

ephesians

23rd Australasian
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Youth Conference

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walking together in
Heavenlies
in Christ Jesus

PREFACE

Dear Young People

You have in your hands a set of notes, written for the purpose of assisting you in your studies of Paul's letter to the Ephesians, the topic of the 23rd Australasian Christadelphian Youth Conference to be held in Perth in September/October 1995, God Willing. Our theme "Walking together in Heavenlies in Christ Jesus," succinctly expresses the emphasis which will be concentrated on at this conference, because it beautifully highlights both the short and long term goals which we should all be striving for:

...in the short term - the way in which our lives must be conducted whilst we await our Lord's return;

...and in the long term - the goal achieved when we will be taken as God's own.

Paul, in the epistle, sets our minds on high. We can soar with the spirit as he beautifully portrays the joys set before us. We can walk soberly with him as he sets out the practical warnings, to "redeem the time, because the days are evil."

Remember, these notes are only an aid to study. Nothing can replace the careful, prayerful, consideration of the Word itself, and the communication of the Word one with another, and the Father.

Read, and reread the epistle.

Ask Yahweh for His guidance and put the time aside to do justice to the understanding of this marvelous epistle.

Other notes available on the Epistle and the ecclesia which can be used in conjunction with these notes are:

- * Ephesians - Bro. John Carter*
- * Ephesians - Youth Conference 1975*
- * Quenching all the fiery darts of the wicked - Bro. Ron Abel*
- * Apocalypse Epitomised - Bro. H P Mansfield*

*Use these notes and others to assist your understanding. Mark them up and when you are ready, **MARK YOUR BIBLE** to have an ever-present companion.*

Finally, "speak the truth in love, growing up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working, in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love."

*Youth Conference Committee
January 1995*

INTRODUCTION

1 EPHEBUS - BRIEF SECULAR HISTORY AND GEOGRAPHY

Ephesus lay very near the coast in Asia Minor (known today as Turkey). It was founded in the 10th century BC by Androklos, a son of the King of Athens. It was situated on an inner harbour at the mouth of the Meander River (also known as the Cayster River). In the days of Paul it was a busy port and lay on the principal trade route to the east.

A most important change in Ephesus was brought about by the Roman Emperor Augustus (born BC 63 and mentioned in Luke 2:1). He declared Ephesus the capital of the Province of Asia instead of Pergamum. Consequently, Ephesus became the first and the largest metropolis in Asia, the most important trade centre, the permanent residence of the Roman Governor, and one of the five largest cities in the Roman Empire. During the first century AD, Ephesus was the largest and most important city of antiquity.

The alluvium deposited by the River Meander throughout the centuries finally deprived Ephesus of its harbour. Today Ephesus lies in ruins, and all that remains of the harbour is a small lake in a swampy area some 4.5 km from the sea.

2 THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE ECCLESIA AT EPHEBUS

The apostle Paul visited Ephesus on his second missionary journey (Acts 18:19-21). His stay was brief because of his desire to "keep this feast that cometh in Jerusalem". He left at Ephesus his travelling companions, Aquilla and Priscilla, and promised to return, which he did almost immediately after starting his third missionary journey (Acts 19:1 - 20:1). This stay lasted three years (Acts 20:31).

For the first three months, Paul went to the synagogue where he spoke boldly, entered into dispute and proclaimed the Gospel of the Kingdom (Acts 19:8). However, when it became no longer profitable to preach at the synagogue because "that Way" was evil spoken of, Paul took his disciples away from the synagogue and continued his preaching in the school room of Tyrannus (Acts 19:9).

In confirmation of his preaching, God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul (Acts 19:11-12). Others who tried to imitate these miracles were shown to be imposters with the result that the name of the Lord Jesus Christ grew in stature (Acts 19:13-17). Many who had practiced magic brought their books of magic and burned them (Acts 19:19). "So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed" in Ephesus (Acts 19:20).

As the brethren grew in number, so those that made their living from selling silver shrines of the goddess Diana (known by the Greeks as Artemis) grew livid as they saw their trade threatened. Then, as now, false religion and money often go together. This threatened decline in trade led to a trade meeting (Acts 19:25), and subsequent uproar in the city with Gaius and Aristarchus, Paul's travelling companions, being dragged into the theatre (Acts 19:29). The Town Clerk reasoned with the unruly mob and eventually restored order (Acts 19:35-41).

Following this uproar, "Paul called unto him the disciples, and embraced them, and departed for to go into Macedonia" (Acts 20:1).

The character of the pagans in Ephesus is illustrated by Paul's remark in I Cor 15:32 "If after the manner of men I have fought with [human] beasts at Ephesus ...". Paul again describes the opposition and persecution he faced in Ephesus in the following words "We would not, brethren, have you ignorant of our trouble which came to us in Asia, that we were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life: But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead: Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that He will yet deliver us" (II Cor 1:8-10).

Paul's final personal contact with the Ephesians is recorded in Acts 20:17-38. On his way back to Jerusalem at the end of his third missionary journey, he stopped at Miletus and sent for the elders of the Ephesian Ecclesia. One of his concerns that he wanted to warn them of, is contained in Acts 20:30 - "Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them." The Ephesians heeded this warning with the result that 30 years later the Lord Jesus Christ was able to commend them in these terms - "I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars" (Rev 2:2).

Nevertheless, secular history remembers Ephesus for its Paganism rather than for the outstanding work of the apostle Paul and the Ecclesia he founded there. In Ephesus there are many ruins which testify to the immoral pagan worship which was practiced in that place. The Roman Catholics, keeping up the pagan tradition, held an Ecumenical Council of 200 bishops there in AD 431 and as a result of which proclaimed three blasphemous doctrines, viz:

- 1 Christ's personality is one and divine;
- 2 The virgin Mary is the Mother of God; and
- 3 During the execution of religious duties the Pope acts with divine authority.

"That Way" so evil spoken of and blasphemed in Ephesus will soon become **"The Way"** of all men on the face of the earth when the Lord Jesus Christ returns to establish the Kingdom of God.

3

IS THE EPISTLE REALLY "THE EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS"?

Bro Carter writing in his book *The Letter to the Ephesians - An Exposition* says on page 8:

Ephesians is like Romans in that it is in the nature of a treatise. The absence of the destination "in Ephesus" in some manuscripts [ch 1:1], and the omission of greetings in the letter, together with references to the matter in some early writers, have led to the general conclusion that Ephesians was a circular letter intended for all the Ecclesias near to Ephesus. The particular form the error had taken at Colosse necessitated a letter especially for them. It is possible that the "letter from Laodicea" which Paul desired the Colossians to read [Col 4:16], was a copy of the Ephesian letter to that city.

Bro H P Mansfield writing in *Guidebook to the New Testament* says on pages 168-169:

... the character of the [letter to the] Ephesians does not accord with the circumstances of Paul's knowledge of the Ephesian Ecclesia. He had a great love and concern for the brethren there, and he knew their circumstances personally; but none of this comes through the Epistle. Not only is there not a single personal greeting, but Paul describes the Ecclesia to whom he is writing as one whose conversion he only knew by repute (ch 1:15), and he as an Apostle only known by hearsay (ch 3:2) so as to need credentials to accredit him with them (ch 3:4). He refers to them as exclusively Gentiles (ch 2:11, 4:17), whereas the Ecclesia in Ephesus was partly Jewish at least (Acts 19:8), and implies that they were only recently converted (ch 1:13; 2:13; 5:8).

Moreover, in view of Paul's long association with the Ecclesia in Ephesus, the warmth of his earnest last appeal to its elders, the intimacy with which he had associated with them whilst dwelling in their midst, it is incredible that he would not include some personal comment or greetings if the Epistle was dictated specifically for the Ephesians. There is not even a reference to Timothy in the whole of the Epistle, though he had laboured long in Ephesus.

It seems that the ancient suggestion is correct, and that this Epistle was designed primarily for Laodicea, but used as a circular letter to other Ecclesias in Asia, among which was that of Ephesus.

It is attractive to think that this Epistle was written primarily for the Ecclesia in Laodicea, for its opening theme: "The riches in Christ" provided a great contrast to the material wealth of that city. It also provides an appropriate link to Christ's warning of indictment against the Ecclesia in Laodicea because of its materialism (cp Rev 3:17).

4 AN EPISTLE FROM PRISON

The Epistle was written by Paul while a prisoner in Rome (ch 4:1). The date is probably about AD 62. In content it is very similar to the Epistle to the Colossians and in understanding Ephesians it can sometimes help to look at parallel expressions in Colossians.

Although the two Epistles (Ephesians and Colossians) bear a close resemblance to each other, in that in both places false teaching had led to a wrong way of life, nevertheless the effect of the false teaching in both places was different. In the Epistle to the Ephesians it is immorality which had to be corrected. In the Epistle to the Colossians it was asceticism.

The bearer of both Epistles (as well as the Epistle to Philemon) is Tychicus (ch 6:21; Col 4:7-9).

5 THE CONFERENCE THEME

No matter to whom the Epistle was written, what is clear is that the environment in which we live today is remarkably similar to that in which the brethren and sisters to whom Paul wrote, had to survive spiritually. There was rampant materialism and a depraved immoral lifestyle.

Against this background Paul exhorts his readers to maintain a steadfastness for the Truth, and to exhibit standards of behaviour that are appropriate for a people called to be saints (Eph 1:1). We are encouraged as Paul reminds us of the outstanding "riches" that God has graciously bestowed upon us in Christ (cp ch 1:7, 18; 2:4, 7; 3:8, 16). We are indeed a greatly privileged people who have the status of living **"IN THE HEAVENLIES IN CHRIST JESUS"** (ch 2:6). This being our status, Paul exhorts us to **"WALK"** in a way that is in keeping with our high calling (ch 4:1, 17; 5:2, 8, 15) and so the theme for our conference is **'WALKING TOGETHER IN THE HEAVENLIES IN CHRIST JESUS'**.

OUTLINE OF EPHESIANS

1:1-1:2

INTRODUCTION

1:1-1:2 Greetings to the Ecclesia

1:3-1:23

GOD'S PURPOSE WITH HIS ECCLESIA PREDESTINED

1:3-1:14 **PRAISE** for our high calling in Christ

1:15-1:23 **PRAYER** for spiritual perception

2:1-2:22

HOW THE ECCLESIA IS BUILT

2:1-2:10 Once dead but now alive in Christ Jesus

2:11-2:22 Reconciled to God in Christ Jesus

3:1-3:21

GENTILES INCORPORATED INTO THE ECCLESIA

3:1-3:12 The secret revealed - The Gospel preached to Gentiles

3:13-3:21 Paul's prayer for their spiritual strengthening

4:1-5:21

PRACTICAL EXHORTATIONS FOR THE ECCLESIA

4:1-4:6 Be united - Walk worthy of your vocation

4:7-4:16 Be mature - Do not be children

4:17-4:24 Be pure - Put on the new man

4:25-4:32 Be righteous - Put away evil

5:1-5:7 Walk in love

5:8-5:14 Walk in light

5:15-5:21 Walk circumspectly

5:22-5:33

HOW TO CONDUCT VARIOUS RELATIONSHIPS

5:22-5:33 Wives and husbands

6:1-6:4 Children and parents

6:5-6:9 Servants and masters

6:10-6:20

HOW TO FIGHT THE FIGHT OF FAITH (OR THE SPIRITUAL WARRIOR)

6:10-6:20 The weapons of our warfare

6:21-6:24

FINAL WORDS

6:21-6:22 The work of Tychicus

6:23-6:24 The final benediction

SUBSIDIARY ANALYSIS

The Ecclesia as the Body of Christ
(see ch 1:23; 2:16; 4:4; 4:12; 4:16; 5:23; 5:30)

- 1:1-1:2 **GREETINGS** to the members of his body
- 1:3-1:14 **BLESSINGS** for members of his body
- 1:15-1:21 **PRAYER** for members of his body
- 1:22-1:23 Christ is **THE HEAD** of the body
- 2:1-2:10 How we become **MEMBERS** of his body
- 2:11-2:22 **RECONCILED** to God in his body
- 3:1-3:21 The **SECRET** about his body - Gentiles incorporated into it
- 4:1-4:6 The **UNITY** of his body
- 4:7-4:16 The **EDIFYING** of his body
- 4:17-6:20 The **DUTIES** of members of his body
- 4:17-5:21 Concerning our **WALK**
 5:22-6:4 Concerning **FAMILY LIFE**
 6:5-6:9 Concerning **EMPLOYMENT**
 6:10-6:20 Concerning our **WARFARE**
- 6:21-6:24 **FAREWELL** to members of his body

KEY WORDS & PHRASES IN THE EPISTLE

<i>LOVE(D)</i>	1:4, 15; 2:4(2); 3:17, 19; 4:2, 15, 16; 5:2(2); 5:25(2); 5:28; 5:33; 6:23, 24.
<i>THE BODY (OF CHRIST)</i>	1:23; 2:16; 4:4, 12, 16; 5:23, 30.
<i>WALK(ED)</i>	2:2, 10; 4:1, 17; 5:2, 8, 15.
<i>IN THE HEAVENLIES</i>	1:3, 20; 2:6; 3:10; 6:12.
<i>RICH(ES)</i>	1:7, 18; 2:4, 7; 3:8, 16.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

The following reference works are referred to in these Notes:

<i>ABBREVIATION</i>	<i>REFERENCE</i>
Bull/Bullinger	A Critical Lexicon and Concordance to the New Testament - E W Bullinger
Bro Carter	The Letter to the Ephesians - An Exposition Bro John Carter
Diag/Diaglott	The Emphatic Diaglott (translation of the New Testament)
JB	The Jerusalem Bible
NIV	The New International Version of the Bible
Roth/Rotherham	The Emphasised Bible - J B Rotherham
Strong	Strong's Exhaustive Concordance
TCNT	The Twentieth Century New Testament
Thayer	Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament
RSV	The Revised Standard Version of the Bible
RV	The Revised Version of the Bible
Vine	Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words - W E Vine

The following works may also prove helpful in your study of Ephesians:

<i>AUTHOR</i>	<i>TITLE</i>
Bro John Carter	The Letter to the Ephesians - An Exposition
Bro H P Mansfield	Guide Book to the New Testament
Menorah Publications	Notes on Ephesians
Perth 1975	13th Australasian Youth Conference Notes

CHAPTER 1

That we should be holy and without blame before him

1.1 *Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ*

The opening words identify the author and establish his standing among the believers. He was an apostle, ie one sent by Jesus Christ. In many ways Paul was Christ to the first century Ecclesias. Prophecies in the Old Testament which apply directly to the Lord Jesus Christ are also applied to Paul, for example:

Prophecy	Application to Christ	Application to Paul
Isa 42:6 Isa 49:6	Acts 26:23	Acts 13:47
Isa 6:10	John 12:40-41	Acts 28:25-27

Because Paul so closely followed the example set by his Lord, he was able to say "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ" (I Cor 11:1). This too must be our goal - we must so follow our Lord that others will be encouraged and edified by the example we set in our own lives.

by the will of God

Even before his birth, God had a purpose with Paul. Paul explained it himself when he said that God "... separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by His grace, to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach him among the Gentiles" (Gal 1:15-16).

to the saints which are at Ephesus

"Saints" (Greek HAGIOS) are '*separated ones*'. Separation is a fundamental principal in the calling of God. God is taking out of (or separating from) the Gentiles a people for his name (Acts 15:14). In the natural creation, God worked upon this principle of separation (See the use of the words "divide" and "divided" Gen 1:4, 6, 7, 14, 18 and "gathered together" Gen 1:9). God also works on the same principle of separation or division in forming his spiritual creation. We are called to be saints, ie a separate people (II Cor 6:14-18). This has important implications for how we live our lives in this evil and degenerate world.

and to the faithful in Christ Jesus

Paul is not addressing two classes of people (ie saints and faithful) but one. Those who are the saints will not only be separated ones, but they will be faithful. Their lives will exhibit by action the things which they believe. Their faith will be seen

in their works (Jas 2:17-18). There are two aspects to being in the truth. We have to be not only dead to sin, but alive to God through Jesus Christ our Lord (Rom 6:11). Each of the doctrines we believe should have a practical outworking in our lives. This is how our faith is seen in action.

1:2 *Grace be unto you*

"Grace" is a key word in this Epistle. It occurs 12 times (Eph 1:2, 6, 7; 2:5, 7, 8; 3:2, 7, 8; 4:7, 29; 6:24). "Grace" is '*Divine favour*'. It was Paul's prayer that God would, in His kindness, bestow upon this Ecclesia that which would be beneficial for their growth in the Truth.

In the context of this verse "grace" is that love and kindness and concern which flows spontaneously from God to His children and seeks their welfare.

and peace

"Peace" (Greek EIRENE) describes not just a harmonious relationship, but a binding together. The Greek EIRENE is derived from EIRO meaning '*to join*'. Paul's prayer was that the Ecclesia would be blessed in that it's individual members would be welded together in understanding and outlook and therefore enjoy a unity of purpose.

from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ

This is the source from whence true grace and peace arise. The Ephesian believers, who **ONCE** were without hope and without God in the world (ch 2:12), had received grace and peace through the redemption that God has provided in the Lord Jesus Christ.

1.3 *Blessed be*

The Greek EULOGETOS has the idea of '*to speak well of, to please*'. We cannot bless God in any material sense, but we can praise Him for His abundant goodness to us. His goodness is principally seen in the redemption that He has provided in the Lord Jesus Christ.

the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ

Notice that Paul says that the Lord Jesus Christ has got a God - Blessed be **THE GOD** and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ (see also 1 Pet 1:3). These verses are fatal to the doctrine of the Trinity. Even after the Lord was immortalised and

ascended to Heaven he is said to have a God. If it were true, as the doctrine of the Trinity demands, that Christ is co-equal and co-eternal with God, then Christ cannot have a God - he cannot have someone who is greater than himself. But as with the rest of humanity Christ has a God.

who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings

As Psa 126:3 declares "Yahweh hath done great things for us; whereof we are glad".

in heavenly (places) in Christ

Notice that the word "places" is in italics (in your Bible) and should be omitted. The phrase would better be translated "in the heavenlies in Christ" as it is in Rotherham (see also the Diag). This does **NOT** describe the believers' physical location, but rather their **STATUS** in Christ. God is taking out (or separating) a people for His Name (Acts 15:14). While still physically on the earth, symbolically we are now clouds (Heb 12:1) drawn up from the Sea of Nations (Isa 57:20) by the Sun of Righteousness, the Lord Jesus Christ (Mal 4:2), and so elevated to "the heavenlies" in him. In the age to come we hope to be "stars" in the symbolic heaven that will govern the earth (Dan 12:3).

The phrase "in the heavenlies" is a characteristic expression of the Apostle Paul in this Epistle. It is an expression which Paul applies to believers to describe their **STATUS** in Christ (see ch 1:3; 2:6 and the note in the previous paragraph). It is used to describe the **STATUS** of the government and ecclesiastical systems of this world which rule now (see ch 3:10; 6:12 margin). It is used of the **STATUS** which the Lord Jesus Christ enjoys as God's only begotten son who "overcame", was resurrected, and now occupies a position of great privilege at God's right hand (see ch 1:20).

The key to understanding the expression is to remember that it describes the **STATUS** which someone holds. It describes their rank or standing or state. It does **NOT** describe physical location.

1:4

According as He hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world

God, through His foreknowledge is able to declare "the end from the beginning" (Isa 46:10). He knows beforehand what will happen. There is a distinct difference between God knowing beforehand what individuals will be like and pre-determining how they will act. God calls people to the Truth through the power of His word. But God does not force people to respond to preaching, although He knows who will. God knows who will be in the Kingdom, but He does not force them to

That we should be holy and without blame before him

develop characters which will be found acceptable at the Judgement Seat of Christ. The "Book of Life", which records the names of all those who will become immortal in the Kingdom, has been in existence since the time of creation (see Ex 32:32, Dan 12:1-2, Rev 17:8).

that we should be holy

Vine in his Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words says that "holy" (Greek HAGIOS) '*fundamentally signifies separated and hence in Scripture in its moral and spiritual significance, separated from sin and therefore consecrated to God, sacred.*' The height of our calling is seen in 1 Pet 1:15 - "But just as He who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do" (NIV).

and without blame before Him

"Without blame" is translated from the Greek AMOMOS which is always rendered "without blemish" in the RV. In the Septuagint (the Greek version of the Old Testament) AMOMOS is frequently used in relation to the animal sacrifices. There it points forward to the blameless character and conduct of the Lord Jesus Christ. We must strive for such blamelessness in our own lives.

(in love)

Many translations (eg, Roth, NIV, Diag, RSV) connect the words, "in love" with the next phrase. In effect they put "in love" in verse 5. It is by His love that God has provided the opportunity for members of the human race to become part of His adopted family - His children.

1:5 *In love having predestinated us unto the adoption of children*

The Diaglott translates it as "having in love previously marked us out for sonship". God does this through His foreknowledge. He knows who will be faithful and attain the Kingdom. What is predestinated is THE REWARD, which is our final adoption. This adoption comes when our bodies are redeemed (Rom 8:23). The reward of the faithful is sure having been predestined by God. What we have to do day by day, is work out our own salvation with fear and trembling (Phil 2:12). Nevertheless, while we are even now the children of God (I John 3:1), we wait for Christ to come that we might receive the (final) adoption (Rom 8:23).

Because the false doctrines of *the predestination of individuals to be saved or lost*, and *the predestination of events in their lives*, have been a problem from time to time, some additional notes here may be helpful. The Bible teaches that the

predestination of individuals is a fallacy and freewill is a fact. Some passages which establish this are:

- 1 We are exhorted to "work out our own salvation with fear and trembling" (Phil 2:12) which would be impossible and unnecessary if we were predestined to be saved or lost.
- 2 Yahweh took Israel "that they might be unto Him for a people, and for a name, and for a praise, and for a glory: but they would not hear" (Jer 13:11). Yahweh had a purpose with His people, but they used their freewill to frustrate that purpose.
- 3 Gal 6:7-9 teaches that "whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap". Predestination of individuals teaches that we are predestined to be saved or lost, rich or poor, sick or healthy no matter what we sow.
- 4 The Lord Jesus Christ said that he will reward "him that overcometh" (Rev 2:7, 11, 17, 26; 3:5, 12, 21). Predestination teaches that we will be rewarded or punished no matter what we do.
- 5 The Bible teaches that we are subject to '*time and chance*' (Ecc 9:11). Predestination teaches that every event in our lives is predetermined by God (even down to whether we do or do not kick our little toe!!!). As Bro Roberts said:

There is such a thing as chance, as distinct from what God does. The Bible declares this (Ecc 9:11) and the experience of every day life teaches it. Every moment teems with incidents of chance ... God has control of all chance; but all chance is not controlled. It is controlled when His purpose requires it ...

