

To the Praise of the Glory of His Grace

Chapter 17

Ephesians 4:12–13

Ephesians 4:12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:

Perfecting of the saints. Here we see the beginning of the Lord's reason for both ordaining and equipping certain individuals for ministry. It is so that those in the body of Christ, may be raised up to share in the work of the ministry, and edification of the entire body of Christ. The Greek word for *perfecting* is #2677 *katartismos*. *Strong's Lexicon* defines the word "a bringing to a condition of fitness, perfecting." The word origin is "Derived from the Greek verb *καταρτίζω (katar-tizō)*, meaning 'to complete, prepare, or equip.'" The usage of the word, also according to *Strong's*, is defined as "The term '*katartismos*' refers to the process of making something complete or fully equipped. In the New Testament, it is often used in the context of spiritual growth and maturity, particularly in the equipping of believers for service and ministry within the body of Christ. It implies a sense of preparation and readiness for a specific purpose or task." The cultural and historical background of the word is linked to, "In the Greco-Roman world, the concept of '*katartismos*' would have been understood in various contexts, such as the preparation of soldiers for battle or the mending of fishing

nets. The idea of equipping or perfecting was integral to many aspects of daily life, emphasizing readiness and functionality. In the early Christian church, this concept was applied to the spiritual development and preparation of believers to fulfill their roles within the community of faith." *HELPS Word-studies* defines *katartismos* as "(a masculine noun)—properly, exact adjustment which describes how (enables) the individual parts to work together in correct order (used only in Eph 4:12)." You can liken young Christians to raw recruits in the military. For though they possess certain potential, there remains a need for extensive training before they become ready for the missions purposed for them. Ultimately the higher position an individual is called to, the more training by qualified leadership is needed over him. Young Christians also, though possessing a zeal for God, still lack a degree of spiritual instruction to be fully useful for the Lord and gospel outreach. And though spiritual desire is a good thing to possess, for those filled with religious zeal, it can, without sufficient knowledge of God,¹ easily turn to pride. And pride, if left unchecked, uncorrected, and unaddressed, can just as easily result in falling into the same condemnation as the devil. (I Tim. 3:6) *Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil.*

¹ Rom. 10:2 *For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge.*

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(*Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers*, I Tim. 3:6) *Lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil.*—The Greek word rendered here “being lifted up,” would be more happily Englished by *being clouded* or *deluded*. It marks the pride or vanity engendered by the finding himself in a position of authority for which no previous training and experience had fitted him. Such a “novice” would be in imminent danger of falling into the judgment passed by God upon the devil, whose fall was owing to the same blinding effect of pride.

It is for this reason of misguided zeal, youthful pride, and a limited knowledge of the truth, that the divinely sent ministries of *apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers* have been ordained and spiritually equipped, to restore and repair that which is lacking in God's people. It is also consistent in those who were previously unsaved, that before their salvation occurred, they regularly pursued a path of going their own way. So that if left ungoverned and uninstructed in the truth, new converts can be tempted to continue in their previous habit of spiritual wandering. The genesis of all sin also, is sinners departing from God's way, to pursue a selfish life of going about their own way. (Isa. 53:6) *All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.*

(*Benson Commentary*, Isa. 53:6) *All we*—All mankind; *like sheep*—Which are exceedingly apt to go astray, and lose themselves; *have gone astray*—From God, and from the way of truth and duty; of wisdom, piety, and virtue; of holiness and happiness. *We have turned every one to his own way*—In general, to the way of sin, which may well be called a man's *own way*, because sin is natural to us, inherent in us, born with us; and, in particular, to those several paths which several men choose, according to their different opinions and circumstances. *And the Lord hath laid*—

Hebrew, *hath made to meet on him*, as all the rivers meet in the sea. *The iniquity of us all*—

