the interpreter of all revelations, the key of all seeming contra-

dictions in the physical and moral worlds." In his deeply spiritual commentary on Ephesians, John Pulsford happily expresses the central thought of the Epistle in the formula: "Christ and His seed, central to all things."

Combining these key expressions—"in the heavenlies," "the mystery," the dispensation," "the Gentiles," and "the purpose of the ages," we obtain the sublime theme of the Epistle: "The Formation of one universal and unending Church in Christ Jesus is the Purpose of the ages"; it is the one far-off divine event to which the whole creation moves. The Christian Church is the centre and end of all history. This thought runs through every paragraph of the Epistle. There are, however, three passages, which we may call theme-texts, where the central idea of the Epistle is expressed in simple yet profound language. The first of these texts is i. 10: "to sum up all things in Christ"; literally, "to head up the universe in the Christ." The Jewish Messiah is to be the head of a new and redeemed universe. The second theme-text is i. 22-23: "The Church, which is His body, the fulness of His that filleth all in all." The Head finds completeness in the Body. The Church is the completion of the Christ. The Church is ever moving on towards a completeness absolute and all-inclusive. The third theme-text is iii. 10-11: God called the Church into existence in order to make known his manifold wisdom "according to the purpose of the ages he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Over and over again Paul emphasizes the thought of the Church's unity. The unity of the Church is effected through the union of the believer with Jesus Christ. The expressions "in Christ," "in the Lord," "in Him," occur over thirty times in the Epistle. We are chosen in Christ, adopted in Him, redeemed in Him, inherited in Him, sealed in Him, made alive in Him, made to sit together in the heavenlies in Him, created in Him for good works; the purpose of the ages was formed and wrought out in Him. God has made Jesus Christ "the radiating centre of spirit-

ual forces for the universe. The goal of God's gracious purpose is in the end to sum up all things in Him."

But the Church is not only one, it is likewise universal. It reaches out over all races, over all barriers and divisions of mankind. The word "all" occurs fifty-one times in Ephesians. "Here for the first time," declares Hort, "we hear Christians throughout the world described as together making up a single ecclesia, a single assembly of God, or Church." "What is characteristic of Ephesians is the vision of the universal Church, the Church of all the nations and of all the ages, the body and bride of a risen and ascended Christ, an instrument for the expression of his mind and heart and for the working out of his eternal purposes, by bringing all men to a knowledge of the truth and faith in him." All believers are parts of one divine temple, are citizens of one city, are members of one family. Throughout the Epistle the apostle is presenting the idea that there is "No East, nor West, nor border, nor breed, nor birth when two men in Christ Jesus stand face to face, though they come from the ends of the earth."

Not only is the Church one and universal, it is the same in all ages; it has unending continuity. There has been only one Church; it is the Church in Christ Jesus. The sweep of Paul's thought takes in not only all races, but all the ages—past, present, and future. It is the "eternal" epistle, setting forth the thought that the Church is one and the same in all ages.

The formation of one universal, unending Church is the divine purpose of the ages; that, according to our view, is the splendid theme of Ephesians. We now propose to give a rapid sketch of the literary structure and arrangement of the Epistle, in order that we may discover how the apostle develops and unfolds such a sublime conception. We claim for Ephesians nothing less than what Marcus Dods claimed for the Gospel according to John: "It is a perfect work of art; from the first word to the last there is no paragraph, sentence, or expression which is out of its place, or

with which we could dispense; part hangs together with part in perfect balance." The flow of its sublime eloquence sweeps forward along the channel of logical arrangement and argument. Nevertheless, the commentaries have failed to see the perfect structure and symmetry of the Epistle. For example, MacPherson asserts: "In this Epistle, even more decidedly than in any other epistle of Paul, the impassioned character of the composition renders it difficult to arrange the contents according to any structural, logical and orderly scheme. Whatever the plan adopted, ideas will make their appearance under one head which would apparently take rank more appropriately under another; or, at certain points, expressions will be given to thoughts which in a slightly different form or connection have been introduced elsewhere."

It would be hard to pack into a brief statement a more erroneous conception of the structure of Ephesians. MacPherson has failed utterly to trace the anatomy of the Epistle. He has missed the organic cleavages. The student does not have to try to arrange the contents according to any logical and orderly scheme. It is not left to the student to adopt any plan or to put ideas under any one head. Paul has cared for all these things himself. The Epistle itself is a logical whole, a literary unit. When the student has discovered the true organism of the Epistle, he will see every part dove-tailing beautifully into every other part. In the perfection of its form as well as in the heavenliness of its matter he will see an evidence of its inspiration. And yet we are forced to admit that we have never seen in print a real analysis of the Epistle. To be sure, the commentaries give what they call an "analysis," but it is no more than a table of contents, with no exhibit of the logical connection between the paragraphs. Westcott alone approaches what may be called an analysis.

