

God's Ultimate Purpose

CLASSIC EXPOSITIONS FROM D. MARTYN LLOYD-JONES

God's Ultimate Purpose Ephesians 1

Ephesians 1, which sets forth God's glorious plan and destiny for the church, is basic to all New Testament studies.

God's Way of Reconciliation Ephesians 2

These masterful expositions reach the heart of the human problem—our estrangement from God. They drive home the fact that nothing is more relevant today than the message of how God reconciles the world to himself.

The Unsearchable Riches of Christ Ephesians 3

"We can never know too much concerning the great doctrines of the Faith, but if that knowledge does not lead to an ever deeper experience of the love of Christ, it is merely the knowledge that puffeth up." — Lloyd-Jones

Darkness and Light Ephesians 4:17 – 5:17

In his usual incisive fashion Lloyd-Jones explores "How are we to grow up into Christ in all things? How are we to attain to this perfect man? How are we to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace?"

Life in the Spirit In Marriage, Home, and Work Ephesians 5:18 – 6:9

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The Christian Warfare Ephesians 6:10 – 13

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The Christian Soldier Ephesians 6:10 – 20

What is involved in spiritual warfare? What are the provisions God makes for His servants? Lloyd-Jones answers these questions by examining "the whole armour of God." He explores the general principles of spiritual warfare and the pieces of armour Paul mentions.

God's Ultimate Purpose

An Exposition of Ephesians 1:1 to 23

D. M. LLOYD-JONES

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Preface

This volume consists of sermons preached on Sunday mornings in the course of my regular ministry at Westminster Chapel, London, during 1954–1955. Some readers may be curious as to why they did not appear in *The Westminster Record* and why they have been preceded in book form by my sermons on Ephesians chapter 2, under the title *God's Way of Reconciliation*, and on chapter 5:18 to the end of this same Epistle, which have appeared under the titles *Life in the Spirit*, *The Christian Warfare* and *The Christian Soldier*.

The explanation is that I felt that the themes dealt with in those volumes were of more immediate relevance. I yielded also to the pressure that was brought upon me by those who felt that there was an urgent need for guidance from Scripture on the general questions of peace among nations, the problem of racism, and the mounting problems in the realm of relationships between husbands and wives, parents and children, masters and servants, and also the problems raised by the cults, eastern religions and the new interest in the occult.

I am ready to confess that in adopting this procedure I may well have been guilty of allowing my pastoral heart to govern my theological understanding, and especially my understanding of the Apostle Paul's invariable method. My only defence is that in those other volumes I have repeatedly stressed that the teaching could only be understood in the light of the great doctrine which the Apostle lays down in this first chapter. And now, I hope to

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make full amends in this volume, and, 'God willing,' in further volumes on Chapters 3, 4 and 5:1-18.

Our world is in a state of utter confusion, and, alas, the same is true of the Christian Church and of many individual Christians. It is idle to call people to listen to us if we are uncertain ourselves as to what we mean by the terms 'Christian' and 'Christian Church'. In this first chapter of his Epistle to the Ephesians, the Apostle deals with those very questions in a most sublime manner, reminding us at the very outset that we have been 'blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ'. He goes on to tell us that this is true of Jewish and Gentile believers, that the power of the resurrection is working in each of us and in the Church which is His body. The epistle to the Ephesians is the most 'mystical' of Paul's epistles, and nowhere does his inspired mind soar to greater heights. There is no greater privilege in life than to be called to expound what Thomas Carlyle called such 'infinities and immensities'. I can but pray and trust that God will bless my unworthy efforts and use them to help many to rise to the height of 'our high calling in Christ Jesus' and deliver those whose lives have hitherto been 'bound in shallows and in miseries'.

I have to thank Miss Jane Ritchie who kindly did the original transcribing, and also as ever, Mrs E. Burney, Mr S. M. Houghton and my wife for their customary help and encouragement.