So we are free agents as to whether we do or do not serve God. We are subject to time and chance. So Christadelphians get sick; have accidents; suffer from the ravages of floods, cyclones etc. God is in control of all such events and sometimes He acts to save us from ourselves or from calamities which might otherwise overtake us. But we are not predestined to be sick or healthy. We are not predestined to have an accident or not have one. We are not predestined to get into the Kingdom or be rejected at the Judgement Seat. What is predestined for ALL the faithful is the future REWARD - the adoption into God's immortal family - and not the every day events of life.

by Jesus Christ to himself

It is only through the work of God in Christ, that salvation is available to mankind. "There is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself (2 Cor 5:19).

according to the good pleasure of His will

God is the author of man's salvation (Isa 43:11; John 3:16; Acts 2:23). It is God's will that ultimately the earth will be filled with His glory (Num 14:21). This purpose requires that some humans become part of God's immortal family on earth. Yahweh's scheme of salvation has been provided "... for His own kind purposes" which is how the JB translates this phrase.

1:6 *to the praise of the glory of His grace*

NIV "to the praise of His glorious grace". JB "to make us praise the glory of His grace". Those who have been blessed with all spiritual blessings in Christ (1:3) have been recipients of the abounding grace of God - a grace which has covered our sins and so justified us (Rom 3:24) and made us accepted in the Beloved. This grace is glorious (Greek DOXA) in that it attracts attention and commands recognition. This graciousness is part of the Divine character (Ex 33:19).

wherein He hath made us accepted in the Beloved

"The Beloved" is the Lord Jesus Christ (Matt 3:17; 12:18, 17:5; Luke 20:13 etc). We who once were without hope and without God in the world, have been accepted through our identification in baptism with the sacrifice of the Beloved (Eph 2:12-13).

1:7 *In whom we have redemption through his blood*

As sons and daughters of Adam, what we need is the redemption of our minds and the redemption of our bodies. By the power of the Word of God we can experience in measure the redemption of our minds now. "Be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind" (Rom 12:2). "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus" (Phil 2:5). The redemption of our bodies awaits the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ and the change to immortality. So we are "waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body" (Rom 8:23, see also Phil 3:20-21). Our redemption comes through being in Christ who through his own blood

obtained eternal redemption for himself (Heb 9:12 - omit "for us") and for all who are "in him".

the forgiveness of sins

It is sin that separates man from God (Isa 59:2). The basis upon which God will forgive our sins is through our identification with the shed blood (ie the sacrifice) of the Lord Jesus Christ (Rom 3:25; Heb 9:22, 28).

according to the riches of His grace

"Riches" Gk PLOUTOS - can mean 'abundance', ie "according to the abundance of His grace". See note on "to the praise of the glory of His grace" (1:6).

1:8 *Wherein He hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence*

NIV "that he lavished on us with all wisdom and understanding". The scheme of reconciliation which God instituted for mankind was no haphazard affair. It was a scheme full of divine wisdom and understanding. It was a scheme in which God could remain just while justifying (or declaring righteous) those who believe in Jesus (Rom 3:26). It was a scheme which requires men and women to acknowledge their sinfulness and espouse the mental and moral virtues which were exhibited by the Lord Jesus Christ. So while Yahweh has lavished grace on us in providing redemption, He has done it in a way which reveals a facet of His wisdom and understanding.

1:9 *Having made know unto us the mystery of His will*

The secret (Gk MUSTERION), here translated "mystery", which was revealed to Paul and others, was God's will concerning the Gentiles, that they should be fellow heirs with the Jews of the gospel promises (ch 3:5-6).

according to His good pleasure which He hath purposed in Himself

See earlier note on "according to the good pleasure of His will" (ch 1:5). It is God who, according to His own pleasure has instituted a scheme of reconciliation for mankind (John 3:16; Luke 10:21; Phil 2:13). We have been called to the Truth according to the purpose and grace of God (II Tim 1:9).

That we should be holy and without blame before him

1:10 ***That in the dispensation of the fullness of times***

NIV "to be put into effect when the times will have reached their fulfilment". This expression can refer to the end of three time periods:

- 1 The time of Christ's crucifixion, or the end of the Jewish age in AD 70 when the truth was preached to Jews and Gentiles (1 Cor 10:11; Gal 4:4; Heb 1:2; I Pet 1:20).
- 2 The return of the Lord Jesus Christ to establish the Kingdom on the earth when Jews and Gentiles will inherit the Kingdom (Isa 2:2-4; Mic 4:1-2).
- 3 The end of the Millennium when God will "be all in all" (I Cor 15:24-28).

He might gather together in one all things in Christ

The gathering together in one comes about through:

- 1 The crucifixion of Christ with which believing Jews and Gentiles identify and become "one in Christ Jesus" (Gal 3:28).
- 2 The return of the Lord Jesus Christ when God will commence to "put all enemies under his feet" (I Cor 15:25).
- 3 At the end of the Millennium when "all things shall be subdued unto him" (I Cor 15:28).

which are in heaven and which are in earth; even in him

Heaven is in the plural in the Greek - see the margin. These are the heavens - the divine government of the Kingdom age. The earth represents all the mortal nations of which the Jewish nation will be the chief. There will be great unity of purpose between the immortals and the mortals when Christ reigns on earth. "In that day shall there be one Yahweh and His name one" (Zech 14:9).

1:11 ***In whom also we have obtained an inheritance***

The Bible often speaks of things that are not as though they were. For example, the resurrection of Abraham (Matt 22:31-32). Having been baptised into Christ we have the "inheritance" in prospect. If we are truly "in him" we will obtain the inheritance when he comes.

that we should be holy and without blame before him

being predestinated according to the purpose of Him that knoweth all things after the counsel of His own will

Those who are found worthy when they appear before the judgement seat of Christ (II Cor 5:10) are predestined to be given the inheritance. This inheritance is predetermined by God. Paul is not teaching that individuals do not have a free will or that God forces people to act in a certain way. God by foreknowledge knows who will attain the Kingdom and their inheritance is predetermined or predestined.

1:12 *That we should be to the praise of His glory*

Weymouth translates this phrase as "that we should be devoted to the extolling of His glorious attributes". We can extol God's marvellous attributes by what we say about Him to others, and by how we express ourselves to Him in our prayers.

However, a most important way of extolling God's glorious attributes is by devoting ourselves to displaying His character in our own lives - to show by the way we live what Yahweh really means to us. God wants to see in us a reflection of His glory (ie, His character).

1:13 *In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth*

There is a contrast between the "ye" of this verse and the "we" of verse 12. By "we" in verse 12 Paul seems to mean the Jewish believers and by "ye" in this verse he means Gentile converts to the Truth. See the use of "ye" in this context Eph 2:11, 12, 13. So after the Word of God was preached to the Gentiles, some believed and came to trust in the salvation provided in Christ.

the gospel of your salvation:

There is only one Gospel (Gal 1:6-9) which is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believes it, whether Jew or Gentile (Rom 1:16).

in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise,

In the first century many (but not all) believers received the gift of the Holy Spirit by the laying on of the hands of one of the apostles (Acts 8:14-19; 19:6). It was a stamp which clearly indicated that Gentiles were part of God's plan and purpose in that God gave His spirit power to Gentiles. They were sealed in the sense that a seal was a distinctive mark which implied possession. The Jerusalem Bible has "you too have been stamped with the seal of the Holy Spirit of the Promise".

What they received in an age when the Scriptures were not complete was a "taste" of the power which will be made available to the saints in the age to come (Heb 6:5). It was a "guarantee" (II Cor 5:5 RSV) of a fuller manifestation of Holy Spirit power at the second coming of Christ.

1:14 *Which is the earnest of our inheritance*

"Earnest" is translated from Greek ARRHABON. It was a commercial word denoting part of the purchase price given in advance as **security** for the rest (see Strong 728). So the first century believers received the Holy Spirit (in the absence of the complete Word of God) like a small advance payment. The receiving of the full payment awaits the day of Christ's coming when those who are found worthy, will become the Elohim (the mighty ones of power) of the coming age.

until the redemption of the purchased possession,

The word "until" would better be translated as "unto" (Roth, RV). Paul is not saying that the Holy Spirit would be available as a possession until the day of Christ's second coming, but rather that the Holy Spirit was given in the first century with a view to establishing the certainty of the ultimate redemption of those who faithfully follow the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul expresses it in Rom 8:23 as "... but ourselves also which have the firstfruits of the spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body". Faithful followers of the Lord are the "purchased possession" having been "bought" with the price of his sacrifice (I Cor 6:20; 7:23; I Pet 1:18-19).

unto the praise of his glory.

See notes on ch 1:12. So this phrase is repeated in the course of three verses. Paul is here expressing the fact that in view of the "inheritance" which we have in Christ (ch 1:11), the "gospel of salvation" (ch 1:13) which has been committed to us, and the certainty of the "redemption" available to us if we faithfully follow our Lord (ch 1:14), we are a marvellously blessed people who should devote ourselves to extolling Yahweh's glorious attributes.

1:15 *Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints,*

The expression "heard of your faith" indicates one of two things: As a prisoner in Rome when the Epistle was written, Paul had been brought a good report of the faith and sacrificial love of the Ephesian brethren (probably by Tychicus).

Alternatively, the expression may indicate that the Epistle was intended primarily for the Laodiceans whom Paul had not personally visited. He had no first hand knowledge of them, but had "heard" of their faith and love.

1:16 *Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers;*

Despite the privations of the apostle Paul in prison in Rome, he constantly thought about the welfare of others, many of whom he had never personally met, and he remembered them in his prayers. In this he sets us a marvellous example.

1:17 *That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ,*

See earlier comment on ch 1:3.

the Father of glory,

This may be understood in two ways:

Firstly, it can be understood as the NIV translates it, ie "the glorious Father". Our understanding of the expression is enlarged when we recognise that the word "glory" is used in Scripture to denote the marvellous character of God (cp Ex 33:18 with Ex 34:6-7; John 1:14). So God is "the God of Glory" (Acts 7:2; Psa 29:3). In Scripture Yahweh is also described as "the God of Comfort" (II Cor 1:3), the God of Hope (Rom 15:13), the God of Love (II Cor 13:11), the God of Patience (Rom 15:5), the God of Peace (Rom 15:33), the God of all Grace (I Pet 5:10) and the God of Truth (Deut 32:4).

Secondly, the expression "glory" can mean the Lord Jesus Christ, and so Yahweh was the Father of Glory in that sense. This understanding of the expression is given some weight because the Greek is HO PATER TES DOXES which literally is '*the Father of the Glory*'. The expression is thus seen in parallel to that which proceeds it. Yahweh is not only "the God of our Lord Jesus Christ", but also his Father - "the Father of **the** Glory". The Lord Jesus Christ is given the title of "Glory" in such passages as Jas 2:1; I Cor 2:8; Psa 24:7-10. See also John 1:14.

may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him:

The "knowledge" which Paul wanted his readers to have of the Lord Jesus Christ was EPIGNOSIS. Bullinger says of the Greek word EPIGNOSIS that it means '*clear and exact knowledge ... a knowledge that has a powerful influence on the knower*'.

In the first century part of this knowledge came through the gifts of the Holy Spirit which were designed to guide the Ecclesias into all truth (John 16:13).

Paul's prayer has relevance for us today because we need the spirit of wisdom and revelation. Today the Holy Spirit gifts are not available to us, but the Holy Spirit in the form of the Word of God is. By applying ourselves to it, we can have minds which are filled with "spiritual wisdom and understanding that we might walk worthy of the Lord" (Col 1:9-10). In this way we can have "the spirit" (ie the disposition) of Christ and, to the extent that our minds are filled with the spirit word, the spirit of God dwells in us (Rom 8:9).

1:18 *The eyes of your understanding being enlightened;*

Many translations have "the eyes of your heart" being enlightened. The Truth should be an emotional thing so far as we are concerned. We must deeply appreciate what God has done for us in Christ. But never should our heart rule our head. We need to have emotion which is real and genuine, but under the control of a mind filled with the spirit word. So here Paul speaks metaphorically of our heart having eyes and being enlightened. Godly emotion needs a sound spiritual foundation.

A genuine love for God and the Lord of Glory which springs out of a spiritually enlightened mind will constrain us to live lives which show our heartfelt appreciation for all that has been done for us (II Cor 5:14-15).

that ye may know what is the hope of his calling,

The hope of our calling is to have our mortal body of humiliation changed to a glorious immortal body (Phil 3:20-21) so that we might be associated with the Lord Jesus Christ in the Kingdom. We now rejoice in hope of the Glory of God (Rom 5:2). This hope grows as the character of Christ is developed in us (Col 1:27).

and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints,

The NIV translates it as "the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints". In a certain sense the saints are Yahweh's inheritance (Psa 33:12; Psa 28:9; I Pet 5:3; Acts 15:14). They are a godly seed (Mal 2:15). In the immortal state the saints will become equal unto the angels (Luke 20:36) and will enjoy spiritual unity with God and the Lord Jesus Christ (John 17:9-10; 21-23). Paul wanted his readers to appreciate the abounding riches of the reward that is available to the faithful followers of Christ.

1:19 *And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe,*

The Gospel is "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth" (Rom 1:16). By this power we have been created new creatures in Christ Jesus (Eph 2:10). This power is not only seen in the Word which is able to renew our minds and transform our thinking (Rom 12:2) so that we are fit for the Kingdom, but if we are found worthy at Christ's coming, God will use His power to change our bodies of humiliation so that they become glorious immortal bodies like that possessed by the Lord Jesus Christ (Phil 3:21).

(according to the working of his mighty power,)

The Greek literally means 'according to the strength of his might'. This phrase really belongs with verse 20 - see next note.

1:20 *According to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead,*

The NIV has "that power is like the working of his mighty strength, which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead". God's power as displayed in the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ is our guarantee that Yahweh will also raise us (I Cor 15:14-23).

and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly (places),

Again the final words in this phrase would be better rendered "in the heavenlies". Here Paul is alluding to Psa 110:1. It is not that the Lord Jesus Christ sits literally at God's right hand day in and day out. The expression "at his own right hand" is an expression which denotes a position of great honour and privilege. See the note on "in heavenly places in Christ Jesus" (ch 1:3).

1:21 *Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named,*

The Lord Jesus Christ has been given a position that surpasses any position that anyone has ever occupied in the world. The word "principality" (Greek ARCHE) indicates 'the highest dignitaries of the state'. It is used, for example, of magistrates in Luke 12:11. "Power" is from the Greek EXOUSIA and denotes 'the right and might of a person to do anything'. "Might" is the Greek DUNAMIS and means power. "Dominion" is from the Greek KURIOTES and means 'lordship or authority'.

The Lord Jesus Christ has been given "the name which is above every name: that at the name [which God has given to] Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven [ie the saints] and things in earth [ie Israel] and things under the earth [ie the Gentile nations]; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Yahweh [in manifestation] to the glory of God the Father" (Phil 2:9-11).

Peter says that Jesus Christ "is gone into heaven and is on the right hand of God; angels and authority and powers being made subject to him" (I Pet 3:22).

not only in this world, but also in that which is to come:

The word "world" is from the Greek AION meaning 'age'. The Lord Jesus Christ's supremacy over all positions of authority, whether angelic or human, is not just restricted to this present age, but will be evident to all when he reigns on earth in the age "which is to come".

1:22 *And hath put all things under his feet,*

Here Paul quotes Psa 8:6. God intended man to have dominion over the creation. The first Adam lost that dominion because of sin. The second Adam (the Lord Jesus Christ) will establish that dominion in the Kingdom age. All things will be put under his feet. This will ultimately be accomplished at the end of the Millennium. See Paul's exposition on this subject in I Cor 15:23-28).

and gave him to be the head over all things to the Ecclesia,

The meaning here is "and gave him to the Ecclesia as its supreme head" (TCNT). Instead of the word "gave" some translations have "constituted" (Diag), "appointed" (NIV), "made" (JB). All these ideas are correct. "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten son" (John 3:16). Because of the Lord's faithful obedience unto death, God has constituted (appointed or made) him the head of the Ecclesia. So in Paul's analogy the Lord Jesus Christ is the head, and the Ecclesia forms the body. Paul will develop this theme in greater detail later in the Epistle (eg, ch 4:15-16).

1:23 *Which is his body,*

See previous note.

the fullness of him that filleth all in all.

The idea of what Paul means here may be gained from I Cor 15:28 where Paul says that at the end of the Millennium God will be "all in all". But here in Ephesians Paul is referring to Christ and the Ecclesia. The spirit (disposition) of Christ is to be seen in every member of the body. His spirit (disposition) is to fill us all because "if any man have not the spirit of Christ he is none of his" (Rom 8:9).

By the expression "the fullness [Greek PLEROMA] of him" Paul means the complete character of Christ. Yahweh desires that this character will fill all the members of the Ecclesial body which is joined to its head - the Lord Jesus Christ. Thus they will act as Christ acted. They will present their bodies a living sacrifice (Rom 12:1). They will deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow him (Luke 9:23). They will live by the principle that the cross must come before the crown, and that "if we suffer, we shall also reign with him" (II Tim 2:12) etc.

CHAPTER 2

By grace are ye saved through faith

2:1 ***And you {hath he quickened},***

The words "hath he quickened" are not in the original and are an ellipsis supplied from verse 5.

who were dead in trespasses and sins;

This is the state of all those **not** in Christ. They are spiritually dead (ch 2:5; Matt 8:22; I Tim 5:6). They are without God and without hope (ch 2:12). Sin alienates from God (ch 4:18; Col 1:21).

2:2 ***Wherein in time past ye walked***

Before their conversion to the Truth those to whom Paul addressed this Epistle had been just like other Gentiles. They had been caught up in the "pleasures of sin" (Heb 11:25). There are two ways in which men can walk: they can walk in God's ways (Psa 119:1, 3), or they can walk in darkness (John 8:12; I John 1:6). Outside of Christ men are in darkness.

according to the course of this world,

The word "course" is translated from the Greek AION meaning 'age', or here, 'the present round of things' (Vine), while the word "world" is translated from the Greek KOSMOS meaning order or arrangement of things and sometimes ornament or adornment. It is the word from which is derived the English word 'cosmetic'. The NIV translates the phrase as "when you followed the ways of this world".

according to the prince of the power of the air,

Bro Thomas translates this phrase as "according to the ruling of the authority of the air". The NIV has "and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air". The rulers of this world are in the heavenlies (ch 3:10). That is, they are over the people. In that sense they are symbolically in the air. They are "the power of the air". They have an elevated status. In Paul's day as in ours, the government made the laws and set the standard of acceptable behaviour expected from its citizens. Sin was enthroned in high places with the result that the lifestyle of the ordinary citizen was morally depraved.

the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:

The word "spirit" here simply means disposition (for use of the word "spirit" in this sense see Rom 8:9; Luke 1:17). The disposition of the people of the world

was ungodly, unChrist-like, and evil. This evil spirit (or ungodly disposition) energised the people to wantonly disobey God.

2:3 *Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past*

The word "conversation" would be better translated as '*manner of life*' or '*living*'. The NIV has "all of us also lived among them at one time". The Jerusalem Bible has "we all were among them too in the past". The brethren to whom Paul wrote had separated themselves from the sensual way of life of their fellow citizens. They had responded to the call to come out and be separate and touch not the unclean thing (II Cor 6:17). We must be careful to maintain our separateness and not conform to the moral standards of an evil world.

in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind;

The society out of which these believers came was like our own. It was promiscuous, which means that they allowed things which should never have been allowed. The slogan of the world is: "If it feels good - do it!" It was no different in the days in which Paul wrote this Epistle. People of the world indulged themselves in things which pandered to the lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes and the pride of life. The way they acted indicated the depravity of their minds.

and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.

Human beings are born with a bias towards sin. "The imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth" (Gen 8:21) and "evil continually" (Gen 6:5). The descendants of Adam were all "made sinners" (Rom 5:19). We understand this to mean that we are "constituted sinners" (the contrast is to be "made righteous" or "constituted righteous").

We are born with a nature which makes sin inevitable in our lives. Consequently, "all have sinned and come short of the Glory of God" (Rom 3:23; 5:12). Because we have sinned and "the wages of sin is death" (Rom 6:23), there is a sense in which we may properly be described as "the children of wrath". All the descendants of Adam, with the exception of the Lord Jesus Christ, are therefore "the children of wrath".

2:4 *But God, who is rich in mercy,*

Despite the fact that we have all sinned, God in His great mercy, has provided a means whereby we can be reconciled to Him. So we see Yahweh our God as "merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping

mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin ..." (Ex 34:6-7).
See also Neh 9:17; Psa 51:1; Psa 86:5, etc.

for his great love wherewith he loved us,

The extent of God's love is seen in the fact that He "so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). What God did in providing the Lord Jesus Christ should never be seen as some kind of commercial transaction in which Yahweh had little interest. Yahweh was greatly concerned about, and involved in, the crucifixion of His only begotten and beloved Son. The events of Gen 22 are provided to let us appreciate how Yahweh felt as the Lord was crucified. As with Abraham and Isaac, so with God and His only begotten Son. "They went both of them together" (Gen 22:6).

2:5 *Even when we were dead in sins,*

See notes on 2:1.

hath quickened us together with Christ,

Christ was raised from the dead (or quickened by God - Acts 2:24, 32; 3:15 etc). Likewise we must be born from above (John 3:3 margin). This comes as the word which is sent from God quickens us and affects our lives (Psa 119:50, 93, 107, 154; John 6:63; I Pet 1:23). Thus we come to appreciate what God has done for us in Christ. As Christ was made alive by the Spirit of God after his death, so too must we, who are "risen with Christ" (Col 3:1), be quickened by the Spirit Word which came from God.

