

Bible Studies

A magazine for the exploration of the Word of God [Acts 17: 11]

THE EPHESIAN EPISTLE

VOLUME 52

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EDITORIAL

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The importance of an accurate knowledge of the word of God is well seen in the history of the church of God in Ephesus. In the beginning, Paul, Apollos, Priscilla and Aquila are all shown to be constantly engaged in public and/or private teaching of the word. For the most part this meant exposition of the Old Testament Scriptures to show how the teaching of the Lord Jesus was the natural and inevitable continuation of what had been written in the Law. Without this the epistle to the Ephesians could not (and cannot) be properly appreciated. It is clear from the epistles to Timothy that prominent teachers in the assembly did not have a true grasp of these things though they desired to be teachers of the Law (1 Tim. 1: 7). Fortunately for the assembly they came up against a man like Timothy (2 Tim. 3: 14-17). By the time of the final record of the assembly's welfare, their adherence to the word of God had been further tested. They had again stood firm but had by then become battle-weary and had lost the love for the Lord and His things that had characterized their early years.

Having spent last year studying Old Testament scriptures readers and contributors to Bible Studies are well placed to appreciate the essential Old Testament teaching that underpins New Covenant teaching as set forth in the Epistle to the Ephesians. For example, the first part of Eph. 4: 26 is the language of the first part of Psalm 4: 4 (RVM) and invites comparison of the second part of the verse with the second part of Psalm 4: 4. Again, Eph. 4: 30 is the same teaching as Isa. 63: 10 to which is added the New Covenant truth of the permanent indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the believer. In the same way, Eph. 5: 2 assumes that the reader is thoroughly familiar with the shadows and types of the Old Testament. The same assumption of familiarity with the Old Testament Scriptures underpins Paul's instruction to Timothy (2 Tim. 2: 19-21). To readers of the New Testament unfamiliar with the Old, the force of the passages may well be lost. But set beside the events

of Numbers 16, where similar language and teaching is used (Num. 16: 5 and 2 Tim. 2: 19), the meaning of Paul's teaching is clear. In the case of both the assembly of Israel in the wilderness and the assembly in Ephesus, the size of the dissenting sect was too great for the remainder simply to put them away from amongst the people of God. And so, in both cases, those faithful to the Lord had to withdraw themselves from the rebels (Num. 16: 21, 2 Tim. 2: 21) and leave them to their dishonour and destruction.

Such was the unhappy state of affairs at the close of Paul's life. An assembly whose early testing was so dramatic and triumphant that it made serious inroads into the idolatrous fabric of Ephesian and Asian society was rent by false teaching within. An assembly whose early leaders were highly skilled in the Scriptures passed into the hands of men who were neither careful nor faithful teachers of the word. Instead of promoting spiritual health and life they promoted spiritual gangrene and death. The story of declension and division that is the story of the assembly in Ephesus is the story of the dispensation. Instead of the planting of assemblies by those already in assemblies so that all are together in the unity of the faith there has been division after division. Such division arises because men lose their love for God and His word and cease to "handle aright the word of truth".

Yet the Ephesians had had every opportunity. In the epistle bearing their name they were confronted with some of the loftiest statements of the purposes of God. They were reminded, in particular, of their irrevocable standing in Christ; of blessing and glory that they will never lose throughout eternity. Acquainted with God's workmanship in them (Eph. 2: 10) they could not emulate it in their working for God and so lost the place. As we follow, as it were, in their footsteps in our study of the epistle we should give diligence to present ourselves approved unto God, workmen that need not be ashamed, handling aright the word of truth.

I. E. P.

A STUDY OF THE EPHESIAN EPISTLE: **THE WORK IN EPHESUS**
(Acts 18: 18-20: 1; **20: 17-38**; **1 Tim, 1: 3-7**; **3: 4-16**; **2 Tim, 1: 15-18**;
2: 14-26; **Rev. 2: 1-7**)

From Ajegunle, **Nigeria**: *The Path of God's Will*. Paul and his companions obeyed the will of God not to enter Asia or Bithynia (Acts 16: 6, 7).

The circuit of Paul's missionary work eventually **reached Ephesus** when Paul **returned** accompanied **by Aquila and Priscilla** (Acts 18: 19). In the **Ephesian** synagogue Paul reasoned **with the Jews and, having surveyed the work, he promised to come back, in the will of God.** In his absence Apollos was contacted **and** taught the way of **the Lord** (Acts 18: 26). Apollos **the Alexandrian** stands out **as the first-fruit of the work in Ephesus** (Acts 18: 27).

The Pattern of Work. Paul **returned to Ephesus and the scriptures** present twelve **men** who were John's disciples, **in dialogue with Paul.** **The sign** of apostolic authority vested **in Paul was** manifested when he discerned **the obedience of the twelve.** He laid his **hands** on them **and they were filled with the Holy Spirit** (Acts 19:1-7). For **three months** Paul **preached repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus,** "reasoning **and** persuading as to **the things concerning the kingdom of God**" **in the Jewish synagogue and from house to house** (Acts 19:8; 20: 20). "Special miracles" **were permitted** by Paul's **hands as a demonstration of the pre-eminence of God's truths to the devotees of idolatrous worship and magical art in Ephesus.** Keeping **in mind the primary objective that the work should develop towards the establishment of a divine testimony in Ephesus,** Paul **separated the disciples to teach them daily at the school of Tyrannus** (Acts 19: 9). **This forum** permitted both **Jews and Greeks to be reached** (Acts 19: 10). A visible testimony **evident in the church** of God planted **in Ephesus sooner or later shed light on the evils of society.** The conviction of **the Holy Spirit in hearts had a purging effect in lives of "many... that had believed"** (Acts 19: 18, 19). **Satanic attacks on the work were evident** through seven sons of **Sceva and Demetrius the silversmith** (Acts 19: 14 & 24).

Conduct of saints in Testimony, **The church of God in Ephesus** stood on **the apostolic pattern** (Acts 2: 41, 42). Separation to **the will of God and holy conduct by disciples in the church** were **an absolute necessity for their continuing in the testimony.**

Paul counselled Timothy to watch **that saints adhered to the truth and that especially he, himself, should be a model to fellow disciples 'in word, in manner of life, in love, in faith, in purity'** (1 Tim. 3: 15; 4: 12).

Shepherd-care for the Church. **A church of God has need of Spirit-appointed leaders. Such leaders are commonly referred to in Scripture as elders, overseers or bishops. As a principle, the plurality of men appointed to this office is attested to in Acts 20:17. The elders in**

Ephesus were not independent but a link in the chain of elders appointed throughout the Fellowship which existed then (see 1 Pet. 1: 1; 5: 1). The care of the church in the matters of watching, feeding and guiding through wise counselling was primarily the responsibility of the elders of the church. Paul warned them about grievous wolves, men arising from among the Ephesian brethren to spread false doctrines (Acts 20: 30). Later (Rev. 2: 1-7) the Ephesian church was brought under the light of divine searching. The Lord commended them for holding fast His Name and rejecting the teaching of the Nicolaitans. As only the Chief Shepherd discerned, however, the church in Ephesus had left its first love. The Lord called them to repentance. Today there is no visible divine testimony existing in Ephesus. Doubtless, this is a sequel to the rejection of the apostolic pattern (Acts 2: 42).

E. I. Basse, M. Imoukhuede

From Birkenhead: The readings quoted in the syllabus trace the work of the Lord amongst those in Ephesus from the early days through the establishment and development of the church until a time when enthusiasm for the things of God waned. The extent of this is displayed when the angel of the church in Ephesus warned of the ultimate outcome of their behaviour, which was eventually fulfilled when the lampstand was removed as the church ceased to exist. We estimate that the period covered by these events was some forty years from about 50 - 90 A. D.

It is evident from Scripture that the Holy Spirit was the guiding light in Paul's life and it was obedience to the direction of the Spirit that led Paul to devote so long to the development of the saints in Ephesus. It would seem that a period of approximately three years elapsed, during which time Paul dedicated himself to the instruction, guidance, upbuilding and direction of the Ephesians.

As would seem to be Paul's practice, he commenced his teaching in the synagogue, and when opposition became strong he withdrew with those in whom the Holy Spirit had stimulated an interest, and he devoted his energies to teaching them the Way. To assist in this work the Spirit fitted men and women who helped Paul directly in the spreading of the word of God.

In Acts 20: 17-35 we learn of the spiritual growth of some of the saints, to the extent that the Holy Spirit had fitted them for the responsibility and privilege of oversight. Paul declared to them the frame of

of **mind and attitude of heart and spirit which characterized his visit to Ephesus. Outstanding was his lowliness of mind, which could be observed in many of the things which he spoke and wrote to edify others. Paul could work in the sure knowledge that he had conveyed to them the complete truth as delivered to him. Part of this truth involved the fact that the overseers themselves had a similar duty to build and "feed" the church with the whole counsel of God.**

The **extent of Paul's efforts is made clear in two particular verses; Acts 19: 10 indicating preaching to the whole of Asia, and Acts 19: 20 "So mightily grew the word of the Lord and prevailed". Mention is also made of the turning of magicians to the Lord.**

Having spoken the truth and lived it out amongst them, Paul gives Timothy written confirmation of this and a reminder of the way of the Lord. However, Paul was not unmindful of the dangers facing early Christians, and warns of those who would come from within their number and would cause havoc amongst the flock. It is unfortunately apparent that insufficient heed was given to these warnings, as the record in Revelation refers to the church's loss of its first love and the high condition from which it had fallen.

R. C. M. Bolt, R. D. Williams

From Birmingham: **Paul arrived in Ephesus for the first time towards the latter end of his second missionary journey (Acts 18; 19). Priscilla and Aquila, whom he had met at Corinth (18: 2), accompanied him but there was not a church in Ephesus at this time. His stay was short and, although asked to abide, he did not consent but returned to Caesarea and Antioch.**

Priscilla and Aquila were left to carry on the work and met Apollos (a disciple of John the Baptist) who through their teaching came to know the way of God more carefully (18: 24-26). Later, Apollos was commended by the brethren to the disciples in Achaia. It seems that during Paul's absence converts had been made with the possibility of a church being planted [Comment 1].

While Apollos was in Corinth Paul returned to **Ephesus (19: 1) on his third missionary journey. He met a small body of men who, like Apollos, knew only the baptism of John (v. 3). Paul expounded to them the way of God more fully to which they readily responded and, having**

been baptised into the Name of the Lord Jesus received the Holy Spirit through the laying on of Paul's hands. This seems an obscure incident, perhaps, but it links the work in Ephesus with Jerusalem and Pentecost. Incontrovertible proof of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit was given by speaking in tongues (vv. 5, 6).

Paul laboured **in Ephesus for three years (20: 31) probably with interspersed visits to other places (19: 10, 20: 31) [Comment 11]. During this time Paul had to endure much hardship and suffering developed during Paul's stay. He met regularly for three months in the synagogue but some were hardened and Paul then separated the disciples "reasoning daily in the school of Tyrannus"¹ (v. 9). This continued for two years, and all in Asia came to hear the word of the Lord (v. 10). The Name of the Lord Jesus came to be magnified (v. 17) and the word of the Lord grew mightily (v. 20).**

As his time in Ephesus drew to a close Paul intended visiting other churches and to proceed to Jerusalem and to Rome and Spain (19: 21). His departure was preceded by a disturbance which broke out in the city. The livelihood of idol manufacturers was threatened (19: 24-27).

Paul wrote to the Corinthians from **Ephesus (19: 22; 1 Cor. 4: 17; 16: 8-9) having heard of their unhappy state (perhaps by letter or word of mouth) by them which were of the household of Chloe (1 Cor. 1: 11). Immediately following the uproar, and possibly hastened by it, Paul left Ephesus to travel to Macedonia and Achaia, perhaps visiting Corinth (Acts 20: 1-3). On this return trip to Jerusalem he called in at Miletus (20: 17) from whence he called for the elders of the Ephesian church. They were not to see his face again (v. 38) and Paul warned of wolves entering in among them not sparing the flock (v. 29). It seems their zenith years would soon be past. When John later wrote the Revelation, although he commended the Ephesians on certain points, they had left their first love (Rev. 2: 4). The tenor of Paul's words, however, are indicative of decline many years before then.**

At one point Paul left Timothy at Ephesus (1 Tim. 1: 3) while he went to Macedonia, It is difficult to pinpoint when this took place [see Question 2]. Following on from Ephesus during Paul's third journey we note Timothy was with him (20: 4). Linking his words to the Ephesian elders warning of wolves coming (20: 29) with those to Timothy (1 Tim. 1: 3, 6) seems to indicate a later date than that of the end of his third journey. Some suppose 1 Timothy to have been written

between Roman imprisonments and this may have been the time when Paul exhorted Timothy to tarry at Ephesus.

R. Wood

From Cowdenbeath: The work at Ephesus appears to have begun when Paul, with Priscilla and Aquila, reached Ephesus from Corinth (Acts 18: 19). There he found an interest in the word among the Jews and no doubt Priscilla and Aquila confirmed the hearts of many with their teaching.

Paul was an achiever, a man with a goal in view, whose zeal affected others accompanying him. Priscilla and Aquila, having come from home, linked with Paul at Corinth and became, under his guidance and ministry, the core of the work in Ephesus, labouring there pending Paul's return.

As God had brought these dear ones to meet Paul at Corinth so He brought Apollos to meet them at Ephesus. Apollos was a man:

mighty in the Scriptures
fervent in spirit
eloquent in speech.

These characteristics were used by the Spirit in the spread of the word and it is lovely to notice that such a man showed real humility to know the way of God from Priscilla and Aquila. Perhaps, about this time, the planting of the church in Ephesus took place. Verse 27 of chapter 18 would suggest a letter of commendation to Corinth.

The gifts of Apollos and his method of presenting the word were perhaps different from Paul since, before long, a party arose in the church in Corinth saying, ^MI (am) of Apollos" (1 Cor, 1: 12). At least he was a servant of God whose ministry had a strong appeal.

We were impressed by the thoroughness of the Ephesian work. This is particularly revealed by:

the time spent there (19: 8-10)
the zeal despite much opposition (19: 19-20; 20: 19)
reason, exposition and persuasion (19: 8 *et seq.*)
teaching publicly and from house to house (20: 20)

testimony to Jew and Gentile	(20:	21)
tears	(20:	19).

The breadth of **the work at Ephesus is measured** not only by its **extensive spread** through "all **Asia**^M (19: 10, 26), but by the **three phrases of chapter 20:**

testifying the gospel	(v.	24)
preaching the Kingdom	(v.	25)
declaring the whole counsel of God	(v.	27).

We considered ^M**the way** of the Lord^M and "the way of God^M (Acts 18: 25-26). The former **is mentioned in such** other scriptures as Matthew **3: 3** and Mark 1: 2-3 where John's baptism **is mentioned because** of the **One** who is to come. Disciple baptism recognises the claims of the **One** who **has come and is** God's **way** for the believer. Evidently, Apollos **knew** nothing of the Master's teaching **during the forty days** after His resurrection. As Paul's determination was that such disciples should **be made aware** of **these** glorious realities (Acts 19: 1-7) so Priscilla **and** Aquila **did the same** (18: 24-28).

Paul, who **had remained in** Ephesus for some **time, seemed** to recognize **that** self-willed **men** would **seek** to **subvert** the **truth** of God. Timothy, a true devotee of **divine truth**, was **given a charge by the divine Spirit**. He recognized **the** seriousness of it.

Despite all, the things that would **bind the** disciples to one another **and to the Lord** were love out of a **true heart, a good conscience and real faith in** God (1 Tim. 1: 5). Sadly, **perhaps the** most important **virtue** of all would **seem to have failed them in the end** (Rev. 2: 4).

R. I. Shaw

From **Denver:** The word of God was going out to **Asia and** Paul, as was **his** custom, moved on from Corinth to **the city** of Ephesus. With **him he** took two, Priscilla and Aquila, who were knowledgeable **in** the word. We **find in their** work elements of instruction **that were needed for their time and are still vital for ours**. **Here was** Apollos, eloquent **and mighty in the** Scriptures yet not knowing **the full teaching** of baptism. But when **taken aside** they expounded unto **him the way** of God more accurately. **The** importance of correct instruction **and** the accurate proclamation of **Scripture cannot be diminished** (2 Tim. 2: 15). We live

in a day when truth is being set aside and we are called upon to hold the pattern of sound words in faith and love.

If we were to select a city for evangelism would it be Ephesus? The work in this city was most difficult as is evident from the following points. It was the home of the temple of Diana of the Ephesians, the economy was based on idol business, people were hardened and disobedient and many practised magical arts (Acts 19: 19). Yet, let us consider the success of Paul's preaching. The results of Paul's work were not known immediately but were accomplished over a three year period (Acts 20: 31). We can see the effect of this extended work from the actions of the people as they first heard, then saw, then did. Many that dwelt in Ephesus heard the word of the Lord, saw special miracles and, as a result, believed and confessed. The burning of their books in the sight of all confirms that actions often speak louder than words. But we must remember, they heard first. Paul, in the Holy Spirit, spoke boldly, reasoning and persuading without any compromise (Acts 20: 27). We should take lessons from the master evangelist. Being bold does not come easily, for without the assurance of the Holy Spirit and the confidence of His word, our boldness will quickly fade. To reason and persuade comes from understanding and commitment. Such understanding can only come from a deeper, richer appreciation of our Lord and Saviour, and the tremendous work that was accomplished at Calvary. It is also interesting to note that the scope of Paul's work was toward all men, as seen in Acts 13 to the Jews, Acts 19 to the Gentiles and Acts 20 to the Church.

Once the work in Ephesus was established we cannot help but notice the concern expressed by Paul for its continued care. This was to rest with the overseers of the church of God on behalf of the flock. Let us take note of the warnings given in Acts 20: 28 "take heed... to feed", v. 29-30 "grievous wolves shall enter in", false teachers and ambitious leaders and finally (v. 31) "watch... remembering". Also see Jude 3-4 and 1 Tim. 1: 3-4. Churches of God are not immune to problems or to attack from Satan or even from those inside the church of God.

"I know thy works... but I have this against thee, that thou didst leave thy first love". As far as the work in Ephesus was concerned this may be the most important point. Paul advised Timothy "but the end of the charge is love... ". How essential is our love to Him! Regardless of all that was accomplished at Ephesus, the lack of love could have removed the Lampstand. Should we not also take heed to

the final words written to the church of God in Ephesus: "Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in uncorruptness"?

D. Williamson, D. Brooks

From **Derby**: Ephesus was in the province of Asia, part of the area now covered by modern Turkey. It was an important city being a centre of human society, culture and wealth. It also had a huge temple which had been erected for the worship of the goddess Diana (Acts 19: 23-27). Here, in this strategically placed city from which the word could be carried to all parts of the province of Asia, Paul sought to establish the work of God (19: 10). This involved a great amount of labour and a great amount of travel on his part. He must have suffered personally and physically as he walked many miles along rough roads and endured long sea journeys (Acts 20: 33-35).

When the church of God was planted, however, the temple of God was found in Ephesus. It was built by God and acquired by the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 20: 28, Eph. 2: 22). It was an important church of God because of the persons associated with it. Among them were Priscilla and Aquila who were an honourable couple and had a tremendous part to play in the work in Ephesus. Apollos, too, was an outstanding man. He was eloquent and well educated and it was to his credit that he was prepared to listen to the godly couple when they instructed him more accurately in the way of God (Acts 18: 24-26). Humble, godly people can put mighty people on the right track. We should all be willing to be taught and should teach each other. Tychicus was a faithful man and Timothy had learned a lot from Paul who loved him (Eph. 6: 21; 2 Tim. 2: 2).

The church must have been wealthy in connection with spiritual teaching. However, there were some very wicked people who had got into the church and were teaching wrong doctrine. Hymenaeus and Philetus taught that the resurrection was past and they disturbed the faith of many (2 Tim. 2: 17-18). Timothy had to deal with them and it was not an easy task for a young, delicate man. In Acts 20: 17 we read that Paul called the elders of the church to him. It was to be the last time they were to see him. He looked backwards and then forwards and saw ahead of him the work of Satan. In this address we can study the man, Paul; his message and the methods that he adopted in his work. Serving the Lord is the keynote and this was with lowliness of mind, tears and trials. He shrank not from declaring anything that was profitable - an important qualification. He made a very, very sweeping

statement **when he said that he was pure** from the blood of men. He was not boasting, only stating what **was** true.

In Acts 20: 28 the church in Ephesus is described as "purchased". Not all **purchased** believers are in the church of God. **In Titus 2: 13-14 and 1 Pet. 2: 9 we see an aspect of the death of Christ** which goes beyond **purchasing** individuals. God **said to the children of Israel, "if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure... an holy nation" (Ex. 19: 5-7).** **These were conditional IFs.** We should not claim the "then" in God's promises **if we are not prepared to keep the "if".**

Paul calls **the church of God (Acts 20) "all the flock".** They were **in the church of God, which is a called-out and called-together people, and they were a flock. The sheep had to be kept together under authority and control. The responsibility was placed on some to give the correct food.**

We considered **the significance of the terms "elders" and "bishops" or "overseers". Overseers watch over the work done in the church of God. Elders were not necessarily old but they were the wise and experienced overseers both in character and maturity.**

In Rev. 2 there is quite a bit of praise from the Lord to Ephesus. They were well taught and strong numerically, but they had lost their first love. That wiped out what there was on the credit side. If there was no love, what was there for God who is Love? God loves us with an eternal love.

G. W. Conway

From Galston: Paul, Priscilla and Aquila, Timothy, Apollos and Onesiphorus are among the names of these involved in the work of planting, watering and maintaining the church of God in Ephesus.

Between the time of Paul's first, **brief** (was **it** one day only?) visit to the synagogue at **Ephesus (Acts 18: 19-21) and his return to Ephesus (Acts 19: 8)** it would **appear** that the **church in Ephesus had been planted. The evidence for this is that when Apollos was minded to go to Achaia "the brethren encouraged him, and wrote to the disciples to receive him" (Acts 18: 27).**

Priscilla and Aquila are the stuff of which churches of God are made. The references to them in the Scriptures indicate that they were two who had opened their mouths unto the Lord and would not go back. They were "helps" in the assembly continually and even to the gifted Apollos they "expounded unto him the way of God more carefully".

Timothy was left by Paul at Ephesus (1 Tim. 1: 3). He was to preserve the church from wrong doctrine, fables and genealogies and the end of the charge was "love out of a pure heart and a good conscience and faith unfeigned" (1 Tim. 1: 5). He was a young man, gifted, and a "man of God".

Onesiphorus, who ministered in so many things at Ephesus and who oft refreshed Paul, was not ashamed of his chain, but when he was in Rome he sought Paul diligently and found him (2 Tim. 1: 16-18). Was Onesiphorus indeed one of those who "turned away" from Paul? [Question 3]. If so we feel the sadness that such a man should so spoil a life-work. If only he had risen to the occasion!

Apollos was "mighty in the scriptures". The same word is used by the two on the way to Emmaus of the Lord, "a prophet mighty in deed and word" (Luke 24: 19) and by Stephen of Moses "He was mighty in his words and works" (Acts 7: 22).

We are each to run with patience the race that is set before us but as we read Paul's farewell address to the elders of Ephesus we realise that in the race he "leaves us standing". He could say "I hold not my life of any account, as dear unto myself, so that I may accomplish my course... " and "I shrank not from declaring unto you the whole counsel of God" (Acts 20: 24, 27).

How thoroughly the church at Ephesus was grounded in the faith! From Rev. 2: 1-7 we conclude that much of the three years' work endured but "the one thing needful" was lacking. "Thou didst leave thy first love... Do the first works; or else... I will move thy lampstand". That first love for the Lord was seen in the love of the elders for Paul at Miletus. Later, disciples were drawn away from "God, and the word of His grace" probably in teachings and/or practices which they had not thought of as contrary to the word of God. They had left their first love [Comment 2] "Thou shalt have none other gods beside Me" (Ex. 20: 3 RVM). "My son, give Me thine heart" (Prov. 23: 26).

J. H. Johnson

From Hereford: Paul **described** the word **in Ephesus in his message** to the **Ephesian** elders whom **he had** called to **him while** at Miletus (Acts 20: 24-25). "But **I hold not my life** of any account, **as dear** unto myself, so that **I may accomplish my course**, **and** the ministry **which I received** from the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the **grace** of God. **And.... preaching** the kingdom". It may be that the work of the Holy Spirit **had** already **begun in Ephesus** before Paul **arrived** with Priscilla **and** Aquila. As **he** reasoned with **the Jews in** the synagogue some **asked him** to **abide** a little longer, but **he** consented not (Acts 18: 19-20). **The A. V. says** "saying, **I must by all means keep this feast** that cometh **in Jerusalem**" (18: 21). We wondered why **this is** not written **in RV or RSV** and what **feast would it be?** [Comment 3].

He set sail for Caesarea but **he kept his promise and returned** to **find certain** disciples there. They **may have been saved** as a result of **the earlier ministry** of **the** apostle, or **indeed** through Apollos who, **it would appear**, came to **Ephesus after Paul's first visit and** before **his** second. **These twelve men** would seem to form **the nucleus of the work at Ephesus** [Comment 1]. They **had** previously **been baptized** into John's **baptism** unto repentance. **Here we find that Paul was to teach them the deeper truths** of the kingdom and **desired to deepen** the work of God **in their hearts and so baptized them in the Name** of **the Lord Jesus**. We wondered why **the words of the Lord** were not **used as in Mat. 28: 19**, "**baptizing them** into the **name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit**" [Comment 4].

We wonder **which rendering** of **Paul's question** is correct. **A. V.** "**Have ye received the Holy Spirit since ye believed?**"¹¹, **R. V.** "**Did ye receive the Holy Spirit** when you believed?" [Comment 5],

We thought that possibly the assembly was planted at the point when the apostle separated the disciples **and** reasoned daily **in** the school of Tyrannus. He omitted no opportunity either **by** day or night to visit the homes to confirm **and** instruct the disciples, **and** also taught publicly the word of God.

During his stay he suffered much for the sake of the Name he loved. **In 1 Cor. 15: 32 he says** "**I fought with beasts at Ephesus**", an indication of **the rough-handling he** received. We believe **the adversary stirred up Demetrius and** others to oppose **the work in that idolatrous city**. **The cry of the people was** "**Great is Diana of the Ephesians**",

but how great was the God of the apostles.

Acts 20: 17-38 gives an insight into Paul's character and deep concern for the spiritual lives of the saints. His warnings and appeals were made out of a clear understanding of the perilous times to follow his departure. These comprised evil men and doctrines within, grievous wolves entering in not sparing the flock, from without.

His lowliness, his tears and trials were evident in his selfless service for the Master. His preaching and teaching were in power and demonstration of the Holy Spirit. He says "In all things I gave you an example, how that so labouring you ought to help the weak".

H. Jefferson

From Liverpool: *Background.* The letter to the Ephesians is one of the "prison letters". Paul anticipated being released. When he was he made several trips before writing his final letters, among which are 1 and 2 Timothy. It was a circular letter, probably never actually written to the Ephesians, and quite possibly the Laodicean letter referred to in Col. 4: 16, and intended for general reading among the churches in the area [Comment 61

We have quite a wide historical survey of the work in Ephesus from its commencement recorded in Acts to its demise foretold in Rev. 2. Paul spent a very long time with the Ephesians and experienced a lot of set-backs as well as triumphs. The very determination of the opposition instigated by Satan would indicate that a real work of God was in progress.

Ephesus was an important Roman city, a fact that was of significance in the furtherance of the work of the Lord; hence Paul's determination to win the city for Christ.

Effort. Everything Paul did was done for the Lord. Literally he could say that for him "to live is Christ" Paul never asked "Is it convenient?" but "Is it God's will?" The Lord Jesus values each church of God "which He purchased with His own blood", and Paul shared that estimation too.

Using the naturally favourable communications network that would emanate from such an important centre, Paul's actions reveal that God

is not just the God of the individual (which He is, of course). Nor is He just the God who can operate in out-of-the-way places (which, of course, He can), but He is also the God of the crowds too. Having declared that He had many people in that city, God showed that He approved of using the most appropriate methods and places for maximum advantage in the work. The lesson is obvious.

The Message. Paul did not just preach the gospel but declared the whole counsel of God (Acts 20: 27) preaching the Lord Jesus as Saviour and the kingdom of God too (19: 8, 20: 25). Because of its effect disciples were made and a healthy church of God began its witness amidst the Satanic darkness of Ephesus. The result was that first love (that they are chided for having forsaken in Rev. 2: 4) that manifested itself in obedience (Acts 19: 5), discussion and study (19: 9), outreach (19: 10) and progress in reaching others (19: 18). For a thing to grow it has to be alive and the word of God-which is living, caused growth among the Ephesian Christians.

The Name of the Lord Jesus. Contrary to the disrepute into which it is brought today in being used blasphemously and discourteously, the Name of the Lord Jesus was held in high honour as a result of the work of God in Ephesus (Acts 19: 17). This important and precious Name should always be held in high honour by those in churches of God today and people should see the Lord working and learn respect for Him too.

Paul's Farewell. Having established that his work had been done properly and without sparing himself Paul gave a message of foreboding. He spoke of grievous wolves (not wolves in sheep's clothing), men who were not part of the assembly but who "shall enter in among you" (Acts 20: 19) in much the same way as he himself had done while unsaved, to persecute and destroy; a continuation of the Satanic opposition to all Paul was doing while he was with them. But he also warned of "from among your own selves" (Acts 20: 30) who would distort the truth to get a following. This was more serious, whether he meant from the assembly or particularly from the body of overseers [Comment 7]. The history of second and third century Christianity is one of prominent churchmen seeking to be pre-eminent and it has its origins here.

In speaking of his departure, "after my departing" (Acts 20: 2), Paul was not referring to his death but literally to his no longer being in Ephesus. This persecution from outside the church and disaffection from within were to arise during his lifetime.

Turning Aside. The Asians were turning away from Paul not from the truth. There was still a recognized church of God in Ephesus at the time of the book of Revelation, but Paul's words had become unpalatable and he was no longer held in esteem.

In Eph. 1: 15 (RVM) Paul rejoiced at their "faith in the Lord Jesus^M and their ^Mlove... toward all the saints". By Rev. 2: 4 they had forsaken this position. There were two views on this: (1) The fact that they were commended for deeds, perseverance, not tolerating wicked men, and testing false prophets shows that this forsaking of their first love was a gradual drifting into complacent formalism. They became more concerned at being right (i. e. position) than in loving the Lord and each other (i. e. condition). Their priorities had turned upside down. The Lord, in warning, shows that He will not tolerate an unloving, self-righteous legalistic church of God. We should beware! (2) The word translated "forsaken" (NIV) means to abandon or leave and this had been a deliberate act by the Ephesians in turning away from the truth taught by Paul in order to follow teachers (i. e. the grievous wolves and men who were distorting the truth) (Acts 20: 20-30). The Lord will not tolerate a church of God holding to teachings which are not of the faith. The difficulty with the second view is the commendation of Rev. 2: 2 [Comment 8].

D. J. Webster

From Nottingham: Situated at the end of the ancient Asiatic caravan route, Ephesus was the most important city in the Roman province of Asia. It was a very busy port with a magnificent road leading down from the town to the haven. It had a population of about a third of a million. Many of its streets were paved in marble and there were baths, libraries, centres for public assemblies and a great theatre which could seat at least 25,000 people and possibly many more. A short distance from the city was the great temple of Diana which was one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. Most of the people were idol worshippers and the practice of magical arts was commonplace.

It was to this great city that Paul came, accompanied by Priscilla and Aquila, as we learn from Acts 18: 19. When a church of God is planted in any given place there are, usually, those who carry out the pioneer work necessary to the raising of the testimony and the actual establishing of the church on a specific date. Paul's first visit to Ephesus was brief and we are not told of any particular result. We

do know **that** Paul left Priscilla **and** Aquila **in** Ephesus when he set sail for Caesarea (Acts 18: 19, 26) **and** it seems likely that **this** brother **and** sister played a significant part in the pioneer work at Ephesus.

It is not clear from the Scriptures when exactly the church there was planted **but** we suggest it was during the period contained between verses 19-21; 24-26 **and** before the events related in verse 27 of Acts 18. The reason for **this** suggestion is found in verse 27 where we find a corporate body, **i. e. the church** of God, **acting** together in commending Apollos **in that they** (1) encouraged **him** to go, (2) commended **him** **and** (3) **must have arrived** together at an opinion of his spiritual fitness.

Priscilla **and** Aquila were sufficiently grounded themselves in spiritual truth, **due**, no doubt in some measure at least, to their association **with** Paul (Acts 18: 1-3). **Thus** they were able to help Apollos to a greater understanding of the things of God. Apollos was a learned man, mighty in the Scriptures (18: 24), **but** his understanding was limited. Nevertheless **he** was humble-minded enough to **receive** further instruction **and** the one who spoke **and taught carefully** now was the man who listened to those who expounded the word of God *more carefully*. A superficial grasp of God's word was not good enough for Apollos **and** it is well for us if we **have the same attitude**.

Paul returned to Ephesus as he had promised he would (if it were God's will) **and** he remained there for over two years. At first it may seem astounding that there were some in the city who are described as disciples **but** whose experience had been limited to the baptism of John (Acts 19: 1-7). This is, we think, not so remarkable when we remember we are dealing with a period of transition **and** also that in a city with such a high population it may not have been possible for the brethren **and** sisters to reach out to all. We think the R. V. rendering of verse 2 is more accurate than that of the A. V., which, in the latter part of the verse reads ^MWe have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Spirit". We find it difficult to believe that disciples who had been baptized into John's baptism would be ignorant of the existence of the Holy Spirit (cf. Mat. 3: 11). "We did not so much as hear whether the Holy Spirit was given" seems to comply more with the tenor of the passage [Comment 10]. Following their baptism into the Name of the Lord Jesus (the use here of the title Lord is significant **and** the statement in verse 5, chapter 19 in no way conflicts with the command of Mat. 28: 19-20). We have here an exceptional action to suit an exceptional case as also with the Samaritans. These men then spoke in

tongues **and** prophesied, **thus** confirming to all that what **had** transpired on that occasion was of God. We **gave** some thought to the fact that there **is** no **reference in the** epistle to the Ephesians, **as is the case** with some other epistles, to individuals. **As Paul remained** with the saints **in Ephesus** for a considerable period it may **seem strange** that **he made** no **reference** to people that **he would meet during** that **time**. In this connection we thought of **the** apostle's words to **the** elders of **the church in Ephesus** concerning **the dangers** of "grievous wolves" **and** "**men... speaking perverse things**" (Acts 20: 29-30). We **remembered the sad** words of **the** apostle (2 Tim. 105) "... all that are in Asia turned away from **me**" **and it is evident** from Rev. 2: 2 that **the church had been subject to the attacks** of "evil men". It has been suggested that this **absence** of personal **reference might indicate** that many of those who were **taught** by Paul **in the** early days soon **departed from the truth**. Some, however, question **whether this** letter was **sent to the church in Ephesus** or whether it was of a more general **nature**. The words "**at Ephesus**" (Ephes. 1: 1) do not **appear in some ancient** manuscripts. **Chapter 1: 15 is** quoted also by some **as showing Paul did** not know **the** people to whom **he** was writing **because he** states "**having heard of the faith... which is among you**". **The argument is that if he** were writing to Ephesus **he would have** known of the people **and their** conversion.

However, against these arguments **it can be said** that **verse 15** of chapter 1 does not necessarily relate to their conversion but **rather** to **their** spiritual growth which would become known to Paul only some **time after his visit**. **In** the matter of personal **reference** the **absence** of **such in** the epistle **seems** flimsy ground on which to build **any** definite conclusion. **Of the nine** letters written **by** the apostle to the churches **seven are** without *personal* salutations: see 1 & 2 Cor. Galatians, and 2 Thes., Philippians plus the **Ephesian** letter.

R Hickling*

From Paisley; Ephesus **was** the most important city **in** the Roman province of **Asia**. It was situated on the west coast of what **is** now **Asiatic Turkey**. **Adding to its eminence** was the temple of **Diana**, one of **the** wonders of **the ancient** world. Paul's **intended visit** to **Asia** (Acts 16:6) **was** overruled by the Holy **Spirit, but in the Lord's time** **he** was able to **bring the gospel there** on the second **and third** missionary journeys (Acts 19: 20). **The presence** of Aquila **and Priscilla in Ephesus** was a **help in instructing** Apollos who **was mightily used** of **the** Lord both **in Ephesus and** later **in Corinth**. **The main impact** of Paul's **visit** **is** recorded in Acts 19 where **he spent** two years **teaching the** word of

God. It is known that there was a large colony of Jews there who enjoyed a privileged position in the early Roman empire. Paul's usual approach was to speak in the synagogue, but when the Jews rejected the message he separated the disciples. Special powers, such as the healing of the sick and diseased, and casting out of evil spirits accompanied the preaching of the gospel. Conflict also arose with the powers of darkness as seen in the magical arts practised by some and the worship of the goddess Diana.

It could have been at this period that Paul fought with beasts (1 Cor. 15: 32). Some of us considered that this was a figurative reference to his conflict with the craftsmen of Ephesus. There is no doubt, however, that there was an open door for the word (1 Cor. 16: 9). The planting of the church in Ephesus, and the care of it as mentioned in Acts 20: 17-38, were ever a burden to the apostle. He foresaw the influence of evil men and counselled the overseers on watchfulness. 1 Tim. 1 shows the evidence of false teaching early on in the church's history. The epistle, coming as it did from a Roman prison, is rich in spiritual teaching and revelation. The confining influence of a Roman dungeon could not contain the spirit of the apostle and his heart rises in ecstasy as he writes to the saints of God's eternal purposes of grace in Christ, in which the saints have a part.

Revelation 2 gives a further glimpse of the Ephesian assembly; active, but lacking in first love to the Lord. The fact that the Lord sent His messenger to the church showed His love for them and His desire to restore them to a right spiritual condition, failing which the lampstand would be removed.

J. Renfrew

From Vancouver, **British** Columbia: Acts 18: 19-21 tell us of Paul's first visit to Ephesus. During his absence while visiting other churches (vv. 22, 23) Priscilla and Aquila stayed in Ephesus. It seems that these two saints were instrumental in the planting of a church of God in that city.

Paul "found" a certain Jew named Aquila at Corinth (Acts 18: 2). This was no chance meeting, for this Jew was to be used greatly of God in connection with the planting of a golden lampstand in Ephesus. Apollos "came to Ephesus" (Acts 18: 24-28). This; too, was no chance visit. He was another Jew and "mighty in the Scriptures"¹, and

"instructed in the way of the Lord". Where, when, how? [Comment 9] How clearly we see the Lord going before, and working along with men. Aquila and Apollos were brought together undoubtedly by the Holy Spirits guidance, and Apollos was taught the way of God more perfectly by Aquila. Then Apollos desired to move on to Achaia, teaching the things of the Lord, and greatly helping those there who had believed through grace (Acts 18: 27).

In this verse we also see that brethren from Ephesus wrote to the disciples in Achaia commending Apollos and asking that he be received by them. This indication of close association between groups of disciples makes us think that there was then a church of God in Ephesus. If this is so, it must have been planted before Paul came back to spend at least three years with them (Acts 19: 10; 20: 31). Paul, we think, must have worked his way around existing churches in Caesarea, Antioch, Galatia and Phrygia and approached Ephesus from the north side where he encountered other disciples of John the Baptist (Acts 19: 1-7).

We judge, therefore, that the church was planted before Paul came to stay there, as mentioned in Acts 19: 1 [Comment 1].

F. Smith

COMMENTS

1. (Birmingham and Hereford): Although we are not told precisely when the church of God in Ephesus was planted, friends in Galston and Nottingham show that it must have been prior to the time of the events of Acts 18: 27.

2. (Galston): It is of great interest that the church of God in Ephesus, of whom it is written that they had lost their first love, was a substantially different company of people from the company which had such a dramatic early history. Prominent men had been put away. There had been sectarian division resulting, in all probability, in more than one company of believers calling itself "the church of God", of which only one was entitled so to call itself. Yet it was to the latter company only that John wrote and identified with the early years of the work in Ephesus. Thus, although composed of different people at different times, the assembly is regarded by God as continuous in character as well as service.

3. (Hereford): The statement about the reason for Paul being in Jerusalem does not have sufficient textual support to be considered as Scripture and is therefore omitted from the Revised Version (and later versions). This is exactly what might be expected since set feasts in Jerusalem belonged to the previous dispensation. They were imposed until the time of reformation (Heb. 9: 1-10) in which Paul lived and we now live. See how the scripture in Acts 20: 16 speaks only of a date, not of a religious observance (unlike the doubtful text of Acts 18: 21) rather in the way that we, today, might speak of Christmas or Easter as meaning a date rather than a religious festival.

4. (Hereford): Mat. 28: 19 gives the formula to be used in baptism. That is not the issue in Acts 19: 5 where the issue is in whose name had the disciples been baptized; the name of John or the name of the Lord Jesus. The name of the Lord Jesus is the name to which the "all authority" of Mat. 28: 18 has been given.

5. **(Hereford):** The tense of both verbs "receive" and "believe" is the same in the original. There is, therefore, no justification for the A. V. translation and that of the R. V. is correct.