London August 1978

D. M. Lloyd-Jones

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Ephesians 1:1-23

- 1 *Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus:*
- 2 *Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.*
- 3 *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:*
- 4 *According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:*
- 5 *Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,*
- 6 *To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.*
- 7 *In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;*
- 8 *Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence;*
- 9 *Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself:*
- 10 *That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ,*

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*both which are in heaven, and which are on earth;
even in him:*

- 11 *In whom also we have obtained an inheritance,
being predestinated according to the purpose of him
who worketh all things after the counsel of his own
will:*
- 12 *That we should be to the praise of his glory, who
first trusted in Christ.*
- 13 *In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the
word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in
whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed
with that holy Spirit of promise,*
- 14 *Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the
redemption of the purchased possession, unto the
praise of his glory.*
- 15 *Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the
Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints,*
- 16 *Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention
of you in my prayers;*
- 17 *That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father
of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom
and revelation in the knowledge of him:*
- 18 *The eyes of your understanding being enlightened;
that ye may know what is the hope of his calling,
and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance
in the saints,*
- 19 *And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to
us-ward who believe, according to the working of
his mighty power,*
- 20 *Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him
from the dead, and set him at his own right hand
in the heavenly places,*
- 21 *Far above all principality, and power, and might,
and dominion, and every name that is named, not
only in this world, but also in that which is to come:*
- 22 *And hath put all things under his feet, and gave
him to be the head over all things to the church,*
- 23 *Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth
all in all.*

I

Introduction

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

Ephesians 1:1

As we approach this Epistle I confess freely that I do so with considerable temerity. It is very difficult to speak of it in a controlled manner because of its greatness and because of its sublimity. Many have tried to describe it. One writer has described it as 'the crown and climax of Pauline theology'. Another has said that it is 'the distilled essence of the Christian religion, the most authoritative and most consummate compendium of our holy Christian faith'. What language! And it is by no means exaggerated.

Far be it from me to try to compete with those who have thus described this Epistle, but it seems to me that any general description of it must take special note of certain words which are characteristic of it, and which the Apostle uses more frequently in it, perhaps, than in any other Epistle. The Apostle marvels at the mystery and the glories and the riches of God's way of redemption in Christ. These are the words, as I shall show, which he uses very frequently – the glory of it all, the mystery and the riches of God's way of redemption in Christ Jesus!

Another way in which the peculiar characteristic of this great Epistle can be stated is that it is a letter in which the Apostle looks at the Christian salvation from the vantage point of the 'heavenly places'. In all his Epistles he expounds and explains the way of salvation; he deals with particular doctrines, and with arguments or controversies that had arisen in the churches. But the peculiar feature and characteristic of the Epistle to the Ephesians is that here the Apostle seems to be, as he puts it himself, in 'the heavenly

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places', and he is looking down at the great panorama of salvation and redemption from that particular aspect. The result is that in this Epistle there is very little controversy; and that is so because his great concern here was to give to the Ephesians, and others to whom the letter is addressed, a panoramic view of this wondrous and glorious work of God in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Luther says of the Epistle to the Romans that it is 'the most important document in the New Testament, the gospel in its purest expression', and in many ways I agree that there is no purer, plainer statement of the gospel than in the Epistle to the Romans. Accepting that as true I would venture to add that if the Epistle to the Romans is the purest expression of the gospel, the Epistle to the Ephesians is the sublimest and the most majestic expression of it. Here the standpoint is a wider one, a larger one. There are statements and passages in this Epistle which really baffle description. The great Apostle piles epithet upon epithet, adjective upon adjective, and still he cannot express himself adequately. There are passages in this first chapter, and others in the third chapter, especially towards its end, where the Apostle is carried out above and beyond himself, and loses and abandons himself in a great outburst of worship and praise and thanksgiving. I repeat, therefore, that there is nothing more sublime in the whole range of Scripture than this Epistle to the Ephesians.