(by grace ye are saved;)

Paul here reminds his readers of what God had done for them. They who had been constituted sinners (and were actual sinners) had, through the abundant grace of God, been constituted righteous (Rom 5:19). Nothing that they had done merited this. We are saved by grace and not by works (ch 2:8-9).

2:6 *And hath raised us up together,*

In dealing with baptism in Rom 6, Paul shows that the person being baptised identifies figuratively step by step with what Christ did literally:

- "Our old man is crucified **with** him" (Rom 6:6)

By grace are ye saved through faith

- We are "baptised into **his** death" (Rom 6:3)
- "We are buried **with** him" (Rom 6:4).

Then in Rom 6:8 Paul says "Now if we be dead **with Christ**, we believe that we shall also live **with him**", and in Rom 6:4 he comments "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". And again, he says, "... but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. Likewise **reckon ye also yourselves** to be dead indeed unto sin, but **alive** unto God **through Jesus Christ our Lord**" (Rom 6:10-11).

Our identification with Christ must extend to living as far as possible as he lived. We must say as he said "not my will but thine be done". Being raised **with** Christ, we must dedicate ourselves to a life of service.

and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus:

In Christ Jesus we are potentially the Kings and Priests of the coming age (Rev 5:9-10). That is our status in Christ now. In that sense we are in the heavenlies in Christ. The promise is that if we suffer (with him) we shall reign with him (II Tim 2:12).

2:7 *That in the ages to come*

"Ages" is from the Greek AIONIOS. For its meaning see the note on "world" (AION) in ch 1:21. The ages to come refer to the periods which will make up the Kingdom of God, the Millenium, and beyond.

he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.

It is only when we are made immortal that we will fully appreciate the marvellous things that God has done for us in Jesus Christ our Lord. See I Cor 2:9; II Cor 12:2-4. In the Kingdom when the saints fill the role of King-Priests, all the world will see the surpassing riches of the grace that God has shown to them through Christ Jesus.

2:8 *For by grace are ye saved through faith;*

Sin has separated man from God (Isa 59:2). The solution which God has provided for mankind is an act of divine favour (grace) which is totally unmerited by man. In order for a man to be the recipient of divine grace he must have faith in God and the promises He has made - "... without faith it is impossible to please him:

for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him" (Heb 11:6).

The patriarchs were men who had a faith that pleased God (see Heb 11:13). Their faith had three facets to it. Firstly, they had a **mental** appreciation of what God was prepared to do for them - "they saw the promises afar off and were persuaded of them". Secondly, there was a **inward commitment** to what God had promised - "they embraced them". Thirdly, their mental appreciation and inward commitment was demonstrated in **action** - it was seen in a way of life - they "confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth". It is this kind of faith that will allow us to be "saved by grace".

and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:

No man can save himself, let alone anybody else (Psa 49:7). "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." (Rom 6:23). By sin we **earn** death. But we cannot earn salvation. It is the gift of God.

2:9 *Not of works, lest any man should boast.*

If man could earn salvation by what he did (ie, by his works) then man would become his own saviour and could boast in his own achievements. That would exalt the sinner and put the Sinless (God) in his debt. God's scheme of reconciliation is based on faith and not on works - although a faithful man will exhibit his faith by what he does (see next verse).

2:10 *For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works,*

The word of God has the power to transform us (Rom 12:2). "Transformed" in Rom 12:2 is from the Greek METAMORPHOO from which we get the English 'metamorphosis'. It is the change which takes place when a grub is **transformed** over time into a butterfly. Any member of the human race can be transformed by the power of the word of God. Men "put on Christ" (Gal 3:27) when they respond to the call of the Gospel and their lives are transformed. They become God's "workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good works." This will be seen as they strive to act as Christ acted.

which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

1 John 2:6 declares that "He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked." Paul says in Rom 8:1 "There is therefore now no

condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." Before these believers were created in Christ Jesus unto good works, they produced the works of the flesh and walked in the way of the world (ch 2:2).

2:11 ***Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh,***

In this and subsequent verses Paul calls on his readers to contrast their hopeless state before they were baptised into Christ with their exalted status now in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus (ch 2:6). Without Christ they were simply Gentiles and no different to the billions of other Gentiles who lived without hope on the face of the earth. The NIV translates it as "therefore, remember that formerly you who were Gentiles by birth".

who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands;

To the Jew, circumcision (the cutting off of the flesh by the hands of men) was extremely important. It was a token of the Abrahamic Covenant (Gen 17:11), but it was meant to have a spiritual significance which would be seen in the way a Jew acted (Deut 30:6; Rom 2:29). However, to the Jews it was the physical mark which was important and so they described Gentiles as "uncircumcised" (NIV).

2:12 ***That at that time ye were without Christ,***

"Without Christ" Jews and Gentiles are in a hopeless state because apart from Christ "there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).

being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel,

Salvation is of the Jews (John 4:22) and God's plan of salvation was expressed in "the Hope of Israel" (Acts 28:20). This involved, among other things, the restoration of the Kingdom of God to Israel (Acts 1:6). So a person alienated from the Commonwealth of Israel was in a hopeless position because they were separated from the redemption which God had provided for mankind through Israel.

and strangers from the covenants of promise,

The word "strangers" is from the Greek XENOS and means a foreigner or alien. The NIV has "foreigners to the covenants of promise". The covenants of promise

contain the good news concerning the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ. In them is the Gospel message, and the Gospel is the power of God unto salvation to every one who believes (Rom 1:16). Consequently, a person who is "a foreigner" so far as the covenants of promise are concerned, is in a hopeless position so far as redemption is concerned.

having no hope,

Diaglott - "not possessing a hope". No matter what they believed, because it was not the truth and did not embrace Jesus Christ and the Hope of Israel, it was not a hope which amounted to anything. Erroneous beliefs are hope-less. Consequently, the Gentiles, who were without Christ, had no hope.

and without God in the world:

The Gentiles of Paul's day in fact worshipped a multitude of gods made of wood and stone (Acts 17:22-23; I Cor 8:5; Gal 4:8), but they had no knowledge of Yahweh the Creator of heaven and earth. As a result, they had no basis upon which to obtain eternal life (John 17:3). They had no shepherd (Psa 23:1) etc. They were without God and without a hope in the world.

2:13 ***But now in Christ Jesus***

In Christ Jesus believers are "Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise" Gal 3:29. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit" (Rom 8:1). See also II Cor 5:17; Phil 3:9.

ye who sometimes were far off

The expression "far off" or "afar off" is an expression used to denote the position of Gentiles before they are in covenant relationship with God by being "in Christ Jesus" (see Acts 2:39). Not only were Gentiles in their ignorance "far off" from God and the covenants of promise etc, but many Gentiles were "far off" from the land of the Bible in a physical sense as well. The Lord said to Paul "Depart: for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles" (Acts 22:21). See also Isa 5:26; 8:9; 10:3 etc.

are made nigh by the blood of Christ.

In writing to the Romans Paul expresses it as "Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, when

we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His son, much more, being reconciled we shall be saved by his life" (Rom 5:9-10).

In Col 1:20 Paul says that it is through the blood of Christ that we can have peace and reconciliation with God. See also I Pet 1:18-19; Rev 5:9-10.

We need to take care here. We must not imagine that "the blood of Christ" had, of itself, some magical quality. As Bro Roberts says in *The Blood of Christ* page 6 "*It is not the blood as literal blood that is precious or efficacious, but its relation to something of which blood-shedding is expressive.*" There are numerous ways in which the Bible describes how we are reconciled to God by the death of His son. "By the blood of Christ" is only one of the ways of expressing it.

2:14 ***For he is our peace, who hath made both one,***

There had been great hostility between Jews and Gentiles, but when Jews and Gentiles "put on Christ" in the waters of baptism, they became "one" in him (Gal 3:28). They became part of the one seed which is (the multitudinous) Christ (Gal 3:16). See the note on "peace" ch 1:2. Not only was there created peace between Jews and Gentiles in Christ Jesus, but both enjoyed peace or fellowship with God. The peace (or unity) between Yahweh and those who believed was something the Lord prayed for (see John 17:20-21). "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom 5:1).

and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us;

Paul here alludes to the stone partition three cubits high (ie approximately 1½ metres) in the Temple which separated the Court of the Gentiles from the Temple proper. Of this partition Alfred Edersheim says in *The Temple - Its Ministry and Services* page 46:

Within a short distance, in the [Gentiles] court, a marble screen 4½ feet high, and beautifully ornamented, bore Greek and Latin inscriptions, warning Gentiles not to proceed, on pain of death.

This physical barrier reinforced the barrier which existed in Jewish minds about having close contact with Gentiles. Peter said to Cornelius "Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation: but God hath showed me that I should not call any man common or unclean" (Acts 10:28). And so in Christ, Peter learnt that the wall of partition was abolished.

2:15 *Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances;*

The NIV has "by abolishing in his flesh the law with its commandments and regulations". The expression "in his flesh" seems to allude to the fact that Christ was "made of a woman, made under the law" (Gal 4:4). His fleshly descent as a Jew brought him under the Law of Moses and allowed him to abolish (Greek KATARGEO - 'to render inoperative') it by his death. This came about because while Christ kept the Law perfectly, its provisions cursed him in the mode of his death (Gal 3:13). Christ actually came under two curses. The curse of mortality and the curse of the Law. By his crucifixion provision was made for the removal of both the mortality and the Law.

So Paul argues that the "ministration of death written and engraven in stones ... was to be done away" (II Cor 3:7); "is done away" (II Cor 3:11); is "abolished" (II Cor 3:13).

In Col 2:14 Paul says that God blotted "out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross". The Law of Moses is described as "the enmity" (Eph 2:15) and as being "against us" and "contrary to us" (Col 2:14) because it was impossible for any person born of two human parents to keep it - it was "weak through the flesh" (Rom 8:3).

for to make in himself of twain one new man,

The NIV has "His purpose was to create in himself one new man out of the two ...". The twain (or two) are Jews and Gentiles. The "one new man" is the multitudinous body of Christ - one body made up of various parts. See I Cor 12:12-27; Gal 3:27-28.

so making peace;

See notes on ch 2:14 and 1:2.

2:16 *And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross,*

"Both" Jews and Gentiles needed reconciling to God. The means of reconciliation was provided through Christ's death on the stake. Bullinger in commenting on the Greek word STAUROS here rendered "cross" says that STAUROS disagrees with the modern idea of a cross. STAUROS was simply an upright pole or stake to which the Romans nailed those who were thus said to be crucified. It never means

two pieces of wood joining each other at an angle. Even the Latin word CRUX means a mere stake.

But Paul says that both will be reconciled "in one body". Christ was the body prepared (Heb 10:5). He was begotten of the Father (John 1:14) that he might have the capacity to be the sinless "Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten son that **whosoever** [ie, both Jews and Gentiles] believeth might be reconciled to God (John 3:16).

By referring to "one body" Paul may also be alluding to the fact that there was only **one** great offering. The bodies of many animals were offered under the Law of Moses, but Christ was offered "once for all" (Heb 10:10). He offered "one sacrifice for sins for ever" (Heb 10:12) "By one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified" (Heb 10:14) "For this he did once when he offered up himself" (Heb 7:27).

having slain the enmity thereby:

One expositor has commented:

This is a paradoxical statement, for it was Christ who was slain by Jew and Gentile representatives. As Jews and Gentiles joined together to secure his death, so his death secured the removal of that which kept Jews and Gentiles apart, cp Matt 27:51; Heb 6:18-19; Col 2:14-15.

2:17 ***And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh.***

Paul was Christ to the Gentiles (see note on "Paul an Apostle of Jesus Christ" ch 1:1). In this way Christ "came" through the Apostles and preached peace to those which were "far off" (ie Gentiles ch 2:13) and to those who were "nigh" (ie Jews).

"Peace" here describes the harmonised relationship which exists between God, and Jews and Gentiles who are "in Christ Jesus". That such "peace" was available was made known through the preaching of the Apostles who represented Christ - the one who had sent them.

2:18 ***For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.***

The Twentieth Century New Testament translates the verse as "for it is through him that we, the Jews and the Gentiles, united in the one Spirit, are now able to approach the Father ..." The Jerusalem Bible translates it as "through him, both of us have in the one Spirit our way to come to the Father".

This verse teaches that both Jews and Gentiles have access unto the Father through Christ. The middle wall of partition having been broken down (ch 2:14) and having been made "one in Christ", believers now come in "one spirit". The "one spirit" refers to the unity of mind, purpose and hope which all believers (whether Jew or Gentile) have in Christ.

2:19 ***Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners,***

The Greek word translated "strangers" is XENOS meaning foreigner or alien (see notes on ch 2:12). "Foreigners" is from the greek PAROIKOS meaning a person who lives in a place without any rights - a sojourner, a temporary resident. These words describe a person's relationship to God and the covenants of promise etc, **before** they are baptised into Jesus Christ. They are aliens and foreigners to those things. In Christ they are reconciled to God; they are part of God's mortal family; they are potentially heirs of the promises; they are no longer strangers and foreigners.

but fellowcitizens with the saints,

The Greek for "fellowcitizens" is SUMPOLITES meaning possessing the same citizenship with others. Baptised believers have become fellowheirs and partakers of the promises (ch 3:6). They have been made fit to be "partakers of the inheritance of the saints" (Col 1:12).

and of the household of God;

The Greek for "household" is OIKEIOS meaning belonging to a house or family. Upon baptism believers become the children of God and part of God's mortal family on earth (I John 3:1).

2:20 ***And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets,***

Paul now changes his metaphor. In the previous verse he has drawn attention to the fact that the saints are part of God's family. Now in this verse he illustrates their position by saying that they are part of God's (spiritual) temple. The

foundations of the building support the structure. They take great weight. If the foundations are inadequate, the building cracks and crumbles and ends in ruin. Paul says that the foundation upon which the saints are built up a spiritual house for God are sure. The foundations are laid in the "apostles doctrine and fellowship" (Acts 2:42).

Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone;

The "chief corner stone" in a building was the most important stone. From it the measurements were taken to ensure that the building conformed to the architects plans. Paul is alluding here to Isa 28:16. Also see Psa 118:2-23, Matt 21:42, Acts 4:11, 1 Pet 2:6-8.

2:21 ***In whom all the building fitly framed together***

"Fitly framed together" is translated from the Greek SUNARMOLOGEO which is derived from three Greek words viz. SUN meaning 'with'; HARMOS meaning 'a joint'; and LEGO meaning 'to choose' (see Vine). The idea is harmoniously fitted together. The same Greek word is translated "fitly joined together" in Eph 4:16. The JB has "As every structure is aligned on him". Roth has "In process of being fitly joined together", thus giving the sense of a continuing process. The only way the spiritual temple can be harmoniously fitted or joined together is if each stone is laid so that in shape and size it conforms to the standard set by the chief corner stone.

groweth unto a holy temple in the Lord

The temple referred to is the spiritual house made up of living stones (see 1 Pet 2:5). In this temple Yahweh desires to dwell (2 Cor 6:16).

Bro H P Mansfield commenting on this analogy in 1 Pet 2:5 wrote -

The process of building this spiritual Temple still continues, and will not be completed until the coming of Christ. The pattern of this is the Temple of Solomon. The stones of that Temple were extracted from the depths of the earth; carefully shaped according to divine specifications, and finally conveyed to the site to be placed in the position for which they were designed. As the record states, not a sound of iron was heard (1 King 6:7). The stones that formed the building are described as "great stones" (1 King 5:17), expressing both value and care in preparation. But, in spite of these stones and the care lavished upon them, the Temple had no real beauty until the glory of Yahweh entered it. Then it became His dwelling place on earth. Today, those in Christ are selected for that honour. For the present, the glory is mental and moral, but in the age

to come it will also be physical. The process begins at baptism, and will be complete at the Judgement Seat. Meanwhile, believers need to build into their lives the divine virtues manifested in the Son of God. This will qualify them, as living stones, to grace the spiritual "house" of the age to come. The "house" will be revealed in its fullness and glory after the debris has been removed at the Judgement Seat (see Rev 21:2-11). It will then be found that in that "house" are many "abiding places", as said the Lord (John 14:2; Eph 2:21; Heb 3:2).

2:22 ***In whom also ye are builded together***

Roth "In whom ye also are being builded together"

for an habitation of God through the spirit

See notes on previous verse

CHAPTER 3

That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith

3.1 *For this cause*

NIV "For this reason". In Chapter 2 Paul has explained how the Gentiles had been brought into "the household of God" (2:19). The reason (or cause) that Yahweh called Paul was that His purpose with the Gentiles might be advanced.

I Paul

Paul seems to sometimes use this expression to appeal to his readers. He seems to be saying it is not just anybody who is making this appeal, but "I Paul" your apostle - the one who can say "be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ" (I Cor 11:1). See the use of the expression in II Cor 10:1; Gal 5:2.

the prisoner of Jesus Christ

The original texts read "Christ Jesus" - the Anointed Jesus. Paul's three preaching campaigns and his fearlessness in confessing Christ Jesus before men had led to his imprisonment in Rome. See Eph 4:1; 6:20; Acts 28:16, 20. The expression denotes the depth of Paul's dedication. What are we prepared to do in the service of Christ Jesus?

for you Gentiles

See Acts 22:21; 26:23. This phrase would indicate that the make up of the Ecclesia to whom Paul writes was very largely Gentile.

3:2 (VERSES 2 TO 13)

Paul now inserts into his letter a parenthetical section in verses 2 to 13. He will resume his main theme again in verse 14 with the words "For this cause". Compare "for this cause" in verse 1 and 14.

if ye have heard

NIV "Surely you have heard". Diaglott "Since indeed, you heard". These Gentile believers had certainly heard about the dramatic way that Paul was called by God on the road to Damascus.

of the dispensation of the grace of God

NIV "about the administration of God's grace". "Dispensation" comes from the Greek OIKONOMIA and means the administration (of a household). The

household over which Paul had the administration (or stewardship) was the "household of God". Grace was dispensed to the Gentiles in calling them to be "fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God" (ch 2:19).

which is given me to you-ward

NIV "That was given to me for you" (see Rom 15:15-16; Gal 2:8-9; I Tim 2:7; II Tim 1:11).

3:3 *How that by revelation he made known unto me*

The revelation first came to Paul on the road to Damascus (Acts 26:12-18). Subsequently Paul had revelations in Arabia (Gal 1:12, 15-17) (The revelations were possibly in Mt Sinai - see Sinai's connection with Arabia Gal 4:25). The Truth was therefore not revealed to him by men, but directly by revelation from the Lord Jesus Christ.

the mystery;

Translated from the Greek MUSTERION from MUEO meaning 'to initiate or admit to secrets'; and MUSTES meaning a person so initiated. The secret which was revealed to Paul was that the Gentiles were to be made partakers of the hope of Israel "by the blood of Christ". That this is the secret to which Paul is referring is clear from ch 3:6, 8-9. See also Col 1:26-27.

(as I wrote afore in few words,

NIV "I have already written briefly". Paul has previously mentioned this matter earlier in the Epistle (ie ch 1:9-11). The expression does not seem to refer to some earlier unknown Epistle.

3:4 *Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ)*

NIV "In reading this, then, you will be able to understand my insight into the mystery of Christ". The mystery of Christ being the fact that through baptism into Christ, Gentiles become "Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise" (Gal 3:26-29).

3:5 *Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men,*

"Ages" is from the Greek GENEAE meaning 'a generation and by implication an age' (Strong 1074). The NIV has "which was not made known to men in other generations". See Matt 13:17; Luke 10:24; Acts 10:28; Rom 16:25 etc.

as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit;

The Holy Spirit was given to the apostles for the purpose (among others) of guiding them into all truth (John 16:13). The idea that Gentiles should be incorporated into "the hope of Israel" was not something which the apostles found easy to accept as witnessed by Peter's reaction to it (see Acts 10:14-15, 28; Gal 2:11-12).

3:6 **VERSE 6**

The Greek words translated "fellowheirs", "same body" and "partakers" in this verse all have the Greek word SUN attached to them (see Vine). The Greek SUN intensifies the relationship. Consequently, the NIV has "heirs **together**"; "members **together**" and "sharers **together**". Rotherham has "**joint** heirs"; "**a joint body**"; and "**joint partakers**". By the use of these words the equality of Jews and Gentiles in Christ is stressed.

That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs,

The Old Testament Scriptures had stated God's purpose of extending the Gospel message to the gentiles. Ultimately, **all families** of the earth will find a blessing in Abraham (Gen 12:3). Isa 49:6, which says "I will also give thee for a light **to the Gentiles**, that thou mayest be my salvation **unto the end of the earth**" is applied to the work of Christ in Acts 26:23 and to the preaching work of Paul and others in Acts 13:47. See also Joel 2:32. However, this "secret" was not generally comprehended by the Jews to whom "were committed the oracles of God" (Rom 3:2).

and of the same body,

The apostle Paul likens the ecclesia to a human body (see I Cor 12:12-27). Gentiles through being "in Christ" become joint members of this one body (see ch 5:23; Col 1:24).

and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel:

NIV "And sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus". Rotherham "And joint partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through means of the glad message" (see Gal 3:29).

3:7 *Whereof I was made a minister,*

The word "minister" is from the Greek DIAKONOS meaning a 'servant, an attendant'. Greek authorities say that DIAKONOS is probably derived from DIAKO meaning 'to run, or serve, or pursue' and that consequently DIAKONOS denotes a servant as seen in **activity**. The word is also translated as "deacon" and "servant". Paul was **made** a minister, that is, his commission had divine origins (Acts 9:1-6; I Cor 15:8).

according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me

See notes on "By the will of God" (ch 1:1). It is God who calls individuals to the Truth (I Thess 2:12; I Pet 1:15; II Pet 1:2-4). In the vast majority of cases, the call is general and comes when people respond to the preaching of the Gospel (Mark 16:16; Rom 1:16; II Thess 2:13-15, etc). However, with some individuals God has a specific purpose and they are the recipients of a specific call and therefore a special "gift of grace". Paul was one such individual (see Acts 26:12-16).

by the effectual working of his power.

This appears to be a reference to the power of God as seen in the miracle on the road to Damascus. See Acts 9:1-22.