6. **(Liverpool):** See Question 2 for the circumstances of the writing of the epistle. It has been known for a long time that some ancient authorities omit the words "at Ephesus" in Eph. 1: 3 but these authorities have never been considered sufficient to justify other than marginal reference. That is to say there is insufficient evidence to assert that the epistle was not written to the Ephesians. The text nowhere says that it was written to the Laodiceans and so we are not justified in making that assumption. There is no evidence that it was a circular letter for the usual format for a circular letter is that of Gal. 1: 2 and Rev. 1: 4. Consider Tychicus. He was to accompany the letter and tell all the details of Paul's circumstances (Eph. 6: 21-22). Was he to make the same circuit as the "circular letter", repeating the details in place after place? Is not the point of a circular letter to avoid that? Note, too, that he received the same instruction concerning another church in the district, namely Colossae (Col. 4: 8-9). Finally, certain of the themes of the epistle are particularly appropriate to saints living in the city of Ephesus. Ephesians were very concerned with the supernatural against which the assembly was instructed in the "heavenlies". Again the fame of the temple in Ephesus was world-

wide but the saints in the assembly were "builded together for a habitation of God in the Spirit". The object of worship at Ephesus was Diana, a female deity. Against this saints were instructed in the matter of the "Church which is His Body".

7. (**Liverpool**): Acts 20: 18-35 is addressed to the oversight of Ephesus. Therefore the grievous wolves were those who would enter that circle at a later date. Similarly, "from among your own selves" means from among the circle of men to whom Paul was actually speaking at that time.

8. (**Liverpool**): The assembly to which John wrote is commended for its patience, its ability to shoulder the burden and its not growing weary (Rev. 2: 3). All of these are matters of condition and therefore the contrast between position and condition is not the one being made. It was a key condition that was lacking.

9. (**Vancouver**): The Old Testament is full of the way of the Lord (Gen. 18: 19 *et seq**). Apollos came from Alexandria, a city in Egypt which contained a large and influential Jewish community. From them had come the Septuagint version of the Scriptures. Thus Apollos would learn the way of the Lord in the synagogue, from his teachers and by private study in the same way as did the Lord Himself. Men from Egypt attended the set feasts in Jerusalem (see Acts 2:8-10) and, as part of the travel to and from that divine centre, the word concerning the baptism of John would be carried to Alexandria. See *Needed Truth* 1966, vol. 73, p. 104 *et seq.* especially pp. 166-167.

I. E. P.

10. (Nottingham): The interpretation of Acts 19: 2 given in the R. V. may have something to commend it, but it can hardly be said to be more accurate, since it inserts a word that is not present, or directly implied, in the original. It is possible that only the core of John's teaching survived the transmission from Judaea, and these disciples had not heard what he had said about the Holy Spirit.

11. (Birmingham): Ephesus was the centre of the region's commerce and communication, and it was probably through this that the word was spread, rather than through movement by Paul himself, of which there is no direct mention.

P. L. H.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

1. From Galston: Who planted the church of God in Ephesus? Was it Aquila?

The Scriptures do not say. The frequency of travel between Ephesus and Greece suggests that finding men to take part in the planting would be no great problem. Not knowing Aquila's standing in the Fellowship, it is impossible to say if he were the one responsible. He certainly had had the right experience, having worked and lived with Paul during the latter's planting of the church in Corinth (Acts 18: 1-18; 1 Cor. 3: 6). Apart from a return to Rome where both he and his wife were prominent in the assembly there (Rom. 16:3-5), the couple were main-stays at Ephesus, being there in the dark days described in Paul's second letter to Timothy (2 Tim. 4: 19).

2. From Galston: When did Paul leave Timothy at Ephesus (1 Tim. 1: 3)?

No other scripture tells us of this event, therefore we do not know. Comparison of 1 Tim. 3: 14-15 and Acts 20: 25, 38 suggests that it must have been prior to the events of Acts 20:17-38. There is, however, a number of events related in the epistles of which there are no counterparts in other scriptures. See for example 2 Tim. 4: 13, 20; Titus 1: 5; 3: 12. Some have claimed that the time-span covered in the book of the Acts is insufficient for these events to have occurred prior to Paul's imprisonment and that, therefore, he must have been released. During this release he may have written 1 Timothy and Titus before his final imprisonment and writing of 2 Timothy. It should be emphasized that this explanation is an uncorroborated sequence of events which cannot be accepted if it can be shown that the events mentioned in the epistles could have taken place prior to the imprisonment related in the Acts.

3. From Galston: Was Onesiphorus one of those who turned away from Paul (2 Tim. 1: 15-16)?

It is clear from 1 Tim. 2: 16 17 that, far from turning away from Paul, Onesiphorus diligently sought him out in Rome when others were ashamed of Paul. In so doing he continued the faithful behaviour shown by him and his house to Paul when the latter was in Ephesus. Paul shows his high regard for his house in his closing salutation of his letter (2 Tim. 4: 19). His inclusion in the same paragraph as Phygelus

and Hermogenes and their associates is therefore by way of contrast. The mercy which Paul wishes for him and his house "in that day" has therefore to do with his and their service. See Rom. 14: 12; 1 Cor. 4: 5 and consider the application of the teaching of the Day of Atonement (Lev. 23: 26-32).

I. E. P.

Addendum. *Bible Studies* 8312, page 186. The initials I. E. P. should be inserted after Comments 1-5.

Postscript. Everyone will be delighted to see the number of papers in this issue and especially glad to have the help of friends in Ajegunle, Denver, Hereford and Paisley. This has resulted in the issue being, at twenty-four pages, one of the longest ever. In past years the number of papers has fallen off towards the later part of the year. Even allowing for a similar falling-off this year, it is clear that we will all need to be prepared for a reduction in the size of our contributions, else we will get into serious difficulties with printers and costs and so on. Given that the number of contributors remains constant then papers should be about 550 words in length. They should avoid simply retelling the Scriptures in our own words. They should present what we have learned from comparing Scripture with Scripture. It is better to study a particular aspect in depth than to try to cover everything superficially. We can rely on friends in other places to develop the points that we omit. Then the magazine as a whole will contain the overall picture which will also be of some depth.

Editors

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Bible Studies

A magazine for the exploration of the Word of God [Acts 17: 11]

EDITORIAL

8402

When he wrote to the Ephesians, the apostle Paul was nearing the end of his own life's journey and this was among the last of his letters to a church of God.

One of the features of the Gentile city of Ephesus was its idolatry, and various forms of corrupt living confronted the saints on every hand. Not only so, but there was a danger that they might not fully realize how the grace of God and His purposes reached also to Gentiles, and might need to be assured of their part in God's counsel. They needed to be strengthened in their faith and firmly rooted in love. The apostle's concern, therefore, was to tell them something about the purposes and grace of God toward them: and the message which he caused to be written to them has immediate relevance to us also today.

In v. 3 Paul was moved to praise, when he contemplated the wealth of spiritual blessing in Christ. His faith, unconfined by the Roman prison, looked to the heavenly places and a resource upon which he knew the Ephesians also could draw. By the Spirit the apostle set before them a perspective whose dignity rendered insignificant the values of their worldly contemporaries and showed them good cause for oneness of heart in the service of God. Beset by the pressures of modern life, we too can draw upon the same resource in our own particular circumstances.

E. A.

THE EPHESIAN EPISTLE - A REVIEW

To stand back and look at a picture as a whole is a useful prelude to closer examination. The salient points are seen in true relation to other points. To do this with an epistle is helpful to an appreciation of the epistle as a whole. The epistle to Ephesus lends itself to this treatment. We do well to look at the letter and ask ourselves four simple questions viz:

- | | |
|------------------------------|---------------------------|
| (1) To whom was it written ? | (2) When was it written ? |
| (3) Why was it written ? | (4) What was written ? |

This epistle is addressed to the saints at Ephesus though the R. V. says that some ancient MSS omit the words "at Ephesus". This has led to some speculation as to whether the letter was really a circular letter and meant to be read in other churches as well as Ephesus. We may reasonably accept that the text of the R. V. is as near to correct as we will get, since it was accepted by the eminent scholars who produced it and it is consistent with what the epistle contains. Ephesus was an important city in apostolic times, being the administrative centre of the Roman province of Asia. In those days it was a port but it is now five miles inland. It was a place of idolatrous worship of the goddess of fertility known in Greek as Artemis, but in Latin as Diana. We read in Acts 2: 9 that some people from Asia were in Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost who may, perhaps, have taken home word of the powerful things that happened then. We need not wonder that the city had some appeal to the Apostle, who saw it as a centre from which the gospel message would radiate. Many important Romans and wealthy Jews had homes there, and the modern tourist can see the remains of their villas. In such a place the apostle had preached and won a number of people for the Lord. There is no reference to any individuals so we take it that the epistle was intended for a company of believers whom we would know as the church of God in Ephesus.

The date of the letter may be discerned from ch. 6: 20-22. The apostle was an "ambassador in chains" from which we deduce that he was in Rome, where he arrived as best we may compute in AD 61, so it is probable that he wrote to Ephesus in AD 62 or 63. A study of the movements of Epaphras, Tychicus and Onesimus seems to support this view. His impassioned appeal in ch. 4: 1 is consistent with this dating of the letter.

As to why it was written we have to examine closely what is written, from which we might say that the reasons for the epistle were to establish the saints in their faith; to improve their understanding of the wide purposes of God in which they had a part; to discourage their fall back to Judaism and to exhort them to develop their Christian lives within and without their family life. There were many influential Jewish believers in those days who, it seems, could not bring themselves to believe that God would bypass the nation of Israel and go directly with the gospel to the Gentiles. They sought to insist that Gentiles must first be proselytised to the Jewish faith before they could be accepted into the Christian churches. This is not so sharply dealt with as in the Galatian epistle but it does rear its head in this epistle.

What was written we can all read for ourselves but some observations may be helpful. In our Bibles the epistle falls neatly into two halves of three chapters each. The divide is very evident when one compares the closing verses of ch. 3 with the opening verses of ch. 4. In the first half the apostle tells what God has done for them whereas in the second half he tells what they might do for Him in return, and how they might exhibit their new life in Christ in their daily lives down here. For convenience the epistle may be seen in five sections which, for ease of memory, may be described by the letters B, C, D, E, F, extended as follows:

Ch. 1 is the chapter of the *Blessings**

Ch. 2 is the chapter of the *Contrasts*.

Ch 2: 11 - 3: 13 deals with *Demolition*, i. e. the breaking down of the middle wall of partition between Jew and Gentile.

Ch. 4: 1-5: 21 contains many *Exhortations* of a general sort.

Ch. 5: 22 - 6: 9 deals with *Family* exhortations.

to be continued

J. J. Park

SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS AND PURPOSES (Ephesians 1: 1-14)

From Ajegunle: The spiritual blessings God bestowed are fulfilled only in Christ Jesus (v. 3) in whom all things consist (Col. 1: 16-19).

Spiritual Blessings

- (i) v. 4 "Even as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world". When this is compared with 1 Peter 1: 2 we see the involvement of the Godhead in our election.
- (ii) v. 5 Foreordination unto adoption as sons (Rom. 8: 29; John 1: 12-13).
- (iii) v. 6 Acceptance in the Beloved.
- (iv) v. 7 Redemption (Heb. 9: 12) and forgiveness of sins,
- (v) v. 9 Revelation of the mystery of His will,
- (vi) v. 13 Sealing with the Spirit.

Purposes

We suggest that these spiritual blessings are given to us by God so that we can give Him the pleasure which He is worthy to receive (Rev. 4: 11). We also suggest that these blessings place us in a position

of holiness enabling us to be "before Him in love"^M (v. 4) [Comment 8].

Also, the basis of our being "gather(ed) together in one. . . . in Christ" (v. 10 AV) lies in the possession of these blessings [Comment 1],

It is interesting to note in verses 6, 12 and 14 the expression which summarises the purpose for the spiritual blessings, "That we should be unto the praise of His glory".

G. M. Okwena, M. A. Imoukhuede

From **Birkenhead**: Although "the faithful in Christ Jesus" in Ephesus would know Paul well, he nevertheless commences his epistle by presenting his spiritual credentials, reminding them and possibly himself of the sovereignty of God's will in this respect.

Immediately he accords praise to the Father for the standing of all Christians in Christ; not only their standing but the fact that they *have* been blessed with *every* spiritual blessing in the heavenly places. We considered these places and thought them to be the spiritual realm into which we and they had been translated through Christ. Paul continues to make known the riches of God's grace, which have become ours through the merciful, gracious and undeserved expression of God's will toward us. Further, we are reminded that we were selected to be partakers in all these things before we were born, before sin entered the world, before even the foundation of the world. Beyond this there is the truth that it was for a purpose; that we should be holy and blameless before Christ in love. Our position as believers, forgiven sinners, is outlined, and the fact of Christ's atoning work is central to this and to the consequent blessings, with the will of God being the instigating action.

All these things then are not just to the praise of God's grace, but to the "praise of the glory of His grace" (v. 6). This praise is the more becoming and the need to express it more urgent when we read that our position is 'according to the good pleasure of His will'; that our blessings are those bestowed upon us when He made His grace to "abound towards us in all wisdom and prudence" and that the revelation of **the** secret of His will to us also gave God pleasure [Comment 9], Paul reminds all beneficiaries that the one purpose in God's will was that their lives should be to the praise of His glory (v. 12). In view of what we are told of God's glory in this passage we can see the need for constant attention to this aspect of our response.

The truth of adoption as sons of God is clearly stated and it directs our minds to the position of an adopted son, who from having nothing is given a home, care and an inheritance. These benefits are ours and are enumerated in the passage, with a reminder at the end of our portion that God's promise to us is guaranteed by the Holy Spirit, with whom we are sealed at salvation and who is a deposit assuring us of God's faithful promises to us.

C. A. Williams, R. Halpin

From **Birmingham**: Paul begins his letter to the Ephesians with a triplet of praise; "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with every spiritual blessing" (v. 3). The triplet is formed by the words "Blessed" (used twice) and "blessing", each derived from Greek words having a root meaning of eulogy or praise. There is the thought of adoration to God in the term "blessed be"; the thought of blessing being invoked or conferred in the term "who hath blessed us"; and the thought of benefit, the blessing itself, in the term "every spiritual blessing". See Gen. 14: 18-20 for a similar example of this.

What are these blessings or benefits with which God has blessed us? They are spiritual not material. They are not seen with the naked eye, but rather they are invisible, eternal (see 2 Cor. 4: 18; 1 Cor 2: 9). These are different from the blessings of God upon His people of a past age, which were material. These blessings are a direct result of the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ as indicated by the term "in Christ". It is suggested that this term means with relationship to or concerning Christ. If it were not for Christ these blessings would not exist; "who was made unto us (has become for us, NIV) wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification and redemption" (1 Cor 1: 30). They are mentioned as follows: election (v. 4), foreordination (v. 5), adoption (v. 5), redemption (v. 7), forgiveness (v. 7).

These blessings are "in the heavenly places in Christ" (v. 3). "In the heavenlies" describes where Christ, we and our blessing are seen by God (Eph. 2: 6). Although they are "in the heavenlies" they are the immediate and present possession of the believer. If that is so how are they experienced? It is suggested that they are "spiritually discerned" by "the spiritual". We come to experience them as we appreciate them. As the believer grows "in Christ" he should be coming to a deeper understanding of God's will and purposes. As a result of searching the Scriptures things are revealed to the believer by the Spirit of God,

which we knew nothing of when we were first saved. These things are revealed by the Spirit to the spiritual (1 Cor. 2: 9-15).

To whom was Paul referring when he said "we who had before hoped in Christ" (v. 12) ? Is it a different company from those referred to as "ye also" in v. 13 ? The grammatical change from "we" to "ye" would indicate this, would it not? [Comment 2]. There are several suggestions as to whom "we" refers.

- (1) The apostle Paul and his fellow apostles, being among the first to believe in Christ (Acts 11: 17).
- (2) The Jewish believers, who had before hoped in Christ in that they hoped in the promises which had Christ as their ultimate realisation. (Gal. 3: 24).
- (3) All believers.

Whoever "we" refers to they had all heard "the word of the truth, the gospel" and "having also believed. . . . were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise" (v. 13). To every believer the Holy Spirit is "an earnest of our inheritance" (v. 14). An earnest is a "deposit which guarantees". His presence in us guarantees that we shall inherit all that God has "laid up in the heavens" for us.

J. Watts

From Cowdenbeath: Paul writes as an apostle of Christ Jesus. This puts the stamp of authority on what he writes. He had received his knowledge of these deep things of God by revelation (3: 3). It is difficult to find the reason for the letter's being written. As this was done probably a year or so before 1 Timothy we might have expected to find some reference to false teachers. Perhaps the words "Let no man deceive you with empty words" (5: 6) are an allusion to such men. It is also clear from 1: 15 that someone gave him a report concerning the church.

Verse 3 contains a summary statement and from v. 4 onwards, in rich and copious language, he states what those spiritual blessings are. These are not set forth as a series of unrelated statements but as a train of thought, the truth stated in each verse being related to both what precedes and succeeds it. It is almost as if Paul's mind was unable to contain the thoughts which are at work within him.

To reconcile the truth of divine election in Christ with the matter of human response to the gospel message is beyond our minds. Only

God can do that. It should, however, fill us with deepest wonder that we were chosen. God's purpose in doing so was that we should be holy and without blemish. We are in that condition now because of the work of Christ, but the words "before Him in love" look forward to eternity. "*Katenopion*" (Gk.) which is translated 'before' is found only in two other instances (Col. 1: 22 and Jude 24), each of which speaks of a future presentation in the presence of God [Comment 5]. We are sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus (Gal. 3: 26). The adoption to which God foreordained us is something for which we wait (Rom. 8: 23). This seems to complete the picture with v. 4 in that as we are before God, it will be in redeemed bodies which have been conformed to the body of His glory (Phil. 3: 21; Rom. 8: 29). This we are told is all according as God has willed, and is well-pleasing unto Him. The result of these wondrous purposes having been achieved will be unto the praise of the glory of His grace. In a limited way we can do this now. Such grace for which we shall praise God has been freely bestowed upon us in the Beloved. The words "freely bestowed" comprise one of only two renderings of "*charitoo*" (Gk.). The other is "highly favoured" (Luke 1: 28). What favour, indeed, God has shown towards us. The means whereby He has done so is through the death of His Beloved. By giving Himself as a redemptive sacrifice and through His sin-atonement death God's just demands against sin have been fully met, thus making it possible for God to show His undeserved favour to us in forgiving our sins.

The death of Christ displays God's inscrutable wisdom as well as His abundant grace. He also shows His wisdom by making known to us the mystery (secret) of His will. This is one of our spiritual blessings. So we can live knowing that the purposes of Him who worketh all things according to the counsel of His will are moving onwards to the fulness or completion of the times, when a new order of administration shall be in operation through Christ. This shall affect things both in heaven and on earth.

The word "also" (v. 13) indicates that both Jew and Gentile had the same experience of hearing the word and believing and being sealed by the Holy Spirit. "Having also believed, ye were sealed" shows that the sealing took place at the time of believing. The sealing is a pledge of future blessings. We shall receive our eternal inheritance. God shall receive us as His own possession. Men and God each receive through the work of Christ. The praise shall be His.

J. Bowman

From **Denver:** The apostle Paul begins the book of Ephesians with thanksgiving and praise because all blessings come from God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Paul speaks of spiritual blessings which are eternal; spiritual blessings are the best blessings and cannot be compared with earthly possessions.

These are spiritual blessings the Holy Spirit reveals to us in this portion: "He (God) chose us in Him (Christ)... having foreordained us unto the adoption of sons,... in whom (Christ) we have our redemption, ... having made known to us the mystery of His will,... in whom also we were made a heritage," ... and we "were sealed with the Holy Spirit" (Eph. 1: 1-13).

God's purpose and ultimate end goal was that "we should be unto the praise of His glory". These seven blessings were to accomplish God's objective. The first two could be labelled "salvation planned", the next three as "salvation accomplished" and the last two "salvation experienced".

These seven spiritual blessings tell us of our debt to our God. Firstly, what He has done for us is totally undeserved. The Bible says salvation is "not of works that no man should glory" (Eph. 2: 9). Secondly, these blessings were planned and accomplished in love. "But God, being rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us" (Eph. 2: 4). Thirdly, these blessings were accomplished by God Himself, "looking for the blessed hope and appearing of the glory of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a people" (Titus 2: 13-14). Fourthly, spiritual blessings are eternal. The Lord Jesus said, "I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, and no one shall snatch them out of My hand" (John 10: 28).

This portion also reveals that God's actions are "according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His will, to the end that we should be unto the praise of His glory". The glory is His own and we should declare it in all we do and say.

Paul said, "Seek the things that are above, where Christ is" (Col. 3: 1); these blessings originated and are found in the heavenlies. Even though we are in the world we are not of the world, the Scripture says. We are in Christ and thus in the heavenlies. We have been blessed "with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ". This is beyond human comprehension.

A. Higgins, W. Smith

From Derby: In this passage we have a list of spiritual blessings which are ours in Christ. Spiritual blessings and purposes are very much intertwined. What is in the purpose of God will indicate our blessing. The one leads to the other.

After the salutation Paul ascends into the heavenlies where we and our blessings are. He says, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ". He is the pre-eminent One. We can bless God in our thanksgivings and He is pleased to receive these from us. He has blessed us with the gift of the Spirit. We can return thanks in the words of Ps. 116: 12-13.

He has blessed us in election and predestination. We have been sanctified in Him. The Lord was without blemish; He was perfect. In God's elective purpose we shall be holy. It will be accomplished and the realization of this fact should have an effect on our behaviour now. God elected us and Christ died for us and redeemed us so that we have, and shall have, the place of sons. Everything depends on the good pleasure of His will. God has foreordained it, ^Mto the praise of the glory of His grace". We are accepted in the Beloved. We read in John 17: 23-25, "And lovedst them, even as Thou lovedst Me... for Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world".

Verses 7-10 deal with the election depending upon redemption. We have redemption or deliverance from the bondage of sin at an unspeakable price. We have the forgiveness of sins or the letting go of sins through the offering to God of a perfect sacrifice.

The richness of God's grace fills and overflows with the gifts of wisdom and prudence. The wisdom of God is revealed to us through the "mind of Christ"¹¹. Prudence is "wisdom in action". Verse 10 is referring to the unity of all in Christ. It is related to the Millennium. The Church will be one [Comment U. God has something in view in which very great glory will be brought to Christ during the Millennium and we will have great joy and peace. The contrast is made between the Jews, who looked forward in hope to the coming of the Messiah, and the Gentiles who had no such hope. However, the way to Christ is the same for everybody and it is shown in v. 13.

The word "earnest" means, "a precious gift, as surety for a fuller gift hereafter". The word "inheritance" means "a present possession which shall be developed into a more precious future"

(Ellicott). We are God's own possession now. He has foreordained the wonderful truth of adoption. It is a future placing and carries the thought of dignity and privilege. The fulfilment of divine purpose will bring blessing to us and glory will redound in eternal ages. In all things Christ will have the pre-eminence.

G. W. Conway

From Dulwich: *Thanksgiving for spiritual blessings*

v. 3. Paul writes here about the spiritual blessings which we have now in the heavenly places *where Christ is now!* What has been given is perfect requiring nothing to be added by us to make it any more complete. In Christ dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily, and as we have received Him so we have received of His fullness, grace for grace (John 1: 16).

v. 4. Those who are called are few [Comment 10], and have been called with a holy calling (2 Tim. 1: 9). This is a blessing based not on our own works, but only on God's divine election and grace. "Whom He foreordained them He also called: and whom He called, them He also justified: and whom He justified, them He also glorified (Rom 8: 30).

The purposes of God

v. 7. Forgiveness is a release from sin's bondage, typified in the Day of Atonement when the scapegoat was released (Lev. 16: 21).

v. 8. Wisdom is apparent in all the works of God (Ps. 104: 24). Christ Himself is spoken of as the Wisdom of God (1 Cor. 1:24). God does nothing by chance but is positive and direct in all His ways.

v. 9, 10. These verses speak of the coming day when all things will be summed up in Christ. Then the Lord Jesus will deliver up the kingdom to His Father, and all shall be subjected to the Father [Comment 6].

The Perfect Seal

v. 13, 14. We have heard the truth of the Gospel, and because we have believed, we have been sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, not with the spirit of bondage or slavery of fear. The Spirit bears witness with our spirit that we are God's children. We wait for our adoption, that is, we wait for the redemption of our body when the Lord Himself shall come again.

M. McKaig

From Galston: *Blessings.* The list of blessings given in Eph. 1 is magnificent in its entirety. We are chosen in Christ (v.4). Fore-ordained into adoption as sons (v.5); His grace is freely bestowed upon us (v.6); we are redeemed through Jesus¹ blood (v.7); we have the forgiveness of our trespasses (v.7); His grace abounds towards us in all wisdom and prudence (v.8); we have been made a heritage in Christ (v.11 and 18); we are to be to the praise of God's glory (v.12); and we are sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise (v.13). It appears to us that we are God's inheritance (v.11) and that God is our inheritance (v.14) [Comment 3].

Purposes: We observed that all the purposes of God have but one end in view: ^Mto sum up all things in Christ" (v.10). Each of God's purposes in us is directed towards the exaltation of our Redeemer and Lord: we are to be holy and without blemish before God (v.4); we have been in love fore-ordained so that we will be "to the praise of the glory of His (God's) grace" (v.6); we have been redeemed, forgiven and blessed according to the riches of God's grace (v.7) and one day all things will be summed up in Christ (v.10).

To "sum up all things in Christ" is a purpose which God has in Christ while His purpose in His saints is "that we should be unto the praise of His (God's) glory "(v.12). The Greek word for "sum up" (RV) according to Strong, is the verbal form of a noun meaning "the principal thing" and can also be rendered as "gather together into one" (AV). This helps to emphasize the thought of the Spirit concerning the Lord Jesus, "that in all things He might have the pre-eminence" (Col. 1:18). These words speak of the consummation of all things in Christ and therefore go far beyond the purposes of God in us. (Compare Phil. 2 and 1 Cor. 15:27). Finally the Son "will also Himself be subjected" (to God) "that God may be all in all" (1 Cor. 15:28).

The phrase "in the heavenlies", elsewhere rendered as "the heavenly places", caught our attention and we noticed that this is the place where spiritual blessings are (v.3). "The heavenlies" is also the place where Christ is seated with God (v.20) and where we are seated with Christ (2:6). Who else inhabits these regions? The "principalities and powers" of 3:10 (heaven's angelic hosts), and also, "the principalities... powers... world rulers of this darkness... and spiritual hosts of wickedness" of ch.6:12 (against whom we wrestle, spiritually). Compare also in this context 2 Cor. 12 where Paul was caught up into the third heaven and Job 1, where the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord "and Satan came also among them". We came to the conclusion that the heavenlies must cover a vast area. The fact that there are mighty spiritual forces of darkness ranged against believers in the heavenlies makes the reality and seriousness of the spiritual conflict in which we are engaged abundantly clear. We suggest that these evil powers may well be responsible for the periods of deep depression

that some believers experience from time to time. The exhortation of the Lord "Abide in Me" was identified as the only way of overcoming such foes.

We also noted that while all believers are seated with Christ in the heavenlies, only those who are gathered together according to the pattern given in the New Testament can (collectively) enter into the holy place "by the blood of Jesus", and that this takes place when we gather to remember the Lord at the breaking of the bread (Heb. 9; 10: 1-25; 12: 18-29).

P. J. Johnson, D. Ramage

From Liverpool: *The source.* God had previously revealed Himself as the God of Abraham, but here the important fact stressed is that He is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is the source of all blessings and all are revealed through Christ.

The Blessings. Paul in writing to the Ephesian saints has many practical issues to put before them, things vital to discipleship: the Christian's walk and warfare, human relationships in the home, in the church and in the world. However, before doing so, he presents a panoramic view of the riches of God's blessings which have been revealed in the person of Christ. God has made Christ Jesus the centre and source of all His loving kindness and we are enlightened and blessed through Him.

Topics of divine revelation. In v. 3 Paul expresses both the deity and humanity of the Lord Jesus, and then he goes on to present three topics which faith alone can grasp:

(i) *Election.* Verse 4 reveals that we were chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world. This is amazing and proves difficult to understand. If God loved us before we existed, we can only conclude that we did exist in the pre-knowledge of God [Comment 7],

(ii) *Foreordination.*

(iii) *Predestination.* The Holy Spirit who had been promised was the seal (v. 13) and marked them out as those who now belonged to God. This seal is also the divine pledge of all their future blessings through redemption (v. 14) at incalculable cost (see 1 Pet. 1: 18-19).

K. T. Jones

From Nottingham: in opening the letter, Paul describes himself as "an apostle of Christ Jesus" (RV). On what textual authority the revisers have rejected the AV., "Jesus Christ" in favour of "Christ Jesus" is

not stated [Comment 4]. Young's literal translation gives "Jesus Christ". This title is also retained by the revisers in other epistles, i. e. Romans, 1 Corinthians, Galatians, but is similarly altered in the RV in, e. g. Philippians, Colossians and both letters to Timothy. The title Jesus Christ would seem to point one first to His humility in the days of His flesh succeeded by His exaltation, while "Christ Jesus" would direct our attention to the great stoop of the One who was on equality with God yet humbled Himself and which is accurately described in Phil. 2: 5-11. Certainly the title Christ Jesus fits the theme of the Ephesian epistle.

In v. 1 Paul states he is an apostle "through the will of God", but in Gal. 1: 1 he declares his apostleship is not "from men neither through man". In Ephesians the emphasis is on the wonder of the fact that God has called him, the one who persecuted the churches and described himself as the chief of sinners, while in Galatians he stresses the divine authority of his apostleship.

The saints and faithful are not two separate groups. The construction of the Greek shows the description refers to the same people. The question was asked as to whether or not the word "faithful" was used to distinguish between those who had continued in the assembly and any who had left the church. This seems rather unlikely in view of the exhortations contained in ch. 4: 28-32, and the word, in this context, seems to apply to all the saints.

In v. 2 we have grace and peace linked together. "Peace" is the English translation of a Greek word which itself is a translation of the Hebrew word "*shalom*". This conveys more than is usually contained in the meaning of the English word; it is essentially positive in nature and describes all that is for man's greatest blessing. Grace speaks to us of the undeserved love and favour of God and it should also characterize us in our walk as believers.

Verse 3 introduces the title, the "God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ". This, in the present dispensation, is the counterpart to the "God of Abraham and the God of Israel". We worship the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. During the days of His flesh the Lord loved, obeyed, honoured and served His God. But God was also His Father from all eternity; the Lord was the only begotten of the Father, Himself eternally God. The titles used in v. 3 contain references to both the deity and incarnation of the Lord.

From v. 3 to v. 14 Paul is in a spirit of praise to God as he reviews the glorious catalogue of His gifts and wonders. God chose us (v. 4), foreordained us (v. 5), adopted us (v. 5), redeemed and forgave

us (v. 7), revealed the mystery of His will (v. 9) and in all these things there was a purpose ^Mto the end that we should be unto the praise of His glory" (v. 12).

The word "blessing" appears three times (in different forms) in Eph 1: 3. God is blessed because He has blessed us and the nature of our blessings is "spiritual". There is a contrast here between the blessings given to Israel in a past day which were earthly blessings in a land which flowed with "milk and honey" and our "spiritual blessings". These are the "things of the Spirit of God", revealed to our spirits by the Holy Spirit, which cannot be received by the natural man (1 Cor. 2: 6-16).

These blessings are in the "heavenly places in Christ". This term "heavenly places" or "heavenlies" occurs five times in Ephesians. It is not synonymous with "the holies" which expression appears only in the epistle to the Hebrews. The holies is the place into which our Lord entered to carry out His duties as High Priest (Heb 9: 24), and into which those in the house of God enter collectively on the Lord's Day to offer our spiritual sacrifices in worship. The heavenlies is a spiritual realm and there the believer's blessings are located (Eph. 1: 3); Christ is seated "far above ail" (1: 21); the believer is seated there with Christ (2: 6); there are principalities and powers (3: 10), and there are spiritual hosts of wickedness (6: 12). There would seem to be a difference between the heavenlies where Christ is seated and the believer seated with Him and that sphere where the spiritual hosts of wickedness are active under the leadership of the prince of the power of the air (Eph. 2: 2). Satan is ever active, but the Lord is enthroned in the heavenlies and the believer, "seated with Christ", has an eternal security that cannot be shaken. Our understanding of the term "the heavenlies" must necessarily be limited while in the body, although our appreciation of this realm will, to some extent, be determined by our spirituality. Certainly the blessings of Eph. 1: 3 are unconditional and conferred with salvation. Although these blessings are "in the heavenlies" we can enter into the full joy of the knowledge of our possession of them now.

R. Hickling

From Paisley: Such is the majesty of language used by the apostle in this chapter that it is necessary to pause and consider some of the expressions he uses:

The heavenlies. This is the place to which Christ has been exalted (ch. 1: 20) and where the believer has been seated (2: 6). It is also a place of spiritual conflict with the powers of darkness (6: 12).

Before the foundation of the world. In John 17: 24 the Lord, in speaking of the Father's love for Him, used the same expression. Peter also

uses these words in connection with the Lamb (1 Pet. 1: 20). *Adoption of sons.* Sonship carries with it a right to share in the eternal inheritance (see Gal. 4: 5-7). The apostle also refers to this later in the chapter (vv. 11, 14).

The mystery of His mil. This is a secret, only to be revealed by God; developed later in ch. 3 in connection with the truth of the church, the Body, as revealed to the apostle.

To sum up all things in Christ. This is the purpose of the ages - Christ supreme; exalted above every name in heaven and earth. God's purposes in Christ will have fulfilment, because He works all things after the counsel of His will.

We should be unto the praise of His glory. That faith in Christ through the message of the gospel should bring such blessings to the believer, is a fact that will forever redound to the glory and praise of God.

The earnest of the inheritance. A deposit or pledge signifying a transaction to be completed later. We would judge this to be completed at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ to the air.

J. Renfrew

COMMENTS

1. **(Ajegunle and Derby):** Verse 10 in its broader significance includes the gathering together in one or summing up (literally "heading up") of all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth.
2. **(Birmingham):** The presence of the pronoun *humeis* ("ye") underlines the difference. The Greek verb by its ending would have been sufficient to indicate "ye were sealed", but in addition the pronoun meaning "ye" is included, to contrast with "we" (Gk. *hemas*) of v. 12. Eph. 2: 13 describes them as "ye that once were far off", but things had altered so that Eph. 2: 18 says "For through Him *we both* have our access in one Spirit unto the Father", and there the verb ending alone is sufficient to indicate "we", since there is no longer a contrast being made.
3. **(Galston):** Paul, in writing to the Colossians said, "Giving thanks unto the Father, who made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light" (Col. 1: 12), and John declares, "God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all" (1 John 1: 5). It is in light that our inheritance is, the light of the knowledge of the glory of God.

The words "we were made a heritage" (v. 11) translate a single Greek word (*eklerothemen*) whose root means, among other things, to have as one's portion or share. This confirms the first part of Galston friends¹ statement; but is not our inheritance something separate from God Himself, provided

by Him? 1 Pet. 1: 4 describes it as "an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven"¹¹.

P. L. H.

4. (Nottingham): The Received Text on which the Authorised Version had been made, was built up in the sixteenth century from very late and imperfect manuscript sources according to Robinson (Ancient and English Versions of the Bible, 1940), though these so-called imperfections are mainly on fine points like this one. In Eph. 1: 1 the reading "Christ Jesus" is found in Westcott and Hort's edition of the Greek New Testament, which appeared about the time of the Revised Version, and the same reading is found in Tischendorf's edition of 1859 despite the fact that the Sinaitic (fourth century) and Alexandrine (fifth century) codices read "Jesus Christ". The ancient codices which have the reading "Christ Jesus" are the Vatican (fourth century) and Claromontanus (sixth century). Since the time of the Revised Version, the text of the Chester Beatty papyrus (No. 46) was published (F. G. Kenyon, 1933-34), which Prof. U. Wicklen would date about AD. 200. Its reading is "Christ Jesus".

E. A.

5. (Cowdenbeath): It may be worth noting that the text on which the Authorized Version is based has *katēnōn* in 2 Cor. 2: 17 and 12: 19.

6. (Dulwich): The references to a dispensation, this heaven and this earth, and the absence of "things under the earth" show that this summing up takes place during the Millennium and not afterwards.

7. (Liverpool): "Exist" is used in different senses here.

/ E. P.

8. (Ajegunle): The meaning of the verse is that God chose us to be holy and without blemish in His sight. The Nestle Greek text places the comma after *autou* (him), making the words "in love" apply to the foreordination, and NIV following the RVM translates thus.

9. (Birkenhead): This is not quite the implication of the words. Greek *endokia*, translated "good pleasure" in vv. 5, 9, derives from *eu*, well, and *dokeo*, to seem, and indicates purpose or intention, rather than enjoyment.

10. (Dulwich): Scripture describes them as "many" (Rom. 5: 15).

P. L. H.

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Bible Studies

A magazine for the exploration of the Word of God [Acts 17: 11]

EDITORIAL

8403

Looking at the epistle to the Ephesians as a whole, one can see how the first part of the letter concentrates on the work of God on behalf of His saints and the second on the implications of this in the believer's life. The first chapter is, to some extent, a microcosm of this in that the first part deals with the blessings given by God and the second with Paul's prayer for the appreciation of these blessings.

Some important lessons can be learned from this: first, the absolute primacy of God in all spiritual experience. We owe the existence of our race and ourselves as individuals to God's creative power, so we cannot claim the right even to exist. We owe our status before God to His choice and foreordination. We owe our forgiveness to the redemption supplied by His grace. Even the understanding of what has been done is only possible through the work of the Holy Spirit. Second, practical teaching about behaviour should be built on a solid foundation of doctrine. This is a consistent feature of the teaching of the apostle Paul. When he wished to exhort the saints in Philippi to humility and love he wrote "Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 2: 5), and proceeded to a sublime exposition of the Lord's deity and humanity. Teaching so based can more readily avoid the shifting sands of personal opinion and prejudice. Third, each thing that God has done for us needs to be grasped by us, and often acted upon by us, to receive the full present benefit. We have to be what God has made us. Paul writes, "Ye died... mortify therefore your members" (Col. 3: 3, 5).

The object of Bible Study, therefore, is not merely the exposition and discussion of Scripture, but the knowledge of God and His will; an object of which those of us of an academic turn of mind need sometimes to be reminded¹.

P. L. H.

In 1: 3 the apostle tells how they were blessed with every spiritual blessing and then lists seven in particular viz:

"chosen" "foreordained" "adopted" "redeemed"
"forgiven" "made a heritage" "sealed"

In ch. 2 he begins by telling them how they were dead in sins but are now quickened, were afar off but are nigh, were strangers and sojourners but are now citizens, and greatest of all, those who once walked in the lusts of the flesh are now builded together for a habitation of God in the Spirit.

In 2: 11 -3: 15 he tells how the eternal purpose of God, which in former times was worked out through the nation of Israel has advanced to include the uncircumcised Gentile, the middle wall of partition having been broken down, and how that *together* Jew and Gentile might share in the New Covenant temple of God. The beautiful words of 3: 14-19 express feelingly the apostle's desire for their spiritual development until they be filled with all the fulness of God.

From 4: 1 to 5: 21 they are told how they might attain to the full measure of the stature of Christ; i. e. that by learning Christ they might leave behind their former manner of life to walk in the new and higher ways of the Spirit; to learn to subject themselves to the will of God as Christ did when He became man and subjected Himself so that they might be more and more like Christ Himself.

From ch. 5: 22 onwards one should note the specific address to members of the family; e. g. "wives", "husbands", "children", "servants" whether bond or free. Evidently their new life in Christ was to be seen in their homes where their former selfishness would be replaced by the caring ways of their Saviour.

With all these things in mind and with a conscious effort to love the Lord and to walk in all His ways they would be able to withstand the wiles of the Devil and remain strong in the Lord to the end of their days.

J. J. Park

SPIRITUAL VISION AND POWER (Ephesians 1: 15-23)

From Ajegunle: The Kingdom Charter, "the faith", called for the obedience of disciples in the church. Unity of hearts was seen in the expression of love among "all the saints". For spiritual development and fruitfulness Paul made instructive prayers continually (see verses 17-23),

Spiritual Vision -

- (i) The Apostle's prayer expresses a primary need for "a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him (the Lord Jesus)". The revelation of the Son, who is the effulgence of God's glory, is within the Father's authority to give (Mat. 11: 27). In following to serve the pre-eminent Lord we must have the vision of His place in glory, His titles and His offices. The vision should have a humbling effect upon the privileged servant.
- (ii) "The hope of His calling" is in relation to "the riches of the glory of His (God's) inheritance in the saints". In this context the "calling" is to the believers for their separation to the will of God (see also 2 Cor. 6: 14-18) [Comment 8].
- (iii) "The riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints" is a precious truth well developed in the Old Testament Scriptures (see Ex. 19: 5, 6; 25: 8; Haggai 2: 2-9). The grandeur "of His inheritance" in the physical type commanded through Moses provides instructions for us regarding the substance, now in fuller revelation. We note "the riches of the glory" in the New Covenant terms: in "the faith" being a counterpart of the Levitical law, in the house, in the order of priesthood and in the nation-hood of Israel. Over and above all is the High Priest, who sat down on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heavens (Heb. 8: 1) [See Comment 4].