Let us begin by taking a general view of it, for we can only truly grasp and understand the particulars if we have taken a firm grasp of the whole and of the general statement. On the other hand those who imagine that, by giving a rough division of the message of this Epistle according to chapters, they have dealt with it adequately display their ignorance. It is when we come to the details that we discover the wealth; a summary of its message is most helpful as a beginning, but it is when we come to the particular statements and individual words that we find the real glory displayed to our wondering gaze.

The general theme of the Epistle is suggested at once in its first verse. This is characteristic of the Apostle; he could not restrain himself, but immediately proceeds to his theme. 'Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God' – there it is! The theme of the

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Epistle, first and foremost, is God – God the Father. ‘Grace be unto you and peace from God the Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.’ The Apostle Paul always begins in this way, and this is how every Christian should begin. This is the theme that controls everything else. There was never any danger that the Apostle Paul might forget it, for he of all men knew that all is of God, and by God, and that to Him the glory must be given for ever and ever.

The Bible is God’s book, it is a revelation of God, and our thinking must always start with God. Much of the trouble in the Church today is due to the fact that we are so subjective, so interested in ourselves, so egocentric. That is the peculiar error of this present century. Having forgotten God, and having become so interested in ourselves, we become miserable and wretched, and spend our time in ‘shallows and in miseries’. The message of the Bible from beginning to end is designed to bring us back to God, to humble us before God, and to enable us to see our true relationship to Him. And that is the great theme of this Epistle; it holds us face to face with God, and what God is, and what God has done; it emphasizes throughout the glory and the greatness of God – God the Eternal One, God the everlasting, God over all – and the indescribable glory of God. This great theme appears constantly in the various phrases which the Apostle uses. Here are examples – ‘Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will’; ‘having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself’; ‘in whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will’. God, the eternal and everlasting God, self-sufficient in Himself, from eternity to eternity, needing the aid of no-one, living, dwelling in His own everlasting, absolute and eternal glory, is the great theme of this Epistle. We must not start by examining ourselves and our needs microscopically; we must start with God, and forget ourselves. In this Epistle we are taken as it were by the hand by the Apostle and are told that we are going to be given a view of the glory and the majesty of God. As we approach this study I seem to hear the voice that came of old to Moses from the burning bush saying,

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'Take off thy shoes from off thy feet for the ground whereon thou standest is holy ground.' We are in the presence of God and His glory; so we must tread carefully and humbly.

But not only so, we are at once face to face with the sovereignty of God. Think of the terms which we find constantly running through the Scriptures, the great words and expressions of true Christian doctrine and theology. How little have we heard of them in this present century with our morbid, pre-occupied subjectivism! how little have we been told about the glory, the greatness, the majesty and the sovereignty of God! Our forefathers delighted in these terms; these were the terms of the Protestant Reformers, the terms of the Puritans and the Covenanters. They delighted to spend time contemplating the attributes of God.

Note how the Apostle comes to this point at once. 'Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God' – not by his own will! Paul did not call himself, and the Church did not call him; it was God who called him. He is an Apostle by the will of God. He states this very explicitly in the Epistle to the Galatians where he says, 'When it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb'. There is always emphasis on the sovereignty of God, and as we proceed in our study of this Epistle we shall find it standing out in all its glory everywhere. It is God who has chosen in Christ every one who is a Christian; it is God who has predestinated us. It is a part of God's purpose that we should be saved. There would never have been any salvation if God had not planned it and put it into execution. It is God who 'so loved the world', it is God who 'sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law'. It is all of God and according to His purpose. It is 'according to the counsel of his own will' that all these things have happened.

This Epistle tells us throughout that we should always contemplate our salvation in this way. We must not start with ourselves and then ascend to God; we must start with the sovereignty of God, God over all, and then come down to ourselves. As we work our way through the Epistle we shall find that not only is salvation entirely of God in general; it is of God also in particular. Take, for instance, the great theme which Paul works out in the third chapter. The special task which had been committed to him as an Apostle is 'to make all men see what is the

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fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ'. The mystery is that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs with Jesus. That was a 'mystery' which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men as it is now revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit.