3:8 *Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given,*

NIV "Although I am less than the least of all God's people, this grace was given to me". Paul's statement here is probably equivalent to I Tim 1:15 where he says that "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am the chief". The reference there would be to his persecution of the Ecclesia prior to his conversion (Acts 8:1-3; 9:1). However, Paul might well refer to himself as "the least of all the saints" even after his conversion. Like our Lord, he made himself of no reputation and assumed the role of a humble servant (cp Phil 2:7).

that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ;

The riches are "unsearchable" in the sense that they cannot be determined or understood by a person apart from the revelation of God (I Cor 2:9). However, the riches of Christ (and the riches of God's glory) have now been revealed to the Gentiles (Rom 9:23-24). In writing to the Colossians Paul describes those riches as "Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Col 1:27). So Gentiles not only have to be baptised into Christ, but Christ has to be formed in them in the sense that his character becomes theirs in measure.

3:9 *And to make all men see*

The commission which the Lord Jesus gave the apostles was to go into **all the world** and preach the Gospel to **every creature** (Mark 16:15). By the time Paul wrote to the Colossians he was able to say that the hope of the Gospel had been preached "to every creature which is under heaven" (Col 1:23, see also Col 1:6).

what is the fellowship of the mystery,

Fellowship here is from the Greek KOINONIA and is translated "administration" by Rotherham and the NIV. The Gospel was now preached or administered to Jew and Gentile alike. As explained previously, the secret (mystery) which the Jews failed to perceive was "that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ" (Gal 3:14).

which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God,

"From the beginning of the world" is translated from the Greek APO TON AIONON and signifies '*from the ages*'. The NIV has "which for ages past was kept hidden in God". God knew from the beginning that Gentiles would be incorporated into His Kingdom.

who created all things (by Jesus Christ):

The words "by Jesus Christ" should be omitted (see NIV, Roth, JB, RSV etc). Paul's makes the point that God "created **all things**" to show that **Gentiles** are also part of the "offspring of God" (Acts 17:29). It was appropriate seeing that the Jews had "crucified the Lord of Glory" (I Cor 2:8) that the Gospel should now be preached to the Gentiles who were part of the "things" created by God.

3:10 *To the intent that now*

Rotherham "In order that now"

unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places

Rotherham translates it as "unto the principalities and the authorities in the heavenlies". This refers to those who are elevated in the Kingdom of Men and hold positions of power and authority. The Lord warned the disciples that "ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake" (Matt 10:18). For examples of this see Acts 5:25-29; 23:32-33; Acts 24-26 etc.

might be known by the Ecclesia

Rotherham "might be made known through means of the assembly". The apostles were originally responsible for establishing Ecclesias. It is now the duty of each Ecclesia to be a lampstand (Rev 2:1) and let the light of the Truth shine in the darkness of the world.

the manifold wisdom of God,

The word "manifold" is from the Greek POLUPOIKILOS which Bullinger says means '*much variegated, very many-coloured; then multifarious, very various*'. There are numerous aspects to God's plan to incorporate faithful Jews and Gentiles into His Kingdom. One aspect of God's plan involved the sacrifice of Christ: Another aspect involved his ascension into heaven, until the set time to favour Zion should arrive (Psa 102:13): Another aspect involved gathering "other sheep" (ie Gentiles) into the Jewish fold (John 10:16) etc, etc.

3:11 *According to the eternal purpose*

"According to a plan of the ages" (Diag, Roth). Yahweh's purpose with the creation from the beginning was that the earth might be filled with his Glory (Num 14:21). This purpose involves all people (Jews and Gentiles) manifesting in their lives the moral qualities of God. That purpose has remained firm through all ages, whether Adamic, Noahic, Patriarchal, Mosaic, Gentile.

which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord:

Bro John Carter comments in his book *The Letter to the Ephesians - An Exposition* page 83 as follows:

... All ages had relation to him. History in the past moved on to his first advent, as at the present times events are shaping for his second advent. In all times men of faith have rejoiced in the hope connected with him. Abraham rejoiced to see his day and was glad. With his first advent much that was obscure became plain. The way of life, exhibited before in type and shadow, was exemplified in him who brought life and immortality to life.

3:12 *In whom we have boldness and access with confidence*

We have access to God by being "in Christ Jesus". We pray to God in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. The word "boldness" is translated from the Greek PARRHESIA denoting "freedom of speech". We come humbly before God, but in Christ Jesus we have the ability to take everything to God in prayer. The NIV has "in him and through faith in him we may approach God with freedom and confidence".

by the faith of him.

The RV and JB have "through our faith in him". Our faith in Christ not only involves our faith in his work of sacrifice, and in his work in heaven for us as a mediator, an advocate, an intercessor and a High Priest. But faith without works is dead. So our faith in him must be shown in the things that we do and the kind of life which we live.

3:13 *Wherefore I desire that ye faint not at my tribulations for you,*

NIV "I ask you, therefore, not to be discouraged because of my sufferings for you". Some of Paul's tribulations and sufferings in bringing the Gospel to the Gentiles are enumerated in II Cor 11:24-28. At this time Paul was in prison at Rome (ch 3:1; 4:1; 6:20). He is concerned that the difficulty of the road to the Kingdom would discourage the brethren and sisters. But as he told Timothy, "if we suffer, we shall also reign with (Christ): if we deny him, he will also deny us" (II Tim 2:12).

which is your glory.

If Paul had not laboured as he had to enlighten these Gentiles, they would have remained without hope and without God (ch 2:12). His tribulations were to their glory - a glory which will be fully revealed in the Faithful in the day of Christ's coming.

3:14 *For this cause*

In verse 13 Paul concludes the parenthetical section he started in Verse 2 and he now resumes where he left off in verse 1 by repeating the phrase "for this cause". See notes on ch 3:2.

I bow my knees

This was an attitude of prayer followed by many of the faithful (eg Dan 6:10; I King 8:54; Ezra 9:5; Psa 95:6; Luke 22:41 etc). It is an appropriate attitude for private prayer which we would do well to practice. Paul prayed for the people to whom he wrote.

unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,

The phrase "of our Lord Jesus Christ" is omitted by NIV, Rotherham, JB etc. When we pray we follow the apostolic practice and pray to God. We do not pray to the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul here describes Yahweh as "the Father" because he has God's family in view as is evident from the next verse.

3:15 *Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named,*

God has an immortal family in heaven (ie, the angels Job 38:7; Luke 20:36) and a mortal family on the earth (ie, baptised believers in the Lord Jesus Christ I John 3:1-2). Both sections of the family bear the name of Yahweh (Exod 23:21; Gen 18:13, 22, 26, 33; Jer 13:11; Acts 15:14). Being part of God's family we must display the characteristics of that family in every avenue of life.

3:16 *That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory,*

The "riches of his glory" here describe the marvellous character of God who is "...merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin ..." (Exod 34:6-7). These attributes of Yahweh's character were revealed to Moses in answer to his request "shew me thy glory" (Exod 33:18). On the basis of His marvellous character Paul prays that Yahweh will help the Ephesians.

to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man;

Moffat translates it as "a mighty increase of strength by his spirit in the inner man". Spirit is used here by metonymy for what the Holy Spirit has produced, that is, the Word of God (II Tim 3:16; II Pet 1:21). Metonymy is a figure of

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speech where the cause (the Spirit) is put for the result (the Word of God). Paul's prayer was that his readers would become spiritually strong through the indwelling of the spirit Word in their hearts and minds. Our inner man needs strengthening day by day (II Cor 4:16).

3:17 *That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith;*

Vine, in commenting on the Greek word KATOIKEO here translated "dwell" says:

... [it] properly signifies to settle down in a dwelling, to dwell fixedly in a place. Besides its literal sense, it is used of ... the indwelling of Christ in the hearts of believers ('may make a home in your hearts') Eph 3:17.

Christ dwells in us to the extent that by faith we fill our minds with the spirit Word and live by its principles (see John 14:23-24). "If any man have not the spirit [the disposition] of Christ he is none of his, and if Christ be in you the body is dead because of sin ..." (Rom 8:9-10).

Whereas in ch 2:19-22 Paul likens the Ecclesia to a temple, his point here is that each individual must be a little temple - a dwelling place for Christ (cp II Cor 6:16).

that ye, being rooted and grounded in love,

"Rooted" is from the Greek RHIZOO meaning 'to cause to take root'. Here it is used metaphorically of the need for our lives to be firmly planted with strong roots in agape love. "Grounded" is from the Greek THEMELIOO and signifies 'to lay the foundation of'. It is akin to THEMELIOS meaning 'a foundation'. The foundation of our spiritual temple must be agape love. We must be prepared to sacrifice for one another. If Christ dwells in us then we will love as he loved. We will be prepared to lay down our lives for our brethren. We can imagine how essential this was in an Ecclesia which may well have been made up of Jew and Greek; bond and free; male female (Gal 3:27).

3:18 *May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height;*

Here Paul's prayer is that his readers might be able to understand the four dimensions of something. What that something is, he does not say specifically. It could be the spiritual Ecclesial temple (the company of the saints) to which he referred in ch 2:21. The saints are described as the New Jerusalem in Rev 21:2, 10, and the length and breadth and height of it are said to be equal (Rev 2:16).

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However, the meaning may be as the NIV translates it. That is, "may have power, together with all the saints to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ".

3:19 ***And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge,***

The love of Christ was selfless. In ch 5:25 Paul says that he loved the Ecclesia and gave himself for it. The word "know" is the Greek GINOSKO meaning 'to know by observation and experience'.

The NIV translates it as "and to know this love that surpasses knowledge". This is a paradox. How can you know something which surpasses (or is beyond) knowledge?

As Bro Carter remarks (*The Letter to the Ephesians - An Exposition*) on page 87:

To know that which passes knowledge is another paradox - a favourite figure with Paul. It may be known partially and increasingly; and the growth in this knowledge is a mark of progress of the saint.

that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God.

See notes on ch 1:23. The character of God will never fill our lives if we do not properly appreciate the love of Christ.

3:20 ***Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think,***

There are many examples in Scripture of the mighty power of God to do that which in human terms is impossible. For example, with Abraham 99 years old and Sarah barren Yahweh said: "Behold, my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations" (Gen 17:4). With Israel trapped in the land with steep mountains on either side, the Red Sea in front, and the Egyptians behind, Moses said "Fear ye not, stand still and see the salvation of Yahweh, which he will show to you today: for the Egyptians whom ye have seen today, ye shall see them again no more for ever" (Exod 14:13 etc).

according to the power that worketh in us,

By these words Paul focuses on God's ability to work in our lives by the power of His Word and prayer. The ability of the Word of God to transform us (Rom 12:2) for the Kingdom is epitomised by Paul's words in I Cor 6:9-11 "Know ye not that

the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. **And such were some of you:**" This power worked in Paul's own life. In Col 1:29 he says "Whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily."

Jude 24 "Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy ..."

21 *Unto him be glory in the Ecclesia by Christ Jesus*

"By" is from the Greek word EN and should be rendered 'in' as it is in Roth and the NIV. Brethren and sisters who are truly in Christ Jesus will give glory to God in the Ecclesia. They will thank Him and reverence Him for truly "Yahweh hath done great things for us whereof we are glad" (Psa 126:3).

throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.

The Diaglott renders it as "to all the generations of the age of the ages, Amen". The idea is that from each generation in every age will come some who will give glory to God and in the end will form part of the glorious immortal company who will forever give glory to God and extol His name

Bro Carter comments on page 89 of his book:

The closing words of the third chapter are a well defined conclusion to a section of the letter. The first part has been devoted to the exposition of doctrine; in the second part Paul turns to exhortation. But the two must not be separated too much: exhortation not only follows doctrine, but is the logical outcome of it. What a man believes should (and will, if sincerely and heartily believed) influence his life. Hence the use of the word "therefore" in the opening verse (ch 4).

CHAPTER 4

Walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called

1:1 *I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord,*

See notes on ch 3:1. The expression here instead of being "of Christ Jesus" as it is in ch 3:1 is "of the Lord". Here the emphasis is on the fact that both Paul and ourselves have a Lord - a master, or ruler, and we are subject to his authority.

beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called,

NIV "I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received". This demands that we conform to the highest standards in every avenue of life. Our calling is that we are to strive to be like God. "But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: "Be ye holy because I am holy" (I Pet 1:15-16 NIV).

Bro Carter, on pages 90 and 91 of *The Letter to the Ephesians*, quotes from Bro Roberts words on *Walking Worthy* from *Seasons of Comfort*:

"The thing that Paul would always exhort us to do, if he were among us, would be to "walk worthy of God". This defines the matter comprehensively; presents it clearly, and fixes its character unmistakably. Need we be at a loss to decide our course, as saints, if we remember that it is to be "worthy of God"? The application of this single text will always, with an earnest man, easily settle controversies on practical questions which men of another type find enveloped in fog. Even earnest men need to apply it energetically.

"It is not for us to trust ourselves in deciding what sort of a walk is worthy of God. We must be guided solely by what is revealed. We are safe in taking the cue from the Scriptures. We are in danger if we trust in our own thoughts, and still more so if we yield to the sentiments current in society. Here we have to wage a constant war, in which we ought to make victory our strenuous aim. It is a warfare in which he only that overcomes will obtain the benefit. To be overcome here is to lose all. Men have certain ideas of how we ought to think, how we ought to talk, how we ought to use our leisure, how we ought to use our money and our abilities, how we ought to carry ourselves in society, and what we ought to aim at. This is one school, large, flourishing, and popular. The Spirit of God, by the apostles and prophets, has promulgated other thoughts on these subjects. There is another school, which is the opposite of prosperous at present. The two schools are incompatible. We cannot belong to both. It is Jesus who has said "No man can serve two masters".

"To "walk worthy of God", then, is first to have the heart where Christ's heart was, and then to let the words of our lips and the deeds of our hands follow suit. Christ's heart was fixed on the Father and the Father's will, and the Father's work and the Father's purpose in the days to come. He had no other interest, no other love, though this indeed truly comprehends all interests and all love.

"Paul warned the brethren night and day with tears: do we need the warning less? Rather do we stand in more imperative need of it. An apostasy of centuries has trampled the whole system of divine ideas in the dust, and there is danger that with nothing but the written word to reclaim us from the abounding darkness, we may receive an inadequate impression of what is required of us. There is danger that we may stop short at the beggarly idea that sonship to God consists of knowing the nature of man and the purpose God, and being baptised and breaking bread. There is danger of our failing to see that Christ wants men with whom he will be the ruling affection, and with whom the love of God prevails unto sanctification and separation from a world that knows him not and obeys not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. There is a danger of being content with the external compliances of saintship, having a name to live while dead, professing to be Christ's while remaining in league with the world for which he did not pray, and which he will shortly destroy, and us with it, if we make ourselves of it. No wise man will be content in this matter with anything short of the genuine apostolic ideal."

2 With all lowliness

Lowliness" is translated from the Greek TAPEINOPHROSUNE meaning 'lowliness of mind, humility, modesty of mind and deportment' (Bull). The NIV has "be completely humble". Consider the complete humility of the Lord Jesus Christ as explained by Paul in Phil 2:6-8.

and meekness,

Meekness and lowliness are part of the disposition of Christ. The Lord wants us to be yoked with him in displaying those attributes (see Matt 11:29).

"Meekness" is translated from the Greek PRAOTES. Vine in his *Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words* says (p 56):

The meaning of PRAOTES is not readily expressed in English, for the terms meekness, mildness, commonly used, suggest weakness and

pusillanimity to a greater or less extent, whereas praotes does nothing of the kind. Nevertheless, it is difficult to find a rendering less open to objection than 'meekness;' 'gentleness' has been suggested, but as praotes describes a condition of mind and heart, and as 'gentleness' is appropriate rather to actions, this word is no better than that used in both English versions. It must be clearly understood, therefore, that the meekness manifested by the Lord and commended to the believer is the fruit of power. The common assumption is that when a man is meek it is because he cannot help himself; but the Lord was 'meek' because he had the infinite resources of God at his command. Described negatively, meekness is the opposite to self-assertiveness and self-interest; it is equanimity of spirit that is neither elated nor cast down, simply because it is not occupied with self at all.

PRAOTES is derived from PRAUS. Of these two words one Gentile commentator has remarked:

That brings us to the use of PRAUS... which really illuminates the whole matter. In Greek PRAUS is used in one special sense. It is used ... for a beast which has been tamed. A horse which was once wild but which has become obedient to the bit and to the bridle is PRAUS. Now herein lies the secret of the meaning of PRAUS. There is gentleness in PRAUS but behind the gentleness there is the strength of steel, for the supreme characteristic of the man who is PRAUS is that he is the man who is under perfect control. It is not a spineless gentleness, a sentimental fondness, a passive quietism. It is a strength under control. Num 12:3 tells us that Moses was the "meekest" man upon the earth, but that same Moses was a man who could act with decision and blaze with anger when the occasion arose.

To such a character no man can obtain by himself and his own efforts. PRAOTES is strength under control, but it would be wrong to say that a man who is PRAUS is perfectly self-controlled. He is perfectly God-controlled, for only God can give him that perfect mastery. It should be our prayer that God will make us PRAUS, masters of ourselves, for only then can we be the servants of others.

with longsuffering,

"Longsuffering" is from the Greek MAKROTHUMIA which is derived from MAKROS - 'long' and THUMOS - 'temper'. It means 'long before being angry; patient'. The NIV renders it "be patient". This is one of the features of Yahweh's character (Exod 34:6). It is the characteristic of God which has provided the

opportunity for us to be saved (II Pet 3:9). If God is patient with us, must we not also be patient with our brethren?

forbearing one another in love;

Rotherham, NIV "Bearing with one another in love". "Forbearing" is from the Greek ANECHOMAI meaning, among other things, 'to endure; then bear with; put up with; suffer'. Despite the personal failings of our brethren we must put up with their idiosyncrasies, because "agape suffereth long, and ... is not easily provoked" (I Cor 13:4-5).

4:3 *Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit*

Clearly, Paul recognised that keeping the unity of the spirit would not be easy. The NIV has "make every effort". The Jerusalem Bible "Do all you can to". RV and Rotherham "giving diligence to". "The unity of the spirit" refers to a oneness in doctrine, practice and outlook which should exist in God's family of Jews and Gentiles which has one Father and one name (ch 3:14-15).

Bro Carter says (pp 95-96):

We individually contribute our part to the keeping of the unity of the Spirit when we hold fast the form of sound words, and walk worthy of our calling.

in the bond of peace.

JB "By the peace which binds you together". Rotherham "In the uniting bond of peace". It is the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ by which Jew and Gentile are reconciled to God. It is Christ Jesus who is our peace and hath made Jew and Gentile one in him (see ch 2:14 and notes).

In subsequent verses Paul goes on to describe why unity should exist among Christ's brethren.

4:4 *There is one body,*

There have been three previous references to the one body in the Epistle (ch 1:23; 2:16; 3:6). This is the Christ body "for as the body is one and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ" (I Cor 12:12, see Eph 4:15-16). Paul exhorted the Corinthians "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all

speaking the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgement" (I Cor 1:10).

and one Spirit,

The word "and" is important here. It links the idea of body and spirit together. The Greek word for "Spirit" is PNEUMA and is sometimes rendered "breath" (Acts 17:25; Rev 13:15 margin). When God created Adam he "breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul" (Gen 2:7). So far as the multitudinous Christ body is concerned it too has been created by God (ch 2:10). As Adam was energised by "the breath of life" so too the Christ body is energised by the one PNEUMA.

There are a number of ideas here. For example, if by "Spirit" Paul means the power of God by which Yahweh inspired holy men to write the Scripture, then Paul is saying that the Word of God gives a totally consistent message because it has only one source. There is one Spirit. Consequently, there is no room for people to have various ideas about what the Bible teaches. The multitudinous Christ body has only one set of doctrines as their vital life force.

There is one body and one spirit. If by "Spirit" Paul means "disposition" (as in the "spirit of Christ" Rom 8:9) then his point is that which gives life to the multitudinous Christ body is the manifestation of that one Christ-like spirit in every part of the body.

even as ye are called in one hope of your calling;

See notes on ch 2:18. Essentially the one hope of our calling is "the hope of Israel" (Acts 28:20). It is a hope unique to the Christadelphian community. This hope energised the apostle Paul to such an extent that his dedication led him to become a prisoner for the Lord Jesus Christ (ch 3:1; 4:1).

4:5 *One Lord,*

That is, one ruler or master (the Lord Jesus Christ I Cor 8:6; 12:5) who is the head of the body and the controller of it (ch 4:15). People who genuinely give all their loyalty and devotion to this one Master will be united (see Rom 10:12).

one faith,

By faith Paul may mean "THE faith", "THE doctrines" or "THE Gospel" by which Jew and Gentile are justified (Gal 1:6-9; Rom 1:16). Alternatively, he may mean

the deeply held conviction which must be within every member of the Christ body (Heb 11:6) and which drives them on to a life of prayer and devotion. The Lord questioned whether that faith would be found in the Ecclesia at his return (Luke 18:8).

one baptism,

That is, baptism into Christ by which Jew and Gentile become one (Gal 3:26-29). There were other baptisms, for example "the baptism of John" (Acts 18:25; 19:3), but following the death, burial and resurrection of Christ there was only **ONE** baptism that could save (Mark 16:15-16; Matt 28:19; Rom 6:3-14; I Pet 3:21).

4:6 *One God*

See I Tim 2:5. All doctrine has implications as to how we live. If we truly believe that there is one God, Christ's followers cannot worship the gods of this world.

and Father of all,

That is, Father of all Jews and Gentiles in Christ. All humans are part of the creation of God, but He stands in relation to those who have been born of water (whether Jew or Gentile) as their Father (Rom 8:14-17; Matt 6:9; II Cor 6:17-18).

who is above all,

God is **omnipotent**, that is, all powerful. He **omniscient**, which means all knowing. He is **omnipresent**, meaning he is everywhere present at the same time. This is applicable to no one else. God is therefore above all. He is the supreme authority over all.

and through all,

"If God gather unto Himself His spirit and His breath; all flesh shall perish together, and man shall turn again unto dust" (Job 34:14-15). So by His spirit He is through all.

and in you all.

Each genuine believer (whether Jew or Gentile) is a little temple in whom God desires to dwell (II Cor 6:16). At the end of the Millenium, the climax of God's purpose with mankind will be attained and God will be "all in all" (I Cor 15:28).

But for now, He is in us to the extent that the Word of God abides in us and directs our actions.