Let us now examine the structure of Ephesians, to ascertain whether it is built upon any consistent and logical plan.

Paul opens in the first two verses with his customary

salutation, where we have a brief description of the writer of the Epistle, the readers and the greeting. At the third verse we come upon the opening prayer (which we find in all Paul's epistles to churches except in that to Galatians), with its uniform parts, Thanksgiving (vss. 3-14), and Petition (vss. 15-23). Thus, the opening prayer occupies the whole of the first chapter, with the exception of the first two verses, which contain the salutation. However, a careful study of the thought-content of this opening prayer clearly shows that it also gives us the apostle's first great thought about the Church, and that consequently the body of the Epistle begins precisely where the opening prayer begins, at verse 3 of Chapter i. Let us glance at this marvellous prayer for a moment. It begins with an outburst of thanksgiving to God for our every spiritual blessing in Christ Jesus: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who hath blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ" (i. 3). Then the apostle proceeds, in vss. 4-14 to enumerate these blessings. They are seven in number: fore-ordination, election, adoption, redemption, inheritance, sealing, and final and complete redemption of God's own possession. These seven blessings sweep the whole gamut of God's loving and gracious purposes to mankind through the Church. Observe that the first two of these blessings—fore-ordination and election—carry us back into the eternal past, "before the foundation of the world"; and that the last, the seventh—final and complete redemption of God's own possession—sweeps forward into the distant future, when all the ransomed hosts of God have been saved, to sin no more; while the four blessings, lying in between the eternal past and the eternal future, summarize God's merciful dealings with mankind through the Church in time. In thus unrolling before his readers this magnificent panorama of God's goodness to mankind, the apostle has a distinct end in view. By tracing God's blessings to mankind through the Church back to a divine purpose in the eternal past the apostle endeavors

to present the sublime conception of the origin of the Church in eternity. That is the first great thought in Ephesians—the Church had its origin in the mind and purpose of God before the foundation of the world. That is the truth contained in the Thanksgiving part of the opening prayer.

The apostle now passes into the Petition part of his prayer, which occupies the remainder of Chapter i. Here he asks God to give to his readers power to appreciate, assimilate and impart to others these seven blessings. He prays that they may know three things: God's calling in the past; God's inheritance in the future; and God's power in the present. It is God's power in the present to us who believe, which is the all-sufficient guarantee that God's calling in the past will be realized in God's inheritance in the future. God, who chose the Church in eternity, is able to carry that Church through time and at last present it faultless before his throne, as the riches of the glory of his inheritance. Hence it is perfectly obvious that one central thought runs through both the thanksgiving and the petition parts of the opening prayer, and that thought is the origin of the Church in eternity.

So far in the epistle we had had the origin of the Church in eternity. Now the question is bound to arise just at this juncture: How is the Church to assume an objective existence in time? How is the Church to pass from its subjective existence in eternity in the mind and purpose of God to its objective existence in history? How does the Church pass from existence in *posse* to existence in *esse*? I say that question is bound to arise just at this point; and I maintain that that is precisely the question which Paul discusses in chapters ii and iii, namely, the origin of the Church in time.

There is a close thought-connection between the closing paragraph of Chapter ii and the opening paragraph of Chapter iii. Paul had just spoken of the exceeding greatness of God's power, which he wrought in Christ when

he raised him from the dead and made him to sit at his right hand in the heavenlies. Now the apostle declares that the same divine power which lifted Christ alive out of his grave and set him at God's right hand came down to our earth and lifted human souls out of their graves of sin and spiritual death and made them alive together with Christ, and raised them up with him, and made them to sit with him in the heavenlies. That is how the Church got its start in time—by the coming down of the creative power of God to quicken dead souls. Without the coming of that power the Church never would have appeared in history. The Church owes its origin in time to the quickening power of God, and to that alone. That this is how the Church began in time Paul proves conclusively in ii. 1-10. The Church, he asserts, is composed of souls once dead in sin, but now alive in Christ. These dead souls could not have been instrumental in their own resurrection; their quickening into spiritual life was due to divine power.

Now if this be a true account of the Church's composition, it necessarily follows that the Church is a real unity, because it has been made out of the same raw material acted upon by the same outside power. Therefore, we would naturally expect Paul to take up next in order the subject of the unity of the Church in time. This he does in the next paragraph, ii. 11-22. Formerly the human race was divided into two sections, the Gentile and the Jew. The Gentile was Christless, churchless, hopeless and Godless. But now, in Christ Jesus, Jew and Gentile have been made into "one new man," and both have been reconciled in one body unto God through the cross of Christ, through whom they both have access in one Spirit unto the Father. The consequences of this union are that believers of all nations and ages are citizens of one city, members of one family, parts of one temple, a holy temple in the Lord, in whom they are builded together for a habitation of God in the Spirit.