God controls everything, the time element in particular. As you read through your Old Testament have you ever wondered why it was that all those centuries had to pass before the Son of God actually came? Why was it that for so long only the Israelites, the Jews, had the oracles of God and the understanding that there is only one true and living God? The answer is that it is God who decides the time when everything is to happen, and so He reveals this truth which had hitherto been secret. This is but another illustration of the sovereignty of God. He determines the time for everything to happen. God is over all, controlling all, and timing everything in His infinite wisdom. At such a time as this I know of nothing which is more comforting and reassuring than to know that the Lord still reigns, that He is still the sovereign Lord of the universe, and that though 'the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing', yet He has set his Son upon his holy mount of Zion (Psalm 2). A day will come when all His enemies shall lick the dust, and become His footstool and be humbled before Him, and Christ shall be 'all and in all'. Thus the sovereignty of God is emphasized in the introduction to this Epistle and repeated throughout because it is one of the cardinal doctrines without which we really do not understand our Christian faith.

Then, having said this, the Apostle proceeds to deal with the mystery of God, His greatness and the majesty of His sovereignty. The word 'mystery' is used six times in this Epistle to the Ephesians, thus more frequently than in his other Epistles. So I am justified in saying that this is one of the major themes of this Epistle, the mystery of God's ways with respect to us, the mystery of His will. We find it in this first chapter - 'Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself'. I wonder whether we always realize this as we should. Christian people, it is to be feared, sometimes approach these great truths and doctrines as if they could comprehend them with their understanding. We

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should never do so. If you start imagining that you can understand the mind and will of God you are doomed to failure, for these are mysteries with which no mind of man can ever cope. 'Great is the mystery of godliness'; no one can understand it. And if you try to understand God's ways with respect to man and the world I assure you that you will find yourself so overwhelmed that you will become miserable and unhappy. Indeed you may end by almost losing your faith and having a sense of grudge against God. 'The mystery of his will'! He is infinite and eternal, and we are finite and sinful, and cannot see and understand.

If ever you feel tempted to say that God is not fair, I advise you to put your hand, with Job, on your mouth, and to try to realize of whom you are speaking. Surely to object to the mystery is almost to deny that we are Christian at all. Is there anything more wonderful, more entrancing, more glorious for the Christian than to contemplate the mysteries of God? I trust that as we but approach these great themes you are already filled with a sense of divine expectancy, and long to go further and further into them. One of the most wonderful aspects of the Christian life is that in it you are ever going on. You think that you know it all, and then you turn a corner and suddenly see something you had not known before, and on and on you go. That is why the Apostle writes about 'the *riches* of his grace'; it is the glorious mystery which He has been pleased to reveal to us by His Holy Spirit. But God forbid that we should ever imagine that we shall be able to understand it all in the sense of fully comprehending it. My concern is not only to increase our intellectual knowledge of God, but to unfold 'the mystery' of His ways, in order that we may look at it, and worship Him, and confess our ignorance and smallness and frailty, and thank Him for the mystery of His holy will.

The next theme is the grace of God; and this word is used thirteen times in this Epistle. The Apostle keeps on repeating it. In the second verse he starts with it: 'Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ'. This is the theme above everything else that is developed in this Epistle – God's amazing grace to sinful man in providing for man's salvation and redemption. 'The grace of God'; yes, and the abundance of it in particular – 'the riches of his grace'. That idea is found here more than anywhere else – 'the riches of his grace'!

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'Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.' In this Epistle we are given a glimpse into the riches, the abundance, the super-abundance of God's grace towards us; and if we do not look forward to an examination and investigation of this with the keenest possible anticipation, then it is doubtful as to whether we are Christian at all. Most people are interested in wealth and riches; we like to go to museums and other places where precious things are kept and stored; we like to look at gems and pearls; we stand in queues and pay a fee to see such wealth and riches. We boast of this as individuals and nations. I repeat, then, that the supreme object of this Epistle is to lead us in, and give us a view and a glimpse of the riches, the super-abundant riches of the grace of God. It all starts with God, God the Father who is over all.