4:7 ***But unto every one of us is given grace***

So while there is unity in the sense that there is one body, and one spirit, and one hope, and one Lord, and one faith, and one baptism, and one God and Father who is above all, through all and in all, there is diversity in the unity. We do not all have the same ability. As Paul explains it: "For the body is not one member but many". There are feet and hands and ears and eyes and noses and "uncomely parts" etc (see I Cor 12:12-27). So we each have to function to the best of our ability according to the **grace** which is given to us. As Paul told the Corinthians "But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him" (I Cor 12:18). In the first century the "grace" may have had specific reference to the holy spirit gifts (see ch 4:8). But Paul must have intended more than this because he says "unto **every one of us** is given grace", but some were not given any gifts of the Holy Spirit. In the AV they are described of as "**unlearned**" (I Cor 14:16, 23, 24), the Greek in those places being IDIOTES meaning, according to Thayer '*destitute of the gift of tongues*' and translated by Rotherham "ungifted" and "unskilled". The "grace" given to us is explained by the Lord in the terms of the parable of the talents (Matt 25:14-30).

according to the measure of the gift of Christ.

NIV "as Christ apportioned it". In the parable of the talents, the gifts or talents are said to be distributed "to every man according to his several ability", which is rendered by the Diaglott as "according to his respective capacity" (Matt 25:15).

4:8 ***Wherefore he saith,***

NIV "This is why it says".

In this verse Paul quotes Psa 68:18. Psa 68 revolves around three journeys to Jerusalem:

- 1 The journey of Israel from Egypt to the Promised Land.
- 2 The bringing of the ark to Jerusalem by David.
- 3 The coming of the anti-typical ark (the multitudinous Christ) to Zion in the coming age. Symbolically this represents **ALL** the members of Yahweh's

Ecclesia who come out of the darkness of Egypt and faithfully make their way to Zion.

When he ascended up on high,

This relates to the ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ to the right hand of the Father (Psa 110:1) where he now waits for the set time to favour Zion.

he led captivity captive,

This can relate to the crucifixion and putting to death of the power of sin's flesh (the devil) by the Lord Jesus Christ (Heb 2:14). However, it has an additional meaning. The Rotherham translation of Psa 68:18 reads: "Thou hast led in procession a body of captives" and the AV margin of Eph 4:8 reads: "he led a multitude of captives". The NIV has "he led captives in his train". These translations show that the phrase also relates to those that Christ has released from the prison house of sin and led forth to sit in the heavenlies (ch 2:6).

and gave gifts unto men.

Rotherham in Psa 68:18 has "Thou hast received gifts consisting of men". The gifts of men which Christ was able to present to God were those purchased with his blood. On the other hand, in keeping with the AV translation, having ascended on high, Christ also gave gifts unto men. These came in the form of spirit gifted apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers (ch 4:11).

NOTE ON CH 4:9-10

Verses 9 and 10 form a parenthetical section in which Paul comments on Psa 68:18, which he has just quoted. To understand this section in its fullness requires an understanding of the glorious subject of God Manifestation.

The Lord was able to say "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father" (John 14:9). That was true because he manifested his Father's character perfectly. Thomas later referred to Christ as "My Lord and my God" (John 20:28). That was true because the Lord manifested the Father mentally, morally, and physically.

The Lord Jesus Christ was not a mere man. He was begotten by the Father by the operation of the Holy Spirit (Matt 1:20; John 1:14). Like all children, he was the product of his Father and his mother, while having a nature the same as our own (Heb 2:14). But in that God used His Holy Spirit in the begetting of the Lord, and the Holy Spirit belongs to God, then God can be said to have descended to the earth. Likewise when the Lord ascended to heaven God can be said to have

ascended, because the Lord was then immortal having been reborn by God's Spirit (John 3:5) and thus possessing a spiritual body (I Cor 15:44) - a body energised by God's Spirit.

:9 *(Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth?)*

The simplest explanation of these words is this: He that ascended to heaven is Christ. He also descended in that like John the Baptist he was a man sent **FROM** God (John 1:6). A more comprehensive explanation is provided by Bro Carter's comments on pp 104-105:

When God moves for the help of His people, He is said to come down. The deliverance effected, God is then said to have ascended. When the Psalmist says God ascended it is evident that He must have first descended to earth.

The greatest work of God on behalf of His people is their eternal redemption, and this work is bound up with the mission of His Son. All other theophanies look forward to this, the greatest of all. Christ's mission is to lead an exodus. Moses and Elijah on the mount of transfiguration spoke of the decease (exodus) which he would accomplish at Jerusalem. Surely the use of that word there means more than death, or 'departure' from life, as in the RV margin. It takes the mind back to Israel's exodus, so typical of Christ's work; for what he accomplished was a departure from the bondage of the grave.

We must now observe that the divine origin of Jesus is described in the style of past theophanies as a descent from heaven. God dwelt among the nation in the person of His Son. "The word was made flesh and dwelt among us". "I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of Him that sent me ... I am the bread which came down from heaven" (John 6:38, 41). And to the 'stumbling' disciples Jesus further said, "What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before?" (John 6:62). "He that cometh from above is above all" (John 3:31). "I am from above" (John 8:23). These were hard sayings for the Jews, and many Gentiles found them equally hard. Jesus ascended. But "no man hath ascended into heaven, but he that descended out of heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven" (John 3:13). The ascent indicates an accomplished work of redemption; but redemption is God's work; therefore Christ is from God, and "descended out of heaven". Only one who was a theophany, if we can put it that way, could ascend to heaven. Christ ascended, therefore he

was a manifestation of God, and in Scripture language, was "from above". The statement that he ascended involves his prior descent to the lower parts, even to earth - a phrase taken from the prophecy of Christ's birth in Psa 139:15.

4:10 ***He that descended is the same also that ascended***

Again Bro Carter comments (pp 105-107):

There had been derangement in the relations of man and God. Man could not restore the harmony; God only could do that. And 'God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself'. The one who descended for this work, is the same that ascended; for God does not manifest Himself in vain. This is the same as saying that God who descended at the birth of Christ ascended in Him. The reconciliation effected, He will at last "fill all things". In ch 1:23 the body of Christ is called "the fullness of Him that filleth all in all". "God was in Christ", and by and through Christ God will be "all in all".

Lest this language should still prove a hard saying, let us prosaically relate it to the simple facts. Jesus is said to have come down from heaven because his birth was the result of the operation of the Spirit of God as recorded in Luke 1. He was raised from the dead, and quickened by the Spirit, becoming the Lord the Spirit and a life-giving Spirit. During his lifetime God was with him, and from his baptism he was filled with the Spirit without measure. He therefore spoke of his words as being the Father's, and his works as the works of Him that sent him. "I will put my words in his mouth" God had said long before (Deut 18:18).

Dr Thomas has expressed it thus: "The Spirit breathes where he pleases and thou, Nicodemus, hearest his voice; but thou perceivest not how he is come, and in what he goes away; thus is everyone who has been born of the Spirit". Nicodemus and his contemporaries heard the Voice of the Spirit, breathed forth in the words of the spirit and life uttered by Mary's Son, who they knew was a teacher come from God. But they did not perceive that this teacher was the Eternal Spirit, nor did they comprehend how he came. Judging by flesh-appearances, they only saw Mary's son, as they saw Isaiah or one of the prophets, as teachers from God. They did not perceive that Jesus was "a body prepared" by special Spirit-creation, the Cherub upon which the effluent power of the Eternal Substance rested; and that upon him and through him, he walked through the country, breathing forth his voice in the doctrine taught, and his power in the miracles performed; not perceiving this, still less did they

comprehend that the Effluent Power would so thoroughly change the constitution of the "Body Prepared", that it should be no longer corruptible flesh perpetuated in life by blood and air, but should be transformed into spirit-flesh and spirit-bones, constituting a Spirit-Body - a material, corporeal substance - essentially incorruptible, glorious, powerful, deathless, and quickening; that in this, as corporealised spirit, the Effluent Power that had "come down from heaven - from the abode of the Eternal Substance, "which no man can approach unto" - would "ascend where he was before".

up far above all heavens,

Christ has been elevated far above all those who are in the political heavens of this world (ch 3:10) (for the use of heavens in this symbolic sense, see also Isa 65:17; Matt 24:30; Matt 28:18).

that he might fill all things.)

God's purpose through His work in Christ is that He might be all in all (I Cor 15:28).

4:11 *And he gave*

Before the parenthetical section (verses 9-10) Paul finished verse 8 with the statement "and gave gifts unto men". He now continues in verse 11 to show what these gifts were.

some, apostles;

"Apostles" - Greek APOSTOLOS from APOSTELLO meaning 'to set apart and by implication to send out on a mission'. In Elpis Israel at p 210 Bro Thomas sets out the qualifications of an apostle as follows:

- 1 *An apostle of Christ to the circumcision must be one who has companied with the Lord Jesus from his baptism until his ascension; so as to be a witness to his resurrection; [Acts 1:21, 22, 8].*
- 2 *An apostle of Christ to the Gentiles must have seen Jesus, and have conversed with him, as well as the former; [I Cor 9:1].*
- 3 *An apostle must be chosen, ordained and sent of the Lord [John 15:16]; and authorised by him to forgive and retain sins; [John 20:22, 23].*

- 4 *An apostle must be able to work signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds, as signs of his apostleship; [II Cor 12:12; Gal 2:8].*
- 5 *To be an apostle a man must have believed the pure Gospel of the Kingdom of God [Gal 1:8], have been immersed [Luke 7:29], and walk according to the truth of it [Gal 2:14].*

and some, prophets;

"Prophets" - Greek PROPHETES meaning 'one who speaks forth openly before any one, a proclaimer of a divine message' (Bull).

and some, evangelists;

"Evangelists" - Greek EUANGELISTES meaning 'a messenger of good' one who preaches the Gospel'.

and some, pastors

"Pastors" - Greek POIMEN meaning 'a shepherd - one who tends, guides and feeds the flock'. In the 16 other occurrences of the word POIMEN in the New Testament, it is always translated as "shepherd".

and teachers;

"Teachers" - Greek DIDASKALOS meaning 'an instructor; a master'. Note that Paul does not say "and **SOME** teachers". The teachers are connected with shepherds (pastors) because it was part of the duty of a shepherd to feed (or instruct) his flock.

4:12 *For the perfecting of the saints,*

Rotherham "with a view to the fitting of the saints". NIV "to prepare God's people". Diaglott "for the complete qualification of the saints".

for the work of the ministry,

Diaglott "for the work of service". NIV "for works of service". Bro Carter comments (p 111):

The messages given equipped the hearers of them for service, for ministry. An illustration of service is to be found in the house of Stephanas: "Ye know the house of Stephanas, that it is the firstfruits of

Achaia, and that they have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints" (I Cor 16:15). The Lord himself is the great example: "For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister" (Mark 10:45). "Whether is greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? is not he that sitteth at meat? but I am among you as he that serveth" (Luke 22:27).

for the edifying of the body of Christ:

JB "building up the body of Christ". NIV "so that the body of Christ may be built up". Rotherham "For an upbuilding of the body of the Christ".

Bro Carter comments (p 111):

The object of the equipment is service; the aim of the service is "the building up of the body of Christ". Here we meet once again a combination of metaphors. The saints are a building; they are also a body, the body of Christ. In the figure taken from building the literal is largely lost sight of. When we speak of edification we are not conscious of the basis of the word - the erection of a building. Possibly that is the case also with Paul on some of the occasions when he uses the word. Yet at other times he lays such stress on the matter that he appears to be fully alive to the underlying idea: "Let us follow after things which make for peace, and things whereby we may edify one another. Overthrow not for meat's sake the work of God" (Rom 14:19). We get a similar emphasis in his discussion of the gifts in I Cor 14. Repeatedly he speaks of the edifying of the Ecclesia. "Seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the Ecclesia" (I Cor 14:12). Paul himself was "a wise masterbuilder" (I Cor 3:10).

4:13 ***Till we all come in the unity of the faith,***

Notice the margin "into the unity". Rotherham "until we all advance into the oneness of the faith". The expression "the unity of the faith" is a parallel expression to "the unity of the spirit" (verse 3 - see note there). The unity of the faith comes when the spirit word is faithfully taught, clearly comprehended, and its principles conscientiously manifested in our lives. This unity of the faith was difficult to achieve in the first century when the Scriptures were not complete. Hence, the need for the spirit gifted apostles and others spoken of in verse 11. They were needed "till" the ecclesia reached maturity.

Walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called

and of the knowledge of the Son of God,

"Knowledge" is from the Greek EPIGNOSIS. Upon this word Bullinger comments as follows:

Clear and exact knowledge, more emphatic than GNOSIS because it expresses a more thorough participation on the part of the knower, with the object of knowledge; a knowledge that has a powerful influence on the knower.

Hence Rotherham translates it as "and the personal knowledge of the Son of God".

unto a perfect man,

The word perfect is from the Greek TELEIOS meaning 'having reached its end, finished, complete, perfect. It is used of persons, primarily of physical development, then, with ethical import, fully grown, mature ...' (Vine). So Rotherham translates it "into a man of full-growth". NIV "and become mature". Notice that "we all" are to become "A mature man". The reference is to the body of Christ - the Ecclesia. The Ecclesia could not be said to be fully grown or mature while it had to rely on spirit gifted brethren, some of whom had one or more gifts, while some brethren had no gifts at all (see note on ch 4:7). With the completion of the New Testament Scriptures the spirit gifts ceased (I Cor 13). The complete Bible (Old and New Testament) now provided sufficient spiritual food for the body of Christ to display maturity. Each individual could now be a student of all Scripture without the need for guidance from **SPIRIT GIFTED** brethren.

unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ:

NIV "attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ". See notes on ch 1:23. While the words of this verse undoubtedly had the application to the first century Ecclesia that has been given to them in these notes, they also can apply to the glorious day when the Lord Jesus Christ shall come and his brethren will be like him mentally, morally **AND PHYSICALLY**.

:14 *That we henceforth be no more children,*

The word "henceforth" implies that the difficulties mentioned in this verse must have previously existed.

"Children" is from the Greek NEPIOS meaning 'not speaking, a baby without the power of speech'. It is translated "childish" in I Cor 13:11. It basically means

immature. Paul's desire is that Christ's brethren will be mentally mature in spiritual things and so rightly divide the word of truth (II Tim 2:15).

tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine,

Bro Carter comments (p 113):

Until the completed revelation was in the hands of the ecclesias there was much scope for the speculation of teachers who desired to introduce some new doctrine from the theories of the world without. The new ecclesias, apart from the guidance of the divinely instructed brethren, would have been at the mercy of every aspirant for leadership. The effect of unrestrained speculation is compared to the tossing of the sea, unstable and insecure, with danger of shipwreck. Well instructed teachers steered them safely through the storm. There is the suggestion of craft and deceit on the part of false teachers. "The sleight of men, in craftiness, after the wiles of error", has underlying it a comparison to the 'dexterous handling of the dice and the smart cleverness of the schemer'.

by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;

NIV "by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming". JB "at the mercy of all the tricks men play and their cleverness in practising deceit". In every age there have been those who "changed the truth of God into a lie" and endeavoured to convince others of the rightness of their foolish thinking. Our own community has not been free from the perpetrators of error, which means we must be watchful and "believe not every spirit but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world" (I John 4:1). Peter also warns us in II Pet 2:1-2 "But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of."

4:15 *But speaking the truth in love,*

There is a contrast here between those who "lie in wait to deceive" (verse 14) and those who "speak the truth in love". In writing to the Philippians Paul speaks of some who "preach Christ even of envy and strife; and some also of good will: The one preach Christ of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds: But the other of love, knowing that I am set for the defence of the gospel" (Phil 1:15-17).

So while we must "earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered to the saints" (Jude 3) we must do so sincerely in the spirit of sacrificial (agape) love following Christ's example in trying to save others. Rotherham puts a different construction on these words in his translation. He has "But pursuing truth - may in love grow into him ...". This translation means that if we earnestly pursue the truth, then it will change our lives so that we will become more Christ-like in manifesting sacrificial love.

may grow up into him in all things,

The idea of growing up into Christ is the idea of progressing day by day in the development of the Christ-character in our lives. The Lord has said "I am the vine, ye are the branches; He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit" (John 15:5). So we must "grow" in such a way that our branch will develop the fruit expected of the Christ-vine.

The word "into" is from the Greek EIS which denotes '*motion to or unto an object with the purpose of reaching or touching it*'. We must strive to reach the standard set for us in the life of our Lord (Phil 3:14).

which is the head, even Christ:

See ch 5:23. The head is that part of the body which controls the rest. It controls our thoughts and actions. As members of the Christ-body we must respond to the directions which are provided by our head - even Christ.

4:16 *From whom the whole body*

Note that it is the whole body which is to be directed by Christ. Sometimes deformation develops in a human body so that there is no coordination with the head. This can also occur in the Christ-body when the word of God is not studied and its principles are not conscientiously applied in the lives of believers.

fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth,

NIV "joined and held together by every supporting ligament". Diaglott "being fitly joined and united, by means of every assisting joint, according to the proportionate energy of each single part".

To work effectively, every part of the human body has to act in unison with other parts as directed by the head. There has to be cooperation and coordination between the various parts of the body. We all have our respective parts to contribute to the well being and smooth functioning of the body of Christ - the

Ecclesia (see I Cor 12:14-27). In Corinthians Paul points out the empathy which must exist between members of the body. "And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it" (I Cor 12:26). If a body has a sore foot, other members take up some of the load to ease the pain in the foot. If you hurt a toe the effect will be seen in the face, as the eyes fill with tears and run down the cheeks. Such is a body in which there is cooperation, coordination, and empathy. There are lessons here for the Ecclesial body.

according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.

NIV "and builds itself up in love as each part does its work".

Bro Carter comments (p 115):

The Christ-body, like the human body, is a frame well knit together, consisting of various parts, each contributing its share in varying ways to the maintenance of the body. The whole being in vital contact with the Head, harmonious working is ensured; the cooperation of all resulting in all being built up in love.

The Ecclesial body is built up on the basis of truth, but it is sacrificial love which sees the various members of the body cooperating together and seeking to save those who are without hope and without God in the world (ch 2:12).

4:17 *This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord,*

JB "In particular, I want to urge you in the name of the Lord". NIV "So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord". Paul's appeal here is very strong.

that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk,

NIV "that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do". There must be the clearest demarcation between the way of life of believers in Christ and the way of life of the Gentiles of the world. We walk after our shepherd (the Lord Jesus Christ) following him. Gentiles who are "without Christ and without hope" follow the dictates of their lusts.

in the vanity of their mind,

The Greek word translated "vanity" here (MATAIOTES) means 'emptiness as to results' (Bull, Vine). Strong says that 'morally, the word carries the idea of "depravity"'. Gentiles who are "without God" and "without Christ" are people

whose minds are empty of the Divine ideas and Divine thinking. Consequently, they cannot produce the "fruit of the Spirit" in their lives. Such people are morally depraved.

4:18 *Having the understanding darkened,*

JB "Intellectually they are in the dark". "God is light and in Him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin" (I John 1:5-7).

Because Gentiles of the world are not enlightened by the Truth, but have darkened minds, no basis of fellowship exists between ourselves and them. This means we cannot have friends in the world. "Friendship of the world is enmity with God. Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God" (Jas 4:4). Some people in the world may seem to be '*nice people*'. From God's point of view (which should be our point of view) they have darkened minds and are not suitable as friends.

being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them,

People cannot live "the life of God" when they are ignorant of Divine principles. People of the world do not understand that this "life" requires separation and dedication. It requires that we be dead unto sin and alive unto God (Rom 6:11). It requires that we crucify the flesh with its affections and lusts (Gal 5:24) and that we walk in newness of life (Rom 6:4). There are two things which alienate a person from God:

- 1 Ignorance (ch 4:18).
- 2 Wicked works, or sin (Isa 59:2).

Gentiles who are "without Christ" are alienated from God on both counts.

because of the blindness of their heart:

JB "because they have shut their hearts to it". Rotherham "by reason of their hearts being turned into stone". The reason that it is so difficult to gain converts to the Truth today is because people have shut their hearts to the teaching of the Bible. This materialistic age with its comforts has caused men's hearts to be turned into stone. They have become like Israel of old. It will take the return of the Lord Jesus Christ to "take the stony heart out of their flesh; and give them an

heart of flesh: that they may walk in my statutes, and keep mine ordinances, and do them: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God" (Ezek 11:19-20).

4:19 *Who being past feeling*

NIV "Having lost all sensitivity". JB "Their sense of right and wrong once dulled ...". When people are intellectually in the dark so far as the things of God are concerned, sensitivity to what God requires is non-existent. They have no fear of offending God. They are "past feeling" so far as that is concerned. Paul describes it another way in I Tim 4:2 when he speaks of those whose conscience is seared with a hot iron.

have given themselves over unto lasciviousness,

"Lasciviousness" is from the Greek ASELGEIA meaning 'excess, licentiousness, absence of restraint, indecency, wantonness' (Vine). The NIV translates it as "sensuality". JB "sexuality". Lasciviousness is one of the things which comes from a stony heart (see Mark 7:21-22).

to work all uncleanness with greediness.

NIV "so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, with a continual lust for more". JB "and eagerly pursue a career of indecency of every kind". The only way men and women can be transformed is by the word of God which has the power to renew the mind (Rom 12:2). Without the beneficial effect of the word, the flesh frequently produces the equivalent of thorns and thistles (Gen 3:18). Human nature has not changed and what it produced in unenlightened Gentiles in Paul's day, it still produces today. So we live in a world of immorality and vice. And the world will get worse because the flesh cannot be satisfied - it is greedy. When the saints are removed to Sinai at the return of the Lord Jesus Christ, Isaiah describes the immoral conditions which will then exist as "darkness shall cover the earth and gross darkness the people" (Isa 60:2).

4:20 *But ye have not so learned Christ;*

JB "Now that is hardly the way you have learned from Christ". Rotherham "Ye however, have not thus learned the Christ". By the use of the definite article "the" (**the** Christ) Paul is drawing attention to the principles by which THE Messiah lived. He denied himself. He dedicated himself to doing his Father's will. He was obedient unto the death even the death of the cross. He was able to say "he that hath seen me hath seen the Father" (John 14:9). Anyone who has learned from THE Christ has learned that we must crucify the flesh with its affections and

lusts (Gal 5:24) and dedicate ourselves to doing the will of God. Such a way of life learned from THE Christ is in great contrast to the way of life of people of the world.