So far, in this section of the Epistle which deals with

the Church on the field of history, Paul has spoken of the composition and the resultant unity of the Church. There now remains only one further idea to give a complete discussion of the origin of the Church in time, and that is the thought of its mission or purpose. The mission of the Church is the particular topic that demands consideration just at this stage in Paul's discussion. We have been told that the Church is composed of souls once dead in sin but now alive in Christ, and that the Church thus composed is "one new man" in Christ. "But," we ask, "what is the Church for? What is its mission or purpose? Why has God called it into being and made it one in Christ Jesus?" This question the apostle now takes up and answers in iii. 1-13. He declares that the mission of the Church is to make known to the principalities and the powers in the heavenlies the manifold wisdom of God. The word "manifold" means literally the many colored, or very varied, wisdom of God. "The metaphor is taken from the intricate body of an embroidered pattern," and the manifold wisdom of God is seen in his control of millions upon millions of free agents without destroying their freedom, in his use of the varied capacities and powers of man, in his guidance of the complicated events of human life—in his making all men, all events, and all nations to work together for the furtherance of his purpose to build in His Son one universal and unending Church. The Church of God thus builded on the field of history is the most signal manifestation of the manifold wisdom of God. The very existence of a Church thus formed will flash throughout the universe the message of the manifold wisdom of God.

These three topics—the composition, the unity, and the mission of the Church on the field of history—embrace every essential feature pertaining to the Church in time. Hence, we are not surprised to find Paul bringing his discussion to a close at this point. The apostle has now given us in Chapter i. the origin of the Church in eternity, and in chapters ii.-iii. the origin of the Church in time. He

has presented in outline every essential feature of the origin of the Church. With this sublime view of the Church's origin spread out before him, how natural and appropriate would it be for Paul to close this part of his Epistle with a mighty outburst of praise. This is what we have in iii. 14-21. This paean of praise is one of the finest passages in Paul. "For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, that he would grant you to be strengthened with power through His Spirit, that ye may be strong to apprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth of the love of God in making possible such a glorious Church." He closes with the doxology: "Now unto Him that is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or thing, according to the power that worketh in us, unto Him be the glory in the Church and in Christ Jesus unto all generations, for ever and ever. Amen."

We have completed the first main division of the Epistle, chapters i-iii., where we have The Origin of the Church portrayed, and the two sub-divisions—the Origin of the Church in Eternity in chapter i., and the Origin of the Church in Time in chapters ii. and iii. Before we pass on to the second main division of the Epistle—chapters iv.-vi.—let me call your attention to a very interesting feature of the structure of chapters i.-iii. In i. 3 we read: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who hath blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies in Christ." That one verse contains the substance of the first three chapters of Ephesians. Everything that follows that verse on through the third chapter is simply the expansion of the thought contained in that verse. In other words, Paul at the very beginning gives us an all-comprehensive statement of our spiritual blessings in Christ, and then he proceeds to unfold step by step the rich and varied content of those blessings. Paul takes his text and sticks to it to the end.

Thus the first main division of Ephesians—chapters i.-iii.

—presents in rapid outline the Church of God from the standpoint of its origin. In the first chapter, its origin in eternity; in chapters ii.-iii., its origin in time; and the whole presentation begins and ends with an outburst of praise.

As we enter upon the second main division of the Epistle—chapters iv.-vi.—we find in the very first verse of chapter iv. a statement that throws a flood of light upon the organic structure of the whole Epistle. The first verse of chapter iv. reads: “I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beseech you to walk worthily of the calling wherewith ye were called.” Part of this verse looks back to chapters i.-iii., and sums them up in a brief statement. It is “the calling wherewith ye were called.” That part of the verse—“the calling wherewith ye were called”—is an accurate description of Ephesians, chapters ii.-iii., where we have The Calling, or Origin, of the Church. The other part of the verse—“walk worthily”—looks forward to chapters iv.-vi. and sums them up. There we have the Walk, or Life, of the Church. Thus, iv. 1 is, so to speak, the link that binds the two main parts of the book together, and at the same time describes the respective themes of the two parts. These two topics—the origin and the life of the Church—embrace every essential feature of the Church. The Epistle to the Ephesians is a comprehensive and logical treatment of the Christian Church.