As to spiritual power, God gives power to His servant or people according to the commitments assigned to him or them in His purposes. As in the Old Covenant so it is in the New, the power is through the Holy Spirit (Zech. 4: 6). The ministration of spiritual power is in subjection to the "head over all things" even Christ. Concerning this the Lord said "the Spirit of truth... He shall not speak from Himself ... He shall glorify Me" (John 16: 1?, 14). "The exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward", provides the strength and might, and the security we will ever need to fulfil the will of God for us.

Anon

From Birkenhead: Having reminded those in the church at Ephesus of the wonders of God's will, which have been expressed towards them, and having enumerated the benefits and blessings which are theirs, Paul turns to their response. He is pleased to have heard of the attitude of the saints. Their faith and devotion to the Lord Jesus is evident in the love which exists amongst them. These developments in their lives cause Paul to thank God, whom he sees as the originator of all their actions. His thanksgiving is blended with petition on their behalf, to the end that they should receive a spirit of wisdom and revelation from God, so that their knowledge of the Father might increase. God's will is that the very centre or core of their being should accept and absorb those things which He wishes them to know. Three things which God wishes them to recognise and value are there mentioned. Firstly, the hope of His calling; that is a fuller knowledge of those things which accrue to the believer, having been called by God. Secondly, the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints; here again we are reminded of the glory which is God's, and its inherent richness. Thirdly, the exceeding greatness of His power "to usward who believe". The verse continues to use the words "strength" and "might", reinforcing the fact that there is no limit to the ability of God as demonstrated when the Lord Jesus Christ was raised from the dead.

Verse 17 describes the Father as "the Father of glory", i. e. the source or originator of glory [Comment 1]. This serves to remind us that there can be no comparison with the glory of God or the Godhead. This is further demonstrated when we read of the placing of the Lord Jesus in His rightful position as described in verses 20, 21 and 22. This is simply stated as being the very pinnacle of authority, both in this world and that which is to come. Paul writes with the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and describes the situation as God can view matters, i. e. with His will having been done and all His purposes fulfilled. This becomes clearer when we read that all things are in subjection to the Lord Jesus. We know that in the present day, although He has all authority (Mat. 28: 18), there are still those who reject such authority. But there will come a day when all will be subject, and it is only by virtue of His forbearance that they have the freedom to reject Him now.

The final thoughts of the chapter revolve around the Church the Body of Christ. We are reminded not only that He is the Head of the Body, but also that it is He who has enabled it to live and He who is responsible for its completion.

The chapter takes us full circle, when we realize that we have been chosen by the Father, through faith in the Son, and that we are desired to develop according to the Lord's provision for us, so that we might not only learn of Him and learn to know Him, but also that our lives might be to the praise of His glory.

Verse 16 tells us how Paul reacted to what God had done for the Ephesians by praying ceaselessly. Should we not do the same, in realization of what God has done for those in the Church, and the more so when we remember that as individuals, by His grace, we are numbered with them?

R. C. Halpin, A. E. Sands

From Cowdenbeath: Because of what had been told him about the church in Ephesus Paul gave God thanks and prayed for them. In this he continued. The use of the word "also" would indicate that someone, or ones had also heard and reacted similarly [Comment 2]. He learned that their conduct towards others was in harmony with what they believed. This is as it should be.

His desire for them was that they might increase in the knowledge of God. Such knowledge is not obtained all at once, but progressively: "increasing in the knowledge of God" (Col. 1: 10). There can be no finality to knowing God. He is a self-revealing God. All we know of Him comes by revelation contained in His word. With the revelation God gives wisdom (Gk. *sophio*, which is the "insight into the true nature of things" - Vine) to apprehend what is revealed. Hence Paul's request for a spirit of wisdom and revelation. Knowledge enlightens. The human mind is enlightened by the conception of God but so that for the purpose of enlightening their hearts He may receive a response of love and adoration.

In the great temple in Ephesus stood the image of the goddess Diana which they believed was "sky-fallen" and to which they attributed magnificence, (divine majesty NIV) (Acts 19: 27). This word is translated as "majesty" (2 Pet. 1: 16), referring to the glory of Deity which belonged to Christ. The God whom Paul wished they should know was the God whom our Lord Jesus Christ as a man worshipped and served; which God is the Father of Glory. He is the One who is "the source from whom all divine splendour and perfection proceed in manifestation and to whom they belong" (Vine). They had turned away from the idol to serve and worship this God. This was the vision Paul knew they

needed. It was the vision of the God of Glory which altered the whole course of Abraham's life and it was the glory of the exalted Christ which changed Paul himself.

The words of v. 18 would seem to mean that, being enlightened through a knowledge of God Himself (i. e. the Being of God) we may go on to know other things. Three things are stated which surely must be related, but which are difficult to relate [Comment 3]. "The hope of His calling": it is God who calls and He has a hope or expectation [Comment 4]. This shall be fully realized some day. "His inheritance in the saints": it is in Christ that sinners are sanctified and are made saints to become an inheritance for God. "The riches of the glory of" would seem to describe the very great value to God of His inheritance. It is and shall be His because of the work of Christ. The first of the three statements indicates the part that God plays in calling and the second would indicate what Christ does, i. e. sanctifies. In the third statement we find ourselves spoken of as those "who believe". We have become part of this great purpose of God by a simple belief in Christ the Saviour. He is a risen Saviour. Without His resurrection and ascension God's purpose would not be realized. It was accomplished through the mighty power of divine energy (Gk. *energeia* - translated working: v. 19). So the apostle moves on to the grand climax of his thinking presenting Christ as the pre-eminent One, yet as the One who, although he fills all things is Himself incomplete without her who is His fulness, His complement, even as Eve was to Adam.

J. Bowman

From Denver: Paul pays a wonderful compliment to the Ephesians as he refers to their faith in the Lord Jesus and their love toward all the saints. With this he has captured their interest and wishes to move them on to further riches in Christ. Paul was a man of vision, a man of prayer. I'm sure we have all heard some say, while experiencing difficult circumstances of life, "I have tried this and tried that, but I guess there is nothing left to do but pray. " Prayer should be first and not left until last. Paul may have given thanks for them, but prays on that they may have a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him. Do we pray for each other in this way, or do we pray only when problems arise? It was suggested that all of us may need this prayer on our behalf but especially those who have recently been saved and baptized.

We might look at the words "wisdom" and "revelation". Surely we cannot be a people of spiritual vision and power without them. James encourages us that if any of us lacketh wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all. Wisdom is better than rubies; and all the things that may be desired are not to be compared unto it. The thought of the word "revelation", is the communication of the knowledge of God to the soul. We must first, of course, have the eyes of our heart enlightened. For those who know not the Lord Jesus as Saviour, such knowledge of God is impossible. Yet for believers there are wonderful things presented here for us to know: the hope of His calling, the riches of the glory of His inheritance, the exceeding greatness of His power and the strength of His might. If only we could grasp a measure of these things, indeed our vision and power would be Spirit filled with a deeper appreciation of our Lord Jesus Christ and the Father of glory!

We also have in our reading what Christ is to us and what we are to Him. When we thought of the words "hope of His calling", we thought of oneness. In Eph. 4: 6, we see these things listed. We rejoice in the one Body and trust that in obedience of heart, there will be a continued oneness in unity among God's people. For this was the prayer of the Lord Jesus in John 17, that they may all be one. We would suggest that this unity would be a part of the glory of His inheritance in the saints. We also thought of the lovely picture of the Lord Jesus in Rev. 19 and the garment of the bride being the righteous acts of the saints. Should we not give more to Him who has given all for us? We are to know Him and the power of His resurrection (Phil. 3: 10). Isaiah saw the Lord high and lifted up, and again we are reminded that God raised Him from the dead and made Him to sit in heavenly places. Surely our vision should be of Him who is far above all that which is in this world and Head over all things to the Church. Spiritual vision and power will come with a spirit of wisdom and prayer.

D. Williamson

From Derby: Vision has to do with revelation in relation to the purposes of God. Our vision can be blurred. We can lose our vision by not reading the Scriptures. We need a vision of God's purposes for the individual and the church.

How can we deepen or clear our vision? We need a revelation of God into the mind and heart. "The entrance of Thy word giveth light". It is not just a matter of shining on our hearts. It must shine in so that we can give out to others. In v. 17 Paul was praying for increase of knowledge of Him. Paul says these people were once darkness;

that is darkness itself. Then they knew Him as their Saviour and they had the light of the knowledge. Paul wanted them to progress in knowledge of God. He wanted them to know Him in the great purposes He is fulfilling. There is no word in Hebrew for mind: it is the heart. All that we attributed to the mind was attributed to the heart. They had received the Holy Spirit. God would give them a spirit of wisdom and revelation. He would bring light to them so that they would have knowledge of Him and His character and purposes. They would know what God expected from them.

His power transcends any power that man has. We get the word dynamite from the Greek word for power. Paul wanted to know "the exceeding greatness of His power... according to that working of the strength of His might". We think of these in reverse order. There is the might from which comes the strength and the result is the working. The resurrection is the greatest miracle of all. It is the greatest manifestation of His power. God began to work as the Lord was in the tomb. He exerted His might and placed Him at His right hand, far above all rule and authority. Hell cannot resist such wonderful power. That power is available to us.

The Church is the fulness of Christ. Adam was incomplete even though he was perfect. Eve was the fulness or the completion of Adam. Christ is the Head over all things to the Church. God gave Him to the Church.

We are numbered among the most privileged of human beings as members of the Body of Christ. We will be brought in to join the Head when the last one has put his trust in Him.

G. W. Conway

From Galston: Verse 17 speaks of "a spirit of wisdom and revelation ... ". Not the Holy Spirit but the spirit that is to characterize the saint of God in what Paul is about to say. "A spirit of" is joined to both wisdom *and* revelation, i. e. the knowledge of God requires both wisdom and revelation. This implies "having the eyes of your heart enlightened".

Then follow three marvellous statements:

- (1) what **is the hope of His** (God's) calling;
- (2) what **are the riches of the glory of His** (God's) inheritance **in the saints;**
- (3) what is the **exceeding greatness of His** power.

We think the first two are closely related. In eternity they will be realized **in their fulness**. **That God can** so speak of **His hope and His inheritance in the saints** is all **due to the work and the excellencies** of our Lord Jesus Christ [Comment 4], **The first statement we suggests** relates to **the church** which is Christ's Body (vv. 22, 23), **the second to "a habitation of God in the Spirit"** (ch. 2: 22). God's ideal is **that all members of the Church** which is Christ's Body, who **are alive on earth**, should **be gathered together in churches** of God to serve Him. (This is clear from **the books of the Acts**). Today **that ideal is not realized and we are forced to emphasize the differences between the Church the Body and the church of God but from this epistle (ch. 4: 13-16) and from 1 Cor. 12 and Rom. 12 it is evident that in the churches of God there should be an evidence, a demonstration of the harmonious working together of the several parts of the Body and in this way the Lord's command in John 13: 34, 35 be fulfilled**. These two closely related truths **are referred to later on in the epistle**.

The first: **"And you did He quicken"** (2: 1);

"And raised us up with Him, and made us to sit with Him in the heavenly places, in Christ Jesus "(2: 6);

"For we are His workmanship... " (2: 10) **and** (4: 11-16).

The second: **"In whom ye also are builded together for a habitation of God in the Spirit "(2: 22);**

"For this cause" (3: 1) **i. e.** because **they were a habitation of God in the Spirit, repeated in v. 14, "For this cause" (same reason)**

"... that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith... that ye may be filled unto all fulness of God" (3: 17, 19).

Statement number three is then for us, that we may avail ourselves of "the exceeding greatness of His power" in order that we may realize these two purposes of God in our lives here on earth.

J. H. Johnson

From Liverpool: *Faith, Love and Spiritual Growth.* Faith and Love are two sides of the same coin. Faith is our response to God, love is the expression of that invisible faith which may be shown to our fellows. "If I have all faith, so as to move mountains" wrote Paul elsewhere, "but have not love, I am nothing"¹ (1 Cor. 13: 2). James also emphasized the point that "Faith without deeds is useless (Jas. 2: 20 NIV) and love is one of the deeds, "works" or actions of faith. Love is a fruit of the Spirit and can in turn only be revealed by its actions. As God gives us a new nature we develop new attitudes, are motivated by new principles and engage in the works that God has prepared for us to do.

Paul had amazing scope in his prayers, revealing that he prayed for his fellow-Christians not because they were in serious trouble, or going through a bad patch; not for deliverance for them, but for their spiritual development. Paul was a true spiritual father to them, concerned to see that they were growing into maturity and remembering them regularly in his prayers.

Revelation and Knowledge. We favoured the NIV "Spirit of wisdom and revelation" (RV "a spirit") in v. 17 [Comment 5], Although the Holy Spirit indwells each believer it is still necessary for Him to be given to us in this fuller sense to bring wisdom and revelation which leads to knowledge. That is to say, in order that we might be enlightened to know the exceeding riches of Christ. Just as the knowledge of God is only possible through the Son, so a knowledge of the Son is only possible through the Holy Spirit - a delightful example of the harmonious working of the Trinity. "Know" (v. 18) is not to know about, but to know in experience; and the "hope to which he has called you", his (not "our") inheritance in the saints, is our position in Christ as members of the universal church [see Comment 4]. Hope always looks to the future and in Christ we are called to be holy and to reflect all that is Christ, looking forward in hope day by day to being more like our Lord.

Power. We are so often pathetic Christians because we have not begun to understand the power that is available to us. Like a person in England whose home is fully wired up to the National Grid electricity supply warily using one 60 watt bulb, and not appreciating the potential, so we as Christians, feebly going about our business with an occasional awareness of God working in our lives remain largely ignorant of what we can achieve through Him. The power at our

disposal is the power that raised up the dead body of Jesus and made Him the living Lord and Christ in the place of authority in heaven. The key to being plugged into this power supply lies in commitment:

- (a) Failure to communicate with our God in prayer and Bible study keeps us disconnected.
- (b) Failure to count things as loss for the sake of Christ keeps us disconnected.
- (c) Living at too low a plane, not really expecting God to do anything, thinking it normal for us to sin, usual for our efforts to fail, and routine for the church of God to be in decline and that we are powerless to do anything about it keeps us permanently disconnected from the power supply.

The Picture of a Body. It is unfortunate if we so often refer to the church glibly as "the Church the Body" for the expression may become trite and meaningless. So it is good to reflect that we are given the picture of a body for reasons:

- (i) It emphasizes the fact that just as it is through our bodies that we do things, so Christ acts in the world through his Church [Comment 9].
- (ii) It also emphasizes the dependence of the Church on Christ as our body can only function when it is joined to its head.

D. J. Webster

From Nottingham: Paul tells the saints in Ephesus how much he has given thanks for their faith in the Lord and their love for the saints. It is interesting to see, however, that **the** AV leaves out the word love, leaving faith on its own [Comment 6], The latter part of James 2 shows the working of faith and 1 John 3: 16 shows the action of love, so it is clear that these co-exist in harmony. Faith can be shown by good works toward the saints.

The spirit which he mentions in v. 17 is, presumably, not the Holy Spirit which the saints had already got, but ^{M_aM} spirit of wisdom and revelation which should help them to know God better [Comment 5],

The statement in v. 18, "the eyes of your heart", is an interesting one. It was thought to refer to a deeper thing than understanding on its own, similar to the way we believe in the eternal existence of God, for instance. The hope mentioned here is the hope of the calling into the Church the Body, the realization of the benefits of salvation, the

inheritance being His inheritance in us, i. e. His appreciation of us, (His Body) [See Comment 4].

Paul then goes on to the subject of power, the power of God which is shown towards all saved people. This is the same power which raised the Lord from the dead to sit at God's right hand, once again, far above anything down here on the earth. This must have been a comforting thought to the Ephesians as well as being a comforting thought to us today. Verse 21 shows that the Lord will be higher than anyone aside from God in future times, as He is now [Comment 7], Having shown the mighty power of God, Paul then puts it into perspective by showing the Ephesians the Lord's position in relation to them, that He is Head over everything to the Church which is His Body, a great encouragement to the saints in Ephesus at that time.

T. Elson

From Paisley: Having set before the Ephesians the glory of God's eternal purposes in Christ, the apostle reveals his prayer for the saints that they might grasp the glorious vision of God's purposes. In a former day, when Moses described to the people of Israel the virtues of the land of promise, he exhorted them to go in and possess the land; to enter into the enjoyment of all the good that God had provided for them. There is always the real possibility that we may fail to do this.

There are three specific things which form the burden of the apostle's prayer for enlightenment of the saints:

1. *The hope of His calling.* Has this to do with present service or future glory? It may be that both are embraced. Romans 8: 24 says that we are saved by hope, a hope which is not seen. But it is also a hope which has an impact on our present service. God is calling us unto His eternal glory in Christ (1 Pet. 5: 10).
2. *His inheritance in the saints.* This seems to embrace His eternal purposes in Christ mentioned in 1: 11, but it is also true that the Lord has a purpose in His people in the present time, see Deut. 32: 9 for the Old Testament analogy. The riches of His glory could fittingly be described in the words of the Queen of Sheba who had heard of the glory of Solomon, "I believe not the words until I came... behold the half was not told me... " (1 Kings 10: 7).
3. *The exceeding greatness of His power.* The strength of God is seen in the resurrection of Christ and His exaltation to a position of supreme authority in heaven and earth. This power is available to His saints in their daily experience, and the burden of the apostle's prayer is that we should make use of it.

We note the relationship of Christ to the Church, the Head of the Body. From Him comes the nourishment and direction of His people, and we reflect the fulness of Christ, as the Queen in Ps. 45 reflects the glory of the King.

J. Renfrew

COMMENTS

1. (Birkenhead): An alternative explanation is that the genitive refers to the characteristic quality of the Father; cf. the King of Glory (Ps. 24: 7).

2. (Cowdenbeath): The word *kago*, translated "I also", is a contraction of *kai ego*, "and I", and is probably used to connect Paul's reactions with the facts about the Ephesian believers which he had learned. The Expositors Greek New Testament (Vol. 3, p. 271) refers back to "ye also" in v. 13, and comments "It means simply 'I on my side', and does not imply... that the writer was thinking of a cooperation between those addressed and himself in thanksgiving and prayer".

3. (Cowdenbeath): There is a progressive triad of blessings revealed here: First, "the sure and certain hope" for the future which results from God's effectual calling; secondly, the glory associated with God's claiming us as His own (see below); thirdly, the power which God now exerts, and will exert, on our behalf because we are His.

4. (Cowdenbeath and Galston): The calling is God's; that is, it is God who issues His call which results in salvation, but God does not hope. The hope is something that we have, resulting from God's call to us. The word *elpis* is used in 48 other instances in the New Testament, and in no case is it predicated of God; nor is God said to hope anywhere in the Old Testament. A definite indication in the grammar or sense of the passage would therefore be needed to interpret this verse as referring to God's hope, and there is none.

"His inheritance in the saints" could be taken to refer to what God possesses in His saints. In the context of this passage, which deals with those who have believed and so have become members of the Body of Christ, one would expect the reference to be to all believers. Many commentators reject this interpretation, arguing that *kleronomia* does not have this sense in the New Testament (cp. v. 11, where a different word is used). They regard *autou* (his) as a genitive of origin, and *en* (in) as having the force of "among" as in Acts 20: 23 and 26: 18. The passage would then refer to the inheritance which we shall share with Christ (Rom. 8: 17).

P. L. H.

It is somewhat bewildering to be told that "his (the Lord's

inheritance in the saints" really means "the saint's inheritance from the Lord". Since Eph. 1: 11 is the only other Scripture dealing with the Lord's inheritance in the saints the argument that *kleronomia* does not have this sense in the New Testament can hardly have that much weight. Might it not be that the different words used in Eph. 1: 11 and 14 are used because verse 11 relates the inheritance to the Lord Jesus and verse 14 to the Father? The word *kleronomia* is used of the Lord's inheritance in His people as illustrated by the parable of the vineyard (Mat. 21: 38, Mk. 12: 7, Luke 20: 14) which, as several contributors show, may illustrate the truth of the Lord's inheritance in His saints. Finally, if *en* in Eph. 1: 18 really means "among" then it implies that some saints are not parties to this inheritance just as some are not parties to the inheritance of Acts 20: 32 and 26: 18 where *en* also has the force of "among". If this is so in Eph. 1: 18 then some believers would not be "joint-heirs with Christ" (Rom. 8: 17) which is absurd.

/ . E. P.

5. (Liverpool and Nottingham): It is difficult to decide between the two interpretations here; the absence of the definite article in the Greek is not decisive. On the one hand, the saints were already indwelt by the Holy Spirit, so it might be said that there was no point in Paul's praying that He might be given to them, and one can understand that he might be praying for an attitude of wisdom. On the other hand, it is difficult to see what "an attitude of revelation" would mean. Revelation is an action of God, through the Holy Spirit, and Paul could be praying for a continual refreshing of the work of the Holy Spirit, in helping them to understand and appreciate the work of God.

P. L. H.

"The Spirit Himself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are children of God" (Rom. 8: 16). Similarly the Holy Spirit acts upon our spirits to give us a spirit of revelation of the knowledge of Him. See also 1 Peter 1: 11 and 1 Cor. 12: 4-11; 14: 26. We must all have known times in our study of the Scriptures or when listening to ministry those periods when we discover, often with apparent ease, one divine truth after another. (Such periods often contrast with others where apparently little discovery is made). Because of the nature of divine truth we do not so much as discover it but God is revealing it to us. We suggest that it is in such periods we experience "a spirit of revelation".

/ . E. P.

6. (Nottingham): It was considered at the time that the RV was produced that the documentary evidence was on the side of omission of the word *ten agapen*. However, the Nestle Greek text (Bible

Society 2nd ed. 1958) does include the words, and NIV translates them. If they are omitted, translation presents some difficulty, since the faith which is in the Lord Jesus, and that towards all the saints must be of quite different sorts. The translators of RV overcome this by inserting ^Mye shew"; this is an interpretation, which may be quite legitimate, but which does not represent any words in the Greek text. The passage reads more naturally if ^Mthe love^M is included.

P. L. H.

"Love" (Eph. 1: 15) was accepted by the translators of the Authorized Version but relegated to the margin by the translators of the Revised Version. Whence it has been returned to the text by those who wrote the NIV. We can be certain, therefore, that there is an element of doubt about the word. This verse, and that alluded to in January's issue (Acts 19: 2, B. S. 8401 p. 10) well illustrate the excellency of the Revised Version for, though they intrude words not in the original text to give their sense, they always distinguish by the use of italics words which they themselves have inserted. Thus, unlike most modern translations including the NIV, the reader is in no doubt as to what has been inserted and what is in the original.

I. E. P.

7. (Nottingham): One needs to be careful, in using expressions like this, to avoid giving the impression that Christ is something other than God. One understands that the allusion is to 1 Cor. 15: 24-28.

P. L. H.

8. (Ajegunle): The rest of the chapter deals with blessings which are ours "in Christ", so it seems preferable to regard the "calling" here as the call to salvation through faith.

P. L. H.

9. (Liverpool): Since the Church which is His Body is incomplete and in all probability the larger part is in heaven, it is not true to say that the Lord acts in the world through His Church. If this were so what role would those in heaven play? Would saints on earth pray for them? The Church which is His Body is not the basis of divine testimony on earth. Indeed the opposite is truth. Churches of God are the centre of divine testimony and through their testimony witness is borne to the truth of Christ and the Church.

I. E. P.

Occurrence of *kleronomia*: inheritance **and** associated words:

Reference	Interpretation
Mat. 21: 38	The Lord's inheritance in His people, both past (Israel) and present (the Fellowship) showing the Lord Jesus as possessor by means of the parable of the vineyard.
Mark 12: 7	
Luke 20: 14	
Luke 12: 13	One of the multitudes' earthly inheritance
Acts 7: 5	Abraham's inheritance in the land
20: 32	The believer's, present day, conditional, inheritance
Gal. 3: 18	The believer's eternal inheritance
Eph. 1: 14	The believer's eternal inheritance
1: 18	The Lord's inheritance in the Church which is His Body
5: 5	The believer's present day, conditional, inheritance
Col. 3: 24	The believer's present day, conditional, inheritance
Heb. 9: 15	The believer's eternal inheritance
Heb. 11: 8	Abraham's inheritance in the Lord
1 Pet. 1: 4	The believer's eternal inheritance

kleros

Acts 26: 18	The believer's, present day, conditional, inheritance
Col. 1: 12	The believer's eternal inheritance

kleroo

Eph. 1: 11	The Lord's inheritance in the Church which is His Body
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kleronomeo

Heb. 1: 4	The eternal inheritance of the Lord Jesus
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Editors

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Bible Studies

A magazine for the exploration of the Word of God [Acts 17: 11]

EDITORIAL

8404

The title of this month's subject is taken from Eph. 2: 5-6 and says unambiguously that the believer's quickening, raising and seating are with Christ. The Authorized Version fails to make this clear since it speaks of "raised us up together" and "made us sit together". These may be understood to mean ^Twith each other^T instead of ^Twith Christ¹. The fact that ^Twith Christ¹ is the correct meaning may be seen from the fact that the words "quickened", "raised up" and "sit" are compound words in the Greek language. Each begins with the preposition *sun* meaning "with" or "along with" and since the first of these is translated "with Christ" then the remaining two also must refer to actions associated with Christ rather than with 'each other'¹. The alert student of the Scriptures, however, quickly appreciates that the repetition of word "with" in his English Bible signals a corresponding repetition of words in the original language and so searches deeper to be confident of the true meaning of the passage. More importantly, the disciple senses something very important is being taught because of the Spirit's repetition and so he is careful in dividing the Word. It is almost as though there is a visible expression, in the English words, of the invisible, original, inspired words; just as the inspired words themselves are the means by which the Lord communicates His will to men in general and disciples in particular.

Another underlying relationship, which the English words conceal in this passage, concerns the striking word "workmanship" (Eph. 2: 10). In the only other occurrence of this word (Rom. 1: 20) it is translated "the things that are made". The latter things are the visible means by which the invisible things of their Maker may be discovered by men. The use of the same word positively invites comparison and contrast between what has been made in the first, natural creation and the later spiritual, new creation. There can be few who have not marvelled at the Creator's handiwork who "established the world by His wisdom" (Ps. 19: 1, Jer. 10: 12), but now the "principalities and the powers in the

heavenlies" see the "manifold wisdom of God" in the Church which is His Body (Eph. 3: 10). Again, "the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof" (Ps. 24: 1), but the Lord has "His inheritance in the saints" and the Church which is His Body is "the fulness of Him that filleth all in all" (Eph. 1: 18, 23). Again, He that "formed the earth... created it not a waste, He formed it to be inhabited" (Isa. 45: 18), but "we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God afore prepared" (Eph. 2: 10).

Perhaps, however, the comparison that is most appealing to us in our disciple position and in our need to learn about Him is that just as the "heavens declare the glory of God" so does the Church which is His Body (Ps. 19: 1, Eph. 1: 12, 3: 10). Not only is this so, but just as the creation has borne its visible testimony to the invisible things of its Creator throughout the ages of man, so the Church which is His Body will similarly bear witness to the "exceeding riches of His grace" throughout "the ages to come" (Eph. 2: 7).

I. E. P.

THE PRINCE OF THE POWER OF THE AIR

Our studies this, month bring to prominence the power that Satan exerts over the minds of unsaved men and women, together with the influence of the world and the flesh. A consideration of Satan and his influence is therefore timely.

Ezekiel 28 reveals something of the exalted position he occupied in the presence of God as the anointed cherub that covereth. This description could not possibly apply to the king of Tyre who is named in the chapter. Verse 15 refers to him as a created being who had a place of privilege in the presence of God, until unrighteousness was found in him and he was cast to the ground (v. 17). Would this be the occasion the Lord was referring to in Luke 10: 18 when He said, "I beheld Satan fallen as lightning from heaven"? Isaiah 14: 12 would also appear to refer to this occasion.

Satan's influence in the garden of Eden is also seen in his denial of the words of the Lord, "Ye shall not surely die" (Gen. 3: 4). Revelation 12: 9 refers to him as the old serpent, the Devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world. His influence is also seen in Cain's slaying of his brother; Cain was of the evil one (1 John 3: 12). The Lord Jesus also referred to this incident; "He was a murderer from the beginning and stood not in the truth, because there is no truth in him ... he is a liar and the father thereof" (John 8: 44).

Satan's influence in the world is exerted by blinding the thoughts of the unbelieving (2 Cor. 4: 4 RVM). John, in his first epistle, said "The whole world lieth in the evil one^M (1 John 5: 19).

When the Lord Jesus came into the world, He came to destroy the works of the Devil (1 John 3: 8). This involved conflict in His life, such as the temptation in the wilderness (Matt. 4: 1), and conflict in His death (John 12: 31). How we thank God that the Lord Jesus triumphed over the principalities and powers through His death on the cross (Col. 2: 15).

Satan still opposes the people of God and watchfulness is required at all times. He may appear as an angel of light (2 Cor. 11: 14), or as a roaring lion (1 Pet. 5: 8). He still has access to the presence of God as the accuser of the brethren, accusing them day and night in His presence (Rev. 12: 10).

In the world, Satan's plans will have culmination in the man of sin, who will have universal domination until the Lord Jesus returns from heaven (2 Thes. 2: 8, 9). This will result in Satan's imprisonment in the abyss (Rev. 20: 3), and his final subjugation in the lake of fire, a fearful judgement (Rev. 20: 10).

Later on in the Ephesian epistle we shall consider our conflict with the powers of darkness (6: 12), and our urgent need to put on the whole armour of God that we may be able to stand against the wiles of the Devil. There is a saying that to be forewarned is to be fore-armed, and this certainly applies in our conflict with the evil one.

J. Renfrew

QUICKENED, RAISED AND SEATED WITH CHRIST (Eph. 2: 1-10)

From **Ajegenle**: *The past* - "That which thou thyself sowest is not quickened except it die" (1 Cor. 15: 36). This verse helps us to appreciate the great kindness of God towards us, through Christ Jesus (Eph. 2: 7), when our Lord Jesus Christ died for our sins and trespasses (v.1), which were the cause of our spiritual death. "But God..." (vv. 4-5) shows divine intervention (compare Rom. 5: 8). The quickening process is entirely of God (vv. 8-9 and Titus 3: 4-10). It reveals the mystery of His grace.

The present - The present state of the quickened man should be seen as continuous from time to eternity. Eternity will perfect that which was not attained in time. "Raised us up with Him" and "made us sit with Him" (v. 6) both suggest taking a stand with Christ and maintaining a testimony in association with Christ. This begins now and continues throughout eternity [Comment 1].

The purpose - It is observed that the purpose of the quickening, raising and sitting us up together with Christ is two-fold.

- (i) **To Serve** (v. 10): As God's workmanship, we are saved to serve. The basis for acceptable service lies in this condition of quickening, raising and sitting together with Christ. Our Lord Jesus Christ said "apart from me ye can do nothing" (John 15: 5).
- (ii) **To Shine** (v. 7): In v. 7 a future event seems to be suggested when "the exceeding riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ" will be revealed. When compared with Matt. 5: 16, however, the shining process must start at conversion. So, we can conclude that the second purpose of the quickening, raising and sitting is supposed to start in time and continue throughout eternity [Comment 1]

M. Imouhuede, G. Okwena

From **Birkenhead**: Paul outlines the transformation which has been wrought in the lives of believers through God's grace. He then points out the extent of the change which has taken place in the Ephesians^T spiritual lives, and which should have reached their daily lives, by contrasting their past and their present states.

His purpose was to point out how all men were in the same position. None was excluded. Jew and Gentile alike are under judgement. The conduct of their lives was according to the master of their lives, known as the "prince of the power of the air". He it was who guided and directed their attitude and actions and was responsible for their condition, described as "dead through your trespasses and sins".

The contrast is heightened as Paul writes of their salvation in terms of death and life. Consequent upon faith in the saving work of the Lord Jesus Christ, there takes place the making alive, raising together with Christ, and seating in the heavenly places. In that new

realm **in which we dwell**, we **are** acknowledged **and** welcomed **by** the **Father** through the work of **the Son**.

Paul, however, **has it in mind** to point out also that **the initiative** for **all** these events rests with God. **His love is the prime mover**, giving **rise to mercy expressed towards all mankind by grace**. **Paul emphasizes the fact that grace**, that **free and undeserved favour**, has accomplished our salvation. We **are not to take any credit for this**; **it is all the work of God**. **Our own act of faith is the result of the** convicting work of **the Holy Spirit** of God.

Our hopeless position before God and His unlimited love, grace and mercy, is again stressed when we are reminded that **"even when we were dead through our trespasses"¹ we were the objects of grace (v. 5)**. Nothing could commend **sinful man** to God; **it was all His work and all "while we were yet sinners"**.

A two-fold purpose **is explained by Paul as being God's will** when **this plan was devised**. **It is His purpose in ages to come that He should display "the exceeding riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus"**. We considered to whom **this display would be directed**, with suggestions **including the host of the redeemed**, or alternatively **the unredeemed who have rejected the love of God when offered to them** [Comment 6].

The second **element** of God's purpose **was** that we should **fulfil the purpose for which we were created (spiritually) in Christ Jesus**, i.e. for good works. We **discussed the evident fact** that God would so **direct or control the affairs** of this world that situations would **be placed** before us continually **in which we would be given** the opportunity to glorify God by acting as **He would wish**. The **same expression "walk"** is used in this **verse (10) as in v. 2, and serves to impress upon us the change in the manner, conduct and attitude in our lives, which should be evident again as a result of God's favour towards us**.

The words of **the apostle, delivered to us by the care of the Holy Spirit, leave us with the thought that we cannot fathom the depths of God's love. Neither can we limit the extent of His mercy, when viewed in connection with sinful man**.

R. C. Hatpin, R. D. Williams

From Birmingham: The Ephesian epistle is full of contrasts. Once we were ^Mdead through...trespasses and sins", but now are ^Mquickened...together with Christ". Once we "walked according to the course of this world" but now we are raised and seated with Him in the heavenly places.

Paul paints a devastating picture of man's hopelessly lost state (characteristics of the Ephesians' pre-conversion days) caused through his own sin and lust. The shame of his walk and inner nakedness is exposed utterly, mocking the pathetic effort of man who would dare to lay claim to divine approval for personal effort.

We were the sons of disobedience and children of wrath. These are terms hard to reconcile with many seemingly moral and upright lives which, in the light of Scripture and against infinite holiness are exposed, without Christ in deepest darkness and sin. But deep and dark as our lives all once were, diametrical to and surpassing are the immeasurable heights of light and glory to which we ascend in our present position as believers, risen and seated together with Christ.

As children (Gk. *teknon* from *tikto* - to beget) of God we think of our spiritual birth (John 1; 12. Rom. 8: 16), whereas as sons (Gk. *huios* expressing kinship), in addition to this we think of resemblance (Rom. 8: 14) to the parent. Kinship means similarity in character.

Similarly in the unregenerate state, not only did we once walk (what we did) according to the course of this world... and so were sons of disobedience, but also were by nature (what we were) children of wrath.

Scripture is not absolutely consistent with this theme as Gal. 3: 26 links sons with faith which we tend to link with birth [Comment 2].

Now we are God's workmanship (a product of His making) created for good works.

R. Wood

From Cowdenbeath: Although the word "quickened" is interpolated in v.1 it is clearly understood, and this is confirmed in v.5 where we have the word associated with the very same words as occur in v.1. God is the One who quickens here. It is Christ who will quicken men physically. We are each quickened when we pass out of death into life and this is spoken of as being in association with Christ.

There are two viewpoints as to how we came to be in this stage of death. The text reads "through your trespasses and sins", thus suggesting that we became dead at some point in our individual lives by our own sin. The other view is that all mankind participated in the sin of Adam the natural head of the race and therefore share the guilt thereof. We are, therefore, in this state of death from birth [Comment 31

Being dead, that is being in separation from God, men pursue a way of living which is regulated by Satan. He exerts a tremendous power and influence over the lives of humans. The sinful nature within man creates the desire to do evil things. Sin merits God's wrath (Eph. 5: 6). Because He is holy God must punish sin. Divine justice demands this. To be true to Himself God can do no other. The punctuation mark (: -) at the close of v. 3 and the "but" at the beginning of v. 4 would indicate a wondrous intervention on God's part toward the sinner. Thus God is rich in mercy toward the sinful. His love is great and He shows grace in kindness in exceeding measure. We are undeserving of God's mercy and love, but yet in wondrous grace He shows them to us. From the depths of sin and shame we are lifted. God sees us as being, even now, raised and seated with Christ. One day we shall in reality be with Him, to have shown unto us throughout those coming ages the riches of grace in kindness in Christ Jesus. As the ages roll on God will continue the showing of His grace towards us. It will be an unending process.

The work of grace precludes all glorying on man's part. Good works play no part in the obtaining of salvation, but should be done by us after we are saved. They are the evidence of our salvation. By the new birth we each have been made a new creation. What was not possible to us previously we are now empowered to do. The ordinance of the law to love both God and our fellow-men can now be fulfilled in us through the indwelling Spirit of God.

J. Bowman

From Derby: It should humble us as we think of God's infinite grace toward us when we realise that, prior to salvation, we were dead through "trespasses and sins", ruled by the law of sin, walking "according to the course of this world". We can say with Hannah, that we were each as a "beggar from the dunghill... set... among princes" (1 Sam. 2: 8 AV).

When Jairus¹ daughter was raised from the dead, her parents were told to give her something to eat. We have been quickened and raised, "to walk worthily of the calling" (Eph. 4: 1). In order to walk we need strength; to gain this we need to feed. We feed on nothing more, or less, than the Word of God. Satan, of course, would have us neglecting the Word. Nothing would please him more than to see us continuing in sin. But, we have to remember that from the day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit has entered into the heart of every believer. Hence, Paul's exhortation, "grieve not the Holy Spirit" (Eph. 4: 30). The same power which was used to raise Christ from the dead was also used to quicken us "together with Christ" (v. 5).

Just as Christ was literally dead, and literally raised from dead, so we were spiritually dead, but now have been spiritually raised and seated with Him. Let us remember that God views us as being actually seated with Christ now, hence the words "made us to sit with Him" (v. 6).

We would do well to bear in mind that we are not just seated with a mighty angel, but we are seated with the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. The purpose of all this is that "in the ages to come He might shew the exceeding riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus" (v. 7). How marvellous, indeed, when we realise that God's grace knows no end, for it will occupy all of eternity for Him to shew us "His grace". Well might the hymn-writer put it:

Christ has done the mighty work;
Nothing left for us to do
But to enter on His toil.
Enter on His triumph too.

L. E. Foster, G. W. Conway

From Galston: "Even when we were dead through our trespasses" God "quickened us . . . raised us up with Him (Christ)" which means that before we were born God saw us in Christ (*cf.* Eph. 1: 4). This is a mystery to us, but some understanding is given us in "One day is with the Lord as a thousand years and a thousand years as one day" (2 Pet. 3: 8) and God declares "the end from the beginning" (Is. 46: 10). God is not bound by time as we are; the Almighty Jehovah of Hosts has a far loftier viewpoint than we (Is. 57: 15). Thus thousands of years before the event God said, "He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied" (Is. 53: 11). But¹ raised with Christ¹ and 'seated with Christ¹

take place *now*! Furthermore, God will in the ages to come shower marvellous blessings of grace upon us just because we are "in Christ". Then the unbounded love that the Father has for the Son will be progressively unfolded to us in eternity.

"By grace have ye been saved through faith..." (v. 8) "and that not of yourselves". What is not of ourselves? Salvation or faith? To say that faith is not of works is only an unnecessary repetition of the same idea in different words, so "that not of yourselves" must refer to our salvation. Sir Robert Anderson in "The Gospel and its Ministry" wrote, "The assertion that faith is a gift is a sheer error". He likened this interpretation to a baker who gives the money to his customers so that they can buy his bread! Moule says that the Greek words "that" and "faith" are of different genders; "that" is neuter, "faith" is feminine therefore "that" cannot refer to faith. It is interesting to note, too, that Calvin agreed that it is our salvation which is not of ourselves rather than our faith [Comment 4], The "whosoever" of John 3: 16 makes it clear that salvation is available to all men. John 16: 9 together with John 1: 29 seem to us to indicate that the sin for which men will find themselves in Hell and ultimately the Lake of Fire is the sin of *not believing* on the Lord Jesus. It is beyond question that God will not be chargeable with a man's refusal to trust in the Lamb of God. We conclude, therefore, that each person must bear full responsibility for the decision he or she makes with regard to Christ and that all are born with the ability to exercise faith in Christ but that not all choose to do so [Comment 7].

P. J. Johnson, D. Ramage

From Hereford: Our salvation unfolds its true glory when we look back at our beginning. Abraham's children were told to look "to the hole of the pit whence ye were digged" (Is. 51: 1). The portion we are considering expresses quite explicitly our former state.

