

EPHESIANS FOUR

DUTIES OF CHURCH MEMBERS

- 1. KEEP THE UNITY OF THE SPIRIT; 1-16**
 - a. WALK WORTHILY, 1-3
 - b. UNITY OF THE SPIRIT CONSISTS OF ONE BODY, SPIRIT, HOPE, LORD, FAITH, BAPTISM, GOD; 4-6
 - c. UNITY AIDED BY A DIVERSITY OF GIFTS, 7-16

- 2. WALK AS BECOMETH SAINTS:**
4:17-5:20
 - a. WALK NOT AS GENTILES WALK
 - (1) GENTILE WALK, 17-19
 - (2) CHRISTIAN WALK, 20-24
 - b. PRACTICAL EXHORTATIONS, 4:25-5:2

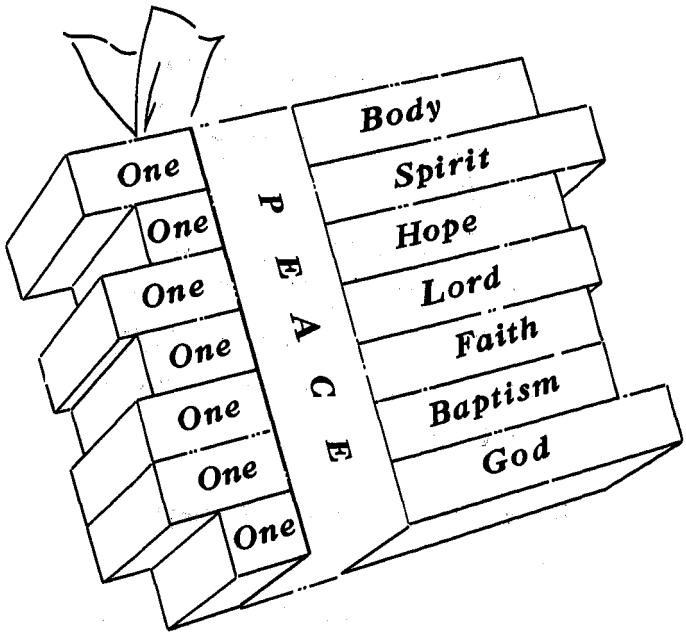
THE GLORIOUS CHURCH

NO UNITY POSSIBLE

UNLESS BOUND

TOGETHER BY

PEACE!



“Keep the unity of the Spirit
in the bond of peace.”

Ephesians 4:3

“Keep the
unity of the
Spirit in the
Ephesians 4:3
bond of peace.”

THE GLORIOUS CHURCH

Previewing in Outline Form (4:1-16)

II. Duties. 4:1-6:20.

A. Keep the unity of the Spirit. 4:1-16.

1. Walk worthily of your calling. 4:1-3.
 - a. With lowliness and meekness. 4:2.
 - b. With longsuffering.
 - c. Forbearing one another in love.
 - d. Giving diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit. 4:3.
2. Unity of the Spirit described. 4:4-6.
 - a. One body.
 - b. One Spirit.
 - c. One hope.
 - d. One Lord.
 - e. One faith.
 - f. One baptism.
 - g. One God.
3. Unity is served by a diversity of gifts. 4:7-16.
 - a. Christ has given different gifts to each one. 4:7-11.
 - (1) This is proved by a prophecy. 4:8-10.
 - (2) The different gifts listed. 4:11.
 - b. Purposes of the gifts. 4:12.
 - (1) For the perfecting of the saints.
— The perfected saints devote themselves to the work of ministering.
 - (2) For the building up of the body of Christ.
 - c. Objectives to be reached by the gifts. 4:13-16.
 - (1) Unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God. 4:13.
 - (2) Unto a fullgrown man.
 - (3) Unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ. 4:13-16.
 - (a) We are not to remain children. 4:14.
 - 1 Children are tossed about.
 - 2 Children are carried about by every wind of doctrine.
 - (b) We are to grow up into Christ. 4:15-16.
 - 1 Speaking the truth in love.
 - 2 Grow up in all things.

THE GLORIOUS CHURCH

3 Christ is the head.

— From Christ all the body working together makes the increase of the body. 4:16.

Text (4:1)

I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beseech you to walk worthily of the calling wherewith ye were called.

Thought Questions (4:1)

179. Is it sufficient to know the doctrines of Christ, without living a transformed life?
180. What is the *walk* of a Christian?
181. What is God's *calling* by which we were called?
182. What type of a life is *worthy* of our calling?

Paraphrase

1. On account of the impelling force in the glorious doctrines of the church, I Paul, the prisoner in the Lord, exhort and beseech you to live in a manner that will be worthy of the gospel, that glorious calling by which you were called.

Notes (4:1)

1. Paul mentions that he was "the prisoner in the Lord." Paul was blessed (happy) in suffering. He was more blessed for being in bonds for the Lord's cause than for having once been caught up into Paradise (II Corinthians 12:3, 7). The word *prisoner* used here (and in 3:1) designates one in bonds.
2. Christian living is not done because a stern and specific law demands it. Rather, Paul beseeches (exhorts, or stands by calling) us to live the proper kind of life. The law of God must be written in our hearts, not just on the law books. When it is written in our hearts, we will do the will of God even when we will not be seen by our fellow men.
3. Paul wanted us to marry "in the Lord" (I Corinthians 7:39), rejoice "in the Lord" (Philippians 3:1), and, if need be, to go to prison "in the Lord."
4. The adverb *worthily* comes from an adjective meaning "having the same weight; of like value." In the balances of life our *walk* (or daily manner of life) should be "of the same weight" as our calling.
5. Our *calling* (or vocation) refers to the Gospel by which God has called us (II Thessalonians 2:14). Certainly the gospel

is good, noble, and undefiled. Our daily walk must be of like value with the Gospel by which we have been called. The Christian life is often described as a *walk* (Romans 6:4; II Corinthians 5:7; Galatians 5:16; Ephesians 2:2; Philippians 3:18; Colossians 1:10).

Fact Questions

179. By what are we called?
180. What is the walk of the Christian?
181. How is our walk to compare with our calling?

Text (4:2, 3)

2 with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; 3 giving diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

Thought Questions (4:2-3)

183. Why shouldn't Christians have an attitude of superiority?
184. What does it mean to "forbear one another"?
185. How far should the Christian go in putting up with the shortcomings of others?
186. Can Christians have unity without working for it?
187. Are Christians to devise methods to produce unity, or to preserve the unity provided for them?
188. Can we have unity without peace?

Paraphrase

2. In order to live (or walk) in a manner worthy of our noble calling we must have a humble opinion of ourselves and a gentle disposition toward others. We need furthermore to exercise great patience in giving vent to anger, supporting one another in the miseries and shortcomings of life, because we are ruled by love and not by personal ambition;
3. Giving haste and attention as we seek to walk worthily, to keep that unity of the church which the Holy Spirit has provided. This unity can only be had when the members of the body are tied together by the bond of peace.

Notes (4:2-3)

1. These verses hint that personal differences and strains are constantly being felt within the church. Out in the world there are certainly strains, divisions, and contentions—nation against nation, capital against labor, race against race, North against South, etc. In the church, God is seeking to bring all things under *one* head, Christ (Ephesians 1:10). In order for this to be done, those in the church must be most careful about how they feel and act toward their brethren.
2. *Lowliness* is a humble opinion of oneself, a deep sense of moral littleness. We need this attitude because we are all sinful, and really know so very little.
3. *Meekness* is that characteristic and attitude that grows out of lowliness. It is mildness or gentleness. Meekness is not weakness. Moses was the meekest of men (Numbers 12:3), but he certainly was no “sissy.”
4. *Longsuffering* is patience, control of anger, endurance, slowness in avenging wrongs.
5. *To forbear* is to hold up, sustain, or support. The attitude that we can push others down to exalt ourselves is not the attitude of love. We must forbear the shortcomings and imperfections of others, because we are ruled by love. We may teach, reprove, or correct those who have shortcomings, but in doing it, we need to demonstrate the patience and forbearance of love.
6. It is not easy to keep unity. We must *endeavor* (or, literally, give haste) to preserve it. It must be worked at. Unity is the design of God for all the universe (1:10; 2:15). Those who please God must promote unity.
7. However, we cannot create unity, nor methods of unity. A divine unity is granted to the church. When men are in Christ, they are automatically one with all others who are in Christ, unless they make divisions by joining denominations organized by men. Two souls who are in Christ will flow

together as two drops of water. They will have fellowship with one another unless some barrier is created between them. All barriers are of men, not of God.