Let us look at chapters iv.-vi. more closely. We discover a section, iv. 1-v. 21, which is tied together by two threads. The first thread is indicated by the frequent occurrence of the expression “one another” or “each other,” or “members one of another.” We read: “forbearing one another in love” (iv. 21); “speak ye truth one with his neighbor, for we are members one of another” (iv. 25); “be ye kind one to another” (iv. 32); “speaking one to another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs” (v. 19); “submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of Christ” (v. 21), etc. Manifestly, in this section the apostle aims to set forth what may be called the *organic* life of the

Church by which we mean the life of Christians as members of one body, the Church. The second thread tying this section together is revealed in the five-fold use of the word "walk." "Walk worthily of the calling wherewith we were called" (iv. 1); "that ye no longer walk as the Gentiles also walk in the vanity of their mind" (iv. 17); "walk in love" (v. 2); "walk as light" (v. 8); and "walk as wise" (v. 15). By use of the expression "walk," the apostle would emphasize the daily life of the Christian. Combining the thought of the organic life of the Church with this thought of the daily walk of the Christian, we reach the all-controlling truth in this section, namely, that the Christian, in every step of his daily life, should remember that he is a member of the body of Christ, the Church; that he is a part of a larger whole, and that his life should be lived in the light of that thought. Furthermore, the five-fold repetition of the word "walk" gives us the five-fold sub-division of this section dealing with the organic life of the Church. The Christian is to live this organic life by walking, first, in unity; second, in holiness; third, in love; fourth, in light; fifth, in wisdom. Under each of these five "walks" the apostle explains *what* is involved in thus walking—*why* we should thus walk, and *how* we may thus walk. Thus there are many evidences that this sub-division of the Epistle—iv. 1-v. 21—was arranged with the greatest care. The apostle groups his material with rare skill. Every part is in perfect balance with every other part, and the whole section gives a striking treatment of the organic life of the Church.

But, after all, the home, the Christian family, and not the Church, is the social unit. The family is the social unit, both in the Church and the State. Hence, we should be prepared to find the apostle giving some space, in his discussion of the life of the Church, to the Christian home. This he accordingly does in the next section, v. 22-vi. 9, where are set forth in great wisdom and particularity the duties and the rights of wives and husbands (v. 2-33), of

children and parents (vi. 1-4), and of slaves and masters (vi. 5-9). This section of Ephesians, dealing with the home life of the Church, is the most complete and the most sympathetic and gracious treatment of the Christian home in the whole Bible.

Paul introduces his last point in regard to the life of the Church with the word "finally." He is about to give us the climax of his most skilfully arranged discussion of the life of the Church. He paints a vivid picture of the Christian warrior, clad in God's panoply, going forth to make unending war with the evils in the world. Now, if we are correct in our claim that this section of the Epistle is climatic, we may say that Paul here (vi. 10-20) teaches that the highest expression of the life of the Church is to be found in an aggressive attack against the evils in the world. "The warfare here described is not the warfare of the individual Christian for his own salvation, but the greater conflict, in which Christ leads his forces against the enemies of the Gospel, against the powers that keep mankind in slavery. However, individual Christians are soldiers in this war, and the armor mentioned is such as individual Christians must put on."

We have now traced in brief outline Paul's discussion of the life of the Church (iv. 1-vi. 20). We maintain that it is a perfect literary organism, with no essential part lacking, and every part in its proper place. The apostle considers, first, the organic life of the Church; that is, the conduct and behavior of the members respecting their duties and rights within the Church itself, the Christian brotherhood. This topic, naturally and logically, comes first in a discussion of the Church's life. Next he takes up the home life of the Church, the duties and rights of Christians in the family circle. Logic requires a consideration of the home life of the Church just at this point. Lastly, he presents the aggressive and militant life of the Church, the duty of the Christian in the great world of sin. These three points—the organic, the home, and the militant, life of

the Church—coming in this order, make a well-rounded, properly balanced treatment of the life of the Church of Jesus Christ.

We cannot bring our survey of Ephesians to a close without directing your attention to the last word in the Epistle. It is the word "incorruptible." "Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ with a love incorruptible" (vi. 24). The same word is used to express the imperishableness of God Himself. "Now unto the King eternal, incorruptible, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory, for ever and ever. Amen." (I. Tim. i. 17). Thus the word signifies that "the same imperishableness which is an attribute of God himself belongs to the unchanging order of the eternal world. Imperishableness is a characteristic of our new life in Christ, and of our love to him." That life and that love are immortal. The Church of Christ is immortal; it belongs to a region which is beyond the touch of decay and death. "Hence, the Epistle, which opened with a bold glance into the eternal past, closes with the outlook of an immortal hope."

" 'Mid toil and tribulation,
 And tumult of her war,
 She waits the consummation
 Of peace for evermore;
 Till with the vision glorious
 Her longing eyes are blest,
 And the great Church, victorious,
 Shall be the Church at rest."

Richmond, Va.

EUGENE C. CALDWELL