4:21 *If so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus:*

Paul does not use names and titles indiscriminately. In verse 20 he has spoken of THE Messiah - the one anointed by God to live a life and die a death that salvation might be made available to mankind. But this time Paul speaks of "Jesus" the man of like passions as ourselves who, though made of a woman (Gal 4:4) and made like unto his brethren (Heb 2:17) and though tempted "in all points like as we are" (Heb 4:15) was yet without sin. In him was "truth" (there is no definite article in the Greek). In commenting on the phrase "as the truth is in Jesus" Bro Carter says:

The words have often been misquoted. Paul does not say "the truth as it is in Jesus". That would imply that the particular aspect of truth as revealed in Jesus was the one that they had learned, but that there are other aspects of truth revealed in other teachers. He says "even as truth is in Jesus" thereby indicating that truth is in him and in him alone.

Truth is not just a system of doctrines revealed in the written Word, but also **the mode of life illustrated in Jesus**, who is also the Word of God. We have to be "of the truth" (John 18:37) and to have the truth in us (I John 1:8). This requires that we "walk in truth" (II John 4), and "do the truth" (John 3:21).

4:22 *That ye put off concerning the former conversation*

NIV "You were taught, with regard to your former way of life to put off". Rotherham "That ye were to strip off - as regardeth the former behaviour". "Put off" is from the Greek APOTITHEMI. It is always in the middle voice in the New Testament - a voice which indicates that which one does for oneself. It has been translated in other places in the New Testament as "put off"; "laying apart"; "laying aside" (see Vine). Having been taught by the Messiah what "truth" is, we are to lay aside all untruth as exhibited in "the old man".

the old man,

This expression also occurs in Paul's writings at Rom 6:6 and Col 3:9. It refers to the lusts of the flesh which dominate the thinking of a natural man and manifest themselves in a way of life contrary to the Divine will. These lusts reign in the

"body of sin". Consequently, in Rom 6:6 Paul says "that our old man is crucified with Christ that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin".

which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts;

Rotherham "Who corrupteth himself according to his deceitful covetings". Lusts are deceitful because they represent as desirable, that which is evil. They deceive by deceit as the serpent beguiled Eve. They represent as right that which is wrong. Because our bodies possess these deceitful lusts, man left to himself is morally corrupted. He has a law of sin within his members which takes him captive (Rom 7:23). It is only as a person develops a spiritual mind and learns "the Christ" (ch 4:20) that the corrupt old man can be crucified. Then with his mind he is able to serve the law of God (Rom 7:25).

4:23 *And be renewed in the spirit of your mind;*

JB "Your mind must be renewed by a spiritual revolution". In Rom 12:2 Paul speaks of us being "transformed by the renewing of our mind". The word "transformed" is from the Greek METAMORPHOO from which we get the English word METAMORPHOSIS which describes, for example, the change which takes place when a caterpillar is changed into a butterfly. METAMORPHOO is also used to describe Christ's transfiguration Matt 17:2; Mark 9:2). METAMORPHOO describes a change within which affects that which is seen without. So instead of being controlled by deceitful lusts we are to be controlled by a mind which is dominated by the spirit word. This will be seen without in a transformed spiritual way of life.

4:24 *And that ye put on the new man,*

As the "old man" has to be "put off" (ch 4:22) so the "new man" has to be "put on". The new man exhibits the character and mind of Christ. The new man walks in newness of life (Rom 6:4). The new man leaves behind the life of sin (II Cor 5:17).

which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

Diaglott "who, according to God, has been formed in righteousness and holiness of the truth". NIV "created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness."

In transforming people by His Word, God expects to see in them some reflection of himself. The exhortation is "be ye holy for I am holy" (I Pet 1:15-16). In

everything that God does His righteousness is upheld. This was true even in the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus Christ (Rom 3:25-26). Consequently, people who manifest the new man which is created in righteousness and holiness will reflect these characteristics in their lives. They will manifest the character of Christ who was "holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners" (Heb 7:26)

Having set out the principles of the new life, Paul now goes on to demonstrate how those principles will be manifested in action. He does this by showing sins which a genuine follower of Christ will not commit.

Wherefore putting away lying,

Bro Carter comments (p 125):

Lying ill becomes the new man, "created in righteousness and holiness of truth". To speak the truth is easy for some, but others exhibit a weakness for making false statements. Under the stress of some powerful influence or emotion truth can be perverted without a speaker recognising how inaccurate the words may be. It is said that in the first century "the habit of lying was congenial to the Greek, as it was to his Oriental neighbours". The remedy consists in a scrupulous care that all that is said is quite correct.

speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another.

Bro Carter comments again:

The reason given for speaking truly is that "we are members one of another". All together constitute the body of Christ. In the natural body there is a wonderful cooperation between the various organs for the maintenance of the functions of life. In digestion, for example, several organs have a part to perform, varying according to the character of the food eaten. But if one organ "lied" to another as to what was required of it, disorder would immediately follow. It is as disruptive for members of a society to deceive one another as for the members of the natural body. Any organisation, to exist at all, must have mutual trust and truthfulness on the part of all who belong to it.

4:26 ***Be ye angry, and sin not:***

RSV "Be angry but do not sin"

Weymouth "If angry, beware of sinning"

Diaglott "When angry, do not sin".

Rotherham "Be ye angry, and not committing sin"

NIV "In your anger do not sin".

One expositor has commented as follows:

The quotation "be ye angry and sin not" is verbatim from the Septuagint Version of Psa 4:4, which is linked with Psa 3 headed "A Psalm of David when he fled from Absalom his son", by the thought-link "Selah" appearing at the end of Psa 3.

The details of Absalom's revolt and the events connected with it are set out in II Sam 15 to 18, and the relationship of Psa 3 and 4 to the historical background are set out in Bro J Carter's "The Letter to the Ephesians", page 127.

*Shimei had cursed David, and Abishai would have twice smitten him (II Sam 16:9, 19:21), but David forbid it. Abishai's **anger** was based on self-justification - its indulgence would have exalted the flesh. David himself had cause for **anger** when Joab disregarded his clear instruction not to kill Absalom (II Sam 18:12-15), but he restrained himself.*

*Of the translations noted above, that of Weymouth gives the best sense. **Anger** is a very natural feeling, and need not be sinful (Mark 3:5; 10:14; 11:15; Psa 7:11; Rom 12:19), but more often, it contains too much of the flesh to be 'righteous', and there is accordingly a Divine prohibition (Psa 37:8; Prov 15:18).*

*But even in matters where there is a valid cause for **anger**, one must pause for self-examination, for "the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God" (Jas 1:19).*

Bro Carter comments on page 128:

It has been said, "To be angry without sin is difficult for men, but it is a difficult duty". Anger is a destructive force, uncontrolled. "But though it is difficult, it need not be impossible that the wrath which a man feels, and under the impulse of which he expresses himself, should be, not 'the wrath of man', but a Divine resentment of evil."

let not the sun go down upon your wrath:

Bro Carter comments on page 128:

"Be ye angry, and sin not", is a quotation [from the Septuagint of Psa 4:4]. "Let not the sun go down upon your wrath", corresponds with the words, "Commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still" [Psa 4:4]. Anger must not be cherished and nursed from day to day. The heart must find rest and be still with the close of day.

4:27 *Neither give place to the devil.*

Again, Bro Carter comments:

[This exhortation] has no corresponding thought in the Psalm [4], but finds its counterpart in the words of David recorded in history, "What have I to do with you, ye sons of Zeruiah, that ye should this day be Satans unto me?" [II Sam 19:22].

We need to make sure we are not provoked into sinning by the wrong action or wrong advice of others. In this case David was being urged by Abishai to let Shimei be slain because he had cursed David (II Sam 16:5-9; 19:21-23). But David did not give place to Abishai who was here "the Devil" and "Satan".

4:28 *Let him that stole steal no more:*

There are many forms of stealing. For example, there is the straight out taking of that which belongs to someone else. But we can also steal in that we are less than conscientious with the work which we do for our employees. We put in the time, but not the effort.

The doing of "foreigners" in a workshop environment is another form of stealing. The purloining of pencils, pens, note books etc, in an office environment is another form of stealing. The use of photocopiers and other equipment at work without permission and without paying for it is yet another form of stealing. The true follower of Christ will not engage in such dishonest activity.

but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.

One way to overcome sin is to replace a negative with a positive. Instead of stealing, live a life of giving.

Bro Carter says (p 129):

The habit [of stealing] is overcome by aiming to provide, by honest work, the means to help others in need. One who is aiming to confer good on the needy will not at the same time steal. Instead of being overcome of evil, the evil is overcome by good.

4:29 *Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.*

NIV "Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen".

The Lord taught "for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things; and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things" (Matt 12:34-35). James said "Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be. Doth a fountain send forth at the same place sweet water and bitter?" (Jas 3:10-12). Our speech indicates the state of our heart. In the Epistle to the Colossians (which is a sister Epistle to Ephesians) Paul exhorted them to put away filthy communications out of their mouth (Col 3:8). Again he counselled them to "let your speech be alway with grace, seasoned with salt" (Col 4:6). Salt has both cleansing and preserving properties.

Bro Carter comments (page 129):

There is talk in the world that is not merely idle, but also foul. There is also much that is on the border-line, not utterly foul in its form, but suggestive in its content. But to this reference is made in connection with another sin.

Corrupt speech not only defiles the speaker, but the hearer also; it is contagious. So Paul points out that the effect upon the hearer must be a guide. Speech "such as is good for edifying as the need may be, that it may give grace to them that hear". Does my speech build up? might well be the test of our conversation. Are men and women better or worse

worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called

for what they hear of our words? Was the remark wisely spoken, fitting the need of the particular occasion? These are the questions suggested as tests by what Paul puts before us as the antidote to unclean talk.

And grieve not the holy Spirit of God,

The Holy Spirit is the power of God and so is impersonal and cannot be grieved. However, by metonymy the Holy Spirit is put for God Himself, who had given the Holy Spirit by gifts unto men (ch 4:8, 11). Where people had the gift of the Holy Spirit and spoke unwholesome words (4:29) then God was grieved by this lack of response in their lives. A similar expression to this is found in Isa 63:9-10 which illustrates well what Paul means here. "In all their [Israel's] affliction [in the wilderness] he was afflicted, and the angel of His presence saved them: ... they rebelled and vexed His Holy Spirit: therefore He was turned to be their enemy and He fought against them."

whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.

This clearly establishes what Paul means by "the Holy Spirit of God" in this verse. For further explanation see notes on ch 1:13.

Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be away from you, with all malice:

NIV "Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice".

"Bitterness" - Greek PIKRIA used of temper. PIKRIA means 'bitterness, venereal spleen'.

"Wrath" - Greek THUMOS indicating 'an agitated condition of the feelings; an outburst of wrath from inward indignation' (Vine). THUMOS often flares up suddenly and then subsides. The NIV has 'rage'.

"Anger" - Greek ORGE indicating 'a more settled or abiding condition of the mind than THUMOS, frequently with a view to taking revenge. ORGE is less sudden in its rise than THUMOS but more lasting in its nature' (Vine).

"Clamour" - Greek KRAUGE. Vine says that here it signifies the tumult of controversy. The NIV translates it here as "brawling".

"Evil speaking" - Greek BLASPHEMIA and means '*blasphemy, slander, railing*'. It is translated "railing" a number of times in the AV and RV. The NIV has "slander" here.

"malice" - Greek KAKIA which means '*depravity, the vicious disposition and desires*'. It describes a settled, sullen disposition.

4:32 *And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.*

Verse 31 has set out the negatives which are to be avoided. In contrast verse 32 establishes the positives which are to be emulated. If we are truly appreciative of the extent of the forgiveness which God has extended to us, then we will be better equipped to manifest a kind, tender-hearted, forgiving disposition to our brethren (see Matt 6:12; 18:21-35). Paul will continue this theme in the next chapter.

Before passing on to that chapter we need to note what "for Christ's sake" means. God was the prime-mover in the matter of man's salvation. It was God who "so loved the world" (John 3:16). It was God who was "in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself" (II Cor 5:19). Nevertheless, it was the Lord who entered the strong man's house (the flesh) and bound the strong man (the lust of flesh, the lust of eyes and the pride of life) and spoiled his goods (the sin and suffering which lust produces) (Matt 12:29). It was the Lord who was obedient unto death, even the death of the cross (Phil 2:8). His object was "to see his seed" (Isa 53:10). We become his seed by being born of water (John 3:3-5) and receiving from God the forgiveness of our sins (Acts 26:18). So on the basis of Christ's faithfulness unto death, God, for Christ's sake, hath forgiven us.

CHAPTER 5

Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God

5:1 *Be ye therefore followers of God,*

Here we have set out the height of our calling. The word "followers" is the Greek MIMETES meaning 'an imitator'. The NIV has "Be imitators of God". In all we say, do, and think we are to imitate God. Because we are mortal we will only do it in measure. But our mortality should not be used as an excuse for not striving to the uttermost, with the aid of the Word of God and prayer, to be like God. As Bro Thomas has said:

God manifestation and not human salvation is the great purpose of the Eternal Spirit.

God wants us to be like Him.

as dear children;

Rotherham "as children beloved". "Dear" is from the Greek AGAPETOS which has as its base AGAPE meaning 'love'. "Dear children" are children who are obedient, faithful, and respectful. This is clear from Matt 3:17 "This is my beloved (Greek AGAPETOS) Son, in whom I am well pleased". If we want to be "children beloved" of God we have to be like the Lord Jesus Christ.

5:2 *And walk in love,*

The word "walk" occurs elsewhere in this Epistle (ch 2:10; 4:1, 17; 5:8, 15). It is from the Greek PERIPATEO and figuratively signifies 'the whole round of the activities of an individual's life'. "Love" is from the Greek AGAPE signifying 'sacrificial love'. In every avenue of life we have to live sacrificially. That is, we have to deny ourselves and live for God, the Lord Jesus Christ and others. The NIV has "and live a life of love".

as Christ also hath loved us,

"Loved" is from the Greek AGAPAO. The love of the Lord Jesus Christ is sacrificial love to the uttermost. "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13). So the standard of our own love is set for us in the life of the Lord Jesus Christ. We are to love as he loved.

and hath given himself for us

NIV "And gave himself up for us". Rotherham "And delivered himself up in your behalf". So the reference is to the crucifixion of the Lord. Paul says he became

obedient unto death, even the death of the cross (Phil 2:8). The Lord delivered himself up to a death of excruciating agony, pain, suffering, and humiliation for us. That is the extent of his love for us. What do we suffer for our brethren?

an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour.

"Offering" - Greek PROSPHORA meaning '*an offering, oblation (strictly without blood)*' (Bull). PROSPHORA is the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew MINCHAH, a word used of the meal offerings in the Old Testament. This offering constituted the dedication of a man's work - the work of his hands - to God. The man "felt moved to make the offering by a sense of gratitude or desire to do special honour to God" (Bro Roberts, *Law of Moses* p 226). The whole of Christ's work was dedicated to God.

"Sacrifice" - Greek THUSIA meaning '*the act of killing and offering in sacrifice*' (Bull). It thus involved the shedding of blood. THUSIA is the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew ZEBACH, a word used for the sin offering. Paul, in commenting on this aspect of Christ's work, says (Heb 9:12-14): "Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption. For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?"

Both the meal offering and the sin offering were offered upon the brazen altar. Both are said to provide a "sweet savour unto Yahweh" (Lev 6:15; 1:9). So the Lord, by his total dedication of his life's work to God and by his enduring in sinlessness the agony of the death of the cross, presented an offering and a sacrifice to God with which Yahweh was well pleased. It was a sweet smelling savour unto Yahweh.

5:3 ***But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints;***

JB "Among you there must be not even a mention of fornication or impurity in any of its forms, or promiscuity: this would hardly become the saints!"

NIV "But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people".

Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God

There is a clear connection between verses 1 and 2 and this verse. Anyone who imitates God or who walks in sacrificial love, dedicating themselves and their work to God as Christ did, will not engage in immorality.

"Fornication" - Greek PORNEIA and refers to '*all kinds of sexual immorality.*'

"Uncleanness" - Greek AKATHARSIA and is used here in its moral and ethical sense and thus means '*the impurity of lustful, luxurious, profligate living*' (Thayer). See its use in Rom 1:24 where it refers to sexual impurity.

"Covetousness" - Greek PLEONEXIA (from PLEON - '*more*' and ECHO - '*to have*') so meaning '*a desire to have more*'. Now Paul may mean "greed" as it is translated by the NIV, but in the context of this verse the word may convey the idea of "promiscuity" as it is rendered in the JB.

We live in a degenerate world - one of whose motives is "if it feels good - do it". This is diametrically opposed to the way the saints are to live. There should not even be the hint of such immorality among them.

5:4 *Neither filthiness,*

"Filthiness" - Greek AISCHROTES meaning '*baseness*' (from AISCHOS meaning '*shame, disgrace*'). Here it means '*obscenity; all that is contrary to purity*' (Vine). It is rendered "coarseness" by the JB; "obscenity" by the NIV; "shamelessness" by Rotherham. Bro Carter says "Filthiness describes the vulgar talk of obscene things" (p 133). "Obscene" means '*that which is foul, filthy, indecent, disgusting*'. So much of the world's talk revolves around such things. The saint must elevate his mind. "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus" (Phil 2:5).

nor foolish talking,

"Foolish talking" - Greek MOROLOGIA (from MOROS meaning '*foolish, dull, stupid*' and LEGO). The JB translates it as "salacious talk". "Salacious" means '*lustful*'. Bro Carter says "Foolish talking is the utterance of the fool who makes a mock of sin, and who freely indulges in unblushing speech, that disregards all sense of decency" (p 133). Foolish talking cannot be engaged in by those whose "conversation [manner of living] is in heaven" (Phil 3:20).

nor jesting,

"Jesting" - Greek EUTRAPELIA which means '*easily turning; nimble-witted, sharp*' (Thayer). Bro Carter says that "Jesting is the more refined avoidance of the coarser form of speech, but which shows that behind the veneer of politeness there

is no purer mind" (p 133). This is borderline talk. Talk which can be taken two ways.

which are not convenient:

Rotherham "Which things are beneath you". JB "all this is wrong for you". NIV "Which are out of place". People elevated in the heavenlies in Christ can not engage in such vulgarity. Bro Carter says "Let humour be clean, and without the suggestiveness pertaining to it that so delights the natural man. Thus, and only thus, do men and women honour the household of God of which they form a part" (p 133).

but rather giving of thanks.

Here is a positive which destroys negative thinking and talking. A mind which is full of appreciation of what God has done for us in Christ, will have no room for rude, coarse, base, suggestive ideas. A mind full of thankfulness to God and His glorious Son will propel us to speak one to another of wholesome things. It will propel us to engage in prayer. It will propel us to lead holy lives.

5:5 *For this ye know,*

Here Paul sounds a solemn warning against the sins of immorality and foolish talking. The JB has "For you can be quite certain". NIV "For of this you can be sure."

that no whoremonger,

"Whoremonger" is translated from the Greek PORNOS and means 'a man who prostitutes his body to another's lust for hire, a male prostitute' (Thayer). 'A Sodomite' (Bull). However, PORNOS is used with a wider connotation than this in the New Testament. See I Cor 5:9, 10, 11, 6:9; Heb 12:16 where it is translated "fornicator(s)". So in Eph 5:5 Rotherham has "fornicator"; The JB "nobody who actually indulges in fornication". The NIV "no immoral ... person". See note on "fornication" in verse 3.

nor unclean person,

"Unclean" is from the Greek AKATHARTOS. In a moral sense it means unclean in thought and life (Thayer). Rotherham and NIV have "impure". See note on "uncleanness", verse 3.

nor covetous man,

"Covetous" is from the Greek PLEONEKTIES and means 'one eager to have more, especially what belongs to others'. However, see note on "covetousness", verse 3.

who is an idolater,

The meaning seems to be that fornication, impurity and promiscuity are forms of idolatry. The NIV has "No immoral, impure or greedy person - such a man is an idolater". He is an idolater because he dedicates himself to worshipping immorality rather than to worshipping God.

hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.

This is because we reap what we sow. "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting" (Gal 6:7-8). And if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his (Rom 8:9).

5:6 *Let no man deceive you with vain words:*

In every age there have been those who would deceive the elect by speech that was worthless, empty and vain. The first "vain words" were spoken by the serpent and these brought sin, suffering and death to Adam and Eve and their descendants. Tragically, history shows that in every age there have been deceivers in the world **AND** in the Ecclesia. The apostle John had to warn "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world" (I John 4:1). Paul had to warn the Colossians that they should not let themselves be beguiled with enticing words (Col 2:4). And in writing to the Romans he said "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which ... by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple" (Rom 16:17-18). The world preaches liberty. It proclaims that man is free to do as he likes. This spirit of liberalism which pleases the flesh can easily make its way into God's Ecclesia because it is a philosophy pleasing to the flesh. Let us not be found proclaiming, by word **OR ACTION**, the philosophy of "Let us continue in sin that grace may abound" (Rom 6:1).

for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience.

Rotherham "For because of these things is coming the anger of God upon the sons of obstinacy". The JB has "it is for this loose living that God's anger comes down on those who rebel against Him". Sometimes the wrath of God may be felt in this life, but we must be careful not to be misled like Job's three friends into believing in the theory of exact retribution. The relationship between sin and suffering in this life is, in the vast majority of cases, a general relationship rather than a specific one. However, there is a day which is rapidly approaching when there will be a direct relationship between our sins and our suffering "For we must all appear before the judgement seat of Christ that each one may get back by means of the body, according to the things which he practised, whether good or corrupt" (II Cor 5:10, see Roth). In addition, the wrath of God will be poured out on an unbelieving and disobedient world at Armageddon.

The word "disobedience" is from the Greek APEITHEIA meaning 'unbelief', see the margin. When people disobey God they are demonstrating unbelief. They do not believe in the reality of God. They have no fear of God. As Paul says in Heb 11:6 "But without faith it is impossible to please Him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."