Vagueness about sin will result in an undervaluing of our redemption. We were dead, yet living according to the three enemies of spiritual living - the world, the flesh and the Devil. The world has its course set by its ruler; the flesh gratifies the cravings of our sinful nature; and the Devil drives the spirit that works in the disobedient. Our conversation, desires and nature were given over to se If-centredness and warranted the wrath of God. The wrath of God is revealed from Heaven against all ungodliness (Rom. 1: 18). What the apostle builds up in the argument of this portion is not the catalogue of sins as in Gal. 5,

but rather the state of godlessness such as characterized, for example the days of Noah; eating and drinking, marrying and being given in marriage (Luke 17: 27).

In our lives we were dead, that is dead to God the life source. And that death is real, an insurmountable incapacity to appreciate anything spiritual (though many pretend so to do and deceive themselves). David spoke of his sinner state in two ways in Psalm 51; born in sin (v. 5), but he sees too his transgressions (v. 3). Even through sin God is glorified in that His justice is vindicated (v. 4) Yes, God uses evil to His Glory. Calvary is the expression of the power and wisdom of God.

Romans 11: 22 **speaks** of the **severity** (sternness) of God. It is a fearful **thing** to fall into **His hands** (Heb. 10: 31). God's wrath is the corollary of **His** love. **He is** a jealous God who **guards His** loved ones (Eph. 2: 4) **as He judges His adversaries** (Heb. 10. 27).

'Dead in trespasses'¹ is repeated (Eph. 2: 1 & 5) but the second **time** with **stark emphasis** that **while in our sin He loved us and quickened us together with Him**. There is no **in** between. **It is** all or nothing; **the** translation into the kingdom of **the Son of His love is complete and final**.

Christ is glorified. **He "sat down" as token of His completed work. "He humbled Himself... wherefore... God highly exalted Him". But He has exalted, and will exalt us too. Without us He would have no joy in His glory; we are the raison d'etre and His fulfilment (Eph. 1: 23). The contrast between the state of wrath and the riches of grace is immediate, present and permanent. Further our manner of life should reflect it (Rom. 6: 18). We should be slaves to righteousness. How shall we that are dead to sin live any longer therein? (Rom. 6: 2).**

We have rights, possessions and position. Our realm is the Heavens, where our citizenship is. This realm of unutterable experience for Paul (2 Cor. 12: 2-4) is also at this point in time uncleaned. The sons of God, Satan among them, had access in Job's day [Comment 5],

In the parable of Israel's possessing the land, ten men saw the cities fenced to heaven and the Nephilim. It was the men of faith that entered and possessed, seeing the "milk and honey" of God's promises. Indeed Caleb claimed the Land of the Giants; they held no fear for him. The anti-type of the Land of Promise is in teaching proper to time subsequent to the resurrection [Comment 8]. Jordan has been crossed. The enemy has no rights there.

What does the **idea** of our good works **being prepared for us** entail? Is there to **be** no credit, **as in 1 Cor. 3**, for the gold, **silver and precious stones**? **Is it** all of Christ Jesus, His work not ours? **Yes**, truly all His. No one **can** boast. **"Of ourselves we can do nothing"**. **"Unto Him be the glory"**.

E. S. Toms

From Liverpool: In order that the Ephesian Christians might appreciate the more what God had done for them, Paul reminded them of what they once were before they were reached and saved by the grace of God (v. 8) He contrasted this with what they had become in Christ. "Ye were dead through your trespasses and sins". They were separated from God and in this spiritual state of alienation they once walked (v. 2). Their whole deportment revealed they were "children of wrath" doing the desires of the flesh and of the mind. They were separated from Christ who is the very source of life, for "in Him was life" (John 1: 4).

What a **dark picture is portrayed by the pen of Paul as, through the Spirit of God, he reveals the utter spiritual and moral ruin of man. The beauties of a portrait, however, often stand out more against the relief of a dark background. So, too, the lovely attributes of God are more clearly seen when contrasted with the depravity of man. The contrasts between God's work and man's may be tabulated as follows:**

Man

Dead through trespasses.
Walking according to the course of this world.
Influenced by the prince of the power of the air.
Living **in the lusts of the flesh and the desires of the mind.**
By nature **children of wrath.**

God

You did He quicken.
Being rich in mercy and love,
Raised us up with Him,
Made us to sit with Him in the heavenlies.
In the ages to come to show the exceeding riches of His grace in kindness towards us in Christ Jesus.

In this passage the apostle emphasizes the mercy (v. 4) and the grace (vv. 5, 7, 8) of God. In doing so he reminds us of the utter inability of man to accomplish anything for himself.

We are new creations in Christ. We are His workmanship created for good works that we should walk in them. Our whole deportment should manifest what we are, and to whom we belong. We are to be luminaries in a dark world, shedding forth the light of truth that men

may be led to our Lord and Saviour.

This is to be our occupation now and until Jesus comes.

J. W. Seddon

From Nottingham: The portion may be viewed in three parts; the state of men before conversion (vv. 1-3); the means and results of salvation (vv. 4 -7); and the intentions of a true Christian life (vv. 8-10).

In Paul's reference to those who "were dead" (v.1) he has extended his thoughts from chapter 1: 20, where he speaks of "raised Him from the dead". As Christ died and was raised so, too, we were dead and made alive with Christ (v. 5). We were dead in that we lived a life of death, caring only for the carnal (Rom. 8: 6-7). We were objects of wrath, even divine wrath (5: 6) but God (v. 4) has made us no longer apart, but has joined us to His life and also His reign in the heavenlies "who is our life" (Col. 3: 4).

The emphasis in vv. 5 and 8 is placed on the words "by grace". Salvation is bestowed upon all those who accept it by faith. It is not to any man's credit because it is not of ourselves. No human activity can result in salvation. It is the gift of God. The believer should not boast of himself, but rather glory in Christ, being created in Him (2 Cor. 5: 17).

The believer is to start a new life not of mere outward ceremonies or rituals but he is to do good works after a manner of life that was laid out in advance of him (1 Pet. 2: 21).

K. Hickling

From Paisley: It must be difficult to read the portion we have before us without being humbled and amazed at the born-again Christian's portion through Christ which results from God's choice (Eph. 1: 4).

The 'quickening' (Eph. 2: 1 & 5) is likened to a 'raising from the dead' in a spiritual sense because each one of us was dead in our trespasses and sins. Then, being recipients of love and mercy through Christ (v.4), we are raised in a spiritual way which is as equally amazing as the physical raising of Lazarus in a past day. We therefore become children of grace rather than children of wrath (v. 3), and are exhorted to walk out of step with the world and in step with God in

the way He has planned (v. 10). We must grieve our heavenly Father daily as we stumble and trip in the perfect way He has prepared for us as we, sometimes unconsciously, get into step with the world again.

The humbling thought of our own inadequacy and worthlessness should be our daily reminder of what Christ has achieved on our behalf. Through our association with Him, we, by simple faith, receive God's gift of grace not only for time but for all eternity (v. 7). Eternity will probably be required to show all "the exceeding riches" referred to in this verse. What a hope we have to witness the unfolding of such a promise, for we will be able to witness it from our seated position in the heavenly places. This will be, no doubt, an elevated position for which none of us can ever work (v. 9).

We can strive, however, to walk in the way prepared and bear fruit to His glory whilst we are in this world. After all, we have everything in Him, so why cannot He have something from us?

F. J. Reilly

COMMENTS

1. (Ajegunle): Friends in Ajegunle draw attention to an important point, namely the present-day, visible expression of the disciple's unseen spiritual position. Our being raised and seated with Christ (Eph. 2: 6), however, is an eternal position in the spiritual realm in which God has placed the believer now. It is because of this that we are commanded, while in this life, to be baptized, walk in newness of life, stand in testimony and let our light shine. That many fail to do so in no way affects their being raised and seated with Christ, nor does it prevent their being a demonstration of God's workmanship throughout eternity (Eph. 2: 7-10).

2. (**Birmingham**): Distinctions between children and sons need to be considered in their contexts. Thus "sons of God, through faith" (Gal. 3: 26) is in contrast to "children... in bondage" (Gal. 4: 3). The contrast is between the infant or school-child being schooled under the law to bring him to faith in Christ and the believer who, having already placed faith in Christ and obtained the entrance "qualification" to heaven, has "graduated" to sonship.

3. (Cowdenbeath): Friends in Birmingham draw attention to the distinction made in Eph. 2: 1-3 between the sinful nature of the children of wrath and the sinful practice of the sons of disobedience. The proof that sin is in our nature from birth is to be seen in the death of children who have never grown up to become sons of disobedience. Since sin separates from God then men must be spiritually dead from birth. Provision for such babes has, of course, been made in the death of Christ.

/ . E. P.

The RV text uses the word "through", but the Greek word *dia*, which is usually translated thus, is not present here. The word used is the dative plural of the definite article, which may indicate instrumentality, but does not necessarily do so, the translation "in", as in AV, being equally possible. The same construction is used in the parallel passage in Col. 2: 13. Commentators are divided as to the correct rendering. However, Rom. 5: 12-21 shows quite clearly that "by the trespass of the one the many died", so the second view mentioned must be correct, as the comment above states.

P. L. H.

4. (Galston): It is true that it is salvation and not faith that is the gift of God in Eph. 2: 8. If faith in Christ arose from the heart of man, however, then man could claim to be saved by his own efforts. See also 2 Pet. 1: 1 and Rom. 12: 3.

5. (**Hereford**): Paul was caught up to the third heaven not the heavenlies. B.S. 8402 contains a helpful discussion about distinctions within the heavenlies.

I. E. P.

6. (**Birkenhead**): Birkenhead friends very appropriately use the word "display" here, for this is the force of **the word** *endeiknumai* (see Rom. 9: 17, 22). There seems to be a close parallel with 3: 10, "unto the principalities and powers in the heavenly places might be made known through the church the manifold wisdom of God".

If this is accepted, the display of God's grace would be directed primarily towards created beings other than men, although redeemed men who are not members of the Body of Christ will surely also glorify God for His great grace. I would not think that in the eternal state there will be any way in which the glory of the blessed will be displayed to the lost. God will have given them their choice; they chose to be without Him, and He will leave them alone, with no ray of the joy which can only come from His presence, in "the outer darkness" (Matt. 22: 13).

P. L. H.

7. (Galston): Galston friends will be well aware that there has been controversy for a least 1500 years about the ability to exercise faith, so that it is unlikely that the problems can be resolved by a few lines in Bible Studies I As far as the meaning of this particular passage is concerned it does seem most likely that the whole preceding clause, involving salvation by grace through faith, is the subject of the parenthetical reference. However, some of the subsequent arguments are of doubtful validity. Sir Robert Anderson's simile is very like what God actually does. He gave His Old Testament people animals so that they could sacrifice to Himself, and everything we have derives from Him, so that we cannot give Him anything that is not His already. We would think of repentance as an act of the human will, but we know that it is granted by God (Acts 11: 18). It seems at least consonant with this that the Holy Spirit should enable us to receive things which cannot be received by nature (1 Cor. 2: 14).

The grammatical argument is refuted by F.F. Bruce (Answers to Questions, Paternoster Press, Exeter 1972, p. 104) thus:

"The fact that the Greek word for faith (*pistis*) is feminine, while the pronoun "that" is neuter

here, is no barrier to regarding faith as the gift of God: the phrase "and that" is really adverbial. We may compare Phil. 1: 28, "a clear omen.... of your salvation, and that from God", where "that" is similarly neuter, while both "omen" (*endeixis*) and "salvation" (*soteria*) are feminine".

He agrees, however, that the reference is "not merely to faith, but to the subject-matter of the whole preceding clause".

The statement "all are born with the ability to exercise faith in Christ" does not seem to agree with such scriptures as John 6: 37, 44, John 10: 26 and Acts 13: 48.

P. L. H.

8. (Hereford): We take it that it is the Lord's resurrection which is meant here.

/ . E. P.

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Bible Studies

A magazine for the exploration of the Word of God [Acts 17: 11]

EDITORIAL

8405

After recounting **the mercy and grace** of God which was **rich** toward **the** Ephesians **and rich** also toward himself, for Paul includes himself in verse **3**, **he bids them remember** how marvellous **it is that after** having **been in** a position of distance **and** exclusion from **the unique benefits** associated with God's chosen people, **they were** now made **near in the** blood of Messiah. It **was He** who meant peace both to those who as Gentiles **had been by nature** hopelessly alienated from God, **and to the** Jews who, though entrusted **with** the law, **had** stood condemned **by it**. **Here** was a **new** creation of God's workmanship. **As** children of God **they had near access in** one **Spirit** unto **the** Father, **They were** of one household, **and in** subjection to **the** will of God **had** a place **in the** visible expression of **that** glorious **structure**, a holy temple **in the** Lord Unlike **the** temple **which** dominated their **city**, **it** was a temple not made **with** hands. **Their** outlook **was** utterly **changed**, **and the** God of heaven could **find** a dwelling place among them. For ever unfathomable **is the** love **that** sought **and** found **us** **and** brought **us** near.

E. A.

CORRESPONDENCE: THE FUNCTION OF THE CHURCH THE BODY

Comments **in B. S. 8403** pp. 51, 55 provoked thought **and** produced **the** suggestions **which** follow.

Paul **in his** writings on **the** subject of **the** Church **the** Body likens **it to the** constitution of **the** natural body **and** highlights **the fact that in** both **there is** a close-knit **interdependence** of members (Eph. 4; 1 Cor. 12; Rom. 12). Things said of or to **the** Body include **the** following: -

"members one of another" (Rom. 12:5), "tenderly affectioned one to another" (Rom. 12:10), "**in** honour preferring one another" (Rom. 12:10), "of **the** same **mind** one toward another" (Rom. 12:16), "forbearing one another" (Eph. 4: 2) "**building up** one" another (Eph. 4: 12), "same **care** one for another" (1 Cor. 12: 25).

We are now many centuries away from Pentecost and we may in our thinking put all the above in a separate compartment away from truths concerning churches of God. The possible outcome of this is for those numbered in churches of God to limit their "body functions" as listed above to those within the churches of God.

An "internal function" which calls for consideration is the building up process. There are members of the Body not numbered in churches of God to whom we pay tribute as we acknowledge benefits received by reading their writings or spending time in their company. The converse should also burden us, actively to pursue avenues of service whereby the rich teaching of Scripture can be brought to members of the Body who stand to benefit. To neglect this aspect of truth could be regarded as a member's saying "I have no need of you" (1 Cor. 12: 21).

"External functions" can be viewed as the purpose served by the Body to those outside the Body. We can gather that the process of building the Body and those who compose it are to be a source of wonder to onlookers on earth and in heaven. Surely the Church the Body is awe-inspiring and the Body should lead others to consider its Head. Also those in the Body are called on to preach and teach so that the Body can be built up numerically. We should prayerfully consider to what degree those in churches of God view this as a "together" function. A neighbour or acquaintance at work who is unsaved should be the mutual concern of fellow-members of the Body, whether numbered in churches of God or not.

It is God's will that members of the Body alive on earth should live as disciples together in the ideal environment of churches of God. Consideration should surely be given as to whether our spiritual lifestyle is in any way working against the achievement of this objective.

R. D. Williams

ONCE FAR OFF, NOW MADE NIGH - Ephesians 2: 11 - 22

From Ajegunle: *The penalty.* The position of Gentiles was a serious one when they were far off. They were without God and without hope. Although the Lord expressed Himself to the Gentiles by the things which he created and their conscience bare witness of these things, yet they were lawless, unthankful, and were living under the wrath of God (Rom. 1: 18 - 25).

The price. There is the need to remember that the Gentiles are now made nigh in the blood of Christ (v. 13). Reconciliation took place through the cross (v. 16). It cost God the blood of His beloved Son, Jesus Christ,

to bring near Gentiles that were far off. Indeed, "The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwelt in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined' (Isa. 9: 2). God showed His love, mercies and grace by the sacrifice and offering of His Son.

The privileges. **The** cross of Christ **made the** blessings of **the** Lord available to the Gentiles. It is now possible for the Gentiles to:

- (a) Have peace with God (v. 14)
- (b) Have communion with God (v. 14)
- (c) Become friends of God (v. 15)
- (d) Have access in one Spirit unto the Father (v 18)
- (e) Become fellow-citizens with the saints and of the household of God (v. 19; Phil. 3: 20)

We suggest that the "household of God"^M(v 19) is different from the "household"^M of Gal. 6: 10 and Heb. 3: 6. The purpose of the Lord in bringing the Gentiles near is that they may be brought into the house of God (v. 22). Such believers must be willing to obey the Lord in matters relating to baptism and addition to the people of God.

G. O. Okwena, M. A. Imoukhuede

From **Birkenhead**: Paul develops his recital of the extent of the blessings which have been heaped upon the Ephesian saints by reminding them that they are of the Gentiles and as such were not of God's chosen people. By their birth and customs they were separated from Christ. They were foreigners to the commonwealth of Israel and were not the subjects of the promise made by God to the Jewish people. In this position they had no hope, that is, not that they were unable to hope, but there was nothing in which they could hope. This has now been changed, and by the blood of Christ they, along with believing Jews, have been reconciled to God, and thus also with one another. Paul uses the physical separation of the Gentile and Jew in the temple, the middle wall of partition separating the *naos*, as a means of emphasizing the significance of the unification which has taken place in Christ [Comment 1].

The separation which was temporal and seen in the ceremonial law as well as the temple, has been abolished and the sense of alienation which was thus engendered has also been abolished. The apostle's purpose here is to impress on them the removal of the cause for separation, but more importantly the unification which has taken place amongst all who are in Christ.

Again Paul develops his **theme** and tells **them that their access to the Father is the same** for all believers, **being in the Holy Spirit**.

Paul's purpose is to **expand his teaching** to its conclusion and lead the Ephesians on **to the truths** of the house of God. **He** first summarizes **their** position through **the** work of Christ; no longer strangers and sojourners **but** now of **the** family of God, **each being a living stone** (1 Pet. 2: 5). **By** virtue of **the** foundational **teaching** of **the** apostles and prophets, with **the** **guidance** of **the** Holy Spirit, **they are** built into individual buildings **which** **because** of **their** common **pattern** and origin, **fit** neatly together to form the house of God, **the** spiritual dwelling place of God **in** this dispensation. **The** dwelling place, described as **a holy temple** in the Lord is **referred** to as growing, **which** indicates its continuing **nature** and **the** **fact that there are intended to be** increases **in** both **the** stones used to build and the buildings **fitted** together [Comment 2].

Furthermore, Paul **emphasizes the firm ground and foundation** on **which** this spiritual house is built. **It is** built on spiritual **truths** revealed by **the teaching** of God's servants. **The Chief Corner-Stone of the building is the Lord Jesus Christ, and it is a fundamental requirement that all who are to be built into God's house should have a correct appreciation of Christ's person and work.**

The teaching here would seem to have a natural progression throughout **the chapter**, culminating **in** this momentous **truth which has been** lost to many **since the early days, and appears to be** beyond **their** comprehension.

We considered verses **20 - 22** against **the** general tenor of New Testament **writings, and marvelled at the** clarity of God's purpose **as** revealed through His Son.

G. H. Roberts, R. C. Halpin

From Cowdenbeath: For **the** second time **in chapter 2** we are asked to **remember what we were and where we were** by nature. **There is a link between the** word "dead" in v. 1 and "separate" **in v. 12, the** former conveying **the meaning** of separateness from God. **The fact that the sinner is "afar off", from God is clearly emphasized in the Lord's ministry in successive chapters of Luke, thus:**

Luke **15: 20 - the prodigal son**
16: 23 - the rich man
17: 12 - the ten lepers
18: 13 - the publican

Such remembrance humbles us, **causing us** to marvel **at the** fulness of God's **grace, made possible " through the cross"** (v. 16). Gentile believers

particularly **are reminded** of **their** position, outside **the unique** privileges of Israel **and thus "at enmity"** with **the Jew**, yet graciously **united** in one Body. **The "new man"** of v. 15 **we judge to refer to the Church which is Christ's Body**, **the** collective expression of **the new** creations in Christ [Comment 9.]. We realized **that the word "new"** (*kainos*) conveys **the** meaning of something "completely fresh".

Two matters in particular impressed us. These were peace and reconciliation. We are told that He "made peace" (v. 15) and that He "preached peace" (v. 17) **but**, preciously, we learn **that "He is our Peace"** (v. 14). **He is the cause of true peace and, as a result, He is the fountain of true** reconciliation, reconciling Jew and Gentile in one Body, reconciling **man** to God **and, in the future**, reconciling all things to Himself **as stated in** Col. 1: 20 where **the same truths are** expounded. "Having abolished in **His** flesh **the enmity"**, **we** believe describes **the fact that it is** through Christ's incarnation (v. 15) **and death upon the cross** (v. 16) **that peace has been** secured. So Jew **and** Gentile join **in a new** eternal relationship **with** privileges **such as are** recorded in vv. 18 - 22.

How greatly **we** value prayer when **we** become **aware** of **the interest and** involvement of **the triune** God as **expressed in** v. 18. **Such interest is** also evident **in the succeeding** verses which **we** believe to contain a development of positional **truth**, with **the** Gentile "**afar off**" **and** culminating **in brethren** together visibly as "**a habitation of God in the Spirit**".

The picture is of many persons drawn together by the grace of God. They are no longer foreigners but sharers together as brothers and sisters in the household of God, a house or household which has as **its** foundation the teaching of the N. T. apostles and prophets, teaching held together by the fact that Christ, His Person, Work and Teaching, are the essence of it. Wherever such persons were drawn together to give expression to such teaching there was a visible unity or building (1 Cor. 3: 9). All such buildings were unified as one Temple *in the Lord*. It is noteworthy that our spiritual forefathers have constantly reminded us that nowhere in scripture does Paul use *naos* (temple) to describe the Body of Christ. We have also been reminded of the change in expression of the epistle from "In Christ Jesus" to "In the Lord" at this point in the letter. (See chapter 4 onwards regarding behaviour **and** related matters). *R. I. Shaw*

From Derby: Our present study deals with time past in relation to time present, and the character of the new man in Ms access in the one Spirit unto the Father. In the earlier verses of this chapter the contrast is made

between death and life ('quickened.... together with Christ"). The question of transgression and sin is seen in relation to the mercy of God. In verses 11-18 the thought is that of distance and nearness, the major portion dealing with the question of the barrier of the middle wall of partition.

The Jews had a unique position in the mind and purposes of God. Rom. 9: 4 clearly sets out their privileged position - "Who are Israelites; whose is the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; whose are the fathers, and of whom is Christ as concerning the flesh".

In contrast the Gentiles were by nature "far off", and of their condition and position it was noted that this was "in the flesh". The concluding words were also significant - without God "in the world". Their disability was far-reaching. The Jews prided themselves in the outward mark that singled them out as a people set apart. The Gentiles were called Uncircumcision. They were without Christ, historically people without hope of a Messiah. As aliens they had no civic rights and were considered strangers to the promises, without hope and without God [Comment 3].

In our study we reflected that this was very much in evidence in the centre of Jewish worship and service, the temple in Jerusalem. This, as we know, consisted of a series of courts and only into the first of these were the Gentiles permitted to enter. Set on the walls between were tablets with the inscription:

"No one being a foreigner may enter into the enclosure around the holy place. Whosoever is apprehended will himself be to blame for his death which will certainly follow".

The accusation against Paul was that he had brought Greeks into the temple and defiled that holy place (Acts 21: 28). Paul's mission was to preach unto the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ (Eph. 3: 8). In this we have a vivid picture of the middle wall of the barrier being broken down.

We further considered the meaning and significance of the middle wall of partition. Although it is often used in the presentation of the Gospel as the barrier of sin, we felt that its main application was to the dispensational truth of the setting aside of the Jewish ordinances and of the Gentiles in a figurative sense being brought nigh; this being through the blood of His cross. Broken down, abolished, slain; these words aptly describe what has

taken place. The wider implications are clearly manifest in the spiritual blessings which accrue: to "create in Himself of the twain one new **man**". That Jews and Gentiles should be no longer at enmity is emphasized in the word "both", which occurs three times in this passage: "made both one" (v. 14), "both in one body" (v. 16) and "both in one Spirit" (v. 18). Christ is our peace and so made peace. Whereas there was formerly distance, there is now peace and reconciliation.

The distinctive character of the new man is embraced in togetherness of unity, as being brought firstly into a right relationship with God, and into fellowship one with another. In the closing verses of this chapter the four metaphors that Paul uses to express this oneness in Him are full of profound spiritual truth. As these are developed there is a wealth of teaching in the blessings and personal and corporate responsibility:

- (1) Being citizens in the holy state as those consecrated to God; thus sharing rights of citizenship within the heavenly commonwealth and being no longer strangers and sojourners.
- (2) Belonging to the household of God. and so enjoying the rights and privileges yet subject to the discipline and order within the House.
- (3) Being built together as a sanctuary for God to dwell in, the foundation on which the structure rests being the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the Chief Corner-Stone [Comment 4].
- (4) Christ is not only the beginning and foundation, but it grows into a holy temple in the Lord for a habitation in the Spirit. This is a continuing process, in all that is built or building. *The* visible house and outward ritual now come to an **end**. The glory of His house will: have its final fulfilment in the eternal state.

G. W. Conway, A. G. Willis

From Dulwich: vv. 11, 12 - These verses outline clearly **the status** of the Gentiles before Christs coming. They stood outside God's covenant purposes in at least **three** ways:

- (a) "**Separate** from Christ"; they **had** no Messianic hope.
- (b) "Alienated from **the** commonwealth of Israel": they were not privileged to **be part** of God's chosen people.
- (c) "Having no hope **and** without God": **this is perhaps the saddest** comment of all. **Being** "without God" **did not** necessarily entail **a denial of His existence**. The prevailing religious climate **was** one of pluralism **and** confusion, epitomized **in** Paul's discovery **at Athens** of an altar dedi-

cated "to an unknown God". "Without God" can only refer to their ignorance of the one true God, an ignorance which, while inevitable to some extent in terms of their status as those historically outside the scope of God's spoken and written revelation (cf. Rom, 3: 2), was also partly of their own choosing. "Because that knowing God^M, they glorified Him not as God, neither gave thanks; but became vain in their reasonings, and their senseless heart was darkened" (Rom. 1: 21) [•Comment 3].

v. 13 - Gentiles who once "were far off" had now "in Christ Jesus" been bought into covenant relationship to God. Although the Old Testament has examples of Gentiles who enjoyed personal relationships with God, a corporate relationship as embodied in the covenant at Sinai was reserved only for the Jews. Now all this had changed. There is an echo of the "Once were far off, now made nigh" theme in v. 17 which appears to be drawn from Isaiah 57: 19, the repetition clearly indicating its significance as a central motif.

v. 14 - The reference here to Christ as "our peace" recalls Isaiah's description of the Messiah as "Prince of Peace". It is interesting to note that the Hebrew word for peace, "shalom", means more than simply the absence of hostility (which might be said of an armed truce). It conveys a much more positive and active sense of well-being and security. It was this kind of peace that was to characterize the relationship between Jewish and Gentile Christians, the traditional hostility between them having been destroyed once and for all by the reconciling power of the Gospel. It is very possible that in referring here to Christ as having broken down "the middle wall of partition" that Paul was deliberately using the very graphic image of the destruction of the Temple wall which the Jewish historian Josephus tells us separated the Court of the Gentiles from the remainder of the Temple at that time.

v. 15 - This destruction of the barrier between Jew and Gentile was accomplished by Christ "having abolished in His flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances". The phrase "in His flesh" is used in reference to Christ in several instances in the New Testament (1 Tim. 3: 16; 1 John 4: 2; 2 John 7; cf. Heb. 5: 7) and without exception they refer to His Incarnation: "the Word became flesh", it is submitted therefore that the abolition of the enmity expressed by the law is something that must be traced not solely to the universally redemptive significance of Christ's death, but also to His apparent transcendence of the Law "in the days of His flesh". This was something that, paradoxically, was implicit in His fulfilment of it (Mat. 12: 1 - 12; Luke 13: 10 -17; cf. Mat. 5: 17 - 20).

His purpose was to "create in Himself of the twain *one new man*" This is surely **the** corporate equivalent of **the term "new creature"** as used to describe individual Christians in 2 Cor. 5: 17. **The** language is strongly **reminiscent** of Paul's **extensive use** elsewhere of **the figure of a body and indeed appears to be** closely linked to **this** by **the** close conjunction **with the phrase "in one body" in v. 16.**

"For **in Him** were all **things created, in the heavens and upon the earth** ____". "**In the beginning**" Christ's creative purpose as "the Master Workman" **was expressed on earth in the** generation of **the** sons of **Adam.** Now, **His** creative purpose **is a heavenly one and is expressed in the** creation of a new creation of which He is the Head. This new race is one in which the old sources of division, nationality, colour and tongue are to be reckoned as of no importance. This was to destroy once and for all the barrier between Jew and non-Jew. Above all the central theme now was to be that of reconciliation.

v. 16 - **His** purpose **was** to "reconcile **them** both **in** one Body unto God through the cross". The stress is on the word *both*, **which is repeated in vv. 14, 16 and 18.** **The dominant theme throughout this passage is that of universality.** Paul was **emphasizing that the** gospel was for all **men and in being** reconciled together to God all **men** could be reconciled **with each** other.

v. 17 -Although **the** Gospels record isolated **incidents such as the** encounter with **the Samaritan woman at Sychar (John 4) and the centurion in Matthew 8,** **the primary thrust of the** Lord's **ministry,** prior to Calvary, was primarily **directed to the** Jews. "Go not into any way of **the** Gentiles, **and enter** not into any **city of the Samaritans:** But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Mat. 10: 5 - 6, *cf.* also Mark 7: 24 - 30). **In what sense,** therefore, **is** Paul able to declare **that** Christ **preached** peace to those "who were **far off**" ? **It has been suggested that this refers to the** **ministry** of Christ **as mediated by the** promised Holy **Spirit after the** Day of Pentecost (John 16: 5 - 15; Acts 1: 8) [*Agreed. P. L. H.*]

v. 18 - **This** verse touches **again on the theme** of **identity.** **There is a** strong echo **here of the theme** of 1 Cor. 12: 13, 'For in one **Spirit** were we all **baptized** into one Body, whether **Jews or Greeks, whether** bond or free; **and were** all **made to drink** of one **Spirit**".

v. 19 - **The** Gentiles **were** now "fellow-citizens **with the saints**¹¹", "**the** saints" presumably **here referring to** **Jewish** Christians, who, together **with the** Gentiles, constituted God's "family" or "household", *Oikeioi* **appears to be an** adjectival form of **the Greek** word "*oikos*" **signifying** "of" or belonging to a house" - i. e. "**the** people of **the** house", "**the** household", "**the** family" [Comment 5].

v. 20 - "... built up on the foundation of the apostles and prophets". The Greek text here seems to be somewhat ambiguous [Comment 6]. It is not entirely clear whether Paul is implying that the apostles and prophets themselves constitute the foundation or whether the reference is to the foundation laid by the apostles and prophets through their teaching and preaching. This latter interpretation seems more likely in view of the fact that Paul refers to himself in 1 Cor. 3: 10 as having "laid a foundation as a wise master-builder", and goes on to say that "other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ"¹¹. While the foundation of a building determines fundamentally its structural integrity, the corner-stone plays an equally vital part in determining its basic orientation, as the remainder of the structure is lined up and squared to it.

v. 21, 22 - In v. 21 the original text appears to be difficult to translate accurately. This is reflected in the alternative renderings offered by the NIV and RV:

"In him *the whole building* is joined together..." (NIV).

"In whom *each several building*, fitly framed together, groweth into a holy temple in the Lord" (RV)

The ambiguity arises from the fact that the Greek word *pas* may be equally translated "whole" or 'every'. Vine indicates that when *pas* is used in conjunction with nouns not preceded by the definite article, "every", in the sense of "each and every"^T, is generally the more appropriate rendering. The absence of the article in this passage would tend, therefore to favour the RV reading. Assuming this to be correct, there appear to be two kinds of structural entity referred to here; "several", i. e. *individual* buildings, and the "temple" that which when joined together, these buildings constitute. "Temple of God" is an expression used adjectivally both of an individual church of God (1 Cor. 3: 16 - 17; 2 Cor. 6: 16) and of the believer's body (1 Cor. 6: 19). While local churches as separate buildings may be said to be characteristically "temple of God" (since they each form part of it), it is the totality of the structure that is in view here, as each church is joined to its neighbour in a community of common worship and faith.

G. Elson

From Galston: The "enmity" of verses 15 and 16 it seems to us is not between Jew and Gentile as might be inferred from v. 14, but is the enmity of the natural man towards God [and the judicial enmity of God towards men - P. L. H] We conclude this for the following reasons:

- (1) The enmity is stated to be "the law of commandments contained in ordinances". This law was "holy... and righteous and good", but the

Jew to whom it was given could not keep it because he was "carnal" (Rom. 7: 7-14). The Gentile also was condemned (Rom. 3: 19; Col. 2: 13, 14).

- (2) "And might reconcile them both... unto God" (v. 16). Reconciliation is peculiarly apposite where enemies are in view (Rom. 5: 10).
- (3) "He came and preached peace to you that were far off", (Gentiles) "and peace to them that were nigh" (the Jews). This reinforces the point in (2) above.

In reading verses 14 to 22 we should not endeavour to see in the several verses either *an exclusive* reference to the Church which is the Body of Christ or *an exclusive* reference to the house of God and/or the churches of God [Comment 7]. We think that we must bear in mind that:

- (a) Paul wrote to the church of God in Ephesus.
- (b) There were no other Christian organisations at that time.
- (c) When writing to the church of God in Rome and to the church of God in Corinth Paul uses the figure of the human body to illustrate the harmonious working together that should characterize saints in a church of God (chapter 12 in both epistles).
- (d) In 1 Cor. 12: 27 Paul says to the church of God in Corinth "Ye are the Body of Christ".

The emphasis therefore of these verses (14 - 22) is practical. They are truths for the church of God in Ephesus to rejoice in and to put into practical effect in their collective worship of God. Verses 19 - 22 especially, are each house of God truths which are not to be divorced from the preceding verses but are to be very much joined to them. In saying this we are of course very clear that there is a difference between the Church which is the Body of Christ and the church of God and that the ground of our gathering together in churches of God is not simply being in the Church the Body of Christ.

J. H. Johnson

From Liverpool: *The people without hope.* Paul's picture of the hopeless state of the Ephesians before their salvation raises an interesting question. Did God in choosing Israel to be His special covenant people, thereby turn His back on all the people of the other nations and leave them without hope? Romans 1: 18 - 20 teaches that God, in giving men minds that can discern His creation, expected recognition as Creator by them and the implication is that, in the absence of any further enlightenment, God would accept people who acknowledge His existence [Comment 8]. "Without God in the world" (v. 12) must be understood as meaning not having tried to acquire a knowledge of God, rather than that God has not revealed Himself to them [Comment 3].

The people without love. If the position of unbelieving Gentiles was bad, surely that of unbelieving Jews was worse! Though proud of their separation and their circumcision (its outward sign) they failed to realise that they were not the people of God because of circumcision but because of the covenant at Sinai; and that cut two ways. In their unloving self-righteous attitude to fellow-men they erected barriers that separation did not call for.

The great barrier. The spiritual barrier that existed between Jew and Gentile was typified by the actual barrier in the temple round the court of the Gentiles beyond which only Jews could approach. So worship - the place where they were to worship and the way in which they were to worship God - was at the core of this problem (*cf.* the Lord's conversation with the Samaritan woman).

The Peace-maker. Paul teaches that peace between Jew and Gentile is possible through the shed blood of the Lord Jesus; as they become one in Christ so they cease to be at odds with each other. "That he might create in Himself of the twain one new man, so making peace" (v. 15) - i. e. a Christian neither Jew nor Gentile [Comment 9].

Access to the Father. The three persons of the Godhead are involved in this amazing access that we can enjoy. The people of God in the present age can experience blessings and privileges of access to the Father unavailable even to the privileged Jews.

The privilege of being the House. The Jews had the privilege of serving God in a material house - it is the privilege of the people of God today to be the house (Heb. 3: 6). Paul paints a picture of those who have been reconciled to each other and to God through Christ now being built into something. They are fellow-citizens and part of God's household, indicating privilege and responsibility as well as acceptance and closeness. [Comment 10], The foundation upon which they are built is the divine blueprint for churches - i. e. the teaching of the apostles,

A technical problem. Whether the translation "each several building" (RV) or "the whole building" (NIV) in v. 21 is correct need not concern us unduly. Scholars seem to accept that the RV is probably more technically correct: "All the building" is not strictly correct as a translation, since there is no article in the original. A more accurate translation would be "every building" or "each several building" (RV) - Foulkes (Tyndale N. T. Commentary on Ephesians). T. M. Hyland said, "The crucial question is whether the picture being painted in this passage is that of the body of Christ or the house of God. We know from 1 Cor. 3: 16 - 17 and 2 Cor. 6: 16 that the latter is the case. Whether, therefore, the correct transla-

tion is 'each several building' or 'all the building' is immaterial. The end product 'a holy temple in the Lord' is the structure described in v 2 'built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the Chief Corner Stone'. My suggestion is that we take care not to give the impression that the RV translation is absolutely essential to our teaching on positional truth". We believe Paul is speaking of churches of God being built together to become the house of God.

D. J. Webster

From Nottingham: During our consideration of this passage three questions in particular were raised and discussed.

The question was first raised, "How can anyone be without God ?"(v. 12), It was thought that Gentiles of the pre-Christian era lived lives "without hope" and were consequently steeped in idolatry [Comment 3]. As Paul discovered at Athens, men had no knowledge of the God of heaven although they could not live without Him.

Verse 17 we found to be initially puzzling in that we could not see how the Lord preached to those "that were far off" and to those "that were nigh". Those referred to as "far off" we assumed to be Gentiles who, apart from a few isolated examples, were not taught by the Lord. It was thought, however, that the words spoken by the Lord Jesus were not just for those who heard Him but for the millions who would come after (John 17: 20). Similarly during the life of the Lord Moses was still speaking to Israel. Such scriptures as Isaiah 42: 6 were also cited to help us see that the words of the Lord to Gentiles had long been fore-ordained.

Some difficulty was encountered in the last part of our passage because although v. 21 was seen to refer to the house of God, and v. 22 to the church of God in Ephesus, there were differing views as to the meaning of the household" of God in v. 19.

One view was that the word household referred to the family of believers and that it implied a community of people associated with a family. An example was seen to be the household of Abraham which consisted not only of close relatives but also of servants. It was also suggested in support of this idea that membership of such a household would not necessarily depend on obedience but on an unbreakable bond.

Alternatively, it was thought that the "'household" of God was indeed the house of God, as suggested by v. 20. ". . . household of God, being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the chief corner stone". As the house of God today has v. 20 as its basis it could be described as God's household. (Bible Studies 1978, p. 82 was suggested as being of some help) [Comment 11].

C. Edis

From Paisley: In the ancient world, the Jew was separated from the Gentile by racial, religious, cultural, and social barriers, the great barrier between them being the law and commandments. The rituals in which the Jews seemed to pride themselves and the manner in which they practised their religion aggravated the conflict between the two.

In Ephesus, the Gentile Christians predominated. This section of the letter is directed to the Gentiles to remind them that "salvation is not of works, that no man should glory" and that as Christians we are all on equal terms. This one-ness must be expressed in our personal relationships and in the way we behave.

Paul reminds them that they were utter strangers to God's chosen community, Israel, and that they had no knowledge of, or right to, the promises of God. Now through Christ, however, they have been brought from outside to within the circle of God's love. He has made a unity of the conflicting elements of Jew and Gentile by breaking down the barrier which lay between.

If Christ could bring these two together, there was, and is, no human gulf too great to bridge. His death on the cross is the one means of peace for all men without distinction. And all who belong to Him have a common bond which is deeper and stronger than any of their former differences for example of race or colour or status or background. Jew and Gentile are one in Christ.

As fellow citizens, therefore, and as members of the household of God with the foundation of God's apostles and prophets beneath them, they are encouraged to knit together. As separate components each is to fit together with his neighbour in churches of God which are also to fit together and so grow into a temple in the Lord.

Paul's address to the Gentiles reminds us:

- (a) that our reconciliation to God, to whom we were strangers, was through the cross (v. 16).
- (b) that we have constant access to God through the Holy Spirit (v. 18).
- (c) that we are fellow citizens and as such we have to adhere to particular standards if we are not to bring disrepute to our fellows.
- (d) that we are "fitly framed" together. All components of the structure are equally important and interdependent.
- (e) that we have an active part to play in the "growth" (v. 21).

B. Gault

COMMENTS

1. **(Birkenhead):** The *naos* was situated in the innermost of three courts which in turn were separated from the court of the Gentiles by a wall beyond which any Gentile passing was in danger of death.

2. **(Birkenhead):** See the article "growing into a holy Temple" (*Bible Studies*, 1981, vol. 79 p. 34) for a discussion of what is meant by "growing".
P. L. H

3. **(Derby):** Friends in Derby have got to the heart of the force of the expression "without God in the world" whose meaning is touched on by friends in Dulwich and Liverpool and queried by friends in Nottingham. It is the exact opposite of that central feature of the truth of the house of God which says that the omnipresent God has a dwelling place on earth amongst His people (2 Chron. 6: 18 - 21, Is, 66: 1). Because the omnipresent God so dwelt with His people He could not so dwell with the Gentiles who were consequently "without God in the world".