For the work of the ministry. The Greek word for *work* is #2041 *ergon*. *Strong's Lexicon* defines the word, “Work, deed, action, task, labor.” The usage of the word, according to *Strong's*, is revealed as, “The Greek word ‘*ergon*’ is commonly used in the New Testament to denote work, deed, or action. It encompasses a wide range of activities, from physical labor to moral actions and spiritual deeds. The term is often used to describe the works of God, the deeds of individuals, and the actions that demonstrate faith. In a theological context, ‘*ergon*’ can refer to both good works, which are the fruit of faith, and works of the law, which cannot justify a person before God.” The cultural and historical background of the word is, “In the Greco-Roman world, work was a significant aspect of daily life, with a clear distinction between manual labor and intellectual pursuits. The concept of ‘*ergon*’ was integral to both Jewish and Greek thought, where it was associated with fulfilling one's duties and responsibilities. In Jewish tradition, good works were seen as expressions of obedience to God's commandments. In the early Christian context, ‘*ergon*’ took on a deeper spiritual meaning, emphasizing the importance of faith manifested through actions.” *HELPS Word-studies* defines #2041 as “*érgon* (from *ergō*, ‘to work, accomplish’)—a work or worker who accomplishes something. 2041 /*érgon* (‘work’) is a deed (action) that carries out (completes) an inner desire (intension, purpose).” For anything to be accomplished there must be those both willing and able to sacrifice elements of their life to accomplish it. Hence not only are divinely sent ministries called to do their own work, they are also purposed to raise up the saved, so that they

will become spiritually mature enough, to do theirs.

(Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges, Eph. 4:12) The Divine gift of a Christian Ministry is to have its effect above all things in the fitting of "the saints" (true believers in general) for active "service" for the common Lord.

It is only as believers are perfected, in that which is lacking in their faith, that their individual callings can be fully entered into. Because also God has set the members in the body as it hath pleased Him,² then there is an essential need of every member to contribute to the edification and spiritual growth of the body. So that as each individual Christian progresses in his, or her, own spiritual development, then the final result will be a collective assembly, being united, edified, and growing in a deeper faith in the Son of God.

Work of the ministry. For the work of the ministry to advance, there must arise in those called by God through Christ, a spiritual willingness to become living sacrifices for Him. (Rom. 12:1) *I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.* Ultimately, for the work of the ministry to be accomplished, there must arise in believers a willingness to give their lives, as living sacrifices to God. This is also in direct contrast to how those now saved previously both lived in, and served sin. So that where once God's people used their bodies, to satisfy the sin nature within themselves, now, after divine mercy has been given to them,³ they are instructed to dedicate these same bodies, and lives,

to be employed for the Lord and His work. The use of the word *bodies* in this verse, connotes the entirety of a believer's being. That is, all Christians are to yield all, and everything, they are, to God, to then be used in service for Him.

(Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers, Rom. 12:1) The idea contained in sacrifice is that of dedication. We are to dedicate our bodies to God. But there is to be this distinction between the old Jewish sacrifices and the Christian sacrifice: the one was of dead animals, the other of the living man. The worshipper must offer, or present, before God, himself, with all his living energies and powers directed consciously to God's service.

Just as Jesus gave His bodily life to save the sinner, which actually included His physical body's death, it is reasonable that believers now should be willing to yield their completely new spiritual life⁴ to God. Undoubtedly to do this, requires a denial of their previous self. (Matt. 16:24) *Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.* To do any work there must be a degree of sacrifice; to do the work of God, demands Christians denying themselves, for God's work.

(Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers, Matt. 16:24) If any man will come after me.— The "will" is more than a mere auxiliary; "willeth," "desireth" to come after.

Let him deny himself, and take up his cross.— Our common thoughts of "self-denial," i.e., the denial to ourselves of some pleasure or profit, fall far short of the meaning of the Greek. The man is to deny his whole self, all his natural motives and impulses, so far as they come into conflict with the claims of Christ. If he does not so deny himself, he is

² *I Cor. 12:18 But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.*

³ *Rom. 12:1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.*

⁴ *I Thess. 5:23 And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

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in danger, as Peter was (it is significant that the same word is used in both instances), of denying his Lord. The self-denial here commanded has, accordingly, its highest type and pattern in the act by which the Son of God, in becoming man, “emptied Himself (see Note on Philippians 2:7⁵) of all that constituted, if we may so speak, the “self” of His divine nature. The words “take up his cross,” which the disciples had heard before (see Note on Matthew 10:38⁶), were now clothed with a new and more distinct meaning, by the words that spoke so clearly of the death of which the cross was to be the instrument.

(*Barnes’ Notes on the Bible*, Matt. 16:24) *Let him, deny himself*—That is, let him surrender to God his will, his affections, his body, and his soul. Let him not seek his own happiness as the supreme object, but be willing to renounce all, and lay down his life also, if required.