There is nothing to be gained by creating councils of denominations. We are only to *keep or guard* the unity that has been supplied to the church by the Holy Spirit. We shun and oppose all human teachings, inventions, and denominations as being causes of division, stumbling, and discord.

8. "To divide the spiritual body of Christ is as cruel a crime against God and man as it is to pierce the fleshly body of Jesus with a spear." (David Lipscomb)
9. The "unity of the Spirit" is that unity which the Holy Spirit provided when He established the church. It is a Spirit-led kind of unity. When the church had this type of unity, it was all of one heart and soul (Acts 4:32).
10. The phrase, "unity of the Spirit," does not hint that there is some unseen spiritual unity between the divisions of the church. We cannot have spiritual unity when external divisions exist, for these divisions are evidence of a lack of internal unity. If unity is not visible, and cannot be demonstrated outwardly, it does not exist.
11. "In the bond of peace": A *bond* is something which binds together, a *band*. *Peace* is the bond which ties the unity of the Spirit together. It is not possible for unity to exist where there is enmity or discord. Nothing good can happen where fighting is going on (James 3:16, 18).

Fact Questions

182. What three characteristics must we have to walk worthily of our calling (v. 2)?
183. In what are we to forbear one another?
184. Describe the kind of unity indicated by the phrase "unity of the Spirit."
185. Is it necessary to invent methods of achieving unity? Why or why not?
186. In what bond are we to keep the unity of the Spirit?

DUTIES

**UNKNOWN AND NEGLECTED
BY MOST CHURCH MEMBERS**

- 1. KEEP THE UNITY OF THE
SPIRIT, Eph. 4:1-16**
- 2. WALK AS BECOMETH SAINTS,
Eph. 4:17-5:20**
- 3. SUBJECT YOURSELVES ONE
TO ANOTHER, Eph. 5:21-6:9**
- 4. PUT ON THE WHOLE
ARMOR OF GOD, Eph. 6:10-20**

Text (4:4)

4 *There is one body, and one Spirit, even as also ye were called in one hope of your calling*

Thought Questions (4:4)

189. What is the *one body*?
190. How should the fact that there is only "one body, one Spirit," etc., affect our relationships toward our brethren?
191. Does the *one hope* of the Christian consist of the hope of making this present world a better place?

Paraphrase

4. The "unity of the Spirit" which we are to keep consists of seven unities: (1) one body, the church of Christ; (2) one Spirit, the Holy Spirit; and, just as there is only one body and Spirit, so also (3) ye were called in only one hope of your calling. This one hope rests upon the grace that is to be brought to us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven.

Notes (4:4)

1. Note that the words *there is* at the beginning of 4:4 are in italics, which indicates that they are not in the original Greek text, but are supplied into the English version for clarity and smoothness. Notice how verses three and four read when the *there is* is omitted: "Keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, one body, and one Spirit—" This plainly indicates that the unity of the Spirit consists in maintaining the seven unities of 4:4-6.

All the divisions of the religious world — Christian, professed Christian, and non-Christian — are a result of violation of one or more of these seven unities. Instead of preserving the *one body*, men have created a multitude of denominations. Instead of clinging to the *one hope*, many have set their hope upon this world only. The "social gospel" places most of its hope upon making this sin-cursed world perfect.

2. The plea for *one body* is not a plea for denominational union or federation, since there were no denominations in Paul's time.
3. The *one body* is the church of Christ (Ephesians 1:22-23; Colossians 3:15; I Corinthians 12:13). Christ has only one

church. We can all be one body if we will accept and abide by God's Word as our only authority, and if we will receive and recognize as brothers all who are truly saved, and if membership in any one church (assembly or congregation) is recognized as sufficient qualification for membership in any other congregation.

4. The *one spirit* is the Holy Spirit.
5. The *one hope* of the Christian has always rested upon the return of Christ and the blessings of the future life (Titus 2:13; I Peter 1:13). "Set your hope perfectly on the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ." "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable" (I Corinthians 15:19). The corruption in the nature of sinners is not taken away by giving them sufficient food, clothing, shelter, and entertainment. The curse which God pronounced on the earth and man when Adam sinned (thorns, death, pain, labor, sweat, suffering, etc.) shall not be removed until the end of time (Revelation 22:3). The future does not look good, according to God's Word (II Timothy 3:1-6; II Peter 3:3; Matthew 24:37-39). Social progress is pleasant and desirable, but social progress has not kept our crime rate from climbing, nor will it ever make this world a paradise.

Fact Questions

187. What relationship does the "unity of the Spirit" have to the seven *ones* of 4:4-6?
188. What does the *one hope* of the Christian rest upon?

Text (4:5, 6)

5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism, 6 one God and Father of all, who is over all, and through all, and in all.

Thought Questions (4:5-6)

192. Did Paul have the question of sprinkling, pouring, or immersion in mind when he said, "There is one baptism"?
193. Is it correct to speak of "interfaith" activities? Why or why not?
194. Why should the fact that there is only one God make us to be united as Christians?
195. How can God be the "Father of all" when multitudes are "the children of the Devil"?

Paraphrase

5. The unity of the Spirit further consists of these unities: (4) the one Lord, Jesus Christ; (5) one faith, the Gospel; and (6) one baptism, immersion in water in the name of the Lord Jesus, that baptism which is the common experience of all the church.
6. And the grand apex of the seven unities that together make up the unity of the Spirit is the truth that (7) there is one God and Father of all, who is high above all things, but yet through all, and in all things. We must therefore be united, for we are all of one family, all brothers, children of one father.

Notes (4:5-6)

1. The one Lord is Jesus Christ. "He is Lord of all." (Compare Acts 10:36; 2:38; Romans 10:12; Matthew 28:18.) No pope, prophet, teacher, editor, elder, preacher, reformer, president, or any other man has authority to act as Lord of the church.
2. The *one faith* does not refer to the act of believing, but to the body of doctrines which we believe. The one faith is the Gospel. Philippians 1:27 speaks of those who were "striving together for THE FAITH of the gospel." See also Jude 3. It is not scriptural to speak of "many faiths" or "interfaith activities," as many do.
3. When speaking of the *one baptism*, Paul could not have had in mind the question of pouring, or sprinkling, or immersion. Only immersion was practiced in the time of the apostles. The earliest case of sprinkling for baptism on record is that of Novation in 251 A.D., who was "baptized" upon his bed while sick by pouring a large quantity of water over him. According to the historians, immersion was nearly the universal practice until the Middle Ages when the Roman Catholic church declared at the Council of Ravenna (1311) that immersion and sprinkling were of equal validity.
4. Paul was certainly not referring to Holy Spirit baptism as the *one baptism* that was the common experience of the church. Baptism in the Holy Spirit was a most exceptional experience. On the day of Pentecost the apostles were baptized in the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:5; 2:4). About ten years later, at the house of Cornelius, Peter saw the Holy Spirit fall on Cornelius and his household. In telling about

this, Peter said that the Holy Spirit fell on them, "as on us at the beginning. Then remembered I the word of the Lord how that he had said, John indeed baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit" (Acts 11:15-16). These are the only cases of Holy Spirit baptism recorded in the Bible. The experiences of those who claim to have received the baptism in the Holy Spirit in modern times are so contradictory that no confidence can be placed in them.