But having said that, we move on to what invariably comes next in all the Epistles of this Apostle, indeed to what always comes second in the whole of the Bible – the Lord Jesus Christ. 'Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.' Have you noticed how frequently the Name occurs, the Name that was so dear and blessed to the Apostle? 'The Apostle of Jesus Christ', 'Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ'; 'Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ', and so it continues. In the first verse Paul tells us at once that he is 'an apostle of Jesus Christ'. It sounds almost ridiculous to have to say it, and yet it is essential to emphasize that there is no gospel and no salvation apart from Jesus Christ. It is necessary because there are people who talk about Christianity without Christ. They talk about forgiveness but the Name of Christ is not mentioned, they preach about the love of God but in their view the Lord Jesus Christ is not essential. It is not so with the Apostle Paul; there is no gospel, there is no salvation apart from the Lord Jesus Christ. The gospel is especially about Him. All God's gracious purposes are carried out by Christ, in Christ, through Christ, from the beginning to the very end. Everything that God in His sovereign

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will, and by His infinite grace, and according to the riches of His mercy and the mystery of His will – everything that God has purposed and carried out for our salvation He has done in Christ. In Christ 'dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily'; in Him God has treasured up all the riches of His grace and wisdom. Everything from the very beginning to the very end is in and through the Lord Jesus Christ. There is no Christian message apart from Him. We are called and chosen 'in Christ' before the foundation of the world, we are reconciled to God by 'the blood of Christ'. 'In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace.'

We are all interested in forgiveness, but how am I forgiven? Is it because I have repented or lived a good life that God looks upon me and forgives me? I say with reverence that even the Almighty God could not forgive my sin simply on those terms. There is only one way whereby God forgives us; it is because He sent His only begotten Son from heaven to earth, and to the agony and the shame and the death on the Cross: 'In whom we have redemption through his blood.' There is no Christianity without 'the blood of Christ'. It is central, it is absolutely essential. There is nothing without it. Not only the Person of Christ but in particular, His death, His shed blood, His atoning substitutionary sacrifice! It is in that way, and that way alone, that we are redeemed. In this Epistle Christ is shown to be absolutely essential. We shall find it to be so as we come to the details. He is everywhere, He must be. We are chosen in Him, called by Him, saved by His blood. He is the Head of the Church as this first chapter reminds us. He is 'far above all principality and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come'. He is 'the Head of the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all'; and He is at the right hand of God with all authority and power in heaven and on earth. Jesus, our Lord, is supreme; He is the Son of God, the Saviour of the world. That is going to be our theme. Are you beginning to look forward to it – to look at Him, to gaze upon Him in His Person, in His offices, in His work, in all that He is and can be to us?

Then in particular, as I have already been anticipating, the theme of God's great purpose in Christ is the practical theme of

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this Epistle. We find it in the tenth verse: 'That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth; even in him.' Here we see God's purpose. The Apostle goes on to tell us that this purpose has ever been necessary because of sin. In the second chapter we shall find that he tells us about the problems that harass the mind and the heart of man, and how they are due to the fact that 'the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience', is controlling fallen man. He tells us that God's plan of redemption is necessary because of the Fall of man, and how that was preceded by the fall of that bright angelic spirit called the Devil, or Satan, who has become 'the god of this world', 'the prince of the power of the air'. This terrible power is the cause of the enmity and the plight and the havoc that has been characteristic of the life of the human race. The modern world is divided into rival factions, the ancient world was in exactly the same case. There is nothing new about this, it is all the result of sin and the devil's hatred of God. It is the result of the loss of man's true relationship to God. Man sets himself up as God and thereby causes all the disruption and confusion in the world. But we are shown how at the very beginning, even in Paradise, God announced His plan and began to put it into practice.