4. **(Derby):** See Dulwich paper (v. 20) and Comment 6.

5. **(Dulwich):** The term *oikeioi* (v. 19) refers to members of a household or family. There is a transition of thought in v. 20 to another concept, that of a building or structure.

6. **(Dulwich):** Not more so, however, than the English. The truth they stood for and communicated had its origin in God and essential to it was the person, word and work of Christ. By divine grace the apostles and prophets were instrumental in laying the foundation whereby there could be collective testimony to the truth, and thus it is called the foundation of the apostles and prophets.
E. A

7. **(Galston):** While agreeing heartily with friends in Galston that the truths of Eph. 3: 14 - 22 all pertain to those in churches of God we shall lose if we do not distinguish between blessings which come through being "in Christ" and those which come through being "in the Lord". We would lose sight, in this passage for example, of the "natural and expected progress in spiritual experience" referred to in Comment 11.

I. E. P.

8. **(Liverpool):** More is involved than mere acknowledgement of existence;

"the demons also believe **and shudder**" (Jas. 2: 19). Romans 2 shows that response to **the law of God written in the heart is the evidence of genuine faith in Him.**

9. (Cowdenbeath **and** Liverpool) These two contributions show alternative understandings of **the** phrase "one **new man**". Is the "**new man**" **the Church, the Body of Christ, or is it an individual Christian? it is true that Christ is Himself man, but this is so in a literal sense, referring to His constitution. The Church, as the Body, is not elsewhere referred to as a man, and it seems to me to be straining the metaphor to refer to the Lord, as Head, and the members together as a "new man". I would suggest that the scripture refers to a new category of man. Previously Tew and Gentile were mutually exclusive categories of man, separated by the circumstances of their birth; now in the new creation in Christ, there is one type of man created by the new birth. I would thus tend to agree with the Liverpool point of view.**

P. L. H.

10. (Liverpool): Some view **the term** "of the household of God" (v. 19) as **signifying** all those who **are born again, and, alas, not all who are born again realise or are prepared to recognise their responsibility, nor are all ready to be built.**

E. A.

11. (Nottingham): As comment 5 points out, there is a difference between the Greek words used for "house" and here for "household". The latter word is not **used** of **the** building, although **the** former **may be used** of **the** group of people. **In the passage under consideration, the phrase "and of the household of God" follows "fellow-citizens with the saints"^{ft}. This citizenship is a heavenly one, shared by all who are believers in Christ. Since "of the household of God" is connected by the conjunction "and", it is logical to deduce that the same groups of people are referred to as God's family or household. Both citizenship and membership of a family are consequences of birth; in this case, of the new birth. In contrast, the house of God is an earthly thing, and men and women who are living stones have to be built into it. This is the natural and expected progression in spiritual experience, which had been followed by the saints in Ephesus, but it has not been followed by everyone, and there are some who are members of the household, but not of the house.**

P. L. H.

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EDITORIAL

8406

Scripture describes the Lord Jesus Christ as "the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last" (Rev. 22:13). He was responsible for the creation of the world, and everything that is in it (John 1: 3) and "all things have been created through Him, and unto Him" (Col. 1: 16). He thus is the creative Son of God, has a position of absolute authority over creation and His power holds it together (Col. 1: 17). Yet God, in completing His purpose, has a greater thing in view than creation; He desired to "sum up all things in Christ" (Eph. 1:10). Chief in such summation was God's purpose to bring created beings, by means of a new creation, into an organic union with His Son. The original creation, in which men had been made God-like with will and intellect, had been spoiled by the sinful exercise of that will, and God revealed through the apostles and teachers of the New Covenant, His plan to unite in one Body men who had been divided from God and from each other by sin. Jew and Gentile, male and female, black and white, are all united in Christ through faith. All become inheritors of the promises made to Abraham long before (Gal. 4: 28, 29).

It must have amazed "the principalities and powers in the heavenly places" (Eph. 3:10) to see the grace of God in giving a new start to those who had failed so signally, and through all ages the Church, the Body of Christ, will be a demonstration of God's wisdom to them. As for ourselves, to whom this revelation has been given, and for whom Christ died to make union with Him possible, we can only thank God as we perceive "the unsearchable riches of Christ" (v.8), and take encouragement from the fact that "if God is for us, who is against us?" (Rom. 8: 31).

P. L. H.

LESS THAN THE LEAST PREACHES THE UNSEARCHABLE RICHES OF CHRIST

The greatness of the message preached by Paul is emphasized by the contrast between his state and his message that is brought before us in this month's study portion most of which (vv. 2-13) appears to be in parenthesis to the main theme of ch. 2 and the verses following ch. 3: 13. The contrast which calls to mind such Scriptures as 1 Cor. 1: 27 is emphasized by the close placing together of the words "less than the least of all saints" and the "unsearchable riches of Christ" (Eph. 3:8).

Various words relating to time are used in the RV; "generations" (v. 5) where the AV reads "ages"; "ages", v. 9 where the AV reads the same but the RV margin reads "purpose of the ages". The RV seems more accurate than the AV in these places, although the full significance is lost in the English, The word in vv. 9 and 11 is "*aion*", "denoting eternal... used of that which in nature is endless,... a period of indefinite duration" (Vine), while the word in v. 5 is "*genea*", "a period ordinarily occupied by each successive generation..." (Vine). The purpose of God to bring together Jew and Gentile into one Body was in the eternal (i. e. far beyond the boundaries of time) purpose of God and hidden in Him from "times" eternal. It was not revealed to many generations because it was not the purpose of God so to do, but when the fulness of the time came, the dispensation of that grace of God (v. 2), then He revealed to that "generation" His wonderful intention. That purpose has been made known to succeeding generations, overwhelmingly Gentile by birth, principally through the writings of one man, the apostle Paul, who was once a Pharisee, a son of Pharisees. How unsearchable are His ways; that one of whom men might say that he was less than the likeliest of Jews should be chosen to be the apostle of the Gentiles.

The Jews despised the Gentiles and the fact that God had granted the opportunity of repentance and salvation to the Gentile was a source of amazement to them (Acts 11: 18) and the truth that Paul declared in Eph. 3: 4-7 would be a revelation difficult to comprehend by a Jew. Yet such was the grace of God that the Gentiles had become fellow-heirs, fellow-members and fellow-partakers and Paul had had this truth revealed to him (v. 5) and, in turn, he was proclaiming it to others (v. 7). The blessing that the Gentiles were to receive through the seed of Abraham had been known for a long time (Gen. 22: 18), but the unique relationship of the Jew and Gentile in one Body had not been revealed before. It had been hidden in God but had been His eternal purpose and the contemplation of it impresses us with His manifold wisdom.

God was showing to the beings in the heavenly places new aspects of His wisdom, wonders far beyond their understanding. Thus, in showing His wisdom, God has, as it were, by-passed angelic beings and given His message to men. And what men they were, for they were regarded (1. Cor. 4: 13) as "the off-scouring of all things"! Of them men might say that they were less than the likeliest of men to be so chosen.

Paul had not received his teaching from another (v. 3) but by revelation (*cf.* Mat, 16: 17). The word "mystery" here, as elsewhere in the New Testament, means something which was hidden but has now been revealed. One has said "a mystery is that which is everywhere proclaimed but which is not understood by those who have not right judgement". While it was in a very special way that these truths were revealed to the apostle to the Gentiles he was not the only recipient of these truths (*cf.* Acts 1: 3) so it may be that the Ephesians were unfamiliar with the other apostles. As Paul himself had spent some time in Ephesus (Acts 19) it seems strange that he should write "... if so be that ye have heard...". It may be suggested that these words indicate that the letter was to be read in other assemblies besides Ephesus. On the other hand, it may be that the use of "if" here does not relate to whether or not the readers had heard of these matters but whether they had grasped the truth taught. See also Eph. 1: 1, RV margin. It is clear, however, that God has taken very special care with the revelation of this truth to we Gentiles and has done so in what men might think of as less than the likeliest of ways.

At the time of writing Paul may well have considered himself as a man ^M"doomed to death" (1 Cor. 4: 9) for he was a prisoner of the Roman government. But this is not how he describes himself for he writes, "... I Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus... ". He saw his imprisonment as part of his sufferings for the sake of the Name and was content to accept them as such. He had been apprehended (arrested) by an earthly power but that was of little significance in the mind of Paul compared with his apprehension by Christ Jesus (Phil. 3: 12). Thus from what might seem less than the likeliest of circumstances he wrote of the "unsearchable riches of Christ".

One might then ask if "less than the least of all saints" (v. 8) was a true description. Paul was an outstanding servant of the Lord, called to be an apostle. He invited saints to be imitators of him, Phil. 3: 17: 4: 9: 1 Cor. 4: 16. One thinks that this description of himself has to be considered in the spirit of 1 Cor. 15: 9 where he writes "I am the least

of the apostles,... because I persecuted the church of God". Paul's humility knew no bounds as he remembered how, even though a devout Jew, he persecuted the Lord Jesus and the church of God (Acts 9: 2, 5). Paul's own opinion of himself as "less than the least" stands in sharp contrast to the words in the same verse, "the unsearchable riches of Christ". How well did he appreciate the grace of God in his case! And how well ought we to appreciate it, too, for these riches come to us in our day through the unlikeliest of men writing from the unlikeliest of places about the unlikeliest of blessings that we Gentiles in the flesh could ever have anticipated.

R. Hickling

CORRESPONDENCE: THE CHURCH THE BODY AND THE BRIDE

The following observations are made concerning Comment No. 5 (BS 8311 p. 171) in reference to Liverpool's paper:

The Church the Body of Christ comprises both Jew and Gentile and hence it is inaccurate to say that Joseph's Gentile bride foreshadows the Church the Body of Christ. We suggest it is more accurate to say that Joseph's bride and Boaz's bride foreshadow the Bride the wife of the Lamb. We suggest they are two different entities.

When comments are made about Ephesians 5: 27 they are often based on the presumption that the Church the Body is the Bride the wife of the Lamb. Neither the word 'present' (*paristemi*) nor the word 'church' (*ecclesia*). which is in italics since it is put in by the translators to give what they consider to be the sense, support the view which so many have followed in the past forty or fifty years. Present (*paristemi*) means 'to set by the side of or 'to place beside' and cannot in any way be construed as marriage. Nor can the word 'church' be totally justified to give the sense. It may be equally correct to insert the word 'Body' to give the correct sense.

The relationship dealt with in the verses 22 and 23 is between two sets of persons who are *already inseparably* joined to each other in the purposes of God, and as conceived in Genesis. That is, husband and wife and Christ and the Church. In no way in their future will it be necessary to undergo another 'joining'. The word 'present' shows this to be so. In this passage is the bringing 'alongside' of an entity whose members were already joined to Him while on earth and before some were called home to glory.

The events in Revelation 19: 5-9 are often linked, incorrectly we suggest, to Ephesians 5. The events of verses 5-9 take place on earth

and concern the 'small and the great*. Many may have had recourse to Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words and will doubtless quote what he says in support of Revelation 19: 5-9 taking place in heaven. His comments are not expository but one of interpretation supporting what 'Brethren' have held to be the understanding of the passage. Many of our early brethren may have followed the same lines without re-examining carefully the passages and laying aside any preconceived ideas about the relationship of the Church and the Bride.

The belief that the Church the Body is the Bride needs careful re-examination.

R. A. Parker

Editorial Note:

Editors agree with the suspicions of our contributor that there will be few readers who believe that the Church the Body and the Bride are not the same people. Nevertheless some points that require answering have been made and we would welcome the observations of contributors on the subject of the foregoing correspondence.

CHRIST JESUS: 'IN' AND 'OF'

Many useful, interesting and stimulating interpretations of the titles of the Lord Jesus have been made by His disciples who are students of the Word. This paper contains a suggestive line of study which takes context into account as well as the order of the two names 'Christ' and 'Jesus'.

The title 'Christ Jesus' occurs 11 times in the epistle of Paul to the Ephesians. It is prefixed by the characteristic prepositions 'in'^T and 'of' in contrast to the title 'Jesus Christ' which is invariably prefixed by the characteristic preposition 'through' or 'by'¹ (see Eph. 1: 5).

In this short study we first offer general suggestions as to the use of the title 'Christ Jesus' and then make comments about its specific use throughout the epistles of Paul.

General Use

From a consideration of its use in the Epistles, the term appears to be associated with service in various ways; service as bond-servants, service as sons of God, service in the house of God and service, both now and eternally for which we are saved. When prefaced by 'in' i. e. 'in Christ Jesus', it denotes the *potential service* of the person or persons in view, arising from what the Lord Jesus has both done and made possible.

When prefixed by 'of, i. e. 'of Christ Jesus', it denotes the *actual service* of the person or persons in the context. It indicates what has been done or what is being done now as a present and continuing service for the Lord.

Specific Use of ^fof (Past or Present Service)

"Paul an apostle of Christ Jesus" (Eph. 1: 1; Col. 1: 1; 1 Tim. 1: 1; 2 Tim. 1: 1; 2 Cor. 1: 1). Here we have a declaration and claim by the apostle to be a 'sent one' in the actual service of our Lord. It states what he was at the time of writing and we know there were those who disputed his claims. The most important experience of Paul in support of his claim was that he had seen the Lord.

"Paul the prisoner of Christ Jesus" (Eph. 3: 1; Philemon 1). Not only was he claiming to be a sent one in the service of the Lord but also that service had brought him into physical bondage for His Name's sake.

"They that are of Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh" (Gal. 5: 24). Those referred to here are viewed as being in the service of God in His kingdom. They walk by the Spirit, are led by the Spirit, and live by the Spirit, so that the fruit of the Spirit is manifest in their lives.

"He which began a good work in you will perfect it *until* the day of Christ Jesus" (Phil. 1: 6). The Greek text in this case is 'Christ Jesus' and so the day in view is the day of Christ Jesus. The characteristic preposition associated with the title Jesus Christ is 'through' and not 'of' (see 1: 11). Also the word *until* would be more correctly translated ^Tin^T. So that the perfecting of the good work or service of the individual which began at an earlier date will be achieved during the period of divine service here on earth.

"I long after you all in the tender mercies of Christ Jesus" (Phil. 1: 8). Being partakers of grace with the apostle, the Philippian saints were highly privileged to be associated with the preaching of the gospel and the royal priesthood service. The tender mercies of Christ Jesus had given Paul fellow-workers, and as they served he longed for them and prayed for them and their spiritual growth through service, being filled with fruit of righteousness (right doing).

(to be continued)

R. A. Parker

THE PURPOSE OF THE AGES (Ephesians 3: 1-13)

From **Birkenhead**: The teaching which Paul delivered from God to the saints is recorded for them whilst he is a physical prisoner, deprived of his freedom because of his beliefs and service to His Master. Whilst he seeks to reassure his flock and help them realize his privilege in suffering thus, he also seeks to impress upon them the joy he had in being a spiritual prisoner of Christ Jesus in His service for them. The differing ideas of imprisonment are closely linked in that they are undertaken in the love of Christ.

The aspect of the truth which is emphasized now is that eternal truth which revolves around the purpose of God from eternity past to save sinful man and make him fully aware of the "mystery of Christ". This mystery is defined in v.6, where the fellowship of all believers as heirs, members of the Body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus, is recorded.

The facts to which Paul refers were hidden by God until the time was right, and were then revealed to those New Testament apostles and prophets by the work of the Holy Spirit. It was Paul's privilege to have a leading place in the outworking of God's purposes by helping many to come to a knowledge of these truths.

His place in His Master's plan was accurately perceived by Paul and demonstrated in v. 7, where his humility is apparent. He "was made" a minister, received "the gift of that grace" which "was given" to him. All he has received is acknowledged as emanating from the Father, and his spiritual position in this world is acknowledged by him as being the most insignificant of believers, and yet he knows that he is the channel through which the Holy Spirit of God is to speak of the unsearchable riches of Christ.

There is another and more profound purpose in God's will and this is the manifestation of both His glory and His work, in the building of the Church the Body of Christ, to the lesser authorities whom God allows to operate in the heavenly sphere. Paul continually draws together other truths which he has already made known. In this case, he again refers to the sacrifice of Jesus Christ being basic to this display as well as to the access which is the believer's through faith. It is evident through Paul's writing that these differing truths are not isolated but are part of that body of truth and teaching which is the full purpose of God in His dealing with man and his sinful state.

Particularly relevant to this thought is the fact that v. 9 brings to light Paul's exercise towards all men through the grace of God. None is excluded from benefiting from the mercy of God.

R. C. Halpin, A. Hyland

From Cowdenbeath: We noted that in this epistle Paul appears to emphasize his state as a prisoner (3: 1; 13; 4: 1; 6: 20). We believe that since such descriptions follow his treatise on our exaltation and blessing in Christ, he is underlining the honour of suffering for Christ's sake. Since the words "For this cause" are used both in v. 1 and in v. 14 we concluded that Paul was suspending his statement (made from v. 14 onwards) to tell the Ephesians of the great stewardship given to him by God to make known what God had revealed to him first of all. This mystery expounded in v. 6 had not previously been known by men (v. 5). It had been hid in God (v. 9). It would appear that none of the angelic orders had known of it either (v. 10). Now it had been committed to Paul by divine revelation. Little wonder he describes himself as "less than the least of all saints". A true understanding of the wonderful grace of God toward us brings real humility of heart. "It humbles us, yet praise compels".

To Paul, then, was given this stewardship and he fully realized the implications of it. He was "to make all men see... ". His was a ministry to enlighten the hearts of men of every class and creed with regard to this great purpose of God. The mystery was revealed and now lay open to the gaze of all who would receive divine enlightenment in the matter.

In v. 10 we noted the time description "now", emphasizing that, in this dispensation, it is God's pleasure to reveal His multi-faceted wisdom through the Church, the Body of Christ. We considered together what we saw as some glories of this wisdom through the Church. There was no unanimity of thought as to whether the principalities and powers might include those of ch. 6: 12. Most thought not. We would appreciate the view of Editors on this matter [Comment 1].

V. 11 goes further than the term "Christ Jesus", used frequently throughout this epistle. This purpose of the ages was purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord and it seemed to us that mention of the Lordship of Christ signified that in that purpose hearts are to be responsive and obedient to the revelation of God.

Since we have been placed in Christ we have freedom of speech (boldness) and confidence of access before God. Paul enjoins the Ephesians then, in view of these things, not to recoil at his sufferings endured on their behalf. The end of his labour had been their salvation and glory.

R. I. Shaw

From **Denver**: What a great vision is presented to us as Paul describes his understanding of the "mystery of Christ"¹. It is indeed a mystery to both the Jew and the Gentile as we see such words as "fellow-heirs", "fellow-members" and fellow-partakers". The Gentile had no hope and was without God in this world, but the purpose of God is seen in the words of the Lord, "The kingdom of God shall be taken away from you, and shall be given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof" (Mat. 21: 43). We should also link this with the words at the start of this chapter, "For this cause...". What cause was this? The purpose of God is seen throughout time and is again outlined in ch. 2, a people for His own possession (1 Pet. 2: 9) [Comment 2]. This mystery had been hid for ages and generations but now was made manifest to Paul and to the saints. The central theme of this mystery, of course, was that God was dealing with the Gentiles through His Son. Paul (Col. 1: 27) could write, "God was pleased to make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory". What a wonderful relationship is brought before us in the words, riches, and glory and hope. This has all been accomplished for us and can be claimed by all who put their trust in the Lord Jesus Christ. So much to learn and discover! No wonder Paul could say, "The unsearchable riches of Christ".

We also see somewhat of this mystery in Rom. 15: 9-13 "that the Gentiles might glorify God". The rejoicing of the Gentiles in Romans must be seen in the purpose; "on Him shall the Gentiles hope". The guards of the law have been overcome by grace to bring the Gentile to the Throne of Mercy. Justified by faith, "accepted in the Beloved", heirs of the promise which had only belonged to the Jew, God's purpose in the Gentiles is now revealed through His servant Paul. Galatians 3: 8, 9 shows that by faith we can accept and become, with the Jew, God's chosen people, partakers of the promise (Eph. 3: 6) in Christ Jesus [Comment 3].

Although we cannot help but enjoy what all this means to us as individuals and as a people for God, we must also look at the direction that is given to us. There is an aspect of stewardship here that we see in Paul but is passed on to us. He states, "I was made a minister ... to preach unto the Gentiles... and to make all men see..." (vv. 7-9), yet he writes (vv. 2, 4, 10), "to the intent that now... might be made known through the church the manifold wisdom of God". Here we have passed on to us the future aspect of the purpose as related to the Church today. What had been hidden should no longer be hidden! This stewardship of the mystery has been passed on to us, therefore, let us not faint but go forth with boldness and make these things known.

A. Higgins, D. Williamson

From Derby: We find the expression used in the title in v. 11, where it is rendered in the RV "according to the eternal purpose". All of God's purposes were centred in His Son Christ Jesus while He was on earth and the ages had looked forward to this. It was given to Paul to reveal the mystery of Christ. This truth had till then been hidden but it was revealed to the initiated that the Gentiles were fellow-heirs, and fellow-members of the Body, and fellow-partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the Gospel.

Paul was in prison because of the Gentiles and from there he wrote this epistle. He knew that all things work together for good... and these prison letters have brought blessing to the Gentiles throughout the dispensation.

The mystery of Christ had not been revealed to any previous generation. The Jews knew that the Gentiles would be blessed, but they had no idea that they would have equal status with themselves in the Body of Christ. They would be fellow-heirs, that is they would have a share in the inheritance, they were incorporated into the Body of Christ and they would enjoy a share in the spiritual blessings - all because they were in Christ. Paul was given by God the privilege of preaching this mystery. He knew that he himself had persecuted the church, but he had had a great vision, so he called himself, "less than the least of all saints".

The riches of Christ are so great that we can only see a part of them. The plan for the Church, the Body of Christ, was in the mind of the great Creator, God, from the beginning of the world. Even the angels are able to increase their knowledge of the wisdom and grace of God as they watch the formation of the Church.

We can speak boldly and freely because of the work of the Lord Jesus Christ and we can come to God in Him. Paul was suffering but the glory was passing to the Church and so he asked them not to faint.

The Jew and the Gentile who believe are in Christ and this is the great mainstream of truth for this generation.

G. W. Conway

From Galston: All knowledge of God comes through revelation of God (v. 3). The "mystery of Christ" is evidently "that the Gentiles are fellow-heirs, and fellow-members of the body, and fellow-partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the Gospel". We assumed that what is meant by fellow-heirs is that the Gentiles are fellow-heirs with the Jewish believers of the promise to Abraham (Gal. 3:8, 16), but we wondered why the phrase is separated from "fellow-partakers of the promise" by "fellow-members of the body".

The words "dispensation" and "gift" in vv. 2 and 7 would indicate that the gifts of God to Paul and to each of us are a stewardship, (see also 1 Cor. 9: 16, 17 and 1 Pet. 4: 10). "Unto me, who am less than the least... was this grace given" (v. 8). The same grace of God enables us to see the greatness of Paul and enables Paul to see his "leastness".

Grace is needed to preach. Not all have the grace to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ. That the grace given includes the gift is implied. Non-observance by us of this teaching of Scripture can only result in lack of blessing in the preaching of the Gospel. Paul knew he had the grace and gift to preach and we would think that each of us lesser men ought to know whether we have the grace or gift or not.

"And to make all men see what is the dispensation of the mystery". This mystery is evidently related to the Church the Body of Christ, but we think is not the Church. In the context it seems to be the question which must have occupied the minds of godly men and angels in past ages, namely, "How will God act, what will He do to fulfil His promise of justification to men and women of faith *and* maintain His standards of righteousness, justice and holiness?" [Comment 4]. God's dispensation of the mystery, His "mode of dealing" with the (to angels and men) unsolvable problem is fully set out in Paul's epistle to the Romans.

The manifold ("much varied" - Vine) wisdom of God is made known through the Church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places. They have seen the manifold wisdom of God in creation (Job 26: 7-14; Prov. 3: 19) and in the natural provisions made by God for His creatures (Ps. 104: 24) "O Lord, how manifold are Thy works! In wisdom hast Thou made them all". Now they see the manifold wisdom through the Church the Body of Christ; "not many wise after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble...; But God chose the foolish... the weak... the base... and the... despised... and the things that are not... That no flesh should glory before God. But of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, who was made unto us wisdom from God... He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord" (1 Cor. 1: 26-31).

J.H. Johnson

From **Liverpool: A Mystery Hidden.** A mystery in the Scriptures is more often than not a truth that has been hidden. Some have been revealed, others have not. In this case the mystery of Christ and His Church has been revealed. It was always the purpose of God to bring together Jews and Gentiles into one Church, described earlier as "the church, which is His body", and this truth was hinted at when God declared to Abram "I will make of thee a great nation... and in thee

shall all the families of the earth be blessed" (Gen. 12: 2-3). From this point onward the mystery's fulfilment remained with the people of Israel, aspects of it appearing through the prophets enlightened by the Holy Spirit.

A Mystery Revealed. The Lord Jesus began the revelation one day at Caesarea Philippi when He spoke about building His Church (Mat. 16: 13-20) and later in giving the great commission He spoke to the apostles of "disciples of all nations" (Mat. 28: 19), though they did not seem to appreciate readily that this included Gentiles. Paul and Peter both had a revelation from God on this point: Paul through Ananias (Acts 9: 15-17), Peter by way of a special vision (Acts 10). Later in Acts 15 we see them both contending for the truth that God "made no distinction between us and them" (Gentiles) in opposition to some believers who belonged to the party of the Pharisees.

An Early Picture. We now have a relationship with God through Christ which is closer than that enjoyed by the Old Testament saints, through the Church which is Christ's Body. This truth was prefigured as early as Adam and Eve:

- (i) Adam was alone and lacked companionship, and God said, "I will make him a help meet for him",
- (ii) God caused Adam to fall into a deep sleep and from that experience He made Eve.
- (iii) God presented Eve to Adam.

In some amazing way Christ is incomplete without His Church, and He went through the "deep sleep" of death to bring it about and some day it will be presented to Him "as a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing" (5: 27). Although Christ is Lord of Creation, nothing is as precious to Him as His Church.

D. J. Webster, K. T. Jones

From Nottingham: Paul was bound in chains in a Roman jail (Eph. 6: 20), but neither the Jewish nor the Roman authorities could bring any charge against him that they could prove (Acts 25: 7; 25: 25-27, 26: 31-32). There is a similarity between this and the experience of the Lord Jesus Christ. He, too, had done nothing wrong, yet they killed Him.

Now Paul may have had a good cause to complain about the way in which he was being treated, but he did not think or see things like this. He saw himself not as a prisoner of Rome but as "the prisoner of Christ". He was not afraid or disillusioned about the treatment he must have gone through, but like the apostles (Acts 5: 41) he thought of it as an honour that he should suffer for the Name and sake of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Why did Paul go to prison? We think it was because the Jewish elders did not like his telling the message of salvation through Jesus Christ to the Gentiles because they thought that it was only for them.

Furthermore, when Paul was bound in Rome, he was the centre of much assembly activity by the Gentile churches, who loved and supported him by their prayers to God for him. In response to their actions he wrote some of the epistles we have in our New Testament. In other words, he saw his being a prisoner as a result of his serving the Lord and also as a way in which he could serve the Lord further in bringing blessing to the Gentiles. Therefore he called himself, "the prisoner of Christ Jesus in behalf of you Gentiles" (Eph. 3: 1), and wrote that his troubles and suffering were for their glory (Eph. 3: 13).

Paul saw that what had happened to him had not happened by accident, but was part of the Lord's will or plan for him. It was but a part of a greater plan; one so special to God that He had not revealed it before the days of the apostles. The plan is that all men, both Jews and Gentiles by birth, should be united as fellow-heirs and fellow-members of the Body, and fellow-partakers of the promise of Christ Jesus through the Gospel (Eph. 3: 6). God had purposed to do this before the ages began, but had then hidden it in Himself so that neither men nor angels knew of it. It is called a mystery because it had been hidden but now it has been revealed (Col. 1: 26).

God revealed it to Paul directly (Eph. 3: 3). Paul's job was to reveal it to all men now (Eph. 3: 9). In the unseen, spiritual world, the Church which is Christ's Body bears its own witness today (Eph. 3: 10). In ages to come it will bear similar testimony (Eph. 2: 7; 3: 21). Therefore it is called the "purpose of the ages" (Eph. 3: 11 RVM), for it was planned before ages began. It was concealed in ages past, it is being revealed in this present age, and will be gazed and marvelled at in ages to come.

S. Greenwood

From Paisley: Paul refers to himself as a prisoner of Christ Jesus - not of imperial Rome. Three times in the epistle he refers to his imprisonment; the other two references being ch. 4: 1 - the prisoner in the Lord; and ch. 6: 20 - an ambassador in chains.

To be confined to a Roman prison must have been a deep trial to the apostle, but he accepted it as from the Lord, knowing that the Lord was able to open prison doors if He so willed (see Acts 12: 7). The discomforts of being chained to a Roman soldier must have been considerable, but they did not deter the apostle from writing this outstanding epistle, and others also.

In v. 3 he speaks of the revelation of the mystery. This takes us back to the period after his conversion when the gospel came to him by revelation of Jesus Christ (Gal. 1: 12). Since this involved the Gentiles coming into the blessings promised by God through Christ, the apostle refers to himself as an apostle of the Gentiles (Rom. 11: 13). He glorified in this ministry. V. 6 shows how the Gentiles are brought into the fulness of divine promises through faith in Christ and are no longer excluded by ethnic barriers. This is a truth we should hold to tenaciously in a day of racial prejudice.

The humility of the apostle is brought out in v. 8 "less than the least of all saints", a new comparative previously unknown in the Greek language.

The riches of Christ preached by Paul are described as unsearchable; that which cannot be explored. Zophar the Naamathite could ask, "Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection?" (Job 11: 7). God has now revealed Himself to men through Christ, and not only so, but has made known also to the heavenly powers His manifold wisdom.

Though the preaching of the gospel involved hardship for the apostle he was willing to endure it that the Gentiles might hear of God's eternal purposes which are now revealed.

I. Renfrew

From **Surulere**: *Review*. The letter by the hand of Tychicus to the Ephesian saints originated from an ambassador in chains! One of the many topics discussed in this letter is translated as "the eternal purpose" or "the purpose of the ages" (Eph. 3: 11 and RV footnote). The purpose is described as a mystery hid before in God, but now revealed through the apostles and prophets of our dispensation in the Holy Spirit for preaching to all men. Paul identifies himself as an herald of this unique purpose to the Gentiles.

The Purpose of the Ages. Is this the singular summary of the privileges allowed to the Gentile believers as in Eph. 3: 6? It was suggested not. Has it any bearing on "the mystery of Christ"? (Eph. 3: 4). The answer was yes. We concluded that the purpose of the ages has to do with the Church the Body of Christ. This purpose embraces both Jewish and Gentile believers. A mystery which is now revealed to show the surpassing wisdom of God among the principalities and powers in the heavenly places. The eternal nature of this purpose is emphatic in the words of our Lord Jesus, "I will build My Church; and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it" (Mat. 16: 18). It is a purpose not subject to the will of man nor of the flesh, but of God. The inception

and the completion of the plan are of God.

The Ministry of Comfort, Paul says **he has written** "afore in few words" and it seems the revelation has weight of comfort he wants to share with the saints in the fierce hour of tribulations facing him and them. Who is the least of all the saints? Paul says I am less than he! The riches of the glory of this mystery is "Christ in you, the hope of glory". "As having nothing, and yet possessing all things" (2 Cor: 6: 10)! In Christ we have boldness and access and confidence through our faith in Him to be "fellow-heirs, and fellow-members of the Body and fellow-partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus". Wherefore I ask that ye faint not, says Paul.

E. I. Basse, M. Imoukhuede, R. Okeri

COMMENTS

1. (Cowdenbeath): It is not possible to be dogmatic about this, but we would tend to agree with our contributors that the passage refers to the display of God's wisdom to angels and other heavenly servants of God, who are interested in such things (1 Pet. 1: 12) rather than to opposing Powers

P. L. H.

The Lord said that the Church which is His Body would know victory over the Devil and his agents (Mat. 16: 18) which indicates that they know of and oppose its building. Eph. 3: 10, however, speaks of the manifold wisdom of God being made known through His Church. Men are constitutionally incapable of knowing much if anything of the wisdom of God without being born again. Their nature is that of their father, the Devil from which we may conclude that the wisdom of God is lost on the Devil (and his agents) too. Is this not the root of the Devil's nature? He thinks his wisdom is greater than God's. He cannot comprehend victory through weakness and defeat. He does not accept meekness and humility as worthy of exaltation. Thus we would think again without being dogmatic, that the principalities and powers of Eph. 6: 12 have no grasp of the manifold wisdom of God.

2. (**Denver**): Care needs to be taken to distinguish between the Church, the Body of Christ, and the earthly people of God. It is true that God desires that all believers, who at the time of faith in Christ have been baptized in one Spirit... into one body" (1 Cor. 12: 13), should be united together in an earthly organization. This is described in two different ways, corresponding to different relationships:

- (i) The house of God - "a habitation of God in the Spirit" (Eph. 2: 22).
- (ii) The holy nation (1 Pet. 2: 9) - the people to whom the responsibilities of the Kingdom of God have been entrusted (Mat. 21: 43).

Eph. 2 demonstrates the natural progression. However, since the Church, the Body of Christ, comprises all believers in Christ since Pentecost, it cannot be coextensive with the holy nation, which is essentially earthly. Furthermore, regrettably, all believers are not gathered into an earthly unity under God's rule.

"The mystery of Christ" (v. 4) is "that the Gentiles are fellow-heirs, and fellow-members of the body" (v. 6). God had had, since Sinai, a people who were His own (Ex. 19: 5; Deut. 7: 6), but union with Christ, so that both Jew and Gentile could be linked with Him in a relationship so close that it would only be likened to that between the limbs and the head of a body, was a completely new concept. It could not have been perceived by reasoning, and had found no previous expression, so it could only have been made known by revelation (v. 3). The wonder of the fact that men, through faith, could become so united with Christ, made the apostle describe it as "the unsearchable riches of Christ" (v. 8). This, then, is what is described in this month's title as "the purpose of the ages"; the building of the Church, which is Christ's body, and which will be united with Him for ever.

3. (Denver): Again, the promise is that of life and blessing to those who are by faith sons of Abraham, not that of national position.

4. (Galston): Since "the mystery of Christ" is defined in v. 6 as the Church, the Body of Christ, and v. 10 again mentions the Church, it is difficult to see how the mystery of v. 9 could be anything else, in the context. However, one can agree that the mystery is not simply the existence of the Church, but all the consequences of its existence.

P. L. H.

QUESTION

From Nottingham: If "ages" has to do with time, what happens to "the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus" at the end of the age of the ages ? (Eph. 3: 21)

The expression which is literally "the age of the ages" is properly translated "for ever and ever" in RV, denoting limitless duration into the future. F. F. Bruce (Answers to Questions, Exeter 1972, p. 203) explains: "Aion... like its Hebrew equivalent *olam*, denotes indefinite duration, whether backward in time, forward in time, or in both directions.... The idea of eternity can be emphasized by the use of the plural 'ages' (e. g. 'to the ages' Rom. 1: 25), or by compound expressions such as 'to all the ages' (Jude 25), 'to the ages of the ages', (e. g. Gal. 1: 5) or even 'to all the generations of the age of the ages' (Eph. 3: 21). The context alone can indicate whether such expressions connote absolute eternity or very long duration". In this case, it is apparent that the glory is unending.

P L H

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Bible Studies

A magazine for the exploration of the Word of God [Acts 17: 11]

EDITORIAL

8407

There can be few words in the Scriptures which quicken the heart like "the love of Christ". They occur three times only yet each time this greatest of divine emotions, if we may so speak, is intimately associated with the believer's innermost feelings. ^MWho shall separate us from the love of Christ?" (Rom. 8: 35), gives the heart the firmest of resting places. "To know the love of Christ" (Eph. 3: 19) gives the heart the best of ambitions. "The love of Christ constraineth us" (2 Cor. 5: 14) gives the heart the purest of motives.

The hardship of the Roman prison may well have reminded Paul of his own words written to the saints of that very city when he wrote of the love of Christ transcending the misery of human suffering (Rom. 8: 35-6). In his description of himself as "the prisoner of Christ Jesus" and "the prisoner in the Lord" (Eph. 3: 1; 4: 1) he was surely recognizing that, far from being an imprisoned wretch, he was more than a conqueror through Him that loved us (Rom. 8: 37).

Like many a prisoner before and since he had doubtless paced his cell; measuring its length and breadth with the same steps that had traversed the length and breadth of the Fellowship of his day; perhaps estimating its height and longing for the sight of sun and sky and stars. There was, however, a greater breadth and length and height and depth that he habitually measured; namely the love of Christ (Eph. 3: 18). Being constrained by the love of Christ he could not help but direct his efforts to the Ephesian saints that they (and we) might also have something of the measure of the love of Christ.

One of our contributors likens the image of Eph. 3: 18 to that of a box, saying that knowing the love of Christ is like knowing what is inside the box. In pursuing this simile it may be seen that the love of Christ is described as having depth, in addition to breadth, length and height. That is to say the subject is viewed, as it were, from inside the box. This is exactly the position with the love of Christ. It is not something one approaches from the outside. On the contrary, the love

of Christ is within the believer because Christ is within the heart. The prayer of the apostle was that He may be allowed the freedom to dwell in the hearts of the Ephesians. Thus the love of Christ is in the heart of the believer and will proceed from him in the measure that the heart is subject to Him. Our knowledge of it may be one of intimate experience that will enable us to view its limitless extent as a matter of practice and not of theory.

Now we live and walk by faith,
Through the love of Christ;
We can triumph over death,
One in life with Christ.
Rooted, settled, knowing more,
Depths and height of love explore,
Till we gain the heavenly shore
Through the love of Christ
Love of Christ!
When He comes we then shall know
All the love of Christ.

P. H. S. S. 310

j E p

CHRIST JESUS: 'IN' AND 'OF' (continued from BS 8406 p. 94)

"For they all seek their own, not the things of Christ Jesus (Phil. 2: 21). The apostle's wish to know how the Philippian saints were progressing while he himself was poured out as a drink offering, moved him to send Timothy to find out. The reason why he did so was directly related to the care Timothy had for the saints as a brother whose goal was the service of Christ Jesus. The original text supports again the term 'of Christ Jesus'.

"For the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord" (Phil. 3: 8). The supreme achievement of the apostle, his potential attainment and goal, described as the high calling of God in Christ Jesus in the future, was based upon the acquiring of the knowledge of Christ Jesus and its excellence now, during his service as an apostle.

"Thou shalt be a good minister (deacon) of Christ Jesus" (1 Tim. 4:6). The finest service Timothy could give, was to put the brethren in mind of these things, **now**.

"I charge thee in the sight... of Christ Jesus" (1 Tim. 6: 13). Keeping the commandment was part of his service until the Lord Jesus comes.

"A good soldier of Christ Jesus" (2 Tim. 2: 3). This last reference bears out the use of the prefix ^fof as being indicative of present service for "no soldier on service entangleth himself".

The indictment is in the sight of Him who witnessed the good confession as Jehovah's Servant.

Specific Use of 'in' (Potential Service)

"The faithful in Christ Jesus" (Eph. 1: 1). All the saints in the church of God in Ephesus are included in those addressed thus: "to the saints". Who then are "the faithful in Christ Jesus"? We suggest it refers to those who, in the will of God, will continue in the future to serve the Lord in the church of God in Ephesus.

"With Him in the heavenly places, in Christ Jesus" (Eph. 2: 5-6). It has often been pointed out that "with" in these two verses is the "with" of association and not of time. The purpose of that association was to put the believer into a relationship with Christ so that he/she could serve Him now and in the ages to come. It gave potentiality for service to the quickened one, who was once dead.

"In kindness toward us in Christ Jesus" (Eph. 2: 7). The fact that we are destined to serve Him in the ages to come gives Him also the opportunity, through that service, to show to us the exceeding riches of His grace in kindness.

"Created in Christ Jesus for good works" (Eph. 2: 10). Once we put faith in Christ we had the potentiality by His grace, as vessels of mercy, henceforth to produce good works (service) which were in line with what He had already prepared for us to do.

"Now in Christ Jesus ye that once were afar off are made nigh in the blood of Christ" (Eph. 2: 13). This scripture focusses our minds on the burnt offering of which the blood of Christ speaks. It has enabled both Jew (those nigh) and the Gentile (ye that were once afar off) who are now joined in divine service, to be made nigh in that service. To have through Christ and His blood, the right of access in one Spirit unto the Father.

"Christ Jesus Himself being the chief corner stone; in whom... ¹¹
(Eph. 2: 20). Whether ^fof or 'in', all service in the house of God now and in the future, must be in line with and measured by Christ Jesus.

"Fellow-partakers of **the promise in Christ Jesus** through the gospel" (**Eph. 3: 6**). **The promise in Christ Jesus** refers to the **giving of the Spirit** of God for the enabling of **the saints in divine service**. It gives to both Jew and Gentile **the necessary ability to work for Him**.