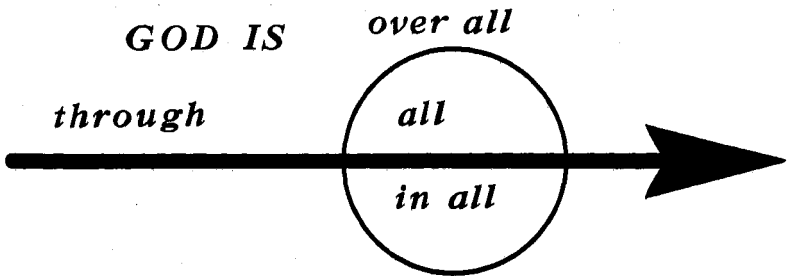
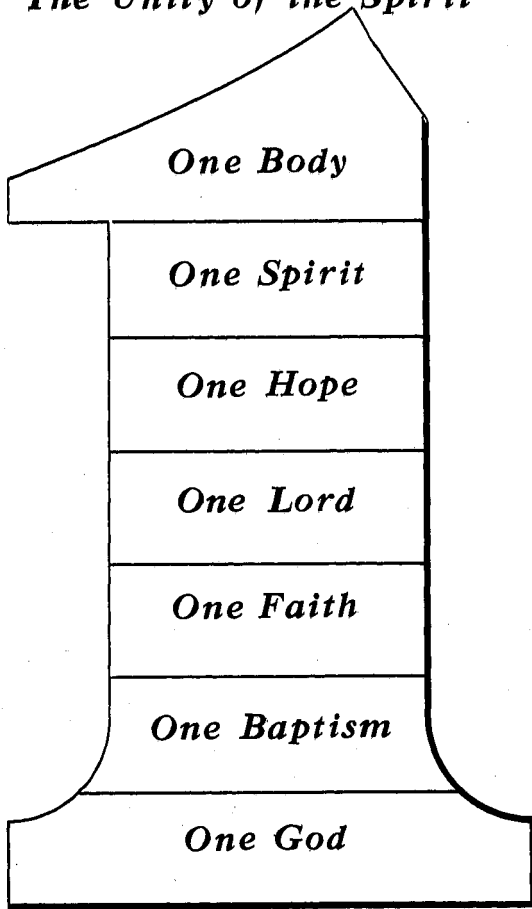
5. If there is only one baptism, surely there ought not be any disagreement as to how it is to be performed, or in what it is done.
6. The Christian believes as firmly as does the Jew or Moham-
medan that there is ONE God. However, the Christian accepts the profound revelation which God has given about Himself, namely that although He is one God, yet there are three perfectly harmonious identities within that one God: the Father, the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit.
7. God is called the "Father of all" in verse six, because He is the Father of all by creation. Of course, He is not the spiritual Father of sinners, and they cannot claim His blessings (John 8:44).
8. God is over all. He is supreme, high above all material and sinful things. God says, "I dwell in the high and holy place" (Isaiah 57:15).
9. God is through all. He is so omnipotent and powerful that He can do all things. No barriers limit His power.
10. God is in all. His power energizes the atoms of all creation. He dwells not only in the high and holy place, but also with him that is of a contrite and humble spirit (Isaiah 57:15).
11. Since there is only one body, spirit, etc., Christians ought to be knit together as one. Being united by God upon these seven things is such a solid basis for unity that it ought to hold Christians together in spite of everything that tends to divide them.

Fact Questions

189. Who is the *one Lord*?
190. What is the *one faith*?
191. Why cannot the *one baptism* be Holy Spirit baptism?
192. Why cannot the teaching of *one baptism* have had reference to the question of sprinkling, pouring, or immersion?
193. In what three relationships does God stand to all things?
194. Quote Ephesians 4:4-6 from memory.

THE GLORIOUS CHURCH

The Unity of the Spirit



Text (4:7)

7 But unto each one of us was the grace given according to the measure of the gift of Christ.

Thought Questions (4:7)

196. How can we be one body in Christ when each of us is so different?
197. Who has given the various special gifts, talents, and abilities to each of us?

Paraphrase

7. But, though there is "one body, one spirit," etc., each one of us has received a different outpouring of grace by being given different gifts. These gifts have been given according to the way that Christ Himself saw fit to measure them out to each one.

Notes (4:7)

1. This verse begins a new section in the discussion about keeping the unity of the Spirit. It still deals with unity (see v. 13), but takes up a new phase of the subject, namely the fact that unity is served, not hindered, by a diversity of individual gifts.
2. There are the seven items upon which the Holy Spirit has united the church (4:4-6). Although we are united upon these seven matters, each of us is different because we have received different gifts. This diversity of gifts will not cause us to be disunited if each uses his own gift without envying others. Actually the difference in gifts helps, not hinders, in the work of perfecting the saints and building up the church.
3. The *grace* mentioned in this verse refers to particular gifts and abilities which Christ has given. Probably the primary reference is to the offices mentioned in Ephesians 4:12, and such miraculous gifts as are described in I Corinthians 12:8-10. But the *grace* probably also refers to the different abilities of Christians, because the gifts are described as being given to "each one of us," and certainly not everyone received miraculous gifts or offices.
4. The *grace* (or gifts) is said to be given according to the measure of the gift of Christ. He knows what gifts we can use the most effectively. The word *gift* here signifies a gratuity or expression of favor. Christ always gives bountifully and graciously.

The *gift of Christ* does not here refer to God's gift of His Son for us (John 3:16), but to Christ's own gracious bestowal of gifts to us. This is indicated by the next verse, 4:8.

5. Inasmuch as the gifts bestowed upon us come from Christ and the Holy Spirit, we should therefore find no harmful overlapping, no insufficiency in any necessary works, and no contradictions, for the Holy Spirit is never at odds with Himself.

Fact Questions

195. To what does the word *grace* refer in 4:7?
 196. What effect does the fact that Christians have received differing gifts have upon their unity?
 197. According to what measure has grace been dispensed to each one?

Text (4:8)

8 Wherefore he saith, when he ascended on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.

Thought Questions (4:8)

198. Who is it that has ascended on high?
 199. What is the captivity which was taken captive? Can you think of anything (or any things) which holds men captive?
 200. What gifts did Christ give to men after He ascended?

Paraphrase

8. As a proof that Christ has given different gifts to each one, note that the Scripture saith (Psalm 68:18), in referring to Christ, that when he ascended into the heights of heaven, he took captive the things that held man in captivity, and he gave gifts unto men.

Notes (4:8)

1. "Wherefore he saith" is more clearly translated, "Wherefore, it says," in Psalm 68:18, etc. Paul quoted this verse, which was actually a prophecy, to prove that Christ indeed had given various gifts to the members of the church.
 2. Psalm 68, which is quoted here, is a psalm glorifying God for His power and victories in battle, for His wonders at Sinai and in the wilderness, and for His glory in the temple. Paul, by inspiration of God, informs us that at least part of the psalm had reference to our God and Savior, Jesus Christ. Paul gives his interpretation of the passage in verse nine.

3. What is the *captivity* which Christ led captive?

Some have thought that this is a reference to what Christ supposedly did after He died. This doctrine sets forth the idea that between the time of His death and resurrection Christ descended into Hades to preach, and to bring out the souls of the saints of Old Testament times. These saints supposedly could not previously be taken into God's presence because no atonement price had been paid for their sins before Christ died. It is our firm belief that this doctrine is not taught in the Bible, and contradicts many plain Bible teachings. See Special Study I in back.

What, then, is the captivity which is referred to?

- (1) *Sin* — "Whosoever committeth sin is the servant (*doulos*, slave) of sin" (John 8:34; Luke 4:18).
- (2) *Fear of death* — Christ died to "deliver them, who through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage" (Hebrews 2:15).
- (3) *The law of sin* — Romans 8:2-3. Our human weakness toward sin, and fleshly inclination toward sin is a great captivity from which Christ has granted us deliverance if we will receive it.

By His death and ascension, Christ has taken captive these things that formerly held His people captive, and in the time to come, He shall even redeem us from the captivity of death.

4. What gifts did Christ* give unto men after He ascended? Victorious generals often gave to their warriors gifts from the spoils of battle, or from the royal treasure.

The gifts which Christ gave are listed in part in 4:11. These consisted of certain offices — apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers. Also the Holy Spirit is spoken of as a *gift*, and the Holy Spirit was poured out after Christ ascended (Acts 2:33, 38; 11:15, 17).

*The *INTERPRETER'S BIBLE* says that as the rabbis had applied Psalm 68:18 to Moses going up onto Sinai, likewise the writer of Ephesians adopts a form of the text then current among the rabbis, and then follows it with an arbitrary *midrashic* interpretation by applying it to Christ's ascension. Actually there is no more natural and obvious application of Psalm 68:18 possible than to apply it to Christ and His ascension. And since Paul, an inspired man, says that that is the meaning of it, all gainsaying should end.

5. Paul has been accused of misapplying Psalm 68:18 in this verse. He has been accused of using a form of the text which was different from the Hebrew version of Psalm 68:18. There is an *apparent* difference. In the psalm the text reads, "Thou hast *received* gifts for men." (Revised Version, "among men.") As quoted in Ephesians 4:8, it reads, that He "*gave* gifts unto men." There is actually no contradiction here between "receiving" (in Psalms) and "giving" (in Ephesians). The Hebrew word *laqach*, which ordinarily means to *take* or *receve*, sometimes carries the idea of taking something *for* someone else, which amounts to the same thing as giving it to them.

For example, Genesis 38:6: "And Judah took a wife for (gave one unto) Er, his firstborn." Paul has not misapplied the Old Testament Scriptures.