The Old Testament is an account of how God began to work it out. First of all He separated unto Himself a people called the Hebrews, later known as the Jews. In their history we see the beginning of His purpose of redemption. Out of the welter of mankind God formed a people for Himself. He called a man named Abraham and turned him into a nation. There we have the beginning of something new. But then there was great rivalry between the Jews and the Gentiles, so one of the major themes of this Epistle is to show how God has dealt with this matter. The great theme here is that He has revealed Himself not only to the Jews but also to the Gentiles; 'the middle wall of partition' has gone; God 'hath made both one'. There is a new creation; something new has come into being; it is called the Church; and this work of God is to go on increasing, says the Apostle, until when the fulness of the time shall have arrived God will have carried out His entire plan, and all that is opposed to Him shall be destroyed.

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Everything shall be united together and made one in Christ. That is one of the major themes of this Epistle. At first Jews only, then Jews and Gentiles, then all things. And all is to be done 'in and through Christ'.

That, in turn, leads to the other major theme, which is the Church. God's purpose is seen most plainly and clearly in and through the Christian Church, His great purpose of bringing together all nations in Christ. In her are found different people, different nationalities, coming from different parts of the world, with different experiences, different in appearance, different in psychology and in every conceivable respect; yet all are one 'in Christ Jesus'. This is what God is doing, until finally there shall be 'a new heaven and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness', and Jesus shall reign 'from shore to shore, till moons shall wax and wane no more'.

Nothing is more uplifting and wonderful than to see the Church in that light, and to see, therefore, the importance and the privilege and the responsibility of being a member of that Church. It is because of this that we must live the Christian life; and so in chapter 4 and to the end of the letter Paul emphasizes the ethical behaviour which is expected of Christians because they are what they are, and because that is the plan of God, and they must manifest His grace in their daily life and living.

There, then, we have taken a very brief view of the great themes of this Epistle. Let me summarize them in a simple, practical manner. Why am I calling your attention to all this? It is because I am profoundly convinced that our greatest need is to know these truths. We all need to look again at this glorious revelation, and to be delivered from our morbid pre-occupation with ourselves. If we but saw ourselves as we are depicted in this Epistle; if we but realized, as the Apostle expresses it in his prayer in verses 17-19, that we are to know 'what is the hope of our calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power', what a difference

Introduction

it would make! Are you a miserable, unhappy Christian, feeling that the fight is too much for you? and are you on the point of giving up and giving in? What you need is to know the power that is working mightily for you, the same power that brought Christ from the dead. If we but know that we are meant to be 'filled with all the fulness of God' we should no longer be weak and ailing and complaining, we should no longer present such a sorry picture of the Christian life to those who live round and about us. What we need, primarily, is not an experience, but to realize what we are, and who we are, what God has done in Christ and the way He has blessed us. We fail to realize our privileges.

Our greatest need is still the need of understanding. Our prayer for ourselves should be the prayer of the Apostle for these people, that 'the eyes of (our) understanding may be enlightened'. That is what we need. In this Epistle 'the exceeding riches' of God's grace are displayed before us. Let us look at them, and let us take hold of them and enjoy them. Above all, and especially at a time such as this, how vital it is that we should have some new and fresh understanding of God's great plan and purpose for the world. With international conferences taking place almost on our doorstep, with the whole world wondering what its future is to be, and what the outcome of our present troubles is going to be, with men at the end of their wits, and at the end of their tether, how privileged we are to be able to stand and look at this revelation, and see God's plan and purpose behind it all and beyond it all. It is not to be brought to pass through statesmen but through people like ourselves. The world ignores it, and laughs and mocks at it; but we know for certain with the Apostle that 'all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come', have been set beneath Christ's feet. The Lord Jesus Christ was rejected by this world when He came into it; they dismissed Him as 'this fellow', 'this carpenter'; but He was the Son of God and the Saviour of the world, the King of kings, the Lord of lords, the One to whom 'every knee shall bow, of things in heaven and things on earth, and things under the earth'. Thanks be to God for the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ, and for 'the riches of his grace'!