"According to the **eternal purpose** which **He** purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord. **In** whom we have... " (**Eph. 3: 11-12**). At **present**, only **members of the Church**, the Body of Christ, who **are** on earth, **are** now able to demonstrate **the manifold wisdom of God**. **In** Christ Jesus **they have boldness and access in confidence through their faith** unto **the Father**. **This**, however, is only the beginning. **The Church the Body of Christ when complete is to be the means** of eternal service to **the Father** according to **the eternal purpose** (purpose of **the ages**) which **He** purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord.

"Unto **Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus** unto all the generations of **the age of the ages** (**Eph. 3: 21 RVM**). The glory of God **the Father is the supreme** reason for **the work of Christ**. Through **it men and women are** not only **able** to become **members of the Church the Body of Christ** to **the glory of God the Father but are made** potential servants of **the Father**, in service now **and eternally** to **the glory of the Father, Amen**.

"Having **heard** of your **faith in Christ Jesus**" (Col. 1: 4). **The apostle is referring to the faith they show while serving the Lord** now.

"**As** therefore **ye received Christ Jesus the Lord**, so **walk in Him**" (Col. 2: 6). **Walking in Christ Jesus is more desirable** for those who would **serve Him**.

"**For ye are all sons of God, through faith, in Christ Jesus**". "**For ye all are one man in Christ Jesus**" (**Gal. 3: 26, 28**). **This passage has reference to sonship and the need to show out in our lives that we are like our Father**. **Our service should betray characteristics from which we can be identified as sons of our Father in heaven**. The potentiality for sonship comes from **faith and was evidenced in our baptism in water**. As sons **in the service of God there is no male or female, Jew nor Greek, bond nor free**. **Such distinctions make for different potentials**. **In Christ Jesus we are all one in potentiality of service as they were in the upper room when the Spirit of God empowered them**. So that **they could fulfil the command "go ye into all the world..., make disciples"** they were "together upon the **same thing**" (*epi to auto*). **Their service was to be in Christ Jesus**. **Being heirs according to the promise and hence Abraham's seed**, brought them into the glorious potentiality of

being those through whom the nations of the earth should be blessed. What is true of Christ Jesus as the seed is true of those also who are in Christ Jesus.

to be continued

” A —
R. A. Parker

CORRESPONDENCE: THE FUNCTION OF THE CHURCH THE BODY

Editors welcome the opportunity to expand the Comment (BS 8403 pp. 51, 55) afforded by the suggestions made in earlier correspondence (BS. 8405, p. 73). The latter lists a number of things from the Scriptures in Romans 12, 1 Corinthians 12 and Ephesians 4 which are said to be "things said of or to the Body". Reading of the relevant verses will show that these things are not said to the Church which is Christ's Body at all. They are said to saints in the churches of God in Rome, Corinth and Ephesus respectively. They are, in the main, commands given to regulate the behaviour of saints to each other in those assemblies in order that they might bear testimony to their spiritual position which they had as having been baptized in one Spirit into one Body. No sinful behaviour such as had to be guarded against in those churches is possible for members of the Church which is His Body. They are forever sinless and perfect and one day will be together, visibly united as His spotless Bride (Eph. 5: 25-7). We would suggest that this is the reason for the truth about which we would be dogmatic; namely that **THERE IS NO COMMANDMENT GIVEN TO THE CHURCH WHICH IS HIS BODY** in the whole of the Scriptures.

On the other hand commandments **HAVE** been given to the people of God who are those gathered together in churches of God. Many of these are to enable the Lord's working in the unseen, spiritual world, in the building of the Church which is His Body, to be made manifest to men. The outcome of the fact that the commandments of the Lord have been given to the churches of God and not to the Church which is His Body is twofold. Firstly, the faith once for all delivered to the saints is indispensable to the Lord's work in building the Church which is His Body. That faith commands men that they be gathered in churches of God to make use of their gifts, given them by virtue of their **membership** of the **Body**, in that **same** harmony that exists between **members** of the Body. Note that we say *exists not should exist* for there *is* perfect harmony within the Church which is His Body. Secondly, a man may not say that he engages in such and such a work because he is a member of the Church which is His Body. He has

no warrant to do so for no commands have been given to that Church.

It will be seen that in the teaching of the Lord concerning the relationship between the Church which is His Body and the churches of God there is little difficulty in understanding how "the building up of the Body" (Eph. 4: 12) and making "all men see what is the dispensation of the mystery which from all ages has been hid in God" (Eph. 3: 9) may be perfectly displayed amongst those in churches of God who being so gathered constitute the answer to the prayer of the Lord (John 17: 16-23). The recent correspondence, however, addresses itself to the position of fellow-members of the Body who are not gathered together into one thing for God. In particular it suggests that those in churches of God may do much to improve upon this sad situation.

We heartily agree with this sentiment and our feelings are akin to those of the apostle towards his fellow-Israelites (Rom. 9: 1-2) and those of the Psalmist for his fellows (Psa. 119: 136). The sad fact is that a believer not in a church of God cannot "attain unto the unity of the faith" and therefore not "unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ". In the faith we have the divine pattern containing the way of truth for the disciple. By adhering to it and it alone the various Christian virtues will be developed in their proper order and balance so leading to the stature of the fulness of Christ. It may be true that few believers in churches of God ever attain to such a standard. It may be true also that various Christian virtues are seen to greater degrees in believers not in churches of God. The fact is, however, that the loss to the latter is great for they have no experience of the carefully laid down disciple pathway that culminates in divine service in the house of God which is the central purpose of God for believers in this dispensation. In contrast, apart from those newly saved, such believers will usually be committed in some way or other to a sectarian association. In the faith we have an instruction which exactly meets the needs of such believers and is the foundation of their attaining^fUnto the unity of the faith so leading to the stature of Christ". The instruction is "Come ye out from among them and be ye separate... and I will receive you, and will be to you a Father, and ye shall be to me sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty" (2 Cor. 6: 17-18). It cannot be too strongly emphasized that only partial spiritual growth will occur if this command is not heeded. Saints in churches of God do a great disservice to fellow-members of the Body if they do not deal faithfully with them in this matter. It is akin to depriving the sinner of the message of the gospel and lies at the threshold of all dealings with believers in spiritual matters.

There is no doubt, too, of the benefit of the writings of believers outside churches of God but invariably we find that our hearts will be saddened as we read error mingled with truth and for those young in the faith this may prove a great snare. For example, we can scarce but be helped by as well as admire the clear statement of the Westminster Confession of Faith of 1647 when it says: ^MThe light of nature showeth that there is a God, who hath lordship and sovereignty over all; is good, and doeth good unto all: and is therefore, to be feared, loved, praised, called upon, trusted in, and served, with all the heart, and with all the soul, and with all the might. But the acceptable way of worshipping the true God is instituted by Himself, and so limited by His revealed will, that He may not be worshipped according to the imaginations and devices of men, or the suggestions of Satan, under any visible representation, or any other way not prescribed in the Holy Scripture". We can scarce do else but admire the believers on the Lord Jesus Christ who were prepared to lay down their lives in their determination to hold fast to their confession of Faith for many did. But side by side with the above statement we also read: "Baptism is a sacrament of the New Testament, ordained by Jesus Christ, not only for the solemn admission of the party baptized into the visible church, but also to be unto Him a sign and seal of the covenant of grace, of his ingrafting into Christ, of regeneration, of remission of sins, and of his giving up unto God through Jesus Christ, to walk in newness of life: which sacrament is, by Christ's own appointment, to be continued in His church until the end of the world" and "not only those that do actually profess faith in and obedience unto Christ, but also the infants of one or both believing parents are to be baptized". Though there is some truth in these statements about baptism, they are mostly highly erroneous. Such an amalgamation of truth and error can hardly be described as "building up the Body of Christ"; the more so when it is remembered that the same believers who were prepared to die for these doctrines were quite happy to force them on others.

It will be seen from what we have said that the statement "those in the Body are called on to preach and teach so that the Body can be built up numerically" (BS. 8405, p, 74) is inexact. It implies a command to the Church which is His Body. We repeat, commands are given to churches of God (which are, of course, comprised of those who are in the Body). It is patently true that the majority of gospel work is carried out by those not in churches of God but also, alas, in sectarian organizations. Thus for the saint in a church of God to ally himself with such even in so laudable an enterprise as gospel preaching is a sinful thing to do. It follows from this that

the greatest of care is needed in dealing with individuals in say a neighbourhood or workplace. The object of saving a sinner is to win him for the service of God in the house of God and not to build up sectarian organizations. Were his work to result in the latter the believer in a church of God would prove himself a transgressor (Gal. 2: 18).

In sum then we would say that the truth of the Church which is His Body and that of the churches of God are mutually indispensable. The one deals with the unseen spiritual realm, the other with that which is seen. It is separation, not collaboration, which is the foundation of the testimony to divine unity that the churches of God bear to the Church which is His Body.

Editors

PAUL'S PRAYER FOR THE EPHESIANS (Eph. 3: 14-21)

From Ajegunle: Pattern

The prominent place of worship in our prayers is shown in Paul's intercession for the Ephesians. We suggest that when Paul said "I bow my knees unto the Father" (v. 14), he did not mean a mere bowing of the knees physically, but an act of true worship; the bowing of the spirit. The "praise (vv. 14-15) - request (vv. 16-19) - praise (vv. 20-21)" format of Paul's prayer is noteworthy. How true it is that he who offers praise glorifies God's Name (see Ps. 50: 23).

Request

- (a) *Strengthened by His Spirit* (v. 16). It is the Spirit who quickens (John 6: 63; 2 Cor. 3: 6) and also strengthens (Col. 1: 11). Compare Acts 1: 8.
- (b) *Christ Dwelling in your Hearts through Faith* (v. 17). Perhaps Col. 3: 16 and John 14: 23 will explain how Christ can dwell in one's heart.
- (c) *Filled Unto All the Fulness of God* (v. 19). We suggest that no one can be filled unto all the fulness of God if Christ is not dwelling in his heart. If the Spirit of God has not strengthened one, it is impossible for the individual to sustain the presence of Christ.

The inter-relationship of Paul's prayer-points stated above is very clear. This is praying intelligently.

The purpose of the Church, the Body (Eph. 1: 22-23 and 3: 21), we would like to suggest, is to reveal the glory of God throughout all generations for ever and ever. Since He is worthy to be glorified, we must be ^Mto the praise of the glory of His grace^M (Eph. 1: 6).

G. M. Okwena, M. A. Imoukhuede

From **Birkenhead**: Paul's concern for those in the Church at Ephesus did not only extend to teaching them those things which he had received from the Lord, but he had a strong belief in the power of prayer and he now petitions God on their behalf, that the Almighty God might confirm in them those things which Paul knows to be desirable and necessary in growing Christians. The form of address which he uses - "Father" - and his elaboration of it leave us in no doubt that the position of Father is rightly God's and He is supreme amongst all fathers, indeed, all take their title from Him who is eternally Father.

It is God's desire, as perceived by Paul that there should be a strengthening of the inward man who is the spiritual centre and new personality of the believer. This was to be achieved by the power of Christ indwelling the believer's heart, where he would have a greater appreciation of the unlimited extent of the love of Christ as a consequence. This in turn would lead to a greater strengthening and the two forces would be mutually beneficial to the believer. It was not to be purely an individual activity, although it was to be personal, for it was to be appreciated and enjoyed by all the saints as they observed it both in themselves and in others.

This enlightening and appreciation is something which God can and does grant, and comes from the witnesses to the riches of His glory. It is an indicator to the believer of the wealth of God's being and of the limitlessness of His glory. It provides one of the means by which he can "see" the glory of God. The believer's spiritual development, which is itself a result of the individual availing himself of God's grace, leads him to ask the Father for more desire, ability, appreciation and power in respect of spiritual growth. Such a developing stage in the believer's spiritual life is a milestone which marks the beginning of a continuing period of service as opposed to a single moment in the Christian life.

As in v. 8, so in v. 19 Paul uses an apparent contradiction in his style of writing to bring home to the reader the force of what he is preaching. We are to know the love which passeth knowledge. A

deeper consideration of **these** words **is** worthwhile **and** clearly points out to **us** our responsibility **and** privilege **in experiencing** that love which **in** itself **is** far greater **than** we can comprehend.

The final **paragraph** is **again** an encouragement to **us** at the **same** time as **being** a witness to God's power, all bound together **in** a prayer of **praise**. **By** His power which indwells **each** believer, **the** Father is able to do for the believer more **than he can ask**, **and indeed** more **than** would occur to **him** to **ask**. It is a comment upon **the** limited power **and** appreciation of **the** Christ compared with **the** limitless power of God **present in him** through **the** death of **Christ** **and in the** person of the Holy Spirit of God. **Again** these purposes of God **are** witnesses to **His** glory, **which is** for eternal ages.

R. C. Halpin, A. Hyland

From Cowdenbeath: This **is** the second **prayer** of Paul recorded **in** the epistle, the first **being** found **in** chapter 1: 16 onwards. **In each case his** exercise follows the unfolding **and** glorious truth concerning God's purposes **in** Christ. **In** fact, it would **appear** that this **prayer we are** now considering **was** both that the **Ephesian** saints might **experience** Christ's indwelling power **and** that **as a** result they might **be** well **equipped** for the disciple life unfolded from **chapter 4** onwards.

Recognizing the **majesty** of **the** Person to whom **we** come **in** prayer our attitude **is** all important. V. 14 **emphasizes** attitude **in** prayer. Paul's vision is of the **greatness** of God, **emphasizing** His Fatherhood **and** His riches. What **He** gives is free by His grace **and** love. **It is a** granting that **we can** receive by faith because of who **He is**, Paul dwells on **the** riches of God **in** this epistle. We **have** also:

the riches of **the** glory of His **inheritance in the** saints (1: 18)

the riches of His **grace** (1: 7)

rich in mercy (2: 4)

riches of His **grace in** kindness toward **us in** Christ Jesus (2: 7)

the unsearchable **riches** of **Christ** (3: 8).

The **prayer** is progressive and **we have in it** the interest **and** action of **Father, Son and Holy Spirit**. Strengthening through **the Spirit in the inward man** (that is the regenerated man) will lead to **the** indwelling presence of **Christ** thus leading to **such** a victorious **Christ-centred** life **that** we shall know **by** experience something that our **minds** cannot **grasp**, **the** love of **Christ**, **and** be filled with a **divine** fulness, **the** fulness of God.

Fellow-students will of course **have** noted **the** difference between **Christ in the** believer (Col. 1: 27) **and** **Christ** dwelling **in the** believer. **This** is like a house **purchased in** which the **purchaser** longs to dwell. We know

He will only dwell as the sole occupant. He is our Lord and Master. In our case the enabling for this will come according as we are strengthened spiritually by the Holy Spirit.

Spiritual strength is very much in evidence in the prayer. When we come to chapter 6 we shall see one of the reasons. We believe there is a number of purposes in spiritual strength. It is not just that we shall be able to stand in the evil day but that we shall be able, with strong spiritual perception, to search and know some of the deep things of God Himself. Achieving such will mean a double armoury in the Christian warfare and a level of spiritual strength and stability (v. 17) which will bring pleasure to God.

This is the high watermark of spiritual achievement. Is it at all possible? The answer is an assured affirmation from v. 20.

R. I. Shaw

From **Denver**: The understanding of the apostle, to recognize that the Ephesians needed a lifting of their spirits, that they were becoming despondent and their spiritual lives were suffering is central in this epistle.

Their spiritual, and not their physical needs, are the main subject of his prayer. The proper attitude of prayer is emphasized, bowing the knees as we bow our spirits to His will. How often we neglect this in our own lives, and do not enjoy those things which can be ours through Christ: to know the riches of the glory which can be ours if only we desire what is according to His will, not always looking to our physical well-being but to our spiritual needs; the strengthening of the inner man, only by the measurement as meted out by Himself, Christ Jesus. Knowing that we can be filled with the fulness of God, by faith knowing that Christ dwells in us, rooted and grounded in love, the message of the apostle belongs to us as well as to the Ephesians.

It is also ours to know that He is able to do above all that we ask, according to the power within us, founded on love and secured by faith, that we might glorify Him in our lives as Christ glorified the Father in His.

If there are any patterns for us, this is certainly one that we should take to heart, through our common bond of love in Christ, that we too might have this caring attitude for one another. Such a concern as the apostle showed here might indeed allow the "showers of blessing" we so often sing of.

A. Higgins

From Derby: This prayer is addressed to the Father of all. ^MFor this cause¹ could refer to the previous verse where Paul asks them not to faint at his tribulations. He was suffering and this might bring discouragement to the saints, or it could refer to v. 1. The apostle breaks off there with a dash and he comes back to the cause [Comment 1]. It had to do with the realization of the great possibilities that had come to them as outlined in chapter 2.

There is a great variety of prayer postures in Scripture. The common example is bowing the knees, but the brother stands in the highest service in which we can participate. The spiritual approach is the important one. Our spirit should be bowed and we should not detract from the fact that our God is a consuming fire. A literal bowing of the knee is only acceptable if the spirit is bowed.

God is the great original Father. He is the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ. As there are families on earth so there are father figures over groups of angels in heaven.

We may call upon the "riches of His glory"^M which are unlimited. The inner spiritual man must be strengthened with power through His Spirit before the great and majestic Christ can possibly dwell in our hearts. He has bought us and has the right to live there but He has to be invited. When He comes into our lives He comes in to take control.

If we are rooted in love, drawing it in from Christ and have a sure foundation of love we may lay hold of the "breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ". It passes knowledge. There will always be more to learn. If Christ dwells in you there will be love and if there is love growth will take place.

We are only puny but we can be "filled unto all the fulness of God" by faith if we are empty of self and love Christ and know Him. The marvel is that it can take place on earth now. This prayer is for Christ to indwell us fully as Master. Paul's master was Christ and it was clearly seen in his life.

G. W. Conway

From Liverpool: *Earnest Prayer.* The normal Jewish posture in prayer was standing. Kneeling was used more often in times of deep emotion or to indicate earnest prayer (*cf.* the Lord Jesus in Gethsemane). Paul having already prayed for wisdom and knowledge for the Ephesians (1: 17) now prays for the indwelling presence of Christ and the fulness of God.

Spontaneous Prayer. The correct posture in prayer today is any position! [Comment 2], We can, and should, spontaneously speak to our Father all day long whatever bodily position we happen to be in. Paul does

so here. God the Father is Head and Source of creation, likewise man is made head of earthly families, and Paul bows to the great Creator of both life and matter.

The Kernel of the Prayer. This is "that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith". We know that the Holy Spirit indwells us at salvation but Paul is praying for a further and deeper experience. The inference is that the Lord Jesus, too, comes into a believer's life and makes His home with him or her. He is not as a casual visitor but to settle down. However, this situation is brought about by faith and a daily opening up of ourselves to Him (Rev. 3: 20). Clearly Christ will not feel at home in a life where there is little room left for Him.

A Prayer for Filling. Preparation for the entrance of Christ and our being filled to all the measure of the fulness of God is by the Holy Spirit. Paul's experience of Christ living in him (Gal. 2: 20) was the outcome of "yet I live; and yet no longer I". Instead of putting ourselves as first in importance (a characteristic of the world around us which we readily see, but which easily is a characteristic of believers in God's house too!) it means putting the Lord Jesus first. Before there can be a filling with anything desirable there must be an emptying.

A Prayer of Praise. Verses 20 and 21 are concluding words of praise to One who is all powerful, beyond our understanding and who is prepared to use some of that power through our lives. In all only a short prayer but a tall order! Nothing, however, is too great a request to One who gets glory from and through the Name and achievements of the Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

K. T. Jones, D. J. Webster

From **Nottingham**: The portion under consideration opens with the same words as chapter 3: 1, "For this cause... ". Verses 2-13 appear to be in parenthesis but now Paul takes up again his main theme saying, in effect, that in view of all God's wondrous working as revealed in such verses as 6, 8-12, he prays they may be "strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inward man" (v. 16). The fact that Paul was a prisoner and that persecution in its cruellest forms often faced the believers of the times was to be compared with the manifold wisdom and eternal purpose of God. Such a comparison would strengthen them as they learned that "the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed to us-ward" (Rom. 8: 18). We are caused to wonder at the marvels of God's working now but much more will be revealed in a future day when we shall be in a condition to receive and comprehend it. We have in Col. 1: 11 the abundance of the might of God's

glory; in Eph. 1: 7, the riches of His grace and in Eph. 3: 16 the riches of His glory. All these attributes were sufficient to strengthen the Ephesians as they are to do the same for us today.

In verse 19 we read of "the fulness of God". God is ever full; filled to perfection with all that is good, pure and holy. While the believer can never experience sinless perfection while in the body, Paul prays that they may know something of the fulness of God in a practical way during their pilgrimage. Some of the essential steps leading to such knowledge are brought before us in the portion. In v. 16 we have the thought of being strengthened. In v. 17 it is of Christ dwelling in our hearts and the word "dwelling" here is *katoikeo*, which "properly signifies to settle down in a dwelling, to dwell fixedly in a place" (Vine). Then we are to be rooted and grounded in love, (v. 17), apprehending (*katalambano* "to lay hold of" (Vine)), **and** thus knowing (to know - *ginosko* - means "to recognize, to understand completely" (Vine)) the love of Christ. Yet here is a paradox for, as the apostle goes on to say, the love of Christ "passeth knowledge" (v. 19). Nevertheless, while we shall never achieve down here a full understanding of His love we can seek to grasp an ever increasing appreciation of it as time goes by.

We were of the opinion that the words "breadth, length, height, depth" used in v. 18 also related to a contemplation of the love of Christ and the illustration was used that this was something like a box which one might look at noting its dimensions and then looking inside, in a figure, and therein is love.

All these experiences are related to the inward man (v. 16); they are matters for our new born souls; our innermost being. They are linked, too, with the thought of Christ dwelling in our hearts and, as already mentioned, the word used shows permanency of dwelling contrasted with "sojourning". Christ will dwell in our hearts if we invite Him to do so; He will never force Himself on us (*cf.* Rev. 3: 20).

The Apostle ends his prayer with the word "Amen". This is a very important word and its Scriptural significance needs to be understood. We observed the "Amen" does not just signify the end of a prayer, which may be a general idea, but it is a word of acquiescence. The God of truth, the God of Amen, (Is. 65: 16, RVM) speaks that which is truth "the testimony of the Lord is sure (amen)" (Ps. 19: 7). God says, it shall be so. Humbly we acquiesce and say "Amen", - so be it!

In v. 21 the RV margin appears to be a much better rendering than that of the AV which reads "... throughout all ages, world without end", the meaning of which is obscure. The RV margin gives the literal Greek, "all

the generations of the age of the ages". The comment made by Mr. Vine is worth noting; "In Eph. 3: 21 '*genea*' is combined with '*aion*' in a remarkable phrase.... The word '*genea*' is to be distinguished from '*aion*', as not denoting a period of unlimited duration". The glory which is in the Church and in Christ Jesus is for ever and is absolutely different from the glory surrounding the doings of men which is transient.

Consideration was given to v. 15, "from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named". We understand the word used here relates more to lineage or clans rather than a household or a particular family inhabiting one house under one father. Are there families in heaven? This seems to be one of the secret things that belong to God, but we suggest that as there are principalities and powers in the heavenly places there may be "families" in the sense of related beings as in a clan in heaven, in some way analogous to those on earth.

"For this cause", writes Paul, "I bow the knee" The bowing of the knee seems a correct posture to adopt when we engage in private prayer, although, of course, we can pray privately without bowing the knees, but we asked the question, "Ought we to bow the knees when engaged in collective worship and prayer?" A brief summary of our answer to this question is:

- (a) there is no Scriptural command for us to kneel in worship and prayer (all these comments refer to our collective activities): indeed the word ^fbow* appears (in different verb forms) only ten times in the New Testament.
- (b) our worship is "in spirit and truth" (John 4: 23, 24), and a prescribed attitude of body would detract from the spiritual nature of our holy priesthood service or approach in collective prayer, and could introduce ritualism and formality.

On the other hand it is vital to remember that there must be a reverent attitude when we meet for these purposes and our demeanour and posture should be in keeping with the solemnity of what we are doing. It is our hearts; our innermost being that should be bowed before God and, if this is true of us, then our bodily attitude will correspond.

R. Hickling

From **Paisley**: The attitude of bowing the knees in prayer signifies a reverence due to the Father. Examples of this are given in the New Testament Scriptures, e. g.

Luke 22: 41 The Lord kneeled down and prayed
Acts 9: 40 Peter, kneeled down and prayed
Acts 20: 36 Paul, and the elders of Ephesus.. kneeled down,
prayed.

This does not imply that standing to pray is not comely, but there may be occasions when circumstances would call for bowing the knee. God the Father is the Begetter of all families, whether in heaven or earth. The heavenly beings do not marry nor are given in marriage, but nevertheless owe their origin to the Father, Earthly families, such as the family of David (Luke 2: 4) owe their existence and continuation to God.

It is out of the riches of His glory that the Father gives in response to our prayers. This would imply that we should be exercised in prayer to experience the things that formed the burden of the apostle's prayer. These were:

- (a) to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inward man,
- (b) that Christ may dwell in our hearts through faith, bringing to us a knowledge of His love that passes human knowledge.

These resources are available to every believer, and if we do not experience them we have only ourselves to blame. There are vast spiritual resources available to every believer in Christ.

It is essential that every plant is firmly rooted to withstand adverse influences. Similarly, every building needs a good foundation. In 1 Cor. 3: 10, 11 Paul refers to the foundation he laid in Corinth, which is Jesus Christ. Every believer needs this foundation.

It is encouraging to know that God not only gives according to our asking in prayer; He exceeds our asking. If we have not, it is because we ask not. Let us give ourselves more to prayer of this kind.

J. Renfrew

COMMENTS

1. (**Derby**): It would appear that the "cause" of Eph. 3: 1 is the same as that of Eph. 3: 14 and refers to the subject of the apostle's prayer recounted in vv. 16-19. Verses 2-13 are then parenthetical.

2. (**Liverpool**): The statement needs to be qualified by words such as "depending on the circumstances". Helpful discussion is contained in the contributions from Nottingham and Paisley.

/ . E. P.

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Bible Studies

A magazine for the exploration of the Word of God [Acts 17: 11]

EDITORIAL

8408

The apostle was moved by the grace of God toward the Gentiles, since it had been revealed to him in particular that they were to have a part in God's wondrous purposes concerning the Church; and thus Paul wished that the Ephesians could conceive of his own imprisonment as having been incurred in their interests. They could not fail to catch the fire of that enthusiasm which made him exult in such imprisonment, nor could they remain insensible of the earnestness in his appeal, seeing that the Lord was speaking to them through the entreaty of His servant. The first half of the letter had traced the eternal counsel of God regarding them, and had emphasized the exalted nature of the calling wherewith God had called them. What Paul desired was that their lives should be in harmony with their glorious calling. For this to be so they must manifest the characteristics of Christ Himself in their lives, both in relationships to one another and toward all. As for preserving the unity of the Spirit, this was something which in practice required diligence as well as divine enabling. The resultant harmony must have its root in the unity seen sevenfold in chapter 4: 4-6. The requisite grace was commensurate with the gift of Christ. What a marvel it is that human beings should share in the triumph of the ascended Christ; that the One who went down so low was afterwards exalted over all the heavens, yet ^Mgave gifts unto men". There on high His concern is still the perfecting of the saints. The progress of all including the apostle was towards this destination of the "unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God^M". The apostle wrote, "Till we all attain", and we today have our part in the all and can identify with the self-same aspiration and goal, namely unity in the expression of the faith as well as in its profession. The contribution of each part promotes co-ordinated growth, forbearing in love, speaking truth in love and finally building up in love.

E. A.

"To all the saints in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 1: 1). The saints are linked with the bishops and deacons in the service of the Lord at Philippi.

"Your glorying may abound in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 1: 26). The Philippians were able to glory in the manner of life the apostle Paul led as he served the Lord.

"Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 2: 5). The mind which was associated with the wondrous Person who took the form of a servant and was made in the likeness of men, is described as the mind 'in Christ Jesus'. It was the mind of service, wholly devoted to the glory of God the Father, and set before the Philippians by the apostle as an example of what they should be.

"Who worship by the Spirit of God, and glory in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3: 3). Here is the centre and motivation of our worship and service on earth, and the enabling power to worship in the beauty of holiness.

"The high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3: 14). Here is the very pinnacle of divine service, the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

"Shall guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 4: 7). One thing which will spoil our service for God is worry. Here we are directed to the peace of God which garrisons our hearts and thoughts when we stop worrying and make our requests with thanksgiving to God.

"According to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus" (Phil 4: 19). The measure of fulfilling our every need (not want) that we have in the daily service of our God is according to His riches in glory. The need we have is like an empty vessel which our God will 'fulfill' by His supply to it. There is superabundance of help for us from the glorious riches associated with the service of the house of God. It is called 'glory in Christ Jesus'.

There are further references of which approximately twelve are in the epistles of Paul to Timothy which fellow students may wish to examine in the same way as those already mentioned. If these comments help us to a better understanding of the term 'Christ Jesus' then our efforts will be well rewarded.

R. A. Parker

Editorial Note:

As far as we are aware the distinctions recognized in the foregoing article have not been made before in our literature. We will all be grateful to our contributor for drawing them to our attention. Editors now invite further comments from readers.

CORRESPONDENCE: A MAN'S FAITH

It appears from the "Comments" in Bible Studies 8404 that Editors take an extreme Calvinistic view with regard to the matter of a man's faith, i. e. that man has no part in the exercise of faith; it is wholly from God. As I understand the teaching of the Scriptures this view impugns the righteous and gracious character of God.

Jesus is "the author and Perfecter of our faith" (Heb. 12: 2). He, who is the Word of God, is the *cause* of faith arising in a man's heart, as Romans 10: 17 confirms, "So belief cometh of hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ. " When such faith arises in a man or woman's heart the Lord calls it "thy faith", "Thy faith hath saved thee. " (Luke 7: 50). Many other examples could be quoted.

Jesus marvelled at a centurion's faith and marvelled at the lack of faith of the Nazarenes. How could He marvel at the centurion's faith if he had no power to believe? How could he marvel that those in Nazareth did not believe if they had no power to believe?

"My Spirit shall not strive with man forever" (Gen. 6: 3) shows that God has been working in the hearts of men since the fall, working to persuade men to believe, to bow their wills to His will. The Lord Jesus said that the Comforter "will convict the world in respect of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgement" (John 16: 8). Striving and convicting obviously involve the human will and it is quite clear from the Scriptures that man has the power to say "Yes" or "No" to God in this matter. This is substantiated by a brief look at three important subjects which are related to the subject of a man's faith.

First, in the inspiration of the Scriptures we are dealing with men who were "moved by the Holy Spirit" to write. They were not simply recording machines. Their experiences, their personalities, their memories, their meditations on God, their emotions and more are all involved in the sacred writings. Individual styles are recognisable.

The writings are wholly men's writings and yet they are "inspired of God". These men were willing to write what they were "moved by the Holy Spirit" to write. God did not make them write against their wills.

Secondly, as regards the Crucifixion of the Lord Jesus (Acts 2: 22-23 and Acts 4: 25-28), no-one will ever say that because the Lord was "delivered up by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God" therefore God made men "crucify and slay" Him. No one will ever say that because God's "counsel foreordained" the crucifixion of Jesus therefore God made Herod and Pontius Pilate with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel crucify Him. To say such things would be blasphemous. "God cannot be tempted with evil, and He Himself tempteth no man" (Jas. 1: 13). Men are accountable to God for their actions.

Thirdly, as regards the Judgements of God, there are many instances of the unseen hand of God in judgement in men's lives. One of the outstanding examples is Haman who was hanged on the very gallows he had built for Mordecai. Each of the characters involved acts responsibly and in accordance with his own will. We realise, of course, that God is working, e. g. Esther 6: 1, but the point is that in no case does God make the person do something he is not willing to do. "Pharaoh hardened his heart" before God in judgement hardened His heart. Again God did not make Pharaoh resist Him. It was Pharaoh's will to resist.

The point I emphasize is that men are not robots. They have a will of their own and in this matter of faith, men can say "Yes" or "No" to God. God calls men because they have a will to respond with a "Yes" or "No". God "willeth that all men should be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim. 2: 4). Why then is God's wish not fulfilled? It is obvious, some men say "No". The very word "whosoever" in John 3: 16 implies that each person has the power to receive or reject God's word, to believe or disbelieve. "Thou wouldst have no power against Me, except it were given thee from above" the Lord Jesus said to Pilate (John 19: 11). So Pilate had been given the power to release or to crucify Jesus. Surely no one would dare say that God made Pilate crucify Jesus? Pilate had the power from God and all men have the power to accept or reject the Gospel message. Why does God, the righteous Judge, bring that awful judgement on men in 2 Thess. 2: 11? It is because they "received not the love of the truth". They had the ability to receive, the will to receive or reject. The judgement comes because they did not do what they ought to have done and had the power to do.

There **are** other **Scriptures** to support what I **have** said **but** I shall conclude with some comments on **the** "Comments".

PLH: "**Sir** Robert Anderson's simile is very like what God actually does. " This statement is "explained" **by** "**He** gave His Old Testament people animals so **that they** could sacrifice to Himself **etc.**". This has nothing whatever to do with **faith**. We do not offer **faith** to God. **There** is no parallel, no analogy.

IEP: "If **faith in** Christ arose from **the heart** of man... **then** man could claim to **be saved by his** own efforts. " Faith does arise **in the heart** of man (Rom. 10: 9) as **a result of the** persuasive work of **the Spirit of God**.

Faith is "without works". No "efforts" **are** involved. It is a contradiction **in** terms to speak of **a man's faith and** "his own efforts". **In** no way could **a man** who believes "**Jesus died for me**" boast or glory **that** his own efforts saved him. (Romans 12: 3 has to do with gifts to **the Church the Body.**)

J. H. Johnson, Galston

A MAN'S FAITH: REPLY

In commenting on **this** contribution, one **might first** say **that it is** seldom helpful to **use** such labels as "**extreme Calvinistic**". Those of **the** opposite view **may** retort with "**extreme Arminian**", and **each** will **be** confident that **he has given** the opposing dog what **he thinks** to be a **bad name**, so that **he can be hung!**

The view attacked **by** our correspondent is "that **man has** no part **in the exercise** of faith: it is wholly from God". **One is** at a loss to **see** how anything written **in BS 8404** could **be** taken to indicate **such** a view. **The** statement is false: **man** does **have a part in** the exercise of faith, **as many** scriptures show. **What is** contended **in BS 8404** is **that** the converse is equally false: "**that God has no part... it is** wholly from **man**". The comment cited Acts **11: 18**, dealing with repentance. Here **it is** certainly **true that men repent**, as an action of **their wills**, **but the Scripture** avers that God **grants repentance**. Similarly, John **6: 37 and 44** were quoted. **The** latter says **that no man can** come to Christ unless **the Father draws him**, and **the former reveals that all** those **given by the Father to the Son shall** come to **Him**. **This surely** cannot **apply to the general call in the gospel** to all. **What is** proposed, therefore, **is that saving faith requires both an enabling** work of God

and an action of man.

This view is well illustrated by our correspondents first example. On the one hand, as is pointed out, the Scriptures show clearly the individual characters of the writers, so that they were the men's own work. On the other hand, they would never have been written at all had not the Spirit of God selected each individual for a particular purpose, and every word they wrote was "God-breathed". One agrees that God is not to be thought of as forcing anyone's actions, but there is an action of God upon the human will of some sort, although its nature is difficult for us to understand. We recognize this when we pray for someone to be saved. If God can do no more than He has done already, the prayer is futile: He is powerless to act. But most would think that such prayer can really achieve its object.

P. L. H.

The final paragraph of this correspondence quotes "if faith in Christ arose from the heart of man". In the next sentence this is changed to "arise in the heart of man". The blurring of this distinction appears to illustrate the misunderstanding that has arisen. Editors were concerned with the origin of faith in the heart not with its subsequent development about which our correspondent has said many helpful things.

/ . E. P.

ATTAINING UNTO THE UNITY OF THE FAITH (Ephesians 4: 1-16)

From Ajegunle: The idea of unity has been put forward in the first three chapters of the Epistle to the Ephesians. There are aspects of unity in the Godhead revealed in the works of God.

There is also unity in doctrine as the seven aspects of verses 4 to 6 show. We suggest that v. 3 uses the expression "unity of the Spirit" for things which stand together.

We understand "the faith" (v. 13) to be the same as in Jude 3 and 1 Tim. 4: 1, to mean the whole counsel of God; the apostles' doctrine (Acts 2: 42) and the "all things" commanded to be observed in Mat. 28: 20.

The "unity of the faith" would therefore suggest the testimony borne out of the true application of the will of God, expressed in "the Faith", in the lives of a collective people (unity) unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.

It seems that the basis of the unity among the saints lies in all accepting and maintaining this unity of the Faith. The apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers are the gifts to the Body of Christ. Through the performance of their duties, the saints are taught unto edification.

How can the individual member (saint) or the Church (Body) grow into the perfect image of Christ if Christ Himself is not the Head, the Lord of all? We suggest here that the appeal by Paul in vv 1-2 must be followed. This is by walking with all lowliness and meekness and longsuffering and forbearance. The basic governing principle must be love: love which is revealed by the working of the Spirit of God (Gal. 5:22-23).

G. M. Okwena, M. A. Imonkhuede

From **Birkenhead**: Paul has outlined to the Ephesian saints the teaching which is received from God regarding their condition and position resultant upon the work of the Holy Spirit and the grace and mercy of God in saving them. He now turns to their expected response. Their realization of the truth of his teaching is to bring about a change in the manner of their lives (walk) which is appropriate to the privilege which is theirs in being called by God. None is worthy of the call and so the response should be wholehearted and dedicated to honouring the One who has called.

The principal purpose in this part of the letter is to indicate the necessity to maintain the unity of the Spirit which is in keeping with the actions expected of those saved by grace.

Verse 2 outlines the elements of Christian behaviour which will have to be exercised individually in order that the unity can be sustained. These behavioural principles require constant attention by all in the Body [Comment 1].

As then so today this unity of the Spirit on which Paul lays such emphasis is extant when those elements listed in verses 4-6 are present and acknowledged by all in the community:

United in one Body
Indwelt by one Spirit
Sharing in one common hope
Acknowledging one Lord
Believing and holding to one faith

Submitting to one baptism (water)
Subject to, and children of, one God and Father.

Paul's words would be useless were he not able to assert that his Saviour is ascended to heaven and more - he can give assurance that He first died, descended to deliver and ascended, leading the captives to freedom.

Christ gave differing gifts in the Church the Body and the grace requisite for them to operate, so that the saints should be fitted to minister to each other, thereby edifying the Body. By this means they will be fulfilling the Lord's wish in His prayer in John 17 that they may be one, i. e. reach or attain unto the unity in the faith and grow in the knowledge of the Son of God which will lead them to that standard, the fulness of which is seen in Christ.

We should be strengthened and encouraged by the exercise of gifts in the Body so that we may continue to be established in the faith, countering the possibility of being blown off course. A mutual strengthening and upbuilding of the Body will result in an attitude of peace and love which is characteristic of Christ.

R. D. Williams, R. C. Halpin

From Derby: Paul, in the will of the Lord, was a prisoner at the time of writing this epistle and it was from this position that he begged the saints to have a balanced walk.

He desired that they should walk with lowliness, which means not being very far above the ground. This should be a sincere characteristic of every Christian. They ought to be meek; willing to be in subjection to the will of God whatever that involves.

They had to work at keeping the unity of the Spirit. It is not possible to give effect to this individually; people must be together. As they all had different backgrounds and cultures it was very necessary that the characteristics already mentioned were found in them. They should also be evident in our lives. The Spirit makes the unity and we give effect to it.

We read of seven ones. The first three are unconditional. All believers are in Christ's Body, they have the Holy Spirit dwelling in them and they have the one hope. All believers see one Saviour but

they do not see the significance of one Lord and the obedience He claims and that is why they do not see the one faith or the necessity to be baptized in water and publicly own the authority of the Lord. However, over all, and through all and in all is the one God and Father₀. The grace given to each of us is according to the measure of the gift of Christ. The word grace has several shades of meaning. It is related to the fact that the ascended Lord gives gifts and the ability to use the gift. Grace fits us to the responsibilities that come to us. We need the grace of the Lord to understand the gift and exercise the gift. Verse 8 is a quotation from Psalm 68 but it is not an exact quotation. There are other similar examples, for instance in Acts 2, where the Spirit of God guided the pen to bring out the real significance of the Old Testament Scripture. The gifts have been given to bring people together and build them up in the church of God. They help us to attain unto the unity of the faith once for all delivered to the saints, and encourage us to know the Son of God. This comes by communion. All the members of the Body have the responsibility for building it up as is the will of the Head. For this growth to take place it is vital that we deal truly and in love.

G. W. Conway

From Liverpool: (la) *Practical Considerations* (1-6). There is at this point a natural break in the letter. Paul has been describing in doctrinal terms the transition of the Ephesian Christians from being dead, far away and aliens to their being made alive and brought near to Christ. Now he proceeds to outline some practical considerations arising from this doctrinal base. Paul's appeal to them to live a worthy life is on the grounds of his own deep subjection to the will of Christ, resulting in his being a prisoner.