Fact Questions

198. Why did Paul quote Psalm 68:18?
199. What three things are listed as being part of the captivity which Christ led captive?
200. When did Christ give gifts to men?

Text (4:9, 10)

9 Now this, he ascended, what is it but that he also descended into the lower parts of the earth? 10 He that descended is the same also that ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things.

Thought Questions (4:9-19)

201. If the Scripture speaks about God ascending, does not that imply that He must first have descended?
202. What are the *lower parts of the earth* into which Christ descended? Do you know what the phrase, *the lower parts of the earth*, is applied to in the Bible?
203. For what purpose did Christ descend and then ascend, according to verse ten?

Paraphrase

9. Now this statement in Psalm 68 that "He ascended," what can that imply, except that God, about Whom the Psalm is written, must have first descended into the earth, thus entering the "lower parts"? For God could not be said to have

ascended from heaven. He must needs have descended first to the earth.

10. Since only Jesus Christ has descended, He is the one of whom the Psalm speaks. He has descended, and He has ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill and rule all things.

Notes (4:9-10)

1. These two verses are a parenthesis between verses eight and eleven, to prove that the verse quoted from Psalm 68 can apply only to Christ. Jesus Himself said in John 3:13, "No man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man." This being true, when Psalm 68 spoke of one ascending into heaven, it must of necessity have referred to Jesus, for He alone has descended from heaven and ascended again.
2. The *lower parts of the earth* into which Christ descended refer to all the places into which Christ entered from His conception in Mary, until His ascension.
 - a. The *lower parts of the earth* may refer to the womb of Mary, for David, in Psalm 139:13, 15 used the phrase "lower parts of the earth" to refer to his mother's womb.
 - b. The earth itself is the *lower parts* of the universe. Some have taken the words, *the earth*, as being in apposition and synonymous with the *lower parts*. For example, in the phrase, *the city of Ephesus*, the city and Ephesus are the same. Likewise, the *lower parts* and the *earth* may be the same. (We mention this interpretation because it is frequently suggested. Frankly, it seems a bit forced to us, because it is hard to use a word in apposition to a comparative form like *the lower parts*.)
 - c. The *lower parts of the earth* refer to the grave, and perhaps to Sheol (Hades), which is described as being an underworld (Isaiah 14:9; Ezekiel 26:20). Note Psalm 63:9 "Those who seek my soul to destroy it shall go into the lower parts of the earth."

Christ certainly descended into the grave and into Hades. Acts 2:27. Thus He was in the *lower parts of the earth*.
 - d. The tomb of Jesus is referred to as *the heart of the earth* in Matthew 12:40. "For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son

of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth."

3. Christ ascended "far above all the heavens." There are several heavens mentioned in the Scriptures. The *third heaven* is mentioned in II Corinthians 12:2. The atmosphere is spoken of as a *heaven* in such phrases as "the birds of heaven." Outer space is spoken of as a *heaven* in such phrases as "the stars of heaven" (Jeremiah 4:25; Deuteronomy 28:62). The Jewish rabbis spoke of seven *heavens*, Christ is so exalted that He is far above all the heavens. (Compare Hebrews 7:26.)
4. After Christ ascended, there was given unto Him dominion, glory, and a kingdom (Daniel 7:14). Truly, He fills all things, for in Him all things consist (or hold together). (See Colossians 1:17.)

Fact Questions

201. What is implied in the statement, *He ascended?*
202. What are the *lower parts of the earth* into which Christ descended?
203. How high did Christ ascend?
204. For what purpose did Christ ascend?

Text (4:11)

11 And he gave some to be apostles; and some prophets; and some evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers:

Thought Questions (4:11)

204. How could the offices in the church be considered *gifts*?
205. Does the church of today have apostles?
206. What is the difference between an evangelist and a pastor?

Paraphrase

11. When Christ ascended on high, he gave gifts to men. These gifts consisted of certain offices and powers, such as apostles, and prophets, and evangelists, pastors and teachers.

Notes (4:11)

1. Servants of the gospel may take considerable pleasure in the thought that the various offices of the church are Christ's choice gifts to mankind.

The list of offices in this verse is not exhaustive. For a similar list of gifts, see I Corinthians 12:28.

2. The apostles were the special messengers, the eyewitnesses of Christ's resurrection (Acts 1:21-22; Luke 6:13). Men may still be called *apostles*, in the sense that anyone who is sent is an *apostle* of the one who sends him. But strictly speaking, the twelve apostles had no successors.

While the office of apostle was temporary, the teachings of the twelve apostles will always direct the church. In one sense, we can say that the church still has apostles, the same ones it had in the beginning.

3. The prophets held another temporary office. (See Zechariah 13:1-3; I Corinthians 13:8. See notes on 3:5 concerning the prophets.)
4. Preachers such as Timothy, Philip, etc., were called evangelists (II Timothy 4:5; Acts 21:8). The word *evangelist* means a bringer of good news. Evangelists may be called *ministers* (I Timothy 4:6). This office, by its very nature, must be permanent in the church. Evangelists will be needed as long as any person on earth has not heard the good news.
5. The pastors and teachers are those who are elsewhere called *elders* (presbyters) or bishops (overseers) (Acts 20:17; Titus 1:5-7). These men are the overseers and teachers of individual congregations, and there should be more than one such *pastor* in each church (Acts 14:23).

The absence of the article *the* before *teachers* in the Greek text, plus the fact that it is connected with *pastors* by a different conjunction than is used to separate the other offices, seems to indicate that the *pastors and teachers* are the same office viewed from two different aspects, namely from the teaching and shepherding aspects.

The common notion that an evangelist is a travelling preacher who holds revivals, and a pastor is a located preacher, has no foundation in the Scripture. Any preacher or minister of the gospel may be called an *evangelist*, and the elders ought to be called *pastors*.

Pastors and teachers are, of course, permanent officers in the church.

6. The offices (or *gifts*) here listed were originally given by miraculous endowment. Even the offices that would remain permanently in the church were given miraculous help in the early years of the church. Evangelists were enabled to preach without long years of study and training. Pastors and teachers were empowered to do their work without the neces-

sity of long preparation. Such assistance was necessary to get the church firmly and quickly established, but there is no indication that such help was to be continued indefinitely.

Fact Questions

205. Name the five offices which Christ gave to be in the church at the beginning.
206. Which of the offices were permanent, and which were temporary?
207. Which two of the five offices probably refer to the same office under different names?
208. In what way were even the permanent offices miraculously given?

Text (4:12)

12 for the perfecting of the saints, unto the work of ministering, unto the building up of the body of Christ:

Thought Questions (4:12)

207. What was it that was given for the perfecting of the saints, and the building up of the body of Christ? (See 4:11.)
208. Why do the saints need to be perfected?
209. When Christians are perfected, what work should they do?

Paraphrase

12. The different gifts that Christ gave to the church — apostles, prophets, etc. — were given to bring about the perfecting of the saints, who are then to devote themselves unto the work of ministering. This perfecting of the saints and their work of ministering will lead unto the growth and building up of the church, the body of Christ.

Notes (4:12)

1. *Perfecting* means "equipping, fitting out, preparing, or strengthening." Every new Christian needs to be fitted out for service to Christ. Especially was this true of the Christians of the apostolic age, most of whom had been idolaters and knew little about the true God and His ways.
2. When saints are perfected, they are to devote themselves to the work of ministering, such as ministering to the needs of the afflicted and the untaught. Every Christian household should imitate the example of the house of Stephanas, who

addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints (I Corinthians 16:15). That would be a wonderful type of addiction: We have perverted the scriptural concept of the word *ministering*, until it has become in most people's minds a description of a "clergyman's" work. ALL of us are to devote ourselves to ministering, which includes helping both the material and spiritual needs of people.

3. When the officers which Christ has *given* for the church are doing their work, and getting the people to do their work, then the churches will be building up. They will be growing in numbers, piety, good works, and happiness.

Fact Questions

209. For what purpose were the gifts given?
210. When the saints are perfected, what work will they do?
211. Unto what will the perfecting and ministering of the saints lead?

Text (4:13)

13 till we all attain unto the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a fullgrown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:

Thought Questions (4:13)

210. What is it that was to last "till we all attain unto the unity of the faith"? (Verses 11 and 12 can help you answer this.)
211. When did, or when will, "we all attain unto the unity of the faith"?
212. By what means should the church be able to come to a unity of the knowledge of the Son of God?
213. Is the *fullgrown man* a description of what we are to become as individuals, or a description of the whole church when it is fully matured?
214. Unto what measure are we to grow? Is it actually possible to attain unto this measure?