5:7 *Be not ye therefore partakers with them.*

"Partakers" is translated from the Greek SUMMETOCHOS and means joint partakers or partakers together. The word occurs in ch 3:6 (see note there). We can be joint partakers with Christ or joint partakers with the world. These two fellowships are mutually exclusive. If we fellowship the Lord Jesus Christ and his sufferings we can have no fellowship with the world. If we partake of the world and its immoral and licentious practices we can have no fellowship with Christ. As Paul says in I Cor 6:14-17 "And God hath both raised up the Lord, and will also raise up us by his own power. Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid. What? know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? for two, saith he, shall be one flesh. But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit."

5:8 *For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light:*

When God brought order out of chaos in Gen 1, one of the first things He did was to introduce light into the world to dispel the darkness (Gen 1:3). When God wants to change a person for His Kingdom and drive out darkness from their lives He does the same thing. Light dispels darkness. The Gentiles had been in the dark (ch 4:18). And the light of the Word of God dispels spiritual darkness from the life of a person who is transformed by the Word. Christ is the true light which shone in the darkness (John 1:5, 9). He said in John 8:12 "I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life". And again in John 12:46 "I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness."

The apostle John declares that "this then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John 1:5-7).

We must demonstrate by actions that we have fellowship with God and follow the Lord Jesus Christ. We must be holy as God is holy.

5:9 *(For the fruit of the Spirit*

Instead of PNEUMA - '*spirit*', most Greek manuscripts have PHOTOS - '*light*'. So the JB has "for the effects of the light are seen in complete goodness and right living and truth". The NIV has "for the fruit of light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth". The Spirit-word is capable of producing good fruit. As the Lord said "Ye shall know them by their fruits ... Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit ... Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them. (Matt 7:16-20). When people look at our speech and actions, what kind of fruit do they see? Do they see goodness and righteousness and truth?"

is in all goodness

"Goodness" is translated from the Greek AGATHOSUNE meaning '*goodness, virtue, beneficence*' (Strong). There is another Greek word which is translated "goodness" in the New Testament. It is CHRESTOTES which is translated "kindness" in ch 2:7; Tit 3:4; II Cor 6:6; Col 3:12 and "gentleness" in Gal 5:22.

Vine says: "Trench ... distinguishes between CHRESTOTES and AGATHOSUNE in that CHRESTOTES describes the kindlier aspects of goodness, while AGATHOSUNE includes also the sterner qualities by which doing good to others is not necessarily by gentle means. He illustrates AGATHOSUNE by the act of Christ in cleansing the temple (Matt 21:12,13) and in denouncing the Scribes and Pharisees (Matt 23:13-29); but CHRESTOTES by his dealings with the penitent woman (Luke 7:37-50)."

and righteousness

From the Greek DIKAIOSUNE meaning "the doing or being what is just and right; the character and acts of a man commanded by and approved of God, in virtue of which the man corresponds with Him and His will as His ideal and His standard; it signifies the sum total of all that God commands and approves ..." (Bull).

and truth;)

See note on ch 4:21.

5:10 *Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord.*

Ignoring the parenthesis in verse 9 this phrase connects to the end of verse 8, viz "we are to walk as children of light proving what is acceptable unto the Lord". The word "proving" is from the Greek DOKIMAZO meaning 'to test, examine, prove, scrutinise (to see whether a thing is genuine or not), as metals' (Thayer). The sense here seems to be we are to walk as children of light proving from God's Word what kind of thoughts, words and actions are acceptable to the Lord in people who are required to be "light in the Lord" (v 8).

5:11 *And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness,*

In verse 9 Paul says that light produces **FRUIT**. Here he says that darkness produces unfruitful **WORKS**. He maintains the same differentiation in Galatians. In Gal 5:22-23 he sets out the **FRUIT** of the spirit as love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness and temperance. On the other hand, in Gal 5:19-21 he sets out the **WORKS** of the flesh "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God."

Paul says we cannot have fellowship with these unfruitful works. Here the word "fellowship" is translated from the Greek SUGKOINONEO meaning 'to share in company with, ie to co-participate in: be a partaker of' (see Strong). We cannot have any part in the unfruitful works of darkness. They "must not be named among us" (v 3). The NIV translates it as "Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness".

but rather reprove them.

"Reprove" is from the Greek ELENCHO meaning 'to convict, rebuke, reprove, expose' (see Vine). So Rotherham has "but rather be even administering reproof". The NIV has "but rather expose them". Sin cannot just be ignored - it has to be exposed for what it really is. It has to be reprovved. There is a great tendency in the world today to cover the true nature of sin by using euphemisms. So what used to be called "living in sin" or adultery is now said to be 'living in a de-facto relationship'. Stealing time and materials at work is now described as 'doing a foreigner'. But sin is sin, and no use of milder language to describe it changes the real nature of the transgression.

5:12 ***For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret.***

It is unwise to let our minds dwell on evil things. Part of the secret of the success of our Lord was that he always kept his mind focussed on Divine things - on wholesome things - on pure things, and so did not sin. Bro Carter in a comment on ch 5:3 (page 133) says:

But saints are separated from the world, and it becomes them not to let the mind dwell on the sins of the world. The mind insensibly is affected by the stream of thought passing through it, and it is desirable to have the stream as pure as possible. A mind familiarised by pictures of evil is not strongly fortified if sin should assail.

This is **ONE** reason why television, unwholesome books and magazines, movie theatres and other places of worldly entertainment etc should be avoided.

5:13 ***But all things that are reprovved are made manifest by the light:***

Rotherham translates it as "All things, however, when reprovved by the light, become manifest". The NIV has "But everything exposed by the light becomes visible".

The Word of God (the light) exposes sin for what it is. When a person understands the character of God and the commandments of God then they have an appreciation of what is right and what is wrong. What is wrong is exposed (or made manifest) by the light.

for whatsoever doth make manifest is light.

JB "and anything illuminated turns into light". Darkness is expelled by light. That fact is evident every day as the sun rises. The Gentile believers at Ephesus were once "darkness" (ch 5:8). However, they became illuminated by the light of the Truth with the result that now they were "light in the Lord" (ch 5:8).

5:14 *Wherefore he saith,*

Who is the "he" that Paul quotes in the following part of this verse? The quotation is not a direct quotation from any particular Scripture although it contains similar ideas to Isa 52:1-2 and Isa 60:1-2. So possibly the "he" is Isaiah. However, the AV margin gives as an alternative to "he", "it". In keeping with this, the Diaglott has "therefore it says". The RV gives some support to this in that it places the word "he" in italics. The NIV has "this is why it is said". Rotherham "wherefore it saith". The "it" is the Word of God or the Light. If "he" is insisted upon, it could mean Isaiah as suggested above, but more likely Paul is personifying "the light" and calling it "he", just as in other places in Scripture "the word" and "wisdom" etc are personified. If this is so, the light is now personified and given a voice to speak to those who are groping in darkness.

Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.

These words are considered to be part of some ancient hymn based on Scripture as explained in the previous note on this verse. Some versions of the Bible (eg Roth, NIV and JB) set it out in poetic form:

"Awake thou that sleepest,
And arise from the dead,
And Christ shall give thee light."

The analogy in the poem is to a person who is "dead in trespasses and sins" (ch 2:1) being figuratively resurrected. He is like a person "awakened" from death, who comes forth from the darkness of the tomb into the light of the "Sun of Righteousness" (Mal 4:2), who transforms him into a "son of light" (ch 5:8).

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5:15 *See then that ye walk circumspectly,*

JB "So be very careful about the sort of lives you lead". NIV "Be very careful, then, how you live". Having been given the light of the truth we cannot follow the ways of darkness. Because light and darkness are mutually exclusive if we walk in darkness we simply proclaim for all to see that we are not genuinely "children of light". The word "circumspectly" is from the Greek AKRIBOS meaning 'accurately' or 'carefully'. It finds reflection in our hymn which says "Brethren walk carefully, danger is near".

not as fools, but as wise,

JB "like intelligent and not like senseless people". NIV and Rotherham "not as unwise, but as wise". By "wise" Paul means people who live by the principles of that wisdom that comes from above (Jas 1:5; 3:17). Fools are people who have the wisdom of the world, but are unwise in God's sight because "the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God" (I Cor 3:19).

5:16 *Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.*

NIV "Making the most of every opportunity because the days are evil". Rotherham "Buying out for yourselves the opportunity because the days are evil".

The Greek word EXAGORAZO here rendered "redeeming" conveys the idea of 'buying or purchasing'. The Weymouth translation has "Buy up your opportunities". Those that are "wise" will make the best use of time. Time can be misused on things which are not necessary, and have nothing to do with that which is eternal. We have got to buy or redeem time. The price to be paid is the sacrifice of that which is pleasing to the flesh. In order to strengthen ourselves against these evil days, time and effort has to be spent in developing the mind of Christ. Time spent on unnecessary things is time wasted - time which needs to be redeemed and put to profitable spiritual use.

5:17 *Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is.*

The Lord does not want us "to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season" (Heb 11:25). Rather He wants us to be wise and do as he would do in all the circumstances of life. In the next verse Paul illustrates how we can be unwise or wise. How we can waste time or redeem it.

5:18 *And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess;*

It takes time to get drunk - that is time wasted. It is unwise to get drunk (Prov 20:1) because drunkenness will exclude a person from the Kingdom of God (I Cor 6:10). Drink consumed in a foolish way results in a person not being in control of their faculties. The will of the Lord is that we should always have minds which are sober (I Thess 5:6, 8; I Tim 3:2, 11; Tit 1:8; 2:2, 4, 6; I Pet 1:13; 4:7; 5:8).

but be filled with the Spirit;

This is the will of the Lord for his followers. As it takes time to get drunk - time which is wasted and unredeemed, so it takes time to fill ourselves with the spirit word (John 6:63). Wine befuddles the mind. That it is the spirit word which Paul has in mind here is clear from the parallel passage in Col 3:16.

5:19 *Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs,*

We need to notice the purpose of this singing. Singing is not just to give praise to God, but in addition, by singing of psalms and hymns and spiritual songs we speak to ourselves. This is why we should sing with enthusiasm and feeling. The words we sing are not just to encourage ourselves personally, but to exhort and encourage our brethren and sisters as well.

"Psalms" - Greek PSALMOS '*primarily denoting a striking or a twitching with the fingers (on musical strings); then, a sacred song, sung to musical accompaniment, a psalm ...*' (Vine). PSALMOS is used a number of times in the New Testament with reference to the Psalms in the Old Testament and that is probably what Paul has in mind here.

"Hymns" - Greek HUMNOS denoting '*a song of praise addressed to God*'. We have people in Scripture who composed such songs of praise to God, for example, Moses (Exod 15:1-19), Deborah (Judges 5), Hannah (I Sam 2:1-10), Mary (Luke 1:46-55), Zacharias (Luke 1:68-79).

"Spiritual Songs" - "Songs" is translated from the Greek ODE meaning '*an ode or song*'. Notice that Paul exhorts us to sing **SPIRITUAL** songs. He does not recommend that we waste our time and be "unwise" by singing the songs of this world.

singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord;

Bro Carter comments (p 140):

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The drunkard indulges in foolish talk and ribald mirth. The [saint] governs his speech by the sentiments of praise and gladness and joy. There is melody in the heart - the harmony of a heart at rest in Christ, thankful at all times for all things.

5:20 *Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father*

NIV "Always giving thanks to God the Father for everything". A heart which truly appreciates all the marvellous benefits we have in the Truth and which appreciates the greatness of our calling, and God's care for us day by day will want to always give thanks for all things "to God the Father" (NIV). The Psalmist expresses it as "Yahweh hath done great things for us; whereof we are glad" (Psa 126:3).

in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ;

We need to note that we pray to God. Prayer should not be directed to the Lord Jesus Christ. But when we pray or sing and give thanks unto God, we do it "in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ". It is only through being "in Christ" that we have free "access" unto God (ch 2:18; 3:12). When we pray "in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ" it implies that we only pray for things that Christ himself would pray for if he was in our circumstances. This is a sobering thought. The work which Christ does for us in Heaven is variously described. He is our advocate (I John 2:1). He is our mediator (I Tim 2:5). He is our High Priest (Heb 4:15-5:2). When we pray in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ we also acknowledge the work he does for us with "the Father" as he fulfils these various roles.

5:21 *Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.*

Instead of "God" some manuscripts have "Christ". So the NIV renders it as "submit to one another out of reverence for Christ". Rotherham and the Diaglott have a similar sense. Bro Carter comments (140-141):

*A further expression of the spiritually elevated life is to be found in the willingness to submit one to another in the fear of Christ. **This does not mean that no one should guide and direct.** The precept is illustrated at length by the duties of husbands and wives, fathers and children, and masters and servants. Paul does not say that masters have to be subject to servants; his rule of mutual submission must be interpreted by his own illustrations.*

Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God

There is no question about the fact that we must submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. Nor is there any question about the fact that we are "all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal 3:28). We must also esteem other better than ourselves (Phil 2:3). This must be the humble state of the mind of every one of us.

But we do need faithful shepherds. Paul exhorted Timothy "And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also" (II Tim 2:2). The faithful teachers - the shepherds who feed the flock - are leaders among equals. Their sound advice should be heeded (see Heb 13:7).

5:22 ***Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord.***

A wife demonstrates here reverence for Christ by the way that she submits to her husband. In the age of 'equal opportunity' the world regards Paul's teaching as antiquated, wrong and discriminatory. Because Bible teaching is ignored, families break up, and divorce, with all its attendant evils, has become wide spread. The reason why wives are to be submissive to their husbands is given in the next verse.

5:23 ***For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the Ecclesia:***

What Paul is saying is that each home is to reflect the situation which must prevail in each Ecclesia. In the home the husband represents Christ while the wife represents the Ecclesia which loves Christ and obeys him as its Head. Now this duty of submission remains even when the husband fails in his duty to act as Christ himself would act - the principle being established by Peter who said "for this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully ..." (I Pet 2:19-20).

and he is the saviour of the body.

Christ saved the body (the Ecclesia) by sacrificing himself for it (v 25). So a husband must sacrifice himself to save his wife and family by providing for their spiritual and physical needs.

5:24 ***Therefore as the ecclesia is subject unto Christ,***

As all the functions of a human body are directed and governed by the head, so by analogy the Ecclesia (the body) is subject to Christ (the Head) who directs and governs all its functions and activities.

so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing.

So it follows that as the body is subject to the head in everything and the Ecclesia is subject to Christ in everything, so a wife must be subject to her husband in everything. This teaching is not popular in a modern decadent world, but it is the teaching of the Scriptures inspired by the God who made us.

5:25 *Husbands, love your wives,*

The responsibility to be God-fearing is not one sided. The wife has to submit to her husband. His responsibility is to be Christ-like in all that he does. He is to love his wife.

The Greek word for "love" here is AGAPAO - '*sacrificial love*'. Bro Carter comments (p 142):

It is noteworthy that the emphasis is placed upon the duty each has to perform, and not upon the right to be expected from the other. The husband is not told to exact submission, but to love. The application of each of them to their own duty helps the other to do his (or her) part.

even as Christ also loved the ecclesia, and gave himself for it;

Christ's sacrificial love for the Ecclesia was total, even to obedience unto the death of the cross (Phil 2:8). "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13). This same **quality** of love should be seen in the love of a husband for his wife.

5:26 *That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word,*

The Diaglott translates it as "so that, having purified her in the bath of water, he might sanctify her by the Word". The "washing of water", or as the Diaglott puts it "having purified her in the bath of water" is a reference to the cleansing of the bride of Christ at baptism. The cleansing which comes through baptism is not because of any physical washing - it is "not the putting away of the filth of the flesh" (I Pet 3:21), but rather the cleansing and sanctification which comes when a person's sins are forgiven (Acts 13:38-39) and they dedicate themselves to serving God. Cleansing and sanctification are aspects of a person being justified (or declared to be righteous) before God (Rom 3:20-26).

The sanctification by the Word is a process which commences before baptism as a person gradually brings their life into conformity with the will of God, and it

continues after it, as "the inward man is renewed day by day" (II Cor 4:16, see also ch 4:23; Col 3:10).

One of the duties of a husband as an imitator of Christ, is to provide **SPIRITUAL** food for his bride that she might find acceptance in the day of Christ's coming.

5:27 *That he might present it to himself a glorious Ecclesia,*

The **ultimate** presentation of the bride to Christ will take place after the Judgement at Mt Sinai, which will be followed later by the marriage feast at Jerusalem. However, there is a sense in which Paul's words must apply **now** to the multitudinous bride of Christ as she is composed of men and women who have responded to the call of the Gospel **in all ages**. They speak of the high moral standards which must be upheld by Christ's followers.

"Glorious" is translated from the Greek ENDOXOS meaning '*to be held in good or great esteem, or high repute, notable, glorious and figuratively, free from sin*' (Thayer 1741).

not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing;

"Spot" is from the Greek SPILOS meaning '*a spot or stain*' and is used here metaphorically of '*moral blemish*' (Vine).

We are being reminded that Christ's bride must be like Christ himself. She must sacrifice herself. The same word is used of Christ's sacrifice (I Pet 1:19) which says that Christ was a Lamb who was "without spot" (ASPILOS).

"Wrinkle" is from the Greek RHUTIS meaning '*a fold which draws together, a wrinkle, especially on the face*' (Bull). Metaphorically a wrinkle would seem to indicate a defect of character.

but that it should be holy and without blemish.

Again we are reminded of the bride's responsibility to follow her Lord and present herself a living sacrifice (Rom 12:1). The expression "without blemish" (Greek AMOMOS) is used of the Lord who "offered himself **WITHOUT SPOT**" (AMOMOS) (Heb 9:14), and who is said to be "a Lamb without blemish" (I Pet 1:19). We are thus exhorted to exhibit the moral standards which befit followers of the Lord Jesus Christ.

VERSES 28 TO 31

Paul's comments in verses 28 to 31 of this chapter are based on Gen 2:18-25 and conclude with a direction quotation from Gen 2:24.

5:28 *So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies.*

Paul argues this way because Eve was formed out of a rib from Adam's body (Gen 2:22). She was part of him. As our Lord suffered and had his side pierced in the formation of his bride (John 19:34), so Adam probably had a somewhat similar experience (see Elpis Israel - 'The Formation of Woman' pp 47-50).

He that loveth his wife loveth himself.

In the case of Adam this was literally true (see above). In the case of subsequent marriages the husband and wife become "one" in a family relationship as well as a physical relationship. In the case of the bride of Christ she is "one" in him (Gal 3:28).

5:29 *For no man ever yet hated his own flesh;*

NIV "After all, no one ever hated his own body".

but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the ecclesia:

Any man in his right senses will feed and clothe and protect his own body. Because his wife is "one flesh" with him he will do the same for his wife. This is what the Lord does for his bride which is the Ecclesia.

5:30 *For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.*

Paul has used this analogy before in the Epistle (ch 1:22-23; 4:25). The Ecclesia is like a body whose actions and functions are controlled by the head of the body - even the Lord Jesus Christ (see I Cor 12:12-27; Rom 12:5).

5:31 *For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother,*

This is a quotation from Gen 2:24. Each partner to the marriage covenant must be prepared to leave father and mother that they might establish a one flesh relationship with their spouse. This principal finds an echo in the words of the

Lord concerning those who will make up his bride - "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me" (Matt 10:37). Our devotion to the Lord has to be above all else.

and shall be joined unto his wife,

"Joined" - Greek PROSKOLLAO, a strengthened form of KOLLAO which means 'to glue or cement together, then generally, to unite, to join firmly ...' (Vine).

and they two shall be one flesh.

It may be thought that the expression means sexual union. In the case of a husband and wife that is certainly involved, but the expression also denotes that a new family unit is formed by the marriage covenant (Mal 2:14). Under the law of Moses this had implications as to who were and were not acceptable as marriage partners should one spouse die (see Lev 18:6-18). Joseph was regarded as Mary's husband before they had come together (Matt 1:19). Likewise the Ecclesia has a husband (cp Isa 54:5) even before she has been made one with him by being made immortal as he is.

5:32 *This is a great mystery:*

For meaning of the word "mystery" see notes on ch 3:3.

The mystery or secret concerning Christ and his Ecclesia is great because it contains great spiritual lessons.

but I speak concerning Christ and the Ecclesia.

In other words, while Paul cited Gen 2:24 and generally referred to Gen 2:18-25 which deals with the creation of Eve for Adam, he was here in Ephesians really talking about principles which unite Christ and his Ecclesia.

5:33 *Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband.*

"Nevertheless" - in other words, Paul's says that although he was really speaking about Christ and the Ecclesia, husbands must love their wives as themselves. Each husband ("every one of you in particular") must produce Christ's love for his Ecclesia in his own marriage. And every wife must reverence her husband just as the Ecclesia respects and gives honour to the Lord Jesus Christ.

CHAPTER 6

Put on the whole armour of God

6:1 ***Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right.***

Modern philosophy teaches children that from an early age they have 'rights', and are 'independent'. This worldly philosophy is destructive of family life "in the Lord", and stifles spiritual character development. The manifestation of this philosophy by children in the world (and sadly sometimes by children of Christadelphian parents) is a sign that we are living "in the last days" (cp II Tim 3:2).

Yahweh requires children to be humble and obedient as can be seen in the outstanding example of how the Lord obeyed his Father (Phil 2:6-8). Parents stand in relation to their children as Yahweh does to His. God has required that children be obedient to their parents from the beginning (see Exod 20:12; Lev 19:1-3).

Whether we can see the reason for it or not, this is a command which must be obeyed. One good reason for it is that parents have a knowledge of the Word of God and the experiences of life which children do not have.

Even when parents are not "in the Lord" they should be obeyed at all times, except when their wishes are contrary to the will of God (cp Acts 5:29). But this exception is stated here with the caution that children may not know what the will of God is. Their view of things might well be unbalanced and uncoordinated.

6:2-3 ***Honour thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise; That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth.***

Of the 10 commandments, this one was the first one to have a promised blessing connected to it (see Exod 20:12; Deut 5:16). Honour of father and mother is good for the spiritual development of the family and its long continuance in the bonds of the Truth. Ultimately, it can lead to parents and children living eternally on the earth in the Kingdom of God.