(lb) *Four Points of a Worthy Life* (Cf. Col. 3: 12-15). To be humble (NIV) (all lowliness, RV/RSV) is to be different. *Tapeinophrosune* (Gk) had the sense of slavish or mean and is only possible when the greatness of Christ is appreciated. A gentle (NIV) person is disciplined and asserts the authority of Christ rather than his own (RV/RSV, meekness). To be patient (NIV) or longsuffering (RV) is an essential quality in forming positive relationships and leads directly to "bearing with one another in love"¹ (NIV). This is Christian diplomacy. Of course there are times for refusing to give in on grounds of principle but there are so many unimportant areas where, for the sake of Christ, we must not push our ideas on others but in love accept their point of view and respect it (and them!) while disagreeing.

(le) *The Unity of the Spirit*. This, which we are commanded to

make every effort to **keep**, could be interpreted as that essential **unity**, **intrinsic** to the members of the Body of Christ, exhibited by the Godhead itself [Comment 2]. In the alternative it could be the **unity** among believers in churches of God brought about by the action of the Spirit of God. Whichever is right the "glue" is peace! Shame on us if we cause dissension in the name of unity. The seven points which follow were viewed either as:

(1) **three** unconditional ones followed by **three** conditional ones with the seventh being God ^Mwho is over all and through all and in all". This view takes the readers beyond their position in Christ and into active obedience to Christ acknowledging His Lordship, embracing the Faith and being baptized.

(ii) merely descriptive of the Church in which one faith is for salvation and baptism in the Holy Spirit. This raises the question whether Paul would write of "one baptism" when, naturally, his readers would think of their literal baptism in water.

(2) *Gifts*. (7-13). This passage with the parenthesis (vv: 9 and 10) shows that the essential unity of the Body of Christ is not spoiled by diversity. In seeking God's unity we may, perhaps, have a fear of diversity; let us not assume that everybody must act the same, think the same and excel at the same things. Clearly God has given each of us different qualities and a different job to do. A fuller treatment of this subject is found in 1 Cor. 12: 4-31. There it is implied that all believers are given a special gift to use in service to God; some of them are seemingly insignificant or are likely to receive less acclaim yet all are vitally important. In this passage only specialist gifts are mentioned; gifts to leadership to build up the Body. Maturity would be seen both in the establishing in their faith of those already in the church as well as the church increasing in numbers, and leads in thought to fully mature Christians together in churches of God growing more like their Lord and achieving great things for Him.

(3) *Stability and Growth* (14-16). The illustration of a body is introduced here again; as in chapter 2 it is for the specific purpose of teaching us about our relationship to Christ and to each other. He is the Head, but we are linked directly to Him and each other and depend upon Him and each other, Christ in turn works through His Body (surely that is the purpose of the illustration) "as each part does its work" (NIV). This is done, not, of course, through those members who are in heaven, but through believers on earth - ideally and in God's purpose only as they are gathered together into divinely ordained churches of God [Comment 3].

D. J. Webster

From Nottingham: Paul opens by speaking of himself as a prisoner, a common expression of his, not because he is making an appeal for sympathy but in this case he refers to himself as the prisoner in the Lord, showing his total resignation to the control and will of his Lord and Master who has all authority. As the Lord's property he was at His disposal.

Being so subjected he can propose one of his great commissions, ^Mto walk worthily of the calling...^M (4: 1) in which it is demanded that in our walk of life we should seek to attain to God's standard and do that which is right in His eyes, so as to "present every man perfect in Christ" (Col. 1: 28). Such a walk would be by the display of the Spirit by whom the Christian virtues are maintained as listed in Eph. 4: 2. The emphasis is on the word "all", Christ being the great example and, indeed, the very instigator of lowliness as a virtue.

Considering the expression ^Mto keep the unity of the Spirit" (4: 3), it was questioned in what way the unity of the Spirit could be broken seeing that the Holy Spirit indwells a person when he believes on the Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 10: 44, 1 Cor. 12: 13). While the Holy Spirit would never leave the believer it is clear that there are different levels at which His indwelling is experienced and enjoyed, some being filled with the Spirit while others may well quench Him or grieve Him (Eph. 5: 18, 1 Thes. 5: 19, Eph. 4: 30). However, it was thought generally that the unity of the Spirit referred to in Eph. 4: 3 was that of the unity of the Faith (Eph. 4: 13). The quenching of the Holy Spirits teaching would lead quickly to disunity.

In connection with the seven "ones" listed in Eph. 4: 4-6, the question was raised as to whether or not the "one baptism" mentioned in v. 5 was the baptism in water or the baptism in the Holy Spirit. There is unity in the baptism in the Holy Spirit for all believers are so baptized, but some had difficulty in seeing where the unity was in reference to the baptism in water. If the baptism referred to here is baptism in the Holy Spirit then unity is displayed here by having the seven "ones" grouped together, i. e. faith as in the act of believing, the one baptism of the one Spirit under the One God, Father, Son and Lord into the one Body [Comment 4]. On the other hand there seems to be a definite division in the list of "ones" which seems to indicate one body, one Spirit and one hope which have to do with all believers whereas the words "one Lord" brings those who acknowledge this apart unto Him in obedience demonstrated through baptism (in water) and the following in the Faith (Jude v. 3). It seems strange that baptism

(assuming the **reference** is to **baptism in water**) is listed separately as it is only a display of one part of the **unity of the faith** and does not, in itself, involve other **basic truths**. Other important aspects such as the **Remembrance** are not mentioned.

Whichever way **this is taken** we still have the **knowledge and re-assurance** of the one hope which we believe to be **different** from that of **Eph. 1: 18**. We **think** the hope of **chapter 4: 4** is that of the hope of the coming **again of the Lord** and all the **fulness of events** which is associated with **it**.

The words "unto **each** one of **us^M** in v. 7 would show that we all possess a **gift**, or possibly more than one **gift**, but v. 11 would indicate that one **man** does not possess all of **them** so that **each** individual should play **his or her part** in the "**perfecting of the saints**" (v. 12). Clearly these **scriptures** rule out any possibility of one **man** ministry. These gifts **have been given**, however, **by grace**, that no one should boast (**3: 2, 7, 8**). Verse 8 shows that on the Lord's ascension **He** led "**captivity captive**" and we believe this relates to the righteous **men** of Old Testament times **being** liberated from Sheol and **carried to heaven**. The Lord's ascension was **necessary** to open up the way for the gift of the Holy Spirit, **even as** the Lord has promised (John 14: 16). The Lord **gave** the **gifts** and the Spirit **divides** "to **each** one severally **even as He** will". The distribution of **gifts in a church** of God is an example of diversity in unity. In Eph. 4: 9 the Spirit, through **Paul**, emphasizes the depth of the Lord's descent "into the lower **parts of the earth**", which is a **reference** to His descent into Sheol. In complete contrast we read of His ascension to the **highest heaven**, "**far above all the heavens**", the **heaven of heavens** which cannot contain Him.

In the list of gifts **given in v. 11** we read of apostles and prophets. We considered whether these gifts were **given** today. The **Greek** word translated "apostle" means "one **sent forth**". It seems clear from the **Scriptures** that the twelve called by the Lord to be **named** apostles (Luke 6: 12, 13) were called to a **distinct and special service**, Matthias taking the place of Judas Iscariot (Acts 1: 23-26). **Peter** spoke of "**men ... which have** companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and went out among **us...** " and, also, that the one who took the place of Judas must be "a witness with us of His resurrection". **Paul** was an apostle and he had seen the Lord (Acts 9: 17, Col. 1: 1). Others are **named** "apostles" as, for example, **James** the Lord's brother (Gal. 1: 19) **Barnabas** (Acts 14: 4), and possibly **Andronicus and Junias** (Rom. 16: 7), and again possibly **Silas** (1 Thes. 2: 6). It seems, therefore,

that the word "apostle" may have had a wider application than to the twelve but there cannot possibly be anyone now who would meet the requirements given by Peter already noted, and we judge the gift of apostle as referred to in Eph. 4: 11 has ceased. The gift of "prophets" also seems to relate to the foundational days (Eph. 2: 20), prophets here being recipients of divine revelation for the teaching of the saints.

The exercise of these gifts are "unto the building up of the body of Christ" (Eph. 4: 12). It was asked why the reference is to the building up of the Body of Christ rather than the building up of the churches of God. It was thought that the majority of those in the Body of Christ alive at the time would be in the churches of God and it was, of course, necessary for them to be built up in Christ to bring about the unity of the Faith (1 Cor. 12: 7), so as to become reliable, trustworthy ambassadors of Christ, fully grown and unshaken in truth.

K. S. Hickling

From Paisley: Having reviewed God's eternal purposes in Christ, the apostle exhorts the saints to order their lives in keeping with our glorious calling. Things which are befitting to saints are:

(1) Humility, which signifies low in situation; humble, lowly as to condition. This was characteristic of the Lord (Mat. 11: 29) and seen in the life of the apostle Paul (2 Cor. 10: 1). It is an attitude of mind which esteems others better than self (Phil. 2: 3).

(2) Meekness, that is mild, soft, gentle. Again seen in the life of the Lord (Mat. 21: 5) and to be cultivated in our lives. This is not natural to the human flesh and needs the grace of Christ.

(3) Longsuffering, which means long enduring, patience. Again, it was characteristic of the Lord (1 Tim 1: 16) and is an attribute of love (1 Cor. 13: 4).

(4) Forbearance, that is patient endurance. This is necessary in our dealings one with another, but is not too difficult when love is in our hearts.

The unity of the Spirit (v. 3) and the unity of the faith (v. 13) derive from the unity of God and His word. Mark 12: 29 states, "The Lord our God, the Lord is one". This is characteristic of God in all His ways and works; Father, Son and Spirit working together in divine harmony. It was the prayer of the Lord Jesus that such unity seen

in the Godhead would be reflected in the disciples also (John 17: 11, 21) and this can only be brought about as we are subject to the will of God and reflect the love of Christ.

The seven things mentioned in verses 4 to 6 are the portion of all churches of God and we are responsible to maintain the unity of the faith. By way of contrast, the Lord has given a variety of gifts to the Church the Body, and the purpose of these gifts is enumerated in verse 11, that is for the perfecting of the saints; our being knit together. It is God's will that through the ministry of others there should be a growth in our lives and increasing conformity to Christ and His word. This requires the proper functioning of each member of the Body; so that the whole Body may be fed and nourished.

J. Renfrew

COMMENTS

1. (Birkenhead): Why do those members of the Body who are in heaven require to pay constant attention to behavioural principles? It is the disciple who needs to pay such attention because he or she is a member of the Body.

I. E. P.

2. (Liverpool): We know that the unity which is conditional upon our effort to keep the commands of our Lord is related to collective testimony, while our position as saints in the Church which is the Body of Christ is unalterable. If ^Mthe unity of the Spirit" here refers to position in Christ, then the exhortation must be to preserve a like unity as disciples in churches of God.

E. A.

3. (Liverpool): If members of the Body who are in heaven are excluded then the Lord is not working through the Body but only through part of it. Similar reasoning must apply to those of this dispensation yet to be saved. Such a situation is of course the opposite of the point of the image of the Body. What appears to be being said here is that the Church which is His Body is the basis of divine testimony. This is not so of course, as friends in Liverpool hint in their closing sentence. The Lord works through disciples who are to behave in certain ways because they are members of the Body.

LE. P.

4. (Nottingham): Had it not been for the similarity of wording in v. 13 ("the unity of the faith"), the mention of "one Body" and "one Spirit" would perhaps have suggested to us that the baptism of v. 5 was baptism in the Spirit into the Body and union with Christ as Head, "one faith" then being understood as signifying trust in Christ.

However, the link with v. 13 ("the unity of the faith"), a verse which has in view the attainment of unity in practice, makes it likely that "one faith" (v. 5) is referring to the revealed will of God for His people in this dispensation, though faith in Christ is a necessary prerequisite for appreciation of it. Salvation is dependent on faith in Christ alone, yet the disciple heart acknowledges Jesus as Lord, and for such God intended that there should be but one Faith (Jude v. 3). Also, for those who had received the word, no other baptism would be envisaged as an act of testimony in pursuit of the Faith than baptism into Christ Jesus (Rom. 6: 3).

E. A.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

1. From Birkenhead: Most believe "one baptism" to be in water. Is the case for it not being in the Spirit fairly conclusive?

See Comment 4 (Nottingham).

2. From Birkenhead: "Perfecting", "attain", "fullgrown" (vv. 12, 13) all outline objectives for members of the Body to have in view. They are human responsibilities. From other passages we see God viewing us in Christ faultless with the need for the above strivings apparently unnecessary. How do we correlate these two ideas?

(To guide any response the suggestion was made that we automatically *became* perfect, attained, were fullgrown at the coming of the Lord).

Members of the Church which is Christ's Body are perfect and sinless and unassailable with regard to their position in Christ, and this is surely true for all eternity. When the Lord comes, our sight and knowledge clouded no longer, we shall experience that for which we hoped and we shall meet Him whom not having seen we loved. Our condition will be marvellously altered when faith is realised in fulfilment.

The "perfecting of the saints" on the other hand has to do especially with collective testimony on earth. This was God's purpose in the gifts of those persons enumerated in verse 11. Take for example the effect on disciples in churches of God today of the writings of the apostle Paul: factors on which our progress depends are faith to lay hold of the word and exercise of heart to stand in testimony together, motivated by the love of Christ and by the hope which we have in Him. Fullgrowth is a goal for our journey, personal maturity and individual conformity to the standard of Christ being only part of it, since the growth of all the saints is in view.

E. A.

POSTSCRIPT

Some practical advice on attaining perfection is given in *Bible Studies* 1937, vol. 5 p. 84 from which we quote.

"Full growth or perfection is attained by exercise; it is so physically, and so too in the exercise of the faculties of spiritual intelligence. Continual training enables a person to discard the evil and select the good. This perception is never more needed than in reading men's writings. How much that is read is like the clay from the diamond mine, it has to be dumped, and for all our labour how infrequently we get a gem¹. Babes would be well advised to stick to the pure fountain of Divine truth in the Scriptures for some time, before they read much from the pens of men. Learn truth and then you will easily discard the error, having had your senses exercised. "

I. E. P.

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Bible Studies

A magazine for the exploration of the Word of God [Acts 17: 11]

EDITORIAL

8409

In writing **the passage under** consideration this month, **the** apostle Paul turns from **the great** spiritual truths of our calling to **the manner** of life which should result from **them, returning to the theme** of the first sentence of **chapter 4**. His message has a particular relevance for us, because **we live in a society** which has **much in common** with **the** Gentile world of Paul's day. **The** Ephesian saints to whom Paul was writing were also, of course, Gentiles, **but they had been taken** from among **their** fellows, **and made** "fellow-heirs, and fellow-members of the Body"^M (3: 6). Similarly, **we have been** saved out of a world alienated from **the** life of God, which has suppressed **the** consciousness of sin, **and in** which **making a "trade** of uncleanness"¹ (RV margin) is common **and** extremely profitable.

God has **taken the initiative in this**, for our old sinful **nature** (the "old **man**") has **been crucified with Christ** (Rom. 6: 6) **and we have been re-created in** Christ (2 Cor. 5: 17) **and have been given a new nature** (the "new **man**"). However, we **have** to **take** action to **express these** facts **in** our lives. The Greek aorist **tense is used** for "put away" (v. 22) **and "put on"** (v. 24), implying a single completed action, a **definite** decision to **reject the one and** espouse **the other**. We **have** to **turn** our **backs** decisively on all those **things** associated **with the** old life, **and turn** to those **which are characteristic** of **the** work of **the Spirit** of God. The **paper** from Cowdenbeath shows how **the** apostle compares **the** two sorts of behaviour. **In contrast with vv. 22 and 24, in v. 23** the present **tense is used** for **the verb be "renewed"**. This implies a constant rejuvenation of "**the spirit** of your mind". NIV translates **here "the attitude** of your **minds"**, **and it is in this sense that the word "spirit" is used here**. It is easy, subjected as we are to **the** continuous **barrage** of **the media**, to absorb **the** values of **the**

age in which we live, and we need a constant, conscious reorientation towards the new values of the age to come. A parallel scripture is Rom. 12: 2; "be not fashioned according to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God".

The new man is created "after God", that is, in the image and likeness of God. This was true of the first man, but he fell, and the image of God in man was corrupted and distorted by sin. The new man cannot sin (1 John 3: 9), and thus cannot lose the rights which have been given to him; he is sealed in the Holy Spirit (v. 30). Because of this it is the more important that we should put away traits belonging to the old nature, for they grieve the indwelling Spirit, who is holy, and observe for the time being the image of God in us.

P. L. H.

PUTTING OFF AND PUTTING ON (Eph. 4: 17-32)

From Ajegunle: Some points with strong contrasts are worthy of note:

- (i) "the Christian walk and the Gentile walk" (vv. 17-20)
- (ii) "the New man and the Old man" (vv. 22-24)
- (iii) "the Fruit of the Spirit and the works of the flesh (vv. 26-32).

The Christian, though saved by the grace of God, must keep himself free from defilement that he may enjoy fellowship with God. There is the renewing process through giving attention to the Word and communion in prayer (Ps. 51: 10; Rom. 12: 2; Col. 3: 10).

The Christian needs the help of the Spirit to "put off" things that are foreign to the life of God, so that he can "put on" the new man, which "after God hath been created in righteousness and holiness of truth". Things that must be "put off" cannot co-exist with things of the new life. The force which should maintain this gap of separation is the love of Christ (Rom. 12: 1; 2 Cor. 5: 14, 15).

The Holy Spirit is with the believer to glorify the Lord Jesus. Anything short of that constitutes a grief to the Spirit with which he

is sealed. The Lord Jesus in the days of His flesh condemned wrong attitudes and evil principles but He never picked on people. Anger destroys but love saves and builds up. The Holy **Spirit** does not lead angry hearts to save other lives, but such as are tender and forgiving. The Christian is at his best for Christ under the control of the Spirit.

G. M. Okwena, M. A. Imoukhuede

From Birkenhead: It is Paul's purpose in this section of the letter to emphasize that there should be a reversal of the way of life which is common to the unsaved. Two distinct actions or changes of direction are required in order that the believer should ^Mwalk worthily of the calling wherewith ye were called¹.

In the matter of "putting off" and "putting on", we reviewed Rom. 7; Col. 3 and our present study portion and considered that whereas the first states a spiritual truth the other two stress our responsibility to live in the realization of the truth of Rom. 7.

It is necessary to put away those things which characterize the life of the unbeliever and are contrary to the Lord's will. They must cease. There must be no more practising them and no more desiring them. In the same way that they were once desirable and sought after with a greediness of attitude, so that approach must be directed towards that walk which the Lord desires His followers to adopt. The same eagerness must be apparent. This change of attitude is summed up by the apostle when he makes comparison with what they know of Christ, His life and the manner in which they have come to know Him. This knowledge of Christ will work through the Holy Spirit so that the spirit of the mind is affected and thus the change is wrought.

Paul, having outlined the basic principle of his message gives specific examples and chooses those things which are likely to give difficulty in the effort to walk worthily; speaking only the truth (remember our position one to another), moderating and confining anger. This must not get out of control and in itself be sinful. There must be no chink or blemish in the Christian character which will allow Satan to obtain a foothold in our lives and thus undermine the purpose of our Christian lives.

Again the complete reversal of both role and purpose is emphasized as Paul points out that the hands once used to steal should now undertake work which will provide help for the needy and thus give expression to the new way of life_c

Those aspects of life which can so readily be seen in us by others but not so readily perceived in ourselves, are particularly dangerous. They are the unlovely aspects of character; bitterness, wrath, malice, clamour, anger and railing,, All these devalue Christian life, both our own and that of others and would lead to that which we are warned against in verse 30. The Spirit of God, ever ready to help and aid can be deeply grieved by action unworthy of the Saviour, who gave His life that we might live.

R. C. M. Bolt, R. C. Halpin

From Cowdenbeath: The theme of the epistle, relating to the Church which is the body of Christ, leads to the teaching which follows the "therefore" and "wherefore" of verses 17 and 25. This has to do with our attitude to Christ the Head and to one another as fellow-members.

The Gentiles, representative here of those who are strangers to God and to Christ, are controlled in their behaviour by their hearts, fed by minds into which the light of the Word has not come. The inevitable decadence which results is summarized in v. 19. There is a striking parallel in Rom. 1, both passages emphasizing the depravity of the human heart as a result of sin. Such are the activities of the old man, dead to God (v. 18), vain in thought and ignorant of spiritual realities.

For those to whom the word of God came and who heard and responded to it - truth is in Jesus, the Head - there is the necessity to show that response by conduct befitting those who have been renewed in the spirit of their mind, and possessors of the life of Christ and who know something of those closely related virtues of the Divine Being, righteousness and holiness. We noted in particular the striking contrast between the unregenerate mind referred to in v. 17 and that referred to in v. 23.

Falsehood cannot co-exist with truth. Truth is therefore to characterize our dealings, ways and words. We are to be transparent; we are to be what we appear to be and this thread runs on among the detail that follows.

It is noteworthy, in relation to our subject, that we have listed for us things to put off against things to put on. These are:

Put Away

1. Falsehood
2. Stealing
3. Corrupt speech
4. Bitterness, wrath, anger, clamour, railing, malice.

Put On

1. Truth
2. Labour... working the thing that is good
3. Edifying speech
4. Kindness, tenderheartedness, forgiveness.

We thought we saw here, as in other scriptures, useful guidance in hortatory ministry. In warning against evil behaviour we should emphasize the virtues of good conduct leading to Christlikeness.

Many other matters could have been exhorted upon the Ephesian saints, but these are emphasized, we believe, because the practical outworking of a spiritual relationship with one another is in view in the context of the epistle.

We noted the "angers" of vv. 26 and 31. These are different. The former indicates an attitude of heart which seeks jealously to guard that which is right, against the power of evil (e. g. as the dog guards his master's possessions and snarls at the thief), whereas the latter is that bitterness which calculates to take revenge.

R. I. Shaw

From Derby: The practical application of this portion, in Christian living, is the positive action - putting on Christ, and the negative putting off the old man. This may be done by renewing our attitude of mind (v. 23) for our thoughts and mind control what we do. Clearly the old character has to be crucified (put off) before the new character can be put on. We are counted as crucified with Christ, who died to sin, so we must reckon ourselves dead to sin, but alive unto God (Rom. 6: 11). Paul, although speaking to Gentiles, testifies that they should not live as the Gentiles do. This may appear to be a contradiction, when one considers the previous chapter where he is presenting the truth of joint fellowship of the Jew and Gentile (3:6). He would, however, it is suggested, be referring to the character of the Gentiles (in the flesh), rather than their nationality as a people [Comment 1], The opposite to walking as the Gentiles do is to walk in love (5: 2) following the example that Christ Jesus gave.

In v. 18 we can see that it is men who harden their hearts to the Gospel, although ^MGod commendeth His own love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. 5: 8). They are blinded by Satan, who has darkened their minds and understanding. The word "hardening" used here is the Greek word *porosis*, which conveys the thought of petrifying - a process of becoming hard over a period of time. This leads to a loss of sensation, so petrified that there is no power to feel at all.

Being renewed in the spirit of the mind (v. 23) and the reference in v. 17 to Gentiles walking in the vanity of their mind, would remind us of the importance of our mind. It is the mind which controls our thoughts and consequently our speaking and our actions. The thought of having our minds renewed would have the effect of helping us in speaking the truth. Speaking the truth, and putting away falsehood has to do with being sincere in our attitude, as well as in our actions. Genuine and honest actions are required as part of the Christian's character. James exhorts us to be doers of the word and not hearers only (Jas. 1: 22), while in Col. 3: 9 we are reminded not to lie to each other. In connection with v. 26 we may ask, when it is right to be angry. The Lord looked on the Pharisees with anger when He healed the man with the withered hand on the Sabbath. This is righteous anger. We may find that we could be justly angry in a situation where wrong is being committed against another person. However, in contrast we would consider v. 31, "let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger...

be put away". This has to do with our general state of mind or character.

We considered the difference between grieving the Holy Spirit and quenching of the Spirit. Grieving the Holy Spirit has to do with one's own behaviour in respect of the Spirit working inside one, whereas the quenching of the Spirit is in the outworking of the Spirit in our service.

A⁷. Willis, G. W. Conway

From Liverpool: *A Wrong Premise*. Paul now contrasts the enlightened position of those who know Christ and have been "taught in Him, even as truth is in Jesus" (v. 21) with the hopeless position of the unbelieving Gentiles. Starting from the premise that either God does not exist or does not matter their thinking and understanding was faulty and their lives sin-traps. The sequence was: futile thinking leading to darkened understanding and thence to hardened hearts with no sensitivity.

Living as Children of Light The older versions use the word "walk", but the meaning is wider, involving a whole way of life including its attitudes, aspirations and actions. "Thy word" wrote the Psalmist, "Is a lamp to my feet, and a light unto my path" (Ps, 119: 105), indicating how we can live the life of God. We all tend to absorb the culture and attitudes of the society in which we live and we must guard against this. Paul could have written "Do not live as Western Society does"! When we make value judgments it would be helpful if we could distinguish between those based on God's word and those based on the accepted norms of our society [Comment 2]

Picture of Dressing and Undressing. [Comment 3]. Paul speaks about the old self (old man RV) and the new self (new man, RV) being the two natures within the Christian. The old self, inherited from Adam, can do nothing but sin. The new self, received from God, is part of the very life of Christ and, therefore, cannot sin. Clearly a recipe for conflict exists! (Compare Rom. 8 and Col. 3: 8-10). The answer Paul gives is in language of undressing and dressing. "Put off" he says "your old self... and put on the new self". But how? In Rom. 6: 12 he tells us not to let sin reign, and elsewhere he en-

courages us not to present our members as instruments of sin but each of us is to present his or her body as a living sacrifice (Rom. 12: 1).

Practicalities. Lies, theft, bad language, bitterness, rage, brawling and slander are the hallmark of the old self. Truth, controlled anger, sharing kindness, compassion and forgiveness is that of the new. Giving in to the old self gives the Devil a foothold and grieves the Holy Spirit. Displaying the new leads to positive Christian fellowship and upbuilding. It is our responsibility as to which we put on each morning!

D. J. Webster

From Nottingham: During our study we were struck firstly by the marked contrast between this portion and the previous one (vv. 1-16). It seemed to us that while the previous one placed emphasis on the positive side of the Christian life, this one looked at the negative side and in particular on the effect of sin.

We saw the first three verses as describing the "mechanism" through which people become alienated from God:

- (i) a giving over of oneself to sinful ways (v. 19)
- (ii) a consequent loss of sensitivity both to spiritual things and to the needs of others (v. 19)
- (iii) a further hardening of the heart making the call of the Holy Spirit still more unlikely (v. 18)
- (iv) this in turn promotes an ignorance of God and His things (v. 18)
- (v) and finally all of this means a separation from the life of God (v. 18).

It was pointed out however that such verses as 18 and 19 were meant as a warning also to those who had already been saved, because v. 17 infers that much effort and strength is required of the disciple if he is to stay on the Christian pathway. We were reminded though that the Ephesians would have been more accustomed to sin as it was actually part of their religious system.

Two further points from our discussion can be presented here.

Firstly on the subject of giving as mentioned in v. 28. We thought that we were living in a world in which there are more people ^Min need" than ever before and should these not be among the recipients of our giving? Where it is not possible to help such people via churches of God around the world, should not other avenues be used? The suggestion was also made that we should always concentrate our giving in the house of God as a priority.

Secondly the dangers of "corrupt" or "unwholesome" talk were pointed out (v. 29). This was mentioned because the word "corrupt" implies an "active" process of malignancy which is continually at work in decaying the hearers of such talk. This could have a special relevance for ourselves who, living in close community, might find it difficult to forget an unkind remark made to us about a fellow-saint. Such things can be a nagging influence for evil.

C. Edis.

From Paisley: "No longer walk as the Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind" (v. 17). We can clearly see that as believers in Christ our way of life should be different from that of the unbeliever. Our understanding of the way of salvation has been shown to us through the Scriptures and by God opening up our hearts.

However, we have been shown more than just salvation. We have to put off the "old man", which is the part of our nature which causes us to sin (this being the nature of the Devil), and putting on the new man, which is sinless and is unable to commit an act of sin. We still sin, however, but this is due to the old man, which is still within us and is continually in conflict with our new self, who, if we let him, can take over our actions again. This agrees with the statement in v. 27. If we give place to the Devil then we are letting the old man take over.

Our attitude should be changed. We should want to do what is pleasing to God, not because we have to but because we want to, merely because it gives us pleasure to do God's bidding. The extent

to which we live in accordance with God's word could be considered as a gauge to show how much control the new man has in our lives.

Anger is not a sin, but it can lead us into sin. The suggestion by Paul that we should not let the sun go down on our anger is a very good piece of advice. Very often if we allow this to happen our anger can be worse in the morning, and the Devil can plant evil thoughts into our subconscious mind.

However, the most reassuring piece of this portion is v. 30, "sealed unto the day of redemption"; once we are saved we cannot be lost. If our eternal salvation was in jeopardy then the seals could be broken before the day of redemption, but as it is we are saved and cannot be lost no matter how we lead our life.

Why should we be forgiving and helpful to others? Christ gave up so very much to forgive us, and what we give up to forgive others can in no way even be compared with the sacrifice of the Lamb.

W. McKaig

COMMENTS

1. (Derby): The truth of the "joint fellowship of Jew and Gentile" rests on the fact that a completely new relationship, in which such distinctions are non-existent has been entered into. This supersedes the distinction between Jew and Gentile as to both character *and* nationality.

2. (Liverpool): In Eph. 4: 17 and kindred Scriptures the NIV has "live" instead of "walk" as in the Revised Version, for example. In this the NIV is giving an interpretation not translation for, as friends in Liverpool have detected, there is a well-worn path of teaching in the Scriptures about "walk" which has to be searched out by the disciple. This he will find even more difficult if words are not accurately translated. It so happens that the word "live" is a helpful interpretation but the proposal that Paul could have written "Do not live as Western Society does" well illustrates the danger of interpretation. If such a thing had been written then

the scripture in question (Eph. 4: 17) would be open to the charge that it does not equally condemn "Eastern Society" or "Third World Society" if these be the counterparts of "Western Society". The inspired writing, however, is not so partial and is of universal application for it is condemning society that man creates independently of the Lord's instruction.

3. (Liverpool): It is true that "put on" (Eph. 4: 24) is the normal Greek word for "getting into clothes" and that the opposite in Col. 3: 9 is a word meaning "to unclothe oneself". The "putting away" of Eph. 4: 22 is *apotithemai* which may suggest something stronger than "undressing". *Apo* has the sense of "away" as for example in our English word apogee which is the point of a planet's or satellite's orbit which is farthest from the earth. A word-study of the various prefixes associated with the Greek word *tithemai* (to lay or place) will be found to be invaluable to an understanding of the New Testament scriptures especially in connection with (hardly surprisingly) positional truth.

I. E. P.

POSTSCRIPT

One of the most appealing features of the way in which the Lord Jesus taught is His use of ordinary, everyday things to illustrate profound spiritual truths. Objects like the water in the well, the lost coin, the lost sheep or familiar sights such as the sower, or the shepherd readily spring to mind. He used scriptural objects, too, such as the manna with which His own people, the Jews, would be familiar but whose history needs some introductory knowledge for such an illustration to be effective to a Gentile audience.

The portion that is before us this month is about the way in which the disciple should walk. As an illustration, the way has a universal appeal but it is also one to which special significance is given in the Scriptures and by the Lord Himself. Something of its universal appeal may be seen in the language of one of our own English poets.

"See you the Ferny ride that steals
Into the oak-woods far?
O that was whence they hewed the keels
That rolled to Trafalgar..."

See you the dimpled track that runs
All hallow through the wheat?
O that was where they hauled the guns
That smote King Philip's fleet^M.

Although few of us speak with Sussex accents which would do justice to the verses or perhaps feel little natural attachment to the land whose sons are spoken of, the idea of what is meant by "a way" is understood by all and has roots in common experience. A "way" is a track that results from the habitual passage of the traveller. It owes its existence to the person who journeys upon it. Many of us nowadays are used to properly constructed roads, indeed railway track was originally called permanent way, but before such engineering feats and certainly to those who people the Old Testament scriptures, ways were places fundamentally marked out by the constant tread of the wayfarers' feet as he sought his destination. It is easy to see how such an everyday thing readily lends itself to illustrate man's journey to his eternal home as marked out by God and followed by His saints. Thus we read, for example, "Teach me Thy way, O Lord" (Ps. 27: 11; 86: 11).

Such identification of a "way" with the Person responsible for its creation finds its perfect answer in the words of the Lord "I am the way, and the truth, and the life: no one cometh unto the Father, but by me." (John 14: 6). Here is the perfect way opened up for all men. He is truth and to walk this way men must know Him. The way unto the Father is personally identified with Him. It is of His creation for He opened it up through His death, resurrection and His abiding presence with the Father.

It is noteworthy that the way, the truth and the life are again brought together in this month's study portion. Thus the passage deals with the new man thereby dealing with men who have eternal life. But what does the new man look like? It is none other than the character of Christ to be displayed by the believer. How is this achieved? It is achieved by learning Christ "even as the truth is in Jesus". Thus the Lord's famous words of John 14: 6 have their application, too, in the ordinary, everyday, apparently humdrum life of the believer as he treads the disciple pathway trodden so long ago by the perfect Man.

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Bible Studies

A magazine for the exploration of the Word of God [Acts 17: 11]

EDITORIAL

8410

The scripture in Eph. 5: 2 has caught the attention of contributors to this month's issue. It is one of those invaluable New Testament verses which enables us to interpret with confidence many Old Testament scriptures which speak of sacrifice and offering. The phrase "odour of a sweet smell" is so distinctive and so resembles that which occurs in Leviticus chapter 1, for example, that we can hardly fail to draw comparisons between shadow and substance. In these the Lord is brought before us so preciously that it is impossible not to dwell on Him especially in the matter of His life and His offering of Himself to God that is so distinctively demonstrated in the burnt offering. Other considerations, however, do intrude.

One of the things that cannot fail to impress us is the way in which the Old Testament illustration is inserted into the Ephesian epistle without any introduction or comment. It is as though the writer expects his readers to be thoroughly familiar with the Old Testament teaching and its foreshadowing of the New. Indeed, at the simplest of levels, what cannot fail to impress us as students of the Word is that most if not all of the Ephesians would not have a copy of the Scriptures in their own homes and, indeed, many, being Gentiles, would not have had the advantage of an upbringing such as that of Paul or Timothy. Can it be that we who have the inestimable advantage of daily access to the written Word are less familiar with it and its doctrines than they?

A practical point in the verse is seen in the force of the words "even as". It is not simply the fact **that the** Lord offered Himself to God that is brought before us but **that** His example in so doing is to **be followed by** His disciples. We would suggest **that the** force of **the** "even as" extends to the divine view of **the** result of **the** disciplined

imitating Him. **That** is to say **the** selfless sacrifice of **the** disciple as **he** walks **in** love, **if** done **in** imitation of Christ **and** **having** its root **in** **that** same sacrifice which **He** made, also ascends to God as **an** "odour of a sweet smell". A similar thought **is** contained **in** **the** description of **the** sacrifice **that** **the** Philippian saints **made** **in** **their** **giving** to support **the** apostle Paul (Phil. 4: 18) though **it** **may** **be** **that** **in** **that** **case** **it** **is** **an** application of **the** **teaching** of **the** sacrifice of **peace** offerings **that** is brought before us.

Thus, **in** addition to **the** application of **the** **teaching** of **the** sweet savour offerings to **the** Lord Jesus **there** is also **that** **which** applies to **the** life of **the** believer, just as **there** is **an** application of **the** **teaching** of **the** sin **and** trespass offerings to **the** daily life of **the** believer. We would suggest **that** **it** is this application of **the** **teaching** of **the** sweet savour offerings **in** **the** believer's life to **which** **the** writer to **the** Hebrews refers **when** **he** says "to do good **and** communicate forget not: for **with** such sacrifices God is well pleased" (Heb. 13:16). **Such** daily deeds **may** **then** **be** seen as a counterpart to those spiritual sacrifices (1 Pet. 2: 5) **which** **are** described **in** **the** preceding verse (Heb. 13: 15) as "**the** fruit of lips **which** make confession to His Name". **The** latter is **thus** a **third** New Testament application of **the** **teaching** of Old Testament scriptures **such** as those of Leviticus **chapter** 1, concerning sacrifice **and** offering.

/s. E. P.

EDITORIAL NOTE

The following article is **by** Bro. Martin Archibald of Glasgow **and** examines **a** **phrase** **in** **Eph.** 5: 19. The article is unusual because **it** cites **a** large **number** of non-scriptural sources. Nevertheless we **have** thought it helpful to print **it** **in** **full** **because**, **in** addition to its exposition, **it** shows several **different** but acceptable ways of using **such** "authorities". First of all **the** phrase is **explained** **by** **reference** to other scriptures. **Then** **reference** **is** **made** to sources **which** **are** authorities on **the** meanings of words: **the** compilers of dictionaries **and** translators of **the** languages of **the** scriptures. **Next**, **reference** **is** **made** to those who **are** commentators of **a** scholarly **nature**. **That** **is** to say **they** **are** interested **in** **understanding** **the** words as **literary** documents and **are** not concerned **primarily** **with** establishing doctrine. Finally, reference is **made** to historical sources, for instance, Eusebius of Caesarea.

Again **the** purpose of **this** **is** not to **establish** doctrine **but** **simply**

to show that the doctrine established from the study of Scripture was actually practised in history. Lest any be mistaken we emphasize again that the purpose of Bible Studies is to expound the Scriptures as the Word of God as taught by the Spirit of God. It is not to see the Bible as a book amongst other books, or to see its setting in history and especially not to build teaching from non-scriptural sources.

Editors

EPHESIANS 5: 19 - SINGING OR MAKING MUSIC?

"And he (Hezekiah) set the Levites in the house of the Lord with cymbals, with psalteries, and with harps, according to the commandment of David, and of Gad the king's seer, and Nathan the prophet: *for the commandment was of the Lord by His prophets.* And **the** Levites stood with the instruments of David, and the priests with the trumpets" (2 Chr. 29: 25, 26).

So the service of praise, accompanied by instrumental music, was given a place by the Lord in Old Covenant worship, along with the developments that characterized the pattern of a more permanent dwelling-place revealed to David and Solomon. And when the temple had been cleansed at the command of Hezekiah, and the continual burnt offering was sacrificed again,

^M... the song of the Lord began also, and the trumpets, together with the instruments of David king of Israel".

Again, when Zerubbabel and Jeshua returned from the Captivity, and the foundation of the temple had been re-laid,

"... they set the priests in their apparel with trumpets, and the Levites the sons of Asaph with cymbals, to praise the Lord, after the order of David king of Israel" (Ezra 3: 10).

How significant, then, that in New Covenant references to praise in music before the Revelation, there is instruction only about singing, and such complete silence about any contribution on man-made instruments! It is all the more important, therefore, that, as disciples who would follow the New Testament pattern today we should search carefully our understanding of the two-fold instruction that is directly given in Eph. 5 and Col. 3.

The dictionaries, e. g. Thayer, Liddell and Scott, **Arndt and Gingrich** - yield evidence **that** leaves **the reader** dependent on **the** context of **each** occurrence. **The** word *psallo* in earlier **Greek** meant **"I pluck** (a cord or instrument)", leading to **the** sense "play", **with** or without **an** instrument **being** mentioned. **By Septuagint** (the Greek translation of **the** Old Testament) **and** New Testament **times** the sense "sing" "sing/praise" **had** arisen, **and** this is invariably **the** meaning these leading scholars **find** in Rom. 15: 9.

"Therefore will **I** give praise unto **Thee** among **the** Gentiles, **and** *sing* unto Thy **name**".

1 Cor. 14: 15:

"I will *sing* with **the** spirit, **and** I will *sing* with **the** understanding also".

And James 5: 13:

"... Is any cheerful? Let **him** *sing* praise".

W. E. Vine is prepared to say:

"*psallo*... denotes in the New Testament, *to sing a hymn, sing praise*; in **Eph.** 5: 19, *making melody*... Elsewhere it is **rendered** '*sing*'..."

but Vine is concerned throughout **his** work to promote more interpretation **than** the usual dictionary would venture, **and** we accordingly **take care** at present. Whereas Markus **Barth**, (*Ephesians*, New York, 1974), **says** on 5: 19:

"... A decision for or **against** accompanied **singing** cannot **be** made on philological grounds"

(i. e. from **studying** the history of **the** **Greek** word's meanings).

It is interesting then to note **that** a clearer **view** emerges from **the** panels of **eminent** scholars responsible for **the** **recent** translations. R. S. V. **and** Revised A. V. **and** R. V.:

"**making** melody to **the** Lord **with** all your **hearts**".

N. E. B., **and** N. I. V.:

"**make** music in your heart(s) to **the** Lord".

In the latter **rendering** the **music is** in the heart - not on a physical instrument accompanying the **singing**.

What about the commentaries? Few of today's major scholarly commentators in fact touch on our concern - even the most recent of the Germans (renowned for their thoroughness), Rudolf Schnackenburg (Zurich, etc. 1982). It is the more valuable, therefore, to find a firm and full statement by Professor F.F. Bruce in *The Epistle to the Ephesians*, (London, 1961).