Paraphrase

13. The gifts which Christ gave to the church for its building up are to continue until we all attain unto the unity of the faith, and the unity of the knowledge of Christ the Son of God; unto a state of development when we shall be like a fullgrown man; and indeed develop unto that required meas-

ure of growth wherein we shall have reached the stature of the fullness of Christ.

Notes (4:13)

1. According to 4:3, we already have a unity which needs only to be kept or guarded. Here we are told that we must *attain* unto unity. We may be only one body in the sight of God, but this oneness is often strained to the breaking point. Even in Paul's time the Jewish and Gentile Christians had little unity. They would probably have had no unity at all if Paul and others had not labored as they did. The word of God was not yet fully revealed at that time. Hence, there were many things that we know and can be united upon which were at that time matters of uncertainty.
2. The phrase, *unity of the faith*, probably means the unity demanded by faith in Christ. Our differing gifts and backgrounds should not keep us from having unity. In fact, the differences among us only serve to meet many needs. No one member can do everything necessary. Every member depends on every other member to do those things that he cannot do. Therefore, our differences should help us to attain unity, rather than hinder it.
3. We are also to attain to the unity of the *knowledge of Christ*. The knowledge mentioned here is precise, personal knowledge of Christ, not merely a knowledge of who He is, but a close personal acquaintance and a profound understanding of Him. The church should have been able to attain unto such knowledge when the apostles had finished their teachings and writings.
4. Verse 4:13 seems to set a time limit on the gifts of Christ. They were to last "till we all attain to the unity of the faith." It might seem that the church has never yet attained to the unity of the faith. However, this goal was almost a reality in the latter part of the first century. The church then reached a degree of unity of belief, fellowship, and practice that it has not duplicated since that time.

In the early generations after the church was established, Christ gave it many gifts and powers to hasten its growth from infancy to a fullgrown man. (See I Corinthians 12:8-11 and Ephesians 4:11 for lists of such gifts.)

While these gifts may have sometimes been given directly from Christ, we know that they were given by the laying on

of the apostles' hands. However, those upon whom the apostles laid their hands apparently could not pass on the gifts that they received (II Timothy 1:6; Romans 1:11; Acts 8:17, 18).

At that time, the New Testament was not completed, as we have it today. Not all of the New Testament books had been written, nor were those which were written collected together into one group and widely distributed. If a man wished to preach the gospel, he had no book of authority and information to rely upon as we have. To take care of this temporary deficiency, Christ bestowed various gifts upon the church.

For example: A man who received the gift of *knowledge* or *prophecy* could know and preach the gospel without having to spend years in study and preparation. WE, however, are told to study in order to show ourselves approved unto God (II Timothy 2:15). A person with the gift of *tongues*, or *interpretation of tongues*, could go into a foreign area and speak so as to be understood without the struggle of having to learn a new language. The power to do this would be a mighty sign to unbelievers. A person with the gift of *discerning of spirits* could detect false teaching without having a Bible to prove that the teacher was a deceiver.

By these gifts, Christ enabled the church to become quickly rooted and to spread rapidly. It was very important in that early age that the gospel should quickly and securely take root all over the world.

But the gifts actually belonged to the "childish" age of the church. Paul tells us in I Corinthians 13:8-11 that the spiritual gifts were like *childish things*. When the church became a fullgrown man, it would put away childish things, such as prophecies, tongues, knowledge.

In accordance with this, we find that the spiritual gifts that existed in the early generations of the church began to disappear after the lifetime of the apostles.

While many people have claimed to have supernatural gifts even down to the present time, we do not find people on earth today who can work miracles like Christ and His apostles did. We are of the persuasion that the gifts were only to last "till we all attain unto the unity of the faith," and we understand that this took place when the writings

of the apostles were completed and made available to the church.

Of course, the permanent officers which Christ gave to the church are still with us. They serve as God's appointed agents to lead the church once again to the unity of the faith.

5. The church is described as the *body of Christ* in many places in Ephesians. It is therefore most appropriate to describe the fully matured church as a *fullgrown man*.
6. Ephesians 4:13 discusses the church as a whole, rather than as individual members. It is "we *all*" who are to come into the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a fullgrown man.
7. As stated in the notes on Ephesians 1:23, the term *fulness* has a passive sense: "that which is filled." If we are to develop spiritually until we measure up to the stature of that which is filled by Christ, we ought to develop very greatly, and arrive at a time of life when we shall be like Christ Who has filled us.

Fact Questions

212. What was to last until the church attained unto the unity of the faith?
213. What are the three things listed in Ephesians 4:13 that the church was to attain unto?
214. According to the notes, when did the church attain unto the unity of the faith, etc.?

Text (4:14)

14 that we may be no longer children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, in craftiness, after the wiles of error;

Thought Questions (4:14)

215. How is a young Christian who is exposed to many conflicting teachings like a ship on a stormy sea?
216. Why are the young easily led to accept falsehoods?
217. Are false teachers always bad, working by the "sleight of men, in craftiness"? Are not some of them sincere?
218. What are *wiles*? Why does error use wiles?

Paraphrase

14. The church must develop into a fullgrown man, so that we may no longer be children in spiritual development. Spiritual

children are like ships on a stormy sea, tossed about and carried around by every wind of teaching they hear. And those teachings which toss the uninstructed to and fro are often most deceptive, being presented by the dishonest methods of men, and by every cunning way of working that is suited to the wiles of error.

Notes (4:14)

1. The word *children* used here refers to little children or infants, those who are young Christians. Such little children will believe almost anything that they may be told, even if it is a lie. We should not long remain in spiritual infancy, and there is no need of so remaining.
2. The force of false doctrine upon the uninstructed is like the force of a storm upon a ship without a rudder.
3. The winds of doctrine that blow the uninstructed around "blow" in (or by) two things:
 - (1) In the sleight of men.
 - (2) In craftiness after the wiles of error. (Rotherham translates this: "In knavery suited to the artifice of error.")
4. The word *sleight* (from *Kubos*, meaning cube) actually refers to dice-playing. The false doctrines that are taught are sometimes presented by dishonest means, even as dice players use dishonesty. Like a small child who finds himself the victim of card sharks, so is an untrained soul before the winds of doctrine.
5. The term *craftiness* carries the idea of bad working. The root of the word means "all workings." False teachers do not overlook a single opportunity to promote their doctrines.

This craftiness is practiced by the wiles (or trickeries) of error. Wiles are tricks, or sneaky schemes. Error never comes out into the open and honestly represents itself. It uses wiles to deceive the unsuspecting. (Compare Ephesians 6:11.)
6. Error is never harmless, nor are false teachers good. They may be morally outstanding, like wolves in sheep's clothing. In fact, they may not even be aware of their own errors. But this does not make them harmless. In truth, those who live good and exemplary lives but do not teach the truth are the most dangerous people of all.

Fact Questions

215. What are we no longer to be (4:14)?
216. What is it that tosses and blows about those who are spiritual children?
217. In (or by) what two things do the *winds of doctrine* blow?
218. To what does the word *sleight* refer? What does this indicate about those who teach false doctrines?

Text (4:15)

15 but speaking truth in love, may grow up in all things into him, who is the head, even Christ;

Thought Questions (4:15)

219. Why must truth be spoken in love? Can truth be spoken without love? Can love be demonstrated without speaking the truth?
220. Is there any difference between becoming like Christ and "growing up into Christ"?

Paraphrase

15. Rather than remaining spiritual children who are subject to such perils, we must grow up. As we grow, we must live according to truth in everything we do. Then we shall grow up in all things into Christ, who is the head of the church.

Notes (4:15)

- Verse fourteen told us what we should not do: "Be no more children." This verse tells us what we should do: "Grow up into Christ."
We should not merely imitate some of Christ's good characteristics. We must grow up *INTO* Him. Our nature, thoughts, and deeds should be absorbed into those of Christ. As we serve Him, pray unto Him, and learn of Him, we shall grow into Him.
- Speaking truth* carries the idea of living the truth, or of "truthing it," or "pursuing truth" (Rotherham). It is very hard to be completely truthful at all times, but such is the will of God for us.
- Truth and love must be joined together. Together they are powerful. Truth can be uttered without love. We can have such a superior attitude that the truth we speak will repel people instead of attracting them.

However, you cannot show real love without holding to the truth. It is not true love to allow a person to go to hell to avoid hurting his feelings. "By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments. For this is the love of God that we keep his commandments" (I John 5:2-3).