In the end every man will either deny himself for Christ, or deny Christ for himself. He cannot do both.⁷ The Bible also clearly reveals that all profession of faith, without acts of obedience is dead. (Jas. 2:26) *For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.*

(*Barnes’ Notes on the Bible*, Jas. 2:26) *So faith without works is dead also*—There is as much necessity that faith and works should be united to constitute true religion, as there

is that the body and soul should be united to constitute a living man. If good works do not follow, it is clear that there is no true and proper faith; none that justifies and saves. If faith produces no fruit of good living, that fact proves that it is dead, that it has no power, and that it is of no value. This shows that James was not arguing against real and genuine faith, nor against its importance in justification, but against the supposition that mere faith was all that was necessary to save a man, whether it was accompanied by good works or not. He maintains that if there is genuine faith it will always be accompanied by good works, and that it is only that faith which can justify and save. If it leads to no practical holiness of life, it is like the body without the soul, and is of no value whatever. James and Paul both agree in the necessity of true faith in order to salvation; they both agree that the tendency of true faith is to produce a holy life; they both agree that where there is not a holy life there is no true religion, and that a man cannot be saved. We may learn, then, from the whole doctrine of the New Testament on the subject, that unless we believe in the Lord Jesus we cannot be justified before God; and that unless our faith is of that kind which will produce holy living, it has no more of the characteristics of true religion than a dead body has of a living man.

Just as Abraham is considered the father of all who believe,⁸ Abraham, after being spoken to by God, obeyed and went out in search of the land that the Lord was calling him to.⁹ This same act of spiritual

5 Phil. 2:7 *But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:*

6 Matt. 10:38 *And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me.*

7 Matt. 6:24 *No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.*

8 Rom. 4:16 *Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all,*

Gal. 3:6–9 *Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness. Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham. And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed. So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham.*

9 Heb. 11:8 *By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went.*

Gen. 12:1–4 *Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father’s house, unto a land that I will shew thee: And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee,*

obedience should be evidenced in all who profess faith in Christ today. Abraham's initial obedience to obey God's will in his life is recorded in Genesis 12:1-9. A study of the record reveals that Abraham's walk, included many acts of obedience, proving his faith as sincere and authentic. By this it is seen, that where true faith exists, there will be corresponding acts of obedience following it. It is this obedience to God and His Spirit, which is critical for the work of the ministry to be both begun, continued in, and ultimately fulfill the great commission.¹⁰

Genesis 12:1-9 Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee:

²And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing:

³And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.

*⁴So Abram **departed**, as the LORD had spoken unto him; and Lot went with him: and Abram was seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran.*

*⁵And Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and all their substance that they had gathered, and the souls that they had gotten in Haran; and they **went forth** to go into the land of Canaan; and into the land of Canaan they came.*

*⁶And Abram **passed through** the land unto the place of Sichem, unto the plain of Moreh. And the Canaanite was then in the land.*

⁷And the LORD appeared unto Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land: and

and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed. ⁴So Abram departed, as the LORD had spoken unto him; and Lot went with him: and Abram was seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran.

Gen. 26:5 Because that Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws.

10 Matt. 28:19-20 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: ²⁰Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

*there **builDED** he an altar unto the LORD, who appeared unto him.*

*⁸And he **removed** from thence unto a mountain on the east of Bethel, and **pitchED** his tent, having Bethel on the west, and Hai on the east: and there he **builDED** an altar unto the LORD, and called upon the name of the LORD.*

*⁹And Abram **journeyED**, going on still toward the south.*

Through Abraham's faith and obedience, we can see the great contrast to those who possess what God's Word reveals as *dead faith*. This counterfeit faith claims to believe, but does little to nothing to obey God. Thus, for any person to possess a faith that saves, like Abraham's, there must be a continuance of obeying God's will, throughout the life. (Jas. 2:17) *Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.*

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Jas. 2:17) That in fact faith is of no more value, and has no more evidence of genuineness when it is unaccompanied with good works, than such empty wishes for the welfare of the poor would be when unaccompanied with the means of relieving their wants. Faith is designed to lead to good works. It is intended to produce a holy life; a life of activity in the service of the Saviour. This is its very essence; it is what it always produces when it is genuine. Religion is not designed to be a cold abstraction; it is to be a living and vivifying principle.

Another verse of Scripture which highlights that all sincere, genuine, and true faith will, obey God's will is Psalm 37:23—

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The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD: and he delighteth in his way.