Bro Roberts wrote as follows in the *Law of Moses* p 54 concerning this commandment:

It is a commandment founded deeply on the reason of things. It ensures the development in the child of the highest faculty of the mind - the faculty of worship - the ultimate purpose of man's existence. When the child comes into the world, its mind is a blank in all directions. Everything depends upon the exercise as to how development will take place. If the child hears nothing but laughter and scorn and profanity, its higher capabilities never will open: it will assimilate its surroundings,

and grow up an insipid buffoon. But let it be taught that reverence and obedience to father and mother are duties which must be enforced, it will grow up in that deferential mood and attitude which will readily be transferred to God, when enlightenment opens the understanding in that high direction. The fear of parents is the best education in the fear of God. The commandment concerns the highest wellbeing of the child.

6:4 *And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.*

Parents have to manifest the character of God. Of the Lord Jesus Christ it is recorded "and we beheld his glory, the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1:14). Of Yahweh, Paul says, "behold therefore the goodness and severity of God" (Rom 11:22). The Lord Jesus Christ and his Heavenly Father always had grace and truth, goodness and severity, and mercy and judgement in perfect balance. Parents must strive for the same balance. Parents have to be able to discern when a heart to heart talk followed by a cuddle or a pat on the shoulder is the right prescription, and when a heart to heart talk followed by "the rod" is that which is required in the case of misdemeanours.

It is true that "foolishness is bound in the heart of a child; but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him" (Prov 22:15). See also Prov 13:24; 23:13-14. However, a child which does not see both goodness and severity in its father is unlikely to be raised in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. If the perceived solution to every misdemeanour is a belting, then it is likely that children will be provoked to wrath. The NIV has "Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord".

6:5 *Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ;*

A Christadelphian should be the very best employee that any employer could have. We are required to work for an employer as if he was Christ. That is no less true if the employer is a bad employer (see I Pet 2:18-20). In this way we demonstrate in a practical way what the Truth really means to us. It is a marvellous way of preaching the Truth (see I Tim 6:1-2; Tit 2:9-10).

If the employer is bad, but we remain Christ-like at all times and suffer because we are the followers of Christ, then that is to our credit in the eyes of God. "if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together" (Rom 8:17). "And our hope of you is steadfast, knowing, that as ye are partakers

of the sufferings, so shall ye be also of the consolation" (II Cor 1:7). "If we suffer, we shall also reign with him" (II Tim 2:12).

The spirit of Trade Unions and the spirit of Christ are so diametrically opposed that Christadelphians should avoid union membership if at all possible. We need to consider whether it is possible to be a member of a Trade Union and also comply with Paul's instructions in this verse.

6:6 *Not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart;*

"Eyeservice" relates to working hard while the boss is in sight and slackening when he is not. "Eyeservice" relates to keeping one eye on the clock so that no time is worked for your employer for which you are not paid, etc. Our service to our employer has to be "hearty" - "good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over" (Luke 6:38). This is the service God wants us to render.

6:7 *With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men:*

The principle is that "God loveth a cheerful giver" (II Cor 9:7). Christadelphians should not serve their employers grudgingly, but cheerfully - with full heart - throwing ourselves into the work. The NIV translates the verse as "serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not men".

6:8 *Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free.*

The NIV translates the verse as "because you know that the Lord will reward everyone for whatever good he does, whether he is slave or free". Roman law gave the slave no hope and thereby instilled lethargy in his heart. In Christ, bond and free serve a Master who will richly reward those who live their lives "as unto him" (see Matt 19:27-29).

6:9 *And, ye masters, do the same things unto them,*

Christadelphian employers are not to take advantage of their employees. The principle to be applied by masters and servants is "do unto others as you would that they should do to you". "Love thy neighbour as thyself" (Matt 19:19 etc). There is a parallel passage in Col 4:1 which reads "Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal, knowing that ye also have a Master in

heaven". The NIV translates "just and equal" (Col 4:1) as "right and fair". God is no respecter of persons and **everyone** in the employ of a believing master should be treated justly and fairly.

forbearing threatening:

NIV "Do not threaten them". JB "Do without threats". The employer who is overbearing and threatens his employees with punishment or dismissal is not displaying the spirit of **his** Master. "Now if any man have not the spirit of Christ he is none of his" (Rom 8:9).

knowing that your Master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with him.

Whether employees or employers in the secular affairs of life, we are all engaged in service to our Master (the Lord Jesus Christ) who is in heaven. We are all to imitate him (I Cor 11:1). At the Judgement Seat he will show no respect of persons. He will treat all in a just and equal way. He will not be overbearing because he knows our frame, being the Son of Man (John 5:22, 27). That same attitude has to be shown by masters in this life.

6:10 ***Finally, my brethren,***

"Finally" is a characteristic word often used by Paul near the end of his Epistles (see II Cor 13:11; Phil 4:8; II Thess 3:1). He is now about to set out his final exhortation in this Epistle.

be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.

The apostle Paul suffered from a serious physical ailment (II Cor 12:7). But despite this he was strong in the Lord. He said "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Phil 4:13, see also II Cor 12:7-10). Our "strength in the Lord" will be proportionate to our faith and the extent to which we engage in prayer. Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God (Rom 10:17). It is essential that we engage in individual personal Bible study and that we have sufficient faith to continue in prayer until Christ comes (Luke 18:1-8). It is the Word of God and prayer that will win the battles of life for us.

6:11 **Put on the whole armour of God,**

Bro Carter comments (pp 147-149):

The Epistle passes from the particular exhortations to different classes on subjection to one another, to a general appeal to all. The brotherhood had a common foe, and all must equip themselves for the fight. The passage, which is very picturesque, is very familiar. It is generally thought that the figure which Paul uses was suggested to his mind by the soldiers who were constantly about him and to one of whom he was chained. Stalker has thus put the matter:

"His attendant was changed every few hours, as one soldier relieved another upon guard. In this way there might be six or eight with him every four-and-twenty hours. They belonged to the imperial guard, the flower of the Roman army. Paul could not sit for hours beside another man without speaking of the subject which lay nearest his heart ... To men accustomed to the horrors of Roman warfare and the manners of Roman barracks, nothing could be more striking than a life and character like this; and the result of these conversations was that many of them became changed men, and a revival spread through the barracks and penetrated into the imperial household itself. His room was sometimes crowded with these stern, bronzed faces, glad to see him at other times than those when duty required them to be there. He sympathised with them and entered into the spirit of their occupation; indeed, he was full of the spirit of the warrior himself. We have an imperishable relic of these visits in an outburst of inspired eloquence which he dictated at this period."

... Sensitive as Paul was to the lessons of human life about him, he was more responsive to the lessons of the Scriptures. And a very similar figure had been used before by Isaiah ... the prophet testifies, "For our transgressions are multiplied before thee, and our sins testify against us; for our transgressions are with us, and as for our iniquities, we know them" (Isa 59:12) ... Yet in this time of utter failure the prophet sees a divine warrior who accomplishes salvation: "And God saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor: therefore his own arm brought salvation unto him; and his righteousness, it upheld him. And he put on righteousness as a breastplate, and an helmet of salvation upon his head; and he put on garments of vengeance for clothing, and was clad with zeal as a cloak" (Isa 59:16-17). This "arm" of the Lord is none other than "the Redeemer who comes to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob" (Isa 59:20). The work of both advents is combined in the picture, as in many other places; there is a time of

suffering and a time of glory. There is the time when salvation protected the Saviour as a breast-plate and helmet.

Here, then, in the first instance, is the source of the apostle's figure; its details are adapted from the Roman soldier's equipment. And if this was the panoply of the saviour, how necessary that his followers should be thus clad.

The weapons are not carnal: the fight is not physical. The opponents may be civil magistrate or pagan priests; kings or papal emissaries. But resistance is not by the sword, or artillery, or any other weapon that some of the defenders of liberty who are called "the earth" in the Apocalypse have not hesitated to use. The attack must be met by a faithfulness to the Truth, by steadfastness in the faith.

"The whole armour" is a translation from the Greek word PANOPLIA meaning 'panoply or full armour'. As the various items of armour are examined it will be found they provide a defence for the front of the warrior. This means that in life the enemy must be faced and fought. We cannot turn our back on him and pretend that he does not exist. Further, if the warrior is going to be successful he needs to be fully equipped. He needs the whole armour of God.

that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

"The devil" is a synonym for human nature in all its forms. The devil exists in us in the form of "lust of flesh", "lust of eyes" or "pride of life". This power was destroyed in the Lord by his crucifixion (Heb 2:14). Its complete destruction from the earth awaits the end of the Millennium when all the world's population will be immortal. In the mean time, the DIABOLOS (or 'false accuser') is manifested in many forms. In Paul's day one disgusting manifestation of it was seen in the licentious emperor Nero who ruled the Roman Empire from AD 51. Of him Bro Thomas says in Eureka:

This Caesar for the first five years reigned with applause ... But changing his manners, he sunk to the lowest depths of degradation. He reduced the greater part of Rome to ashes, and charged it upon the Christians, upon whom he inflicted the most exquisite torture. He died by his own hand in the fourteenth year of his reign, aged 32.

(Eureka Vol 4, page 43 Logos Edition)

Faithful believers in Christ needed to equip themselves to deal with the persecution which broke out from the Roman world. We need to equip ourselves to deal with

the many manifestations of lust of flesh, lust of eyes, and pride of life which are so manifest in the world today.

6:12 *For we wrestle not against flesh and blood,*

That is, our warfare is not a literal one. As followers of Christ and the Apostles we are conscientious objectors to all forms of literal warfare in this age. But nevertheless as our hymn says:

*There is a battle to be fought,
An onward race to run,
A crown of glory to be sought,
A vict'ry to be won.*

Hymn 206

but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world,

NIV "but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world" (see notes on ch 1:21). The darkness to which Paul refers is spiritual darkness, that is, ignorance of Divine things (cp ch 2:1-5; 5:8, 11; Col 1:13). This darkness is described in the next phrase as:

against spiritual wickedness in high places.

It would better be rendered "spiritual wickedness in the heavenlies" (see notes on ch 1:3). The rulers of the Gentile world, both civil and ecclesiastical, have enacted laws and established social programmes which undermine the Truth as it is in Christ Jesus. Of this spiritual wickedness among the rulers of the world Bro Thomas writes in *Elpis Israel* pages 97-98:

Now, sin in its sovereign manifestations among the nations executes its will and pleasure through the civil and ecclesiastical authorities of a state. What, then, is decreed by emperors, kings, popes, and subordinate rulers, are the mandates of "the Prince of the Word", who works in them all to gratify their own lusts, oppress the people, and "make war against the saints", with all the energy they possess. Taken collectively from the chief magistrate to the lowest, they are styled principalities and powers; the world-rulers of the darkness of this age; who are the spirituals of wickedness in the high places of the kingdoms [ch 6:12]. So the apostle writes of the rulers of the world in his day; and from the conduct they now exhibit before the nations in all their kingdoms, it is clear that the

style is as characteristic of the rulers, and of these times, as it was in the first century of the Christian era. Iniquity has only changed its form and mode of attack against the truth. The world's rulers, temporal and spiritual, are as essentially hostile to the gospel of the kingdom as ever. They could not embrace it and retain the friendship of the world. This is as impossible now as at the beginning. But things are now quiet with respect to the gospel; not because the world is reconciled to it, but because there are scarcely any to be found who have intelligence of it, faith and courage enough earnestly to contend for it as it was originally delivered to the saints [Jude 3].

In apostolic times, it was the privilege of the [Ecclesia] to make known to the world-rulers "the manifold wisdom of God" [ch 3:10]. This mission brought the disciples of Christ into contact with them, as is related in the Acts. When they stood before these men of sin, in whom the thinking of sinful flesh worked strongly, the truth of God proclaimed to them brought out the evil of the flesh in all its malignity. They imprisoned the disciples of Christ; threatened them with death; tempted them with rewards; and when they could not shake their fidelity to the truth, tormented them with the cruellest tortures they could invent. The apostle styles these the artifices, or wiles of the accuser [ch 6:11]: against which he exhorts believers to stand firm, being panoplied with the whole armour of God. The war being thus commenced by an attack upon the strongholds of power, the magistrates, urged on by the priests, were not content to take vengeance against them when they came in their way; but they obtained imperial decrees to hunt them out, and destroy them. This they did with destructive energy and effect. They calumniated [ie, falsely accused] the disciples, charging them with the most licentious and impious practices; and employed spies and informers, who personated brethren, to walk among them, and watch an opportunity of accusing them before the judge. These adversaries of the Christians, being actuated by the same spirit of sinful flesh, the apostle terms "your adversary the accuser": and to express the ferocious spirit that impelled the enemy, he compared him to a roaring lion, walking about, on the look out for prey. "Resist him", says he; not by wrestling with flesh and blood in personal combat; but by continuing "steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are inflicted in the world upon your brethren" [I Pet 5:8-9].

6:13 **Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God,**

See notes on ch 6:11.

that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day,

For the followers of the Lord Jesus Christ "the evil day" is the period of their pilgrimage. Today the opposition is not outright physical persecution as in the days of the Apostle. Now the attack is more subtle, more insidious. Because of the advances of technology, now spiritual wickedness attacks through the print and electronic media, sowing ideas which are attractive to the carnal mind, and which, if entertained, will draw us away from the Truth.

and having done all, to stand.

The margin has "and having overcome all, to stand". It is an oft repeated exhortation of Scripture that by the power of the Word of God and prayer we must overcome every obstacle that would prevent us from obtaining a place in God's Kingdom (see, for example, I John 5:4-5; Rev 2:7, 11, 17, 26; 3:5, 12, 21; 21:7). If we take action to overcome our weaknesses then we will be able to stand firm when trial comes upon us.

6:14 *Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth,*

NIV "Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist". Upon the girdle of truth Bro Carter comments as follows (pp 150-151):

The belt served to keep the rest of the soldier's clothes in place, securing freedom and ease of movement. It was essential to all that is expressed in the word soldierliness. Truth has the same work in the Christian's armour. Paul has several times referred to truth in this epistle. The gospel is the "word of truth"; "truth is in Jesus"; his followers have "to deal truly in love"; each has to "speak truth with his neighbour"; "the fruit of the light is goodness and righteousness and truth"; and as God's creation they had "been created in righteousness and holiness of truth". These references show how vital truth is. Its absence vitiates every other quality. It is necessary in the pursuit of knowledge; in business dealings; in friendships. Its absence undermines character. It is manifested in sincerity, veracity, and integrity of purpose. It is the girdle, holding together and making effective the other parts of the garments of character with which the Christian must adorn himself.

and having on the breastplate of righteousness;

A soldier's breastplate was made up of two parts which covered the body from the neck to the knees. It thus protected the vital organs of the body such as the heart, liver etc. That which protects a believer from the insidious attack of the enemy is

moral integrity which is shown in a love of, and a commitment to uphold, the commandments of God. The man who knows and keeps God's laws has a defence against evil. Like David, with his heart, he loves God's law (Psa 1:1-2; 37:31; 40:8; 119:97).

6:15 ***And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;***

NIV "And with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace".

Bro Carter comments as follows (p 151):

Preparation is readiness, preparedness, equipment. Feet thus shod are ready to run with the gospel of peace. Here is a paradox - the warrior is shod for the errands of peace. Isaiah is the source of the figure. "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace: that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth" (Isa 52:7). And this prophecy is given a present application to Christ's brethren. "How shall they hear without a preacher? and how shall they preach, except they be sent? As it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things" (Rom 10:15). The "peace of God" and "peace with God" are essential for the Christian's warfare. While opposing the foe, his feet carry a message of peace.

6:16 ***Above all, taking the shield of faith,***

"Shield" is translated from the Greek THUREOS denoting 'a large door shaped shield'. Again the shield was a defensive piece of armoury. Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God (Rom 10:17). Faith denotes trust in God. That trust is developed as we consider the character of our God and the help He has given His people in ages past. Faith equips us to face the enemy with confidence knowing the words which Yahweh spoke to Joshua "There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life: as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee" (Josh 1:5).

wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.

The picture of fiery darts is taken from the ancient practice of shooting arrows tipped with burning charcoal into a city or opposing army. This used to spread panic and terror among the people. Today the fiery darts of the wicked come in

the form of wrong doctrine, pseudo science, worldly philosophy, and wrong moral ideas which are presented to our minds. We must so understand our Bible through personal Bible study, that we are equipped to quench these fiery darts and render them harmless.

6:17 ***And take the helmet of salvation,***

The helmet protected the warrior's head. It is described as "the helmet of salvation" because it prevented the entry of foreign objects into the brain. The Lord Jesus Christ was successful in overcoming sin because he did not have a carnal mind - he had a spiritual mind. He kept out fleshly thoughts which so easily lead to sin. Bro Carter says (page 152):

The hope of the Gospel gives the spirit of a sound mind, and does not allow destructive thoughts to find entrance. It was thus Christ himself was equipped (Isa 59:17).

The Septuagint version of Isa 59:17 reads "and placed the helmet of salvation on his head". If we wish to be successful in the battles of life we must strive to do what Christ did.

and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:

This is the only offensive weapon in the spiritual warrior's armoury. Bro Carter says (p 152):

It is called the sword of the Spirit because forged by the Spirit as it directed the minds of the writers of the Scripture. Christ was the master swordsman of this school. He wielded it mightily in the wilderness when assailed by temptation. It is sharper than a two-edged sword in dividing between things natural and things spiritual. It reaches to the inner recesses of the heart of a man and brings to light the evil hidden in the mazes there. It is effective in the exposure and destruction of false doctrine and all thoughts that are contrary to the mind of God. It must be known to be used. It can only be known by careful reading and meditation. In time and with practice the mind recalls the statement of the Word that is suitable to the occasion, and which puts to flight the foe.

6:18 *Praying always*

Again Bro Carter comments (p 152):

The Christian fight is not a guerilla warfare by detachments of troops cut off from headquarters, making their own plans and schemes. That way lies plundering, disorder and ultimate defeat. The soldier of Christ must always - for he can always - keep in touch with the One in command.

It is by prayer to God that the soldier of Christ seeks for guidance in the battles of life.

with all prayer

"Prayer" is translated from the Greek PROSEUCHE meaning 'to speak out towards God'.

and supplication

"Supplication" is translated from the Greek DEESIS which denotes 'prayer as an expression of some personal need'.

in the Spirit,

For our prayers to be heard and answered they have to be in accordance with God's will. "And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us:" (I John 5:14). We know what the will of God is by means of His Word which is spirit (see John 6:63). So to pray in the spirit is to pray in a way which is acceptable to God, bearing in mind all that the Bible reveals about the will of God.

and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication

NIV 'With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying'. JB "Never get tired of staying awake to pray". The allusion would seem to be to the Garden of Gethsemane where the Lord asked his disciples to "watch and pray" (Matt 26:41). But they sleep (Matt 26:43). The Lord's need was that the disciples might pray for him. That too is our responsibility towards our friends. We must pray for them in all their difficulties and trials. We must be alert to their needs.

for all saints;

Paul was a great pray-er for others (cp Col 1:9). He wanted others to pray for him (I Thess 5:25; II Thess 3:1, see also ch 6:19).

6:19 *And for me,*

As a prisoner in Rome, Paul had a special need, and he recognised that God would supply that need in answer to prayers.

that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly,

Compare Col 4:3. The NIV has "that whenever I open my mouth, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known ..." When Paul was at Ephesus he declared "that I am pure from the blood of all men" (Acts 20:26). Paul never let the opportunity pass to preach the Gospel. He spoke it to all, and therefore no one's eternal death could be laid at his door. He wanted others to pray that this forthright preaching of the Gospel would continue from his mouth.

to make known the mystery of the gospel,

See notes on ch 1:9; 3:3-9.

6:20 *For which I am an ambassador in bonds:*

Bro Carter comments (p 153):

Can we not think of Paul smiling somewhat whimsically as he dictated the words, "an ambassador in chains"? An ambassador was sacrosanct [ie, he should have had diplomatic immunity]. He should not be imprisoned but sent back to the power he represented. Nero did not recognise Christ or his ambassadors. But [Paul's] embassy was to all, rulers and ruled, and imprisonment did not restrain Paul from discharging his mission. He spoke boldly to those who visited him; he sent letters to those far away.

that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.

NIV "Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should". JB "pray that in proclaiming it I may speak as boldly as I ought to".

6:21 *But that ye also may know my affairs, and how I do, Tychicus, a beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, shall make known to you all things:*

Tychicus was also the bearer of the companion epistle to Colosse (Col 4:7-8). This letter which we know as the epistle to the Ephesians may in fact have been

primarily addressed to the Laodiceans (see Col 4:16 and the Introduction section of these notes).

Tychicus was an Asian and accompanied Paul on his last journey from Corinth to Asia (Acts 20:4). He remained with Paul between his first and second imprisonments (Tit 3:12) and during Paul's second imprisonment was sent again to Ephesus (II Tim 4:11-12).

6:22 *Whom I have sent unto you for the same purpose, that ye might know our affairs, and that he might comfort your hearts.*

Tychicus' mission was not only to bring the epistle to those to whom Paul wrote, but that he might report first hand on the state of things in Rome and "comfort their hearts" by adding his own words of exhortation and encouragement.

6:23 *Peace be to the brethren,*

"Peace" comes when brethren uphold the purity of the Truth (Jas 3:17) and deeply appreciate the love which God has shown to them in Christ Jesus our Lord (see notes on ch 1:2).

and love with faith,

(See notes on ch 2:4 and 2:8). We become more conscious of the love of God the more we grow in faith.

from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

(See notes on ch 1:2).

6:24 *Grace be with all them*

(See notes on ch 1:2).

that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity.

"Love" is from the Greek word AGAPAO denoting '*sacrificially; selflessly*'. Note the use of the personal word "our" - "our Lord Jesus Christ". As a community we are extremely blessed. He is "our Lord Jesus Christ". We know him and love him. We must pray that we do it "in sincerity", that is, with incorruption (see margin). The Greek words translated "in sincerity" EN APHTHARSIA are also

used of an immortalised body "in incorruption" (I Cor 15:42, 50, 53-54). This has led to a variety of translations. For example, Rotherham "Favour be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ with incorruptness". NIV "Grace to all who love our Lord Jesus Christ with undying love". Putting the various translations together we may conclude that our love of our Lord Jesus Christ has to be sincere, pure, and undying. There could not be a better note on which to end this epistle!

Amen.