4. The New Testament repeatedly emphasizes that Christ is the head of the church.

Fact Questions

219. How must we speak truth?
220. Into whom are we to grow?
221. In what things are we to grow up into Christ?

Text (4:16)

16 from whom all the body fitly framed and knit together through that which every joint supplieth, according to the working in *due* measure of each several part, maketh the increase of the body unto the building up of itself in love.

Thought Questions (4:16)

221. Who is it "from whom all the body (is) fitly framed"?
222. Can you find the principal parts (subject, predicate, and object) of verse sixteen?
223. This verse says that the body (the church) must be fitly framed and *knit* together. What does the word *knit* mean when applied to the human body, as to a broken bone, for example? How would this indicate that the members of the church should be joined together?
224. What must each several part do if the body is to make increase?
225. What is that which "every joint supplieth" that causes the body to be knit together and to make increase?
226. When does the church build itself up in love?

Paraphrase

16. From Christ, the head, all the body is bound together closely, indeed even coalesced or grown together. This joining is done as that vital supply of spiritual life passes from Christ through every joint (contact) to the parts next to it. And when every single member of the body is thus functioning in the measure that it should, the whole body will make the increase of the body, and it will build itself up in love.

Notes (4:16)

1. Stripped of its many qualifying phrases, the gist of verse sixteen is this: "The whole body — makes the increase of the body." In other words, all the members of the church must work together if the church is going to grow.

The evil in the church today is that we lay too much stress on certain offices and too little on the work required of every member of the body.

2. *Fitly framed* means "bound together, joined together closely." As bones are bound together at the joints by ligaments, so all members of the body of Christ are closely joined together.

Knit together suggests "growing together, or coalesced." The members of the church are not just placed side by side, but should become coalesced into one living body. The ties that bind brethren in Christ are as close as those that bind the leg bone to the thigh bone.

3. *Through that which every joint supplieth* literally reads, "through every joint of the supply."

Christ, of course, furnishes the *supply*, the vital nourishment of the spiritual body. This vital supply goes out from Christ through every joint of the body to the parts next to it. Thus the members are knit together.

This suggests that as we have been nourished in spiritual things from Christ, we must pass on our spiritual sustenance to the members of the body next to us. Thus the whole body will be knit together.

4. Each member of the body (church) must function according to the working in due measure of each single part. When one part of the human body fails to function, the whole body suffers. The same thing happens in the church.
5. The church builds itself up in love when every member is working to make the increase of the body. A church that is busy, and has its members working to win souls, usually has no time for quarreling. It builds itself up in love.

Fact Questions

222. What is the gist of Ephesians 4:16, stripped of its many qualifying phrases?
223. What is supplied from Christ? Through what does it pass?
224. How must each several part of the body work?
225. In what does the body build itself up when it is increasing?

EPHESIANS 4:16

FROM CHRIST (The Head)

ALL THE BODY — — —

MAKES THE INCREASE OF THE BODY.

THE BODY MUST BE —

JOINED TOGETHER HARMONIOUSLY

AND KNIT TOGETHER INTO

ONE ORGANISM

EACH MEMBER WORKING IN THE

MEASURE THAT IS DUE

EVERY MEMBER MUST WORK

IF THE CHURCH IS TO INCREASE

Previewing in Outline Form (4:17-5:2)

- B. Walk as becometh saints. 4:17-5:20.
1. Walk not as the Gentiles walk. 4:17-24.
 - a. The command. 4:17a.
 - b. The Gentile walk. 4:17b-19.
 - (1) In the vanity of their mind. 4:17b.
 - (2) Darkened in understanding. 4:18a.
 - (3) Alienated from the life of God. 4:18b.
 - (a) Because of the ignorance in them.
 - (b) Because of the hardening of their heart.
 - (4) Given over to lasciviousness. 4:19.
 - (a) Because they were past feeling.
 - (b) To work all uncleanness with greediness.
 - c. The Christian's walk. 4:20-24.
 - (1) Different from the Gentile's walk. 4:20-21.
 - (2) Must put away our former manner of life. 4:22.
 - (3) Must be renewed in the spirit of your mind. 4:23.
 - (4) Must put on the new man. 4:24.
 2. Seven practical exhortations. 4:25-5:2.
 - a. Speak the truth. 4:25.
 - b. Control your anger. 4:26-27.
 - c. Steal no more. 4:28.
 - d. Speak that which is good. 4:29.
 - e. Grieve not the Holy Spirit. 4:30.
 - f. Put away angry talk and attitudes. 4:31.
 - g. Be imitators of God. 4:32-5:2.
 - (1) Be kind.
 - (2) Be tenderhearted.
 - (3) Be forgiving.
 - (4) Walk in love. 5:2.

Text (4:17-19)

17 This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye no longer walk as the Gentiles also walk, in the vanity of their mind, 18 being darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardening of their hearts; 19 who being past feeling gave themselves up to lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.

Thought Questions (4:17-19)

227. Was it a simple task for the Ephesian Christians to *walk no longer as the Gentiles walk*?
228. Paul seems to condemn the Gentiles quite heavily. Did the Gentiles as a whole live baser lives than the Jews?
229. Did Paul mean to imply by his use of the word *Gentile* that non-Christians should be called *Gentiles*, regardless of their race?
230. What is *vanity*? What Old Testament book exposes many things as being *vanity*?
231. Describe the condition of the Gentiles' understanding.
232. Are the Gentiles aware that they are alienated from the life of God? Is there any other source of life, except from God?
233. Note that the Gentiles are alienated from God because of the ignorance that is in them. What should this teach us about the state of the heathen who do not know God at present?
234. What happens to the conscience when we harden our hearts and do not do what we know we should?
235. Can a person get to the point that he is no longer pained by conscience?
236. To what type of conduct do people without feelings of guilt and shame always give themselves (v. 19)?

Paraphrase

17. Now this I say, and bear testimony with all the seriousness of one who knows the Lord and is serving Him, that you must no longer be walking, that is, living each day, as other Gentiles walk. For they live according to the useless and perverse disposition of their minds, and not according to what is good and of God.
18. The Gentiles are covered with darkness in their understanding. They are shut off from the life which God bestows, on account of the ignorance that is in them, and on account of the callusing of their hearts.
19. They have gone so far in sin that they have lost all feeling of guilt and pain of conscience when they do wrong. Having no restraints within them, they have given themselves over to unbridled lust and shamelessness, to work all manner of uncleanness with unrestrained desires to have more of forbidden pleasures.

Notes (4:17-19)

1. It took a lot of courage for the Ephesian Christians to *no longer walk as the Gentiles walk*. They lived in the shadow of the glorious temple of Diana, and with milling thousands of her worshippers. To refuse to associate in the practices of their former friends took much conviction and courage.

It still takes a lot of courage to *walk no longer as the Gentiles walk*. Social drinking, lewd motion pictures, night clubs, dancing, card-playing, and many other things that are displeasing to God are so much a part of modern American life that many Christians compromise their standards. Let us resolutely refuse to walk any longer as the Gentiles walk.

2. Some modern commentaries make a great deal of the use of the word *Gentiles* in verse seventeen, attempting to prove that Paul could not have written Ephesians. It is alleged that *Gentiles* is contrasted with *Christians*, and that Paul never conceived of such a contrast as church members being *Israelites*, and non-Christians being *Gentiles*.

It is by no means implied in this verse that all non-Christians are to be called *Gentiles*. The word *Gentiles* in the verse obviously refers to non-Christian Gentiles. There were far more Gentiles living in and around Ephesus than there were Jews. The Ephesian church was predominantly Gentile. Quite naturally, therefore, Paul would speak to the Ephesians about how the *Gentiles* lived when he wanted to make a contrast between the lives of the Christians and the lives of the non-Christians.

The Gentiles around Ephesus were much given to magic, immorality, and high-mindedness before their conversion to Christ. Generally they lived much more sinful lives than the Jews. The Jews were not perfect, but they had known God and His Law for centuries, and did not walk in the idolatry and vain practices that were nearly universal among the Gentiles. Paul did not want his converts to continue to live as the Gentiles had always lived.

However, even if Paul did use the word *Gentiles* to denote non-Christians, it would not be un-Pauline. For in Galatians 6:16 he speaks of the church as the *Israel of God*. (Compare also Romans 2:28-29; 9:6-8; Philippians 3:3.)