(Barnes' Notes on the Bible, Ps. 37:23) *The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord*—Margin, “established.” The word rendered “ordered” means to stand erect; to set up; to found; to adjust, fit, direct. The idea here is, that all which pertains to the journey of a good man through life is directed, ordered, fitted, or arranged by the Lord. That is, his course of life is under the divine guidance and control. The word “good” has been supplied here by our translators, and there is nothing corresponding to it in the original. It is simply there, “the steps of man are ordered,” etc. Yet there can be no doubt that a good or pious man is particularly referred to, for the connection demands this interpretation. The word “steps” here means his course of life; the way in which he goes.

And he delighteth in his way—In his course of life; and, therefore, he blesses him. The general idea is that he is the object of the divine favor, and is under the care of God.

Understandably, for the *work of the ministry* to be truly accomplished then all of God's people, must have their *steps*, lives, and reason for living *ordered by the Lord*. It is only as the Christian's life is ordered and arranged by the Lord, that true ministerial success becomes possible, and proves itself as of God.

Edifying of the body of Christ. The Greek word *edifying* is #3619 *oikodomé*. *Strong's Lexicon* defines the word, “Building, edification, structure.” The word's origin is “From the Greek verb *οικοδομέω* (*oikodoméō*), meaning ‘to build’ or ‘to construct.’” The usage of the word is “The term *oikodomé* primarily refers to the act of building or constructing a physical structure. In the New Testament, it is often used metaphorically to describe the spiritual edification or building up

of the church and individual believers. It emphasizes growth, strengthening, and development in faith and character.” The cultural and historical background of the word is revealed as—“In the ancient Greco-Roman world, construction and architecture were significant aspects of daily life, with buildings serving as places of worship, commerce, and community gathering. The metaphor of building was a powerful image for early Christians, who saw the church as a spiritual house being built by God. This imagery would have resonated with a culture familiar with the importance of strong foundations and well-constructed edifices.” *HELPS Word-studies* defines *oikodomé*, “properly, a building (edifice) serving as a home; (figuratively) constructive criticism and instruction that builds a person up to be the suitable dwelling place of God, i.e. where the Lord is ‘at home.’” From these definitions of the word it can be seen, that the purpose of all work is to build something, and this something for those saved, is the edification of the body of Christ.

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

Till we all come in the unity of the faith. A more appropriate translation is, as Ellicott states, “*Till we all come.*—The marginal rendering is correct: *till we all arrive at the unity of the faith.*”¹¹ The unity spoken of consists of two things. 1. An agreement, and/or unity, in the faith of Jesus Christ, and/or that gospel message revealed by Him. 2. An agreement, and/or unity, amongst the various members of those who have been saved by Christ, and placed in His celestial body. Hence where

11 *Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers*, Eph. 4:13

false prophets, will seek division as their mode of operation,¹² the Lord's true servants will seek to spiritually inspire, encourage, and promote unity among God's people. So that in both Christian faith, and Christians' fellowship, the Lord's people become unified, just as all believers have been united and made to share in Jesus' life, death, and resurrection.¹³ Between the Father and the Son, there exists a divine and eternal oneness.¹⁴ This oneness has also been transferred to those chosen by God¹⁵ to become members of His Son's body. That which personally connects and produces unity among God's people, is their being made to share in the same gift of the Holy Spirit, sent by Christ.¹⁶

The Greek word for *unity* is #1775 *henotes*. *Strong's Lexicon* defines the word, "oneness, unity, unanimity." The usage of the word is—"The term '*henotes*' refers to the concept of unity or oneness. In the New Testament, it is used to describe the spiritual unity among believers, emphasizing the harmonious relationship that should exist within the body of Christ. This unity is not merely an external agreement but a profound spiritual connection rooted in shared faith and purpose." The cultural and historical background of the word is—"In the Greco-Roman world, unity was often associated with political or so-

cial harmony. However, in the Christian context, unity transcends these temporal associations and is deeply rooted in the spiritual realm. The early church faced numerous challenges, including cultural, ethnic, and doctrinal differences. The call for unity was a call to rise above these differences and to be united in Christ, reflecting the oneness of the Godhead." *HELPS Word-studies* defines #1775 *henotes* as "(from *heis*, 'one')—oneness (unity), especially the God-produced unity (oneness) between believers—i.e. the harmony from sharing likeness of nature with the Lord (used only in Eph 4:3,13)."