3. *Vanity* is that which is devoid of truth and appropriateness; that which is worthless, useless, and has no good about it. In the book of Ecclesiastes, King Solomon exposed many

things that the world thinks are excellent (such as laughter, lust, liquor, learning, real estate, riches) as "vanity, and a striving after wind." But the Gentiles (and also most unconverted Jews) are still striving after such things. Christians have been redeemed from their *vain* manner of life (I Peter 1:18).

4. The world considers itself too wise to believe the teachings of the Bible. Actually, this attitude is not due to wisdom, but to a darkening in its mind. Satan has blinded the minds of the unbelieving (II Corinthians 4:4).
5. God gives life to all. Hence, it is a perversion of nature to depart from the life of God. But the Gentiles are shut off from the life of God, being aliens to God's kingdom. (See the notes on 2:12, 19.) They are alienated for two reasons:
 - (1) The ignorance that is in them.
 - (2) The hardening (callusing) of their heart.

Note that the Gentiles did not know much, and that God does not excuse ignorance. Furthermore, they hardened their hearts against that which they did know.

6. The King James Version wrongly has *blindness* for *hardening* in 4:18. The skin on the hands develops a hardening or callus when it is exposed to pressure and work. Likewise, when the conscience is rubbed hard and its guidance ignored, it develops a hardening or callus. However, instead of being a protection from injury, this is merely a dulling of our finest nature.
7. Sin is like anesthesia. At first, it is offensive, and our conscience revolts against it. However, if we do not get away from it, it soon becomes less offensive to us, and then finally overpowering. We could also compare it to the cold of the great North, which can benumb its victims until they are doomed, but feel no cold. Being *past feeling* is the last stage before destruction. If your conscience never bothers you any more, you are in terrible peril.
8. Those who lose all feeling of guilt go readily into lasciviousness. *Lasciviousness* is a term that includes adultery, fornication, immodesty, shameless dress and speech, indecent behavior, etc. All of these things are natural for one who has thrown aside the feelings of conscience. Nothing is more terrible than the loss of shame. Immodesty should embarrass or anger us. If it does not, we need only to remove the checks of circumstances to complete the descent into sin.

9. The Gentiles do not do iniquity hesitantly, but with greediness or eagerness. This term *greediness* (Authorized Version, *covetousness*) refers to a greedy desire to have more. They desire the pleasures of sin, and go greedily after them.

Fact Questions

226. How were the Ephesians forbidden to walk?
 227. In what do most Gentiles walk (v. 17)?
 228. What was the condition of the understanding of the Gentiles?
 229. For what two reasons were the Gentiles alienated from the life of God?
 230. To what did the Gentiles give themselves (v. 19)?

Text (4:20-22)

20 But ye did not so learn Christ; 21 if so be that ye heard him, and were taught in him, even as truth is in Jesus: 22 that ye put away, as concerning your former manner of life, the old man, that waxeth corrupt after the lusts of deceit;

Thought Questions (4:20-22)

237. Can one be taught of Christ so as not to be taught as the truth is in Jesus?
 238. If we have heard of Christ according to truth, what are we to put away?
 239. Are we Christians in truth because we know and accept correct words and doctrines (v. 22)?
 240. Is *putting away* our old man to be done once for all, or is it a gradual process?
 241. Do sinners get better with age and experience? What does it mean when it says the "old man waxeth corrupt"?
 242. What are *lusts of deceit*? What is deceitful about lusts?

Paraphrase

20. You Ephesians who learned the gospel did not learn of Christ to work uncleanness with greediness, so as to think these things allowable.
 21. Assuming that you have heard of Christ and were taught according to what is truth in Jesus,
 22. then ye were taught that you must put away all that concerns your manner of life before becoming a Christian; for that old man was getting worse and worse, decaying more and more, just as deceitful lusts always cause a spiritual decay.

Notes (4:20-22)

1. *Learn Christ* means more than to learn certain doctrines. True knowledge of Christ must produce a transformed life.
2. Truth in Jesus consists in putting away our former manner of life, and of putting on the new man, and of being renewed in the spirit of our mind. The Romish doctrine that a person can be morally bad and still be in good standing in the church is not of truth as it is in Jesus.
3. *Put away* and *put on* (4:22, 24) are verbs in the aorist imperative which indicates completed action, done one time. *Be renewed* (4:23) is in the present imperative, indicating continuous progressive action. This teaches us that repentance must be a thorough break with sin. There should be no gradual putting away the old man. However, the development of the new man is a progressive process.
4. *Lusts of deceit* are deceitful lusts. The things we desire (lust for) in this world promise thrills, and satisfaction. Instead they bring only disappointment, shame, disgrace, and contention.
5. Our old man, our former life before we accepted Christ, was becoming more and more corrupt through the deceitful desires he sought after. (See II Timothy 3:13.) Age and experience usually do not improve sinners. Their consciences become duller, and habits of evil more firmly fixed.
6. *Conversation* in the King James Version (v. 22) means our *manner of life*.

Fact Questions

231. If the Ephesians learned of Christ as truth is, what would they put away?
232. What is happening to the sinner's nature (the *old man*)?

Text (4:23, 24)

23 and that ye be renewed in the spirit of your mind, 24 and put on the new man, that after God hath been created in righteousness and holiness of truth.

Thought Questions (4:23, 24)

243. What is the spirit of our mind?
244. How can the spirit of our mind be renewed?
245. What is the *new man* which we are to put on?
246. After whom have we been created? In what sense is the converted man *created*?

247. How does God create us *in righteousness*? Do we not perform our own righteousness?
248. What do you think the phrase *holiness of truth* means?

Paraphrase

23. You Ephesians must not only put off the old nature, but be renewing yourselves in the spirit that directs your mind.
24. Put on the new man, that new disposition and nature which has been created in the likeness of God in righteousness and true holiness.

Notes (4:23, 24)

1. *Be renewed* is a continuous duty and process.
2. The *spirit of your mind* is the spirit that directs your mind. Before conversion it was a disobedient spirit. Now it must be a spirit of meekness, humility, and obedience.
3. How often in the Bible are righteousness and Christian character compared to garments which may be put on or off! Thus we note that Christians *can* improve themselves with God's help. We do not have to be the same old detestable persons always. We can put on a new man.
4. The new man, or new nature, is *created* (II Corinthians 5:17; Ephesians 2:10). The change in people that comes through faith and the incoming of the Holy Spirit is as great as the act that God wrought when He created the material universe. We are created after GOD. We are not created to be like the great men of this world, but to be like God (I John 3:1).
5. We are created *in righteousness*, because we have no righteousness in ourselves. Christ Jesus is our righteousness (I Corinthians 1:30). God takes away our sins when we are saved, and declares us righteous as a result of what He has done for us. Of course, after being thus created in righteousness, we must live soberly, righteously, and godly (Titus 2:12).
6. *Holiness of truth* means true holiness, not holiness which is just ceremonial or pretended. We were *created* to develop a Godlike character, true holiness. We are not saved merely to escape from hell and receive blessings.

Fact Questions

233. In what are we to be renewed?
234. What are we to put on?
235. After whom are we created?
236. In what two ways are we created after God?

EPHESIANS 4:25-5:2

**SEVEN PRACTICAL
EXHORTATIONS**

1. SPEAK THE TRUTH; 4:25
2. CONTROL YOUR ANGER; 4:26-27
3. STEAL NO MORE; 4:28
4. SPEAK THAT WHICH IS GOOD; 4:29
5. GRIEVE NOT THE HOLY SPIRIT; 4:30
6. PUT AWAY ANGRY TALK
AND ATTITUDES; 4:31
7. BE IMITATORS OF GOD; 4:32-5:2
 - BE KIND
 - TENDERHEARTED
 - FORGIVING
 - WALK IN LOVE 5:2

Text (4:25-27)

25 Wherefore, putting away falsehood, speak ye truth each one with his neighbor: for we are members one of another. 26 Be ye angry and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath: 27 neither give place to the devil.

Thought Questions (4:25-27)

249. What is the force of the *wherefore* in v. 25? Compare the preceding verses before you answer.
250. Why should the fact that we are members one of another curb our lying?
251. Did Paul command us to be angry? Harmonize 4:26 with 4:31.
252. Did Paul forbid us to be angry?
253. What is the danger in anger?
254. How long is wrath to be permitted to continue?
255. What does it mean when it says, "Neither give place to the devil"?
256. Is there any connection between being angry and giving place to the devil?