And of the knowledge of the Son of God. Ultimately the more accurate a knowledge there is of the *Son of God*, the more substantial unity that those saved by Him will share. Teaching us that the process for building increased spiritual harmony in the body of Christ, shall be accomplished, through a more full knowledge of the Son of God being imparted. Understandably, in Christian ministry, there is no greater work to be engaged in, than that labor which is exerted to bring those saved, into a more perfect knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. This will include not merely a study of the gospels and Jesus' earthly life, but must also include a much more distant knowledge of the Son of God's present glorified position in

12 Acts 20:30 *Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.*

13 Rom. 6:3-5 *Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? ⁴Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. ⁵For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection:*

Col. 2:10-13 *And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power: ¹¹In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: ¹²Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead. ¹³And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses;*
14 John 10:30 *I and my Father are one.*

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

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

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heaven.¹⁷ It is this largely forgotten, and/or never known heavenly knowledge of the Savior, which is most effective in inspiring genuine gospel outreach. I Peter provides a summation of such a knowledge of the Lord Jesus, as this. (I Pet. 3:22) *Who [Jesus] is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him.* Other translations of this verse provide additional emphasis detailing Jesus' exalted position.

(New Living Translation) *Now Christ has gone to heaven. He is seated in the place of honor next to God, and all the angels and authorities and powers accept his authority.*

(Amplified Bible) *who has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God [that is, the place of honor and authority], with [all] angels and authorities and powers made subservient to Him.*

(New American Standard Bible) *who is at the right hand of God, having gone into heaven, after angels and authorities and powers had been subjected to Him.*

(Contemporary English Version) *Christ is now in heaven, where he sits at the right side of God. All angels, authorities, and powers are under his control.*

(GOD'S WORD® Translation) *Christ has gone to heaven where he has the highest position that God gives. Angels, rulers, and powers have been placed under his authority.*

From this verse it is evident, that it is not simply Jesus' earthly ministry that saints are to be instructed in, and therefore brought to a more full knowledge of, but also the knowledge of Christ's present glorified position in heaven. Though many have been exposed to our Lord's earthly ministry, the great realization of His present heavenly ministry, is not truly known, including by many currently saved by Him. It is thus for this grand purpose of bringing God's people into a greater faith in, and awareness of the Son of God's glory, that the ministries of *apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers* are divinely most suited for. It is worth noting that it makes little difference how much a knowledge of God's Word is held, if individuals lack the most important knowledge of all, that knowledge which reveals that God has placed all things under His Son's feet, and that Christ is supreme, and that there is nothing, nor anyone, that is excepted from the Lord Jesus' far-reaching and universal rule,¹⁸ either upon the earth, or in heaven.¹⁹

Unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.

(Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers, Eph. 4:13) *Unto a perfect (that is, full-grown) man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.*—In these words are described the second great object of the ministries of the Church—not only the production of faith and knowledge of the Son of God, but the formation of Christ in the soul, as “dwelling in the heart through faith.”

¹⁷ Rev. 11:15 *And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.*

¹⁸ I Cor. 15:27 *For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him.*

Eph. 1:22 *And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Heb. 2:8 Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him. But now we see not yet all things put under him.*

¹⁹ Matt. 28:18–19 *And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. ¹⁹Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:*

(*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, Eph. 4:13) *Unto a perfect man*—Unto a complete man. This figure is obvious. The apostle compares their condition then to a state of childhood. The perfect man here refers to the man “grown up,” the man of mature life. He says that Christ had appointed pastors and teachers that the infant church might be conducted to “maturity;” or become strong—like a man. He does not refer to the doctrine of “sinless perfection”—but to the state of manhood as compared with that of childhood—a state of strength, vigor, wisdom, when the full growth should be attained; see 1 Corinthians 14:20.²⁰

Unto the measure of the stature—Margin, or age. The word “stature” expresses the idea. It refers to the growth of a man. The stature to be attained to was that of Christ. He was the standard—not in size, not in age—but in moral character. The measure to be reached was Christ; or we are to grow until we become like him.

It is not just that Christians are to come unto a more perfect knowledge of the Son of God, but also that they have been purposed to grow up into such spiritual maturity that their faith, love, and obedience to God, mirrors Jesus' own. Thus, the measure and/or standard of all Christians is purposed to be, that they become so spiritually mature in their faith and life, that their earthly lives, together mimic and mirror, the life of their Savior. It is for this final purpose that Jesus has given to His church, after His ascension, the heavenly ministries of *apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers*. So that through their spiritual instruction and divine oversight, the entire body of Christ, so matures in spirituality, faith, and love, that it uniformly reveals the presence of the Savior, to all those hungering and thirsting for Him.

²⁰ 1 Cor. 14:20 *Brethren, be not children in understanding: howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men.*