Paraphrase

25. Because you are new creatures in Christ, created by God in true holiness, you must observe such practical duties as to stop lying to one another, and to speak the truth to your neighbors. This we must do because we are members one of another in the church.
26. Furthermore, we must keep anger under control that we sin not. You may have anger arise at times, but let it not be prolonged. Put it away before the sun goes down.
27. Neither give an opportunity to the devil to control your actions, which can easily be done if anger is prolonged.

Notes (4:25-27)

1. After the lofty exhortations of 4:23-24, Paul brings us down to earth with a jolt in these verses. We have been created in righteousness and true holiness. *Wherefore*, on account of that, certain duties are laid upon us.
2. Verse 25 begins a series of seven practical exhortations concerning the walk of the Christian. See the outline.
3. The admonition to put away falsehood and speak the truth always is very hard to keep, but it is repeatedly commanded

in the New Testament. Verse 4:25 is a quotation from Zechariah 8:16.

4. In the church we are all members of Christ, and therefore members of one another. Now, in the human body, if one member, the nerves, were paralyzed, and lied to the stomach by carrying no sensations of hunger, the body might refuse all food and destroy itself. Likewise in the church, any lie by one member affects all the other members of the body. When one member is known to have lied, the whole church is discredited.
5. Verse 4:26 is a quotation of Psalm 4:4, where the reading is, "Stand in awe and sin not." (The Revised Version margin reads, "Be ye angry and sin not.") This is not a command to be angry but a caution not to sin when we are angry. People often do things when they are angry that they would not normally do.

While it is not a command to be angry, neither is it a prohibition of anger. Sometimes anger is necessary. Paul was occasionally angry (Acts 13:9-10; 23:3). Even Christ Jesus felt anger (Mark 3:5). We need to have convictions strong enough to have strong feelings about wickedness.

Nonetheless, while anger may sometimes be justified, it must be speedily cooled down. Anger should subside the same day it arises. When the sun has gone down, let anger be gone.

The anger upon which the sun is not to go down is anger that expresses itself in exasperation and wrath, the anger in which one is almost beside himself.

6. If anger is held very long, it becomes malice, hatred, and resentment, and produces a desire for revenge. It gives a place (opportunity) to the devil to lead us into transgression and self-ruination.
7. While there is a connection between anger and giving place to the devil, there are also other ways we can give a place to the devil. For examples, (1) meditating upon lustful things, (2) meditating upon our unfair share of earthly riches, (3) reading books that undermine faith and morals.

Fact Questions

237. What is the reason we are to speak truth to our neighbors?
238. What are we to be careful not to do when angry?

239. How long is anger to be allowed to continue?

240. To whom are we not to give place?

Text (4:28)

28 Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labor, working with his hands the thing that is good, that he may have whereof to give to him that hath need.

Thought Questions (4:28)

257. Are there thieves in the church?

258. Can this verse be harmonized with the Communist doctrine of state ownership of all property?

259. What is the grand purpose of our labor?

Paraphrase

28. Let anyone in the church who is stealing steal no more. But rather let him toil, working with his own hands which were formerly used to steal, doing work which is good, so that he may have the means to maintain himself, and to share with those who have need.

Notes (4:28)

1. It may seem strange that Christians should have to be taught not to steal. But stealing is not uncommon. Nowadays there are many sophisticated forms of stealing — embezzlement, cheating on tax reports, driving hard bargains, misrepresenting goods, loafing on the employer's time, shortening an employee's time, cheating on examinations, etc. Let him that stole — regardless of how he did it, or what he stole — steal no more.
2. The best antidote for stealing is working. The word *labor* here implies wearisome, exhausting toil.
3. It is plainly taught here that work is not only for selfish gain, but to help others. Honesty is inculcated by an appeal to the highest motives. And this verse certainly does not teach us to steal from the rich to give to the poor. We must work if we want to have the means to help those in need.
4. This verse cannot be harmonized with Communist doctrine. The verse commands private generosity. But private ownership of property is a necessity if we are to have anything to give to others. Communism destroys private ownership, and makes all things state property.

Fact Questions

241. What is the one who steals to do?
242. With what is the ex-thief to work?
243. What type of work is the ex-thief to do?
244. What is the noble objective for which we toil and labor?

Text (4:29)

29 Let no corrupt speech proceed out of your mouth, but such as is good for edifying as the need may be, that it may give grace to them that hear.

Thought Questions (4:29)

260. How often is our conversation actually uttered with a purpose in mind of edifying and giving grace to those who hear us?
261. What types of utterance could be called *corrupt speech*?
262. How can speech give grace to them that hear?

Paraphrase

29. Let no rotten utterances go out from your mouth, but rather let that go out of your mouth which is good for building up people who may be in need of encouragement, correction, or instruction. Such speech will bring pleasure and profit to them that hear.

Notes (4:29)

1. Christians must carefully control their speech at all times. Do not let any speech that is rotten and corrupt go out of your mouth. (Compare Ephesians 5:4; Matthew 12:36-37.) Words are not simply so much wind. They carry with them the personality and thoughts of the speaker. As character can be rotten and produce evil, words can also be corrupt, for they reflect character.
2. Words are very powerful. They can fill many needs, such as giving instruction, encouragement, and correction.

Fact Questions

245. What type of speech is not to be let out of our mouths?
246. What type of speech is to be uttered?
247. What is our speech to give unto those that hear?

Text (4:30)

30 And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, in whom ye were sealed unto the day of redemption.

Thought Questions (4:30)

263. If the Holy Spirit can be grieved, is the Holy Spirit a personality, or some impersonal influence?
264. How can we grieve the Holy Spirit?
265. Where does the Holy Spirit live (I Corinthians 6:19)?

Paraphrase

30. In all of life's activities, such as working, speaking, etc., be not grieving the Holy Spirit of God, that divine one in whom we are sealed and stamped as God's own until that day when our bodies are redeemed at the resurrection.

Notes (4:30)

1. We grieve the Holy Spirit by wicked actions and rotten speech. We grieve Him when we violate the commandments of the Spirit as given in Ephesians, chapter four. The Holy Spirit is sensitive. Holiness is always sensitive. Purity grows in sensitivity.
2. Israel grieved the Holy Spirit by their sins in the wilderness and in the land of Canaan (Isaiah 63:10).
3. How terrible it is to make the Holy Spirit which strengthens our inward man to be sorrowful and offended (Ephesians 3:16)!
4. See notes on Ephesians 1:13-14 for comments on being sealed with the Holy Spirit until the day of redemption.

Fact Questions

248. Whom are we not to grieve?
249. Unto what day are we sealed?

Text (4:31, 32)

31 Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and railing, be put away from you with all malice: 32 and be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving each other, even as God also in Christ forgave you.

Thought Questions (4:31, 32)

266. Is a Christian's personality any concern to God?
267. Is it really possible to control feelings of bitterness, malice, etc.?
268. How should we forgive each other?

Paraphrase

31. In particular, grieve not the Holy Spirit by an evil disposition. Let all of the sharp, spiteful ways of feeling and speaking, along with anger, both in outbursts and temperament, and loud clamor, and blasphemous speech, be put away from you along with all ill will toward others. For these things displease the Spirit.
32. Having put away evil traits and dispositions, be kind one to another, tenderhearted, graciously forgiving each other, as also God in Christ has graciously forgiven you of even greater offences against Himself.

Notes (4:31, 32)

1. *Bitterness* is sharpness, harshness, spitefulness, resentment.
2. *Wrath* is anger erupting, anger that boils over but soon subsides.
3. *Anger* is a settled disposition of indignation, an angry outlook upon everything.
4. *Clamor* is a loud outcry, loud speech based on ungoverned feelings.
5. *Railing* is blasphemy, slander, speech injurious to another's good name, especially against God.
6. *Malice* is ill will, desire to injure.
7. These evils are common among many disciples of Christ, in spite of the fact that they are utterly contrary to our calling, contrary to the Father, and contrary to the Holy Spirit within us. They are old cruel hounds from past life, from

which we should have escaped long ago, but find baying at our heels.

8. The word translated *forgiving* (v. 32) does not simply mean to release from guilt, but to be gracious unto, be kind, be benevolent, pardon.
9. *Kind*—This word is usually used to describe God. It describes one who is virtuous, good, mild, pleasant.
10. The motive for Christian goodness is different from that of worldly righteousness. Out in the world people are good because "it pays." They get something in return. We are good and forgiving toward our fellow men because God has forgiven us. We realize how much we are indebted unto God. We therefore forgive the small offences our neighbors commit against us.

Fact Questions

250. Name the six things mentioned in 4:31 that we are to put away from us.
251. Quote Ephesians 4:32 from memory.