"The verb translated 'making melody'... means originally plucking the strings of a lyre or similar instrument, but this... sense is probably not intended here; we may take it in the sense of singing psalms which it has in 1 Cor. 14: 15 and Jas. 5: 13".

Further, we may assume that these scholars are aware that the principal 1st and 2nd century authors who refer to the Christian worship of their times mention or describe singing, but musical accompaniment only when their subject is the Old Testament psalms. Professor Bruce indeed says:

"Pliny, when Roman governor of Bithynia in A. D. 112 was told how the Christians of his province were in the habit of meeting on a fixed day before dawn and ^Treciting a hymn antiphonally to Christ as God^f. Towards the end of the same century, Tertullian, writing in North Africa, describes the Christian love-feast at which ^feach is invited to sing to God in the presence of the others from what he knows of the holy scripture or from his own heart".

The point for us at the moment is, of course, simply the evidence for the presence or absence of musical accompaniment, even tens of years after the times of the Apostles. As for further examples, E. Routley, in *The Church and Music*, London, 1967, cites Pliny **and** Tertullian, and the next directly relevant quotation is from Eusebius of Caesarea (c. 265-340 A. D.), writing about Psalm 92 and referring to Romans 2: 28, 29:

"... we can say that we are in this fashion 'Jews inwardly' when we sing God's praise in spiritual songs, with a living psaltery and an ensouled harp. The measure of God's acceptance of the singing of a Christian congregation and of His delight in it, is the unanimity of mind, passion and sentiment, the unity of faith and piety with which we sing together the melodies of our praises. The same apostle commands us to exhort one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs'; here then is the spiritual psalmody, the spiritual harp in our worship".

We quote at length to show that there is nothing to hide. Further samples may be found by the student in Lactantius (born 290 A. D.) and Ambrose (c. 333-397), all witnessing to singing without accompaniment being the norm, and Ambrose indeed rebuking those who prefer harp, psaltery and drum as revellers and drunkards who have a liking for secular *music*. To sum up the evidence from the historians, C. L. Kraeling and L. Mowry, in the *new Oxford History of Music*, (1957) Vol. 1, p. 303, write:

"So far as we can tell the music of the early Church was almost entirely vocal, Christian usage following in this particular the practice of the synagogue, in part for the same reasons... On the Christian opposition to instrumental music and the exceptions to its disuse, see J. Quasten, *Musik und Gesang in den Kulturn...* " (Munster, 1930).

Finally, any interpretation of Eph. 5: 19 must be greatly influenced by the strikingly similar wording of Col. 3: 16:

"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs, *singing* with grace in your hearts unto God".

- where the singing is physical and actual, and it is the *grace* that is in their hearts.

May the example of our Lord with its two-fold witness be the last word in our study:

"And when they had *sung* a hymn, they went out unto the mount of Olives" (Mat. 26: 30; Mk. 14: 26).

"I will declare thy name unto my brethren,
In the midst of the congregation will I *sing* thy praise".
(Heb. 2: 12 from Ps. 22: 22).

Martin Archibald

WALKING AS CHILDREN OF LIGHT (Ephesians 5: 1-21)

From Ajegunle: We noted in our study the contrast between the works of light and the works of darkness (vv. 8, 9). Fellow students have suggested that walking in the light implies living by the power of the Spirit manifesting the fruit of the Spirit: verse 9 compares with Gal. 5: 22, 23.

The offering and sacrifice of Christ to God (v. 3), is seen as the foundation for us to rise to further works of faith and labour of love. By the Spirit the works of the flesh, too, are to be recognised (vv. 3-6) and the saint in light should have nothing to do with them.

Verses 10-13 present the practical aspects of walking as children of light. Paul in his epistle showed the path of victory:

- (a) *proving* what is well pleasing unto God (Rom, 12: 2)
- (b) *reproving* the things of darkness (vv. 11-13)
- (c) *sound speech* for edifying and praise of God (vv. 19, 20).

The call to revival is seen in vv. 14 to 18. From sleep the call is to awake, then to look carefully and to walk wisely in the will of the Lord.

G. Okwena, M. Imoukhuede

From **Birkenhead**: We have read from Paul's words to the Ephesians that he was anxious for them to learn both the benefits and blessings which are theirs in Christ, and the responsibilities which should be shouldered when Christ is accepted. These are delivered to those who are gathered according to God's will in churches of God. In this portion of our study, Paul draws a contrast which on paper seems uneven in that v. 2 of chapter 5 states one side of the position, whilst the remainder of the letter largely deals with the other side, that being man's response. However, Paul's style is such that v. 2 contains in few words the magnitude of the work of Christ in the will of God and his analogy with Old Testament sacrifices sharpens the picture which he seeks to place in their minds.

The essence of his teaching is to show Christ's self-sacrifice and contrast it with man's self-indulgence.

The apostle was able to use words which could readily be identified as being key words to the teaching; words he used frequently,

i. e. walk and love. The first indicates the comprehensive cover of the Christian life which is involved, whilst the second characterizes the manner in which this should be lived. Even so this is not just "love" but "even as Christ also loved you".

Verse 5 seems to indicate that failure in our manner of life would lead to being excluded from any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. On balance, it was felt that this had a present application and would be the sanction applied in respect of continued wrong activity rather than isolated instances [Comment 1]. This led us to involve the idea of discipline within the present expression of the kingdom, i. e. churches of God. However, the involvement of the inheritance in a future sense was not excluded.

The passage continues, giving weight to the idea that having determined what is right and wrong, by using the yard-stick of God's Word, the believer should not only shun that which is wrong, but should actively reprove that which is practised by others when it is in contravention of God's will. The "wise" believer who practises this will find a need to order his life according to the injunction to "redeem the time". That implies, economical use, taking maximum advantage, and careful budgeting of the time which God allows each believer according to His plan for him. Also involved is the idea of time being limited according to God's will, and evidence of the future fulfilment of prophecy being available to those with spiritual insight.

The final verses give guidance to the approach as advised by Paul to those who have to deal with one another in the church. There is to be a recognition that in measure we are all to be subject to one another, a common and useful scriptural teaching. But alongside this we can help, guard, guide and advise one another by the use of those psalms, hymns and spiritual songs which the Lord has given us for our edification and encouragement and for His praise.

J. D. Williams, R. C. Halpin

From Birmingham: Precious thoughts are contained in v. 2 concerning the giving of Christ of Himself to God, "as an offering and a sacrifice". Although the offering and sacrifice were the same thing, two different aspects are before us in the two words used. Perhaps the self-less giving of Christ is seen in the word "offering", and His life which was ultimately consumed in death for the sake of others in the word "sacrifice", i. e. the thought of giving and the object which was given are brought before us. These thoughts are perhaps clarified by Heb. 7: 27.

In relation to the above, the standard of love in which the Christian should walk is realized in the love which Christ showed by His giving Himself for us, even unto death. This is a high standard for the scripture says, ^Mgreater love hath no man than this" (see also 1 John 3: 16). This aspect of the sacrificial love of Christ was very precious to God, as the words "an odour of a sweet smell" show. There are numerous other references in Scripture to the love of God and of Christ being demonstrated by His sacrifice, see Rom. 5: 8 [Comment 2].

All these delightful thoughts are contrasted against the things mentioned in vv. 3 and 4, which God finds abhorrent. Such things should not even be discussed by those who are called "saints". We suggest such discussion would be in the sense of flippant conversation [Comment 3]. Such things are not compatible with the life of one who has been "sanctified".

Paul exhorts the saints not to be partakers with those who practise such things. We assume it to be possible that there were some in the church in Ephesus who had retained some of these former practices which were rampant in Paul's days. He exhorts them to "have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness" (v. 11). Such acts are called "darkness" by the apostle because they speak of ignorance, as opposed to what Paul calls "light" which speaks of understanding or enlightenment.

What did Paul mean when he said "But (ye) are now light in the Lord (v. 8)? Is there not a connection with the words of the Lord Jesus, "He that followeth me shall not walk in the darkness, but shall have the light of life" (John 8: 12)? We suggest that this is the spiritual enlightenment that Christ gives the Christian; an understanding of the way he should walk or conduct himself. As he conducts himself thus he manifests the fruit of the light which is in goodness, righteousness and truth, (v. 9), and thus he walks as do "children of light" (v. 8). These things are well pleasing to God (v. 10), and the Christian proves this to be so by the resultant blessing that God gives to the one who so walks.

As we "walk as children of light" in this way, it is one of the most positive and powerful ways to correct or reprove (v. 11 convict RVM) those that are darkness. "Actions speak louder than words" the world says, and this is never so true as in the life of the Christian. So it is that all that is wrong is made manifestly so by that which

is right (v. 13). "As He is, even so are we in this world" (1 John 4: 17), the Christian is a representative of Christ, the light of the world, who, even when He was silent convicted His accusers.

Those who practise the things mentioned in vv. 3 and 4 are cut off from the immediate privileges of being amongst God's people, if the correct discipline is undertaken (1 Cor. 5: 13), and therefore have no "inheritance in the Kingdom of Christ and God" (v. 5).

We judge that "the Kingdom of Christ and God" are one and the same, as all authority has been given unto the Son in heaven and on earth, and the Kingdom of God is where God rules on earth.

J. Watts

From Derby: We are exhorted to imitate God. We can do this by:

- (a) walking in love (v. 2)
- (b) walking as children of light (v. 8)
- (c) walking, not as unwise, but as wise (v, 15).

Christ's love was self-sacrificing. He offered Himself in perfect obedience to God and He shed His blood when He sacrificed Himself. We cannot attain to Christ's love but if we love one another the world will recognize that we are His disciples. People who commit the sins mentioned are not walking in love. Uncleanliness is a sin against ourselves while covetousness is a sin against our neighbour. The tongue is a little member and it should be occupied in giving thanks. We may lose our inheritance in the kingdom of God if we indulge in these sins but we cannot lose our salvation. The wrath of God will be poured out on evil disobedient people and the Christian should be careful that he does not sink back into these ways from which he has been saved.

We were once darkness itself but, because of the atoning work of Christ, are now "light in the Lord". We can say, "in the Lord" only if we are subject to Him. We are told to "walk as children of light" and the fruit of light will be manifested in us. These are contrasted with the unfruitful works of darkness. Works are done in the darkness but fruit grows in the light. If we are continually looking to Calvary the works of the flesh will be condemned. The sleeping Christian is urged to awake and to keep strictly to the right path. We must buy up the opportunities while we are able.

God's purpose is that we should be subject to the will of God.

The excessive use of wine **and its** evil consequences **are** contrasted with **the** continual filling of **the** Spirit. **The Spirit** of God **leads**, not to excess, **but** to controlled activity. You have speaking, **singing**, giving **and** subjecting. None of **these** seems outstanding **but they** will characterize a person filled with the **Spirit**. **The Spirit** of God **leads** to subjection.

G. W. Conway

From Liverpool: *Children ?* We preferred the Good News Bible translation of v. 1. Paul is not referring to the spiritual progress of the Ephesians nor to their lack of maturity but to their relationship to God. ^MSince you are God's dear children, you must try to be like him^M (Good News Bible. Today's English Version) [Comment 4].

Imitating God, Philip, speaking to the Lord Jesus, said, "Lord, show us the Father and it sufficeth us" (John 14: 8). In reply he was asked the searching question: "Have I been so long time with you and dost thou not know me, Philip? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father" (John 14: 9). This conversation explains the difficult injunction to imitate **One** who is spirit and invisible. "**Be ye** therefore imitators of God" really means "**Be Christians**"! As we learn about Christ and become like **Him** so we become like our heavenly Father.

The Carrot! Paul brings in our indebtedness to the Lord Jesus Christ as the motivating force in imitating God and living a life of love. It is not easy to imitate God and show that kind of selfless love to each brother and sister in our own church let alone to those around us whose political or religious stance [Comment 5] or whose lifestyle is opposite to everything we stand for. For help we are inspired by the Lord Jesus who loved those who did not love Him and who taught what He practised Himself.

*Holy Living** All the evils listed in vv. 3-6 are in each one of us in potential. Society practises them, approves of them and tempts us with them. We recognized that so often, when we are honest, those impure things are attractive to us. Yet we must not trade in them. If we really love each other we will not do or say anything that will harm each other's minds. The antidote is the Word of God. When we meditate on it and answer each impure challenge with it we receive strength to withstand the moral pressures.

Sleeping Partners 1 Paul's Old Testament quotation reminds us that it is possible for Christians to be asleep spiritually. A Christian

should not be a foolish person but should be alert to "understand what the will of the Lord is" (v. 17). Such people will be actively "walking" as children of light.

D. J. Webster

From Nottingham: Generally speaking, this portion of Paul's epistle to the church of God in Ephesus contains an immense array of guidance for Christian living. It is fairly evident that a lot was going on in Ephesus, that should not have been, and here Paul sets out clear guide-lines to teach, rebuke, correct and train in righteousness (2 Tim. 3: 16). We can apply a lot of the passage to ourselves.

"Be ye therefore imitators of God" (v. 1) seems to refer back to the previous chapter in which some reasons why we should be imitators of God are given. Although we cannot, at present, be perfect we must strive towards that ideal. The greatest reason that we should become as perfect as possible in a life of love for God is given (v. 2); because the Lord first loved us and showed His love for us, by dying for us. This is something which we should have before us all the time, so that when problems arise, we have a great example to look to for reassurance and help.

It is interesting to see that the wrong things talked about in v. 3 seem to be much more serious than those talked about in v. 4. Obscenity, foolish talk and coarse joking are out of place (v. 4), but there should not be even a hint of sexual immorality, impurity or greed (v. 3) in God's holy people. It should also be said that while coarse joking is clearly wrong, it is not suggested that we as Christians should not have a sense of humour, as the Lord showed in His teaching of the disciples (Mat. 7: 3-5).

Verse 6 seems to bring out the thought (which is also shown in Col. 2: 8) about not being deceived with empty words, and the next few verses introduce the concept of dark and light which seems to be characteristic of the passage. It is good to see that throughout the passage Paul does not rebuke without providing a good positive and wholesome alternative to the sin which was going on. So it is in our case: the Christian life is not a list of rules or things we should not do, but rather we are taught in the Bible positive ideals for Christian living, and the more we adhere to these the less we will find time to involve ourselves in the wrong things of the world (Eph. 4: 28).

Having given a few guide-lines in specific matters, Paul then puts things in perspective, when he emphasizes the need to make the most of every opportunity (vv. 15 and 16, see 1 Cor. 3: 12, 13), and as the passage draws to a close the teaching of a positive replacement of sins with better things is shown again. Finally Paul mentions something which is often hard to do, that is that we should give thanks to God the Father for everything in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

T. Elson

From Paisley: We all have witnessed at one time or another the way in which a child imitates something it has just seen or heard. Thereafter the judgement of the parent encourages or actively discourages this imitation. Similarly in our lives as Christians and children we should endeavour to walk in the pattern outlined by our heavenly Father and the example of the ultimate walk of love shown forth by our Lord Jesus Christ. This should allow us to walk as children of light (v. 8).

Such a Christlike walk is in stark contrast to the worldly things contained in verses 3 and 4 which should not even be named among us. The giving of thanks is much more befitting and if it fulfils the conditions laid down in verse 20 it should take the form of a perpetual stream of praise and thankfulness, leaving little room for anything else.

There is now in verses 5 and 6 an interesting thought that a believer may disinherit him or herself (by the conduct in verses 3 and 4) of an inheritance ready and waiting in heaven. Fortunately for him he cannot lose his eternal salvation, as some would have us believe, but judgement will await those who take part in the works of ^Mthe sons of disobedience". It brings to mind the Sunday school chorus ^M"Watch your eyes, ears, lips, hands and feet" which should be the constant vigil of every believer, in order to keep ourselves closer to God.

Moving on to verses 8, 9 and 10 the initial lines are most worthy of note in that we were once darkness, not in darkness and conversely we are now light with a duty to "reflect" the light to the surrounding world. Men love the darkness but we love the Light of the World, our Lord Jesus Christ.

We have also as Christians to reprove the works of darkness

which are unfruitful and to put the spotlight on them, as it were, and make apparent what is good or otherwise in the sight of God.

As we walk wisely and carefully (v. 15) we have to "buy up each opportunity" as it comes along because as we know it rarely knocks twice. We all know that we have the Holy Spirit within us but our ambition should be, to be filled to capacity and have a Spirit laden, praising, melodious heart. This will allow us to give the perpetual stream of praise mentioned earlier. The way we walk, as children of light, in love, should, as we are exhorted in verse 21, be in subjection and humility and in the fear of the Lord, even after His own example.

Fergus J. Reilly

COMMENTS

10 (Birkenhead): In Eph. 5: 5 and indeed in 1 Cor. 6: 9-10 it is important to recognize that some states result from a single act and some from habitual acts. For example, a single act makes a person a fornicator or an adulterer but a single act of drunkenness or coveting, deplorable and spiritually deadening though they may be, does not make a person a drunkard or a covetous man.

2. (Birmingham): Rom. 5:8 deals, of course, with the sin-offering aspect of the death of Christ which is not that dealt with in the latter part of Eph. 5: 2. See also Question 1.

3. (Birmingham): We agree heartily with friends in Birmingham that the things of Eph. 5: 3 should not be the subject of flippant conversation. Making light of sin is one of the evils of our day. "Let it not even be named" however does not prohibit speaking of them else how can instruction in righteousness be given? The naming here is the Greek word *onomazo*, which is used for example in Luke 6: 13, 14, and has to do with naming in the sense of identification. Thus the behaviour of saints is to be so perfect that in considering their actions the very terms should not come into the observer's mind, let alone should there be any proof of such sins. Something of the sense is given in the NIV which says, "there must not even be a hint", but that is interpretation not translation.

4. (Liverpool): Friends in Liverpool should be quite clear that the Good News Bible account of Eph. 5: 1 is a very loose translation and leans heavily to the side of interpretation. The words and their construction as given by the Good News Bible bear passing resemblance to the original words. What the Good News Bible gives us

here is not the mind of God, but the mind of its writers. It would not be so bad if this were sound. In fact Eph. 5: 1 is a command not an exhortation to "Play up and play the game" as the Good News Bible suggests.

5. (Liverpool): The only political stance that disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ are to have is to be non-political. Political stances are mere worldly posturings of the utmost insignificance compared with the issue at stake concerning the salvation of sinners from hell and the salvation of believers from spiritual Babylon.

I. E. P.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

1. From **Birmingham**: Eph. 5: 2 - In the Old Testament, what was the "sweet savour" and who received it?

The "sweet savour" was the smell or aroma that arose from what was burned on the altar. In the burnt offering, meal offering and sacrifice of peace offerings described in the opening chapters of the book of Leviticus the whole object of the burning was to produce this smell. The aroma was "unto the Lord" (Lev. 1: 9 *et seq.*). This matter is particularly emphasized in the sacrifice of peace offerings because, of course, other parts of that offering were the portion of offerer, the priests and their families. Because of the overwhelming importance and constant reiteration of the phrase "sweet savour" these three offerings with which the book of Leviticus opens are commonly most usefully grouped together and called the "sweet savour offerings". No thought of forgiveness enters into the offering of them, unlike the offerings described in Leviticus 4 and 5 which are commonly usefully grouped together and called the "forgiveness offerings". Even in these, however, a portion was devoted entirely to God and was burned for a sweet savour (e. g. Lev. 4: 31). So important is this distinction that different Hebrew words are used for the burning that produced the sweet savour and that which was to the destruction of the animal. The former (*qatar*) denotes to cause to burn as incense whereas the latter (*saraph*) is used when burning to destruction occurred (e. g. Lev. 4: 12, 21). The word for "sweet" is the Hebrew word *nichoach* which is related to the word *nuach* denoting rest. Thus we deduce that the aroma which ascended was intended for God alone and denoted the rest and satisfaction which He finds associated with a completed work and which Eph. 5: 2 shows us He found in the work completed by His Son at Calvary.

2. From Nottingham: Why does Eph. 5: 5 speak of the "kingdom of Christ and God"? We know that Christ is God, but why use both here when, in the same context, Gal. 5: 21 speaks only of the "kingdom of God"?

The kingdom of God is the kingdom of God the Father, the One who is served by men. It is the kingdom of God and Christ because all authority hath been given unto the Lord Jesus Christ in heaven and on earth (Matt. 28: 18). He is its Lord and its Law-giver and the One whose law is to be obeyed by its subjects who are to render conscious and deliberate obedience to His will. The result of such obedience is that believers will attain the "measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ". That is to say they will be conformed to the character of the ruler of **the** kingdom just as it was expected that the character of Israel in a past day was to conform to that of the Lord, their King (e. g. Lev 11: 44). Now "be ye holy; for I am holy" may be considered a paraphrase of the verses which are before us in Eph. 5. Thus we would suggest that Eph. 5: 5 mentions the name of Christ because His exemplary behaviour is brought before us in these verses, unlike the scriptures in Gal. 5: 16-26 where only the two natures of the believer are brought before us.

3. Is it possible to be out of the kingdom of God but still in a church of God?

The kingdom of God is that sphere of divine authority that finds outward expression in the churches of God as is correctly implied in the question from our friends in Nottingham. Thus the converse of the question is true: that it is impossible to be in the kingdom of God **and** not be in a church of God. Indeed it is impossible to see or enter into the kingdom of God without first being born again (John 3: 3, 5; 1 Cor. 15: 50) although, of course, the new birth does not of itself secure entry to the kingdom of God. That unsaved people have been in churches of God is plain from such scripture as 1 John 2: 19 and such, as we have said, cannot be or enter into the kingdom of God. Therefore, in answer to the question, we would say that because the kingdom of God is about conscious subjection to the will of God by weak and failing men it is possible for mistakes to be made. It is in the very nature of such mistakes, however, that they are undiscovered because until they are discovered action cannot be taken to put the matter right.

I. E. P.

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Bible Studies

A magazine for the exploration of the Word of God [Acts 17: 11]

EDITORIAL

8411

A real appreciation of the love of Christ and a genuine response to His love must bring about a transformation in our outlook. Worldly values give place when the Lord is foremost in our lives and we realise that ^M'none of us liveth to himself' (Rom. 14:7). For we then see Him as our Example, we acknowledge Him as divinely ordained Judge of human conduct, but above all we know Him as the One who loved us and gave Himself up for us. This realisation has an effect on our relationship with others, and so much the more as we truly honour the Lord.

The ideal of marriage which the apostle set before the Ephesians viewed the subjection of the wife to her husband in the light of subjection to the Lord. Her subjection was to be matched, however, by a love on the part of the husband towards his wife which should reflect the love of Christ for the Church. This spiritual dimension not only elevated Christian marriage far above current thinking on marriage in the ancient world, but also set the very highest standard for all time.

The relationship between parents and their children is viewed in its proper focus as intended, namely "in the Lord". In this sphere obedience to parents is affirmed to be right, and the commandment to honour father and mother is also reaffirmed. The injunction to nurture was given to fathers, chastening and admonition to be of the Lord, and not such as to build up resentment.

Slavery, which featured so largely in ancient society, is not being condoned by the apostle, but rather the expectation of the imminent return of the Lord made it of immediate relevance that the servant should perform his service to the credit of his heavenly Master, and that the master should treat his bondservants fairly, knowing that he himself must give an account of his own conduct to the Lord.

Quite clearly, no matter what the circumstances are in which we find ourselves, our awareness of Christ as Lord should affect our relationships to others and imbue them with a meaningfulness and purpose which derive from above: and we know His coming to be so much more imminent in our time. E. A.

RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHERS (Ephesians 5: 22 - 6: 9)

From Ajegunle: Four important aspects of relationship are seen in the passage for study:

- a) wives and their husbands (5: 22-33)
- b) the Church the Body and Christ (5: 25-27)
- c) children and their parents (6:1-4)
- d) servants and their masters (6:5-9)

In the home there are at least two of these aspects of relationship, the wife-husband and the child-parent. Love for Christ and each other in these domestic ties is bound to promote perfect harmony and give lubricating effect in every circumstance of life. The blessings thereof are founded on obedience to the will of God in Christ Jesus. The servant-master relationship can exist in the home as well as in the normal business forum. The promise of reward is assured for well-doing or recompense for unfaithfulness (6:8).

The relationship between Christ and the Church which is His Body is unique in every way. The love of Christ is the ever constant tie, without need for rules and laws to sustain it, a relationship which is unseverable, the unsullied bond for evermore.

The phrases, "as unto the Lord" (5: 22; 6: 7), and "as servants of Christ" (6:5), are built in controls to regulate the conduct of all in witness to that pure love of Christ which we received.

E. I. Bassey, G. Okwena

From Birkenhead: The passage under consideration relates back to v. 21 of the same chapter, which sets the topic upon which the apostle bases his developing teaching. The theme is that of being subject to one another in the fear of Christ. It is important to notice from this that each may be subject to another or others, dependent upon his position, status and calling. The teaching is to those acknowledging the Lordship of Christ, and outlines Christ's relationship to His Church as

the pattern for relationships in marriage.

Separate classes of persons are mentioned - wives, children, servants, husbands, parents, fathers and masters. Where a position of authority is held, then it must be realised that such authority is given by God, and must be rightly used by the recipient. Additionally, there must be a recognition of the position by those who find themselves in subjection. The relationship is two-sided, and must be accepted as such by both parties. We also felt it important to notice that the term "subjection" was not to be equated with "inferiority". There is no sense of this in the scripture, and the meaning relates purely to the question of authority, that authority being limited according to the relationship under consideration.

However, it was clear that whereas authority has been given to some, they must exercise alongside that authority the responsibilities which have been given. Husbands are to love and cherish wives, fathers are not to provoke children, and masters are to acknowledge that they have a heavenly Master. A verse which we decided set the scene for the marriage relationship is found in 1 Cor. 11: 3, and clearly shows the correct relationship as viewed by God Himself: "the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God".

Verse 24 states the subjection of the Church to Christ, but vv. 23 and 25 develop different aspects of Christ's care for His Church. He not only gave His life for sinners that the Church might be established and develop, but He continues in His care and is described as Saviour (Preserver) of the Body. With the stating of this example, husbands are shown the standard of love and care which has been set. The result of Christ's actions is envisaged in v. 27, when His purpose is fulfilled.

God's overall plan is clearly set out in these and other verses, and the importance which is laid upon correct interpretation, acknowledgment and resultant action is clearly seen when vv. 32 and 33 are considered. The purpose of Christ and in the Church has an eminent position in God's dealings with mankind and in accepting His Son as Saviour the believer must continue to obey in the temporal sense, in the full knowledge of the spiritual meaning and application.

R. C. Halpin, R. D. Williams

From Cowdenbeath: "We are members one of another". "One another" is a key phrase throughout. There is so much teaching and exhortation about relationship in the Epistle since it follows on from the glorious truth of Christ and the Church. We are:

- fellow-citizens with the saints
- fellow-heirs
- fellow-members of the Body
- fellow-partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus

These are ours in Christ, and we are exhorted to demonstrate these great truths practically in all our behaviour.

Certain of the matters that concerned our previous study related to our position to one another. In a general sense we are to subject ourselves to each other recognizing Christ as Lord. In our study, Paul now deals with particular relationships. Notice the phrases, "your own husbands" (v. 22), "his own wife" (v. 28). These phrases are not merely to distinguish between one's own and someone else's husband or wife but, we believe, are to emphasize the closeness of the marriage bond. This is more fully emphasized in vv. 28, 29.

Subjection by wives is to be absolute, looking beyond the natural scene to grasp the significance that a wife in subjection "in everything" is a beautiful picture of Christ and His Church. This is the extent of the subjection God requires in a world preaching sex equality. Those who honour it will shine the brighter. At the same time, love (*agape*) is demanded of husbands for their wives. This love also must be firm and true. The extent of the love required of a husband is perhaps measured by its sacrifice. This would seem to be the thrust of v. 25 and other scriptures.

Most contributors will no doubt draw attention to Lev. 8 in relation to v. 26. Paul directs the attention of the Ephesians to that day in Israel's history when Moses, the mediator of the Old Covenant, applied the water once to Aaron and his sons in consecration for priestly service. So he reminds them that the application of the Word of God by the Mediator of the New Covenant resulting in their salvation has sanctified them, with all others who have put faith in Christ, as members of His Body.

The fact that the woman was builded from the man and is therefore complementary is highlighted in vv. 28-33. The woman is of the man. The wife, therefore, is of the husband and in marriage this truth

is beautifully expressed. It is an open testimony to what God has done and it is appealed to in v. 31 in very practical terms.

We believe that the mystery referred to in v. 32 is not that of the woman and the man being one flesh since this has been subscribed to over many ages. What has now been revealed is the greater matter of the union of Christ and the Church.

Moving on in the family sphere Paul has exhortation for children. It is that they might cultivate that characteristic which seems, in Scripture, to be the most important for children, obedience (see 1 Pet. 1: 14 and elsewhere). Some recognized the ingredients of subjection and love, formerly mentioned in relation to husbands and wives, in the characteristic of obedience. If the former were seen by children in their parents the latter might be encouraged in the children by way of example.

In relation to children we noticed the over-riding statement "in the Lord". The divine will ultimately governs that obedience.

"Honour" gave weight to our judgment that love and subjection were ingredients of obedience. It is "a valuing" (W E Vine) and if children will do this blessing is promised. The exhortation to fathers is, we believe, bound up with the importance of encouragement in the things of the Lord. Provocation will tend to irritate and discourage. It must be avoided.

R. I. Shaw

From Derby: The general theme of this passage is subjection and linked with this is obedience. The context of subjection follows on from "Be not drunken...". God's purpose is that we should be subject to the will of God. The Spirit of God leads to subjection. It may bring increased responsibility. The general exhortation in v. 21 leads to the specific exhortation. We are to be yielding to one another.

The apostle starts with the family life. It is the foundation of human society. If divine principles of family life break down it will lead to national and international breakdown. The matter of subjection is to be manifested in these relations. It must be a reciprocal action. Parents have a big responsibility as to how to deal with their children. They should bring them up in the nurture and fear of the Lord.

Subjection means "to arrange under" (whether willingly or unwillingly). God has so ordained that certain people are arranged under others. Subjection does not involve inferiority. A married woman who realizes her allegiance to the Lord is subject to her husband. The husband has the responsibility to take the lead in the home. The subjection should be manifested even when the wife is not in agreement with her husband. This subjection should also characterize the children.

Daniel realized he was faced with something he could not do if he was to maintain his conscience before God. We also are subject to a higher authority than the relations mentioned here. Daniel dealt with it in a right way. There is a wrong way of doing right things and a right way of doing right things. God stood by Daniel. These relations are all governed by "in the Lord". Where His will would clash with what we are told to do we must be on the side of the Lord. We should not violate our consciences when we are subject to our masters. Disciples of the Lord Jesus should be ideal citizens in any country.

No commandments have been given to the Church the Body so the subjection is absolute to Christ. When the Church is complete and united to the Head that absolute subjection will be seen.

The exhortation for children to honour their parents belonged to the revelation of the old law. The apostle quotes the promise given to their forefathers. The responsibility to be obedient and honour our parents remains.

In ch. 6 v. 8 we see the sovereignty of God. This must have a relation to the future and the day of spiritual rewards. Many servants have suffered right through this life. If we recognize that we are serving the Lord in what we are doing we may not get adequate reward here but we will be rewarded in a coming day.

G. W. Conway

From Liverpool: *Divine Order*. In each of the relationships - Marital, Family and Industrial - God has determined the ground rules and it is to be expected that these relationships will be at their best when both parties are "in the Lord" and subject to Christ. That is what Paul is presenting here. We do not doubt that the principles can be carried over into secular life and when they are, each of these important areas will be the happier for it.

*In an Age of Equality** At first glance there seems to be a conflict between the relationships portrayed here and the twentieth century equivalents. However, in the area of equality this is not so: Husbands and wives are equals. The first man was made superior to the animal creation (Ps. 8: 6-8), but of the woman God said "I will make a helper suitable for him" (Gen. 2: 18 NIV). She was suitable in that she was his complement, his equal. Similarly children are granted rights, as also are slaves. Sadly these relationships are often spoiled by sin and a failure to see the wisdom of God in these instructions.

Subjection. To subject or submit is to place oneself under the authority of another and is a key principle in God's things - Christ to God, believers to each other, those in churches of God to their overseers, wives to husbands, children to parents and slaves to their masters. The important consideration is "in the fear of Christ" and "as unto the Lord" (vv. 21, 22), and, without this, harmony will be difficult to attain.

Marriage - A Picture., Husbands are to love their wives - not a romantic feeling for them but in a practical sense as a response to a need. When God looks at a married couple He sees not two people but one and this is intended as a picture of Christ and the Church. There are illustrative similarities to the first marriage which we noted:

- (1) Without "her" He was incomplete
- (2) "She" was brought out of a deep sleep which speaks of Calvary
- (3) They became one body
- (4) He loves "her" as He loves Himself [Comment 1]

Children-Parents. This command assumes a family which is "in the Lord". Problems arise for children who are in the Lord but whose parents are not, and who may have no idea of the importance of the Lord's things to their children. We noticed the importance of a proper education in the instruction of the Lord.

Industrial. Although, thankfully, slavery has largely been eradicated and industrial and commercial relationships are different, the principle laid down here remains the same whether pupils to teachers or employees to bosses and vice versa. Paul is making the point that true Christianity should be carried over into everyday life. There should be no such thing as Sunday habits which are then set aside on Mondays to Saturdays. Industrial relations would be transformed if employees worked as though for the Lord and employers treated them

as brothers **and** sisters.

D. J. Webster

From Nottingham: Having expounded **teaching** concerning **the truth** of **the Church**, **the** Body of Christ, **the** apostle *now* applies some of **the** principles involved to **the** practical daily outworking of our relationship **with** others. **It** is **important** to notice **the** balance **we** find in **the** instructions given. Not only **are** wives exhorted to conform to **certain** standards **but** **husbands**, too, **are** shown to have a responsibility. Similarly, while children must obey **their** parents **in** **the** Lord, so do **the** fathers have to **keep** **watch** over **their** attitudes, **and**, **again**, **there** **are** **inter-relationships** **between** **masters** **and** servants. **The** **key** note to **the** whole situation really is **an** **attitude** of love; not **a** love **which** is no love **and** **which** some would advocate **but** **a** **true** love **which** maintains discipline **and** regards **truth** **yet** **with** **grace** **and** kindness.

In studying **the** passage **it** is helpful to **keep** **in** **mind** **the** background of **the** manner of life prevailing **in** **many** **cities** **and** areas of **the** Roman empire of **the** time **when** **the** Epistles were written. Previously, **in** **the** Greek world, sexual immorality **had** **been** **rife**. This **was** no less **true** of **the** Roman Republic **and** **it** was **carried** forward into **the** earlier years of **the** Roman Empire. **Marriage** was held **in** contempt, generally **speaking**; fidelity was **the** exception, not **the** rule, **and** **the** general atmosphere of relationships **between** **men** **and** women was adulterous. **It** was **when** **the** Gospel came **and** **men** **and** women received **the** Saviour **that** **the** position was altered. Many of those **in** **the** Church of God **in** Ephesus would **have** **been** brought **up** surrounded **by** those conditions already described; **they** were **the** accepted way of life. **The** teachings contained **in** Paul's letter would have **been** very strange to **them** **had** **it** not **have** **been** **that** **they**, like those **in** Thessalonica, **had** "turned to God", **and** **the** Lord, through **the** apostle emphasizes **the** standard **that** was now **required** of **them** as believers in **a** church of God in respect of marriage, children **and** servants.

A **key** **verse** **in** **the** portion is. we think, **v. 23**. **Christ** is **the** **Head** of **the** Church **and** **the** Church is **subject** to **Him**. We, as believers, do not **make** **Christ** **the** **Head** of **the** Church; **God** **has** done **that** **and** nothing **can** **alter** **the** position **God** **has** given to **Him** (**Mat. 16: 18**). **The** Church is **subject** to **Him** **and** **the** relationship **between** **the** **Head** **and** **the** **Body** is illustrated **by** **the** correct attitude of **a** wife in relation to **her** **husband**. In passing we noted **the** difference **between** **the** position of **Christ** as **Head** of **the** Church, **the** **Body**, **that** is that which comprises

all believers and His position as Lord over disciples who come together in accordance with His revealed will.

The matter of subjection is introduced in vv. 22 and 23. It is applied to wives in respect of their relationship to their husbands and, although often pointed out, it is of the utmost importance that subjection should not be confused with or taken as a sign of inferiority. Such scriptures as 1 Cor. 11: 3 and 15: 28 are most helpful to an understanding of the subject which applies in other spheres of the Lord's service also.

In v. 23 we have Christ as the Saviour of the Body and we considered the word "Preserver" would give the better sense in this place. Then in v. 25 we are reminded of the love of Christ for the Church, and the fact that He gave Himself for it not only impresses us with the depth of that love but also would speak to us of His giving Himself as the altar sacrifice. This "giving Himself" had in view the setting apart, or sanctifying of the Church for Himself. Reverting to the matter of the relationship of husband and wife, we learn from this that the husband should set apart his wife to himself, apart from all other women; in marriage the husband sanctifies the wife and the wife the husband.

Associated with the thought of Christ as the One who gave Himself as the sacrifice is the "washing of water with the word" (v. 26). "Word" here is "*rhema*", and "denotes that which is spoken, what is uttered in speech or writing" (Vine), and we believe that the reference here is to the word of the Gospel as it comes with cleansing power to the heart of one who believes. Verse 27 carries us forward to a glad future day when Christ shall present to Himself the Church which will be glorious and not have any type of blemish. It is suggested that "spot" might refer to sin while "wrinkle" might indicate some form of defect or error. But there will be none such found on that day of the marriage of the Lamb because of the work of Christ for the Church. (cf. again Mat. 16: 18) and, referring again to husband and wife relationships, as Christ so loved the Church so ought the husband to love his wife as his own body.

Just as the instructions concerning husbands and wives would have a great impact upon the recipients of this letter, so also would those about children and servants. Under Roman civilisation a child was placed in a perilous position. They could be sold as slaves and were often abandoned. The practices of Rome would influence other

cities in the empire. But what a change the presence of Christ in a life wrought! Fathers had to be careful and wise in handling their sons while the children were to have every respect for and show obedience to their parents.

While it is important for all children to obey their parents in all that is right, the instruction of Eph. 6:1 is evidently directed to those in a church of God. There may well have been cases where the parents of the children were not in the Assembly, but they would have to be obedient provided the demands of father and mother did not conflict with the will of God, a situation which may well have given rise to difficulty as it can today.

The reference to "children" raises two interesting points. First there were these young people in the church, described as "children", the Greek word being *teknon* which, according to Vine, "is in contrast to *huios* which means son". *Teknon* "gives prominence to the fact of birth, whereas *huios* stresses the dignity and character of relationship". *Teknon* is to be distinguished from *teknion* as found several times in John's epistles and which means "a little child", generally in the figurative sense. The children referred to in Eph. 6:1 must have been of sufficient age to have some understanding of their position and responsibilities in the Assembly, but there is no guidance as to what precise age these children were when they were baptized and no doubt each case had to be considered individually according to its circumstances.

The second point is that to which reference has already been made, that is to the difficult situation that could arise and has arisen in modern times when a young person, not of age in the legal sense, finds himself under an instruction from parents to do something displeasing to the Lord, and thus comes into conflict with his parents involving also the Assembly.

R. Hickling

COMMENT

1. (Liverpool) Care is necessary in such explicit comparison to adhere to the words of Scripture. Though the term "incomplete" might conceivably be inferred from the fact that "she was taken out of man" (Gen. 2: 23), Scripture states the matter the other way round: "And ye are complete in Him" (Col. 2:10 AV).

E. A.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

1. From Liverpool: Is there any time when a child in fellowship should disobey his parents to obey the Lord?

There seems little doubt that such a situation would sooner or later involve the Assembly. If circumstances of that sort did arise, advice of overseers ought first to be sought to help resolve the particular difficulty.

E. A.

Eph. 6:1 shows that there were children of the saints in the assembly who had not attained their age of majority. Their position is very interesting because their relation to their parents changed when they were received into Fellowship. Prior to that they were to obey their parents in the same way that all children are to obey their parents. After that, however, their obedience was to be for a higher reason namely that their obedience to the Lord, and not simply their position in an earthly family, demanded that they obey their parents. Their position is comparable with that of the believer and the civil authorities (Rom. 13:1-7). As an ordinary citizen the believer is expected to be in subjection "because of the wrath" but as a disciple of the Lord Jesus he is to be obedient because of a higher reason, namely because that is the will of his Lord. As has often been said, civil authorities may place the believer in a position when to obey them means disobeying the Lord. Since his obedience to the Lord is the reason for his obeying the civil authority then it is clear that in such a situation the believer must obey God rather than men. The same reasoning does not apply in Eph. 6: 1 since all parties are in the church of God. Then such dissension is a serious matter and must be dealt with, as our fellow-editor has said, in an assembly context.

2. From Nottingham: Eph. 5:14 shows that Christians in the early churches had sayings that were not previously in the Scriptures. Do editors think that sayings such as this one "became" inspired when included in Paul's writings? This question was held over from last month's issue.

Eph. 5: 14 appears to be based on Isa. 60: 1 and therefore may be more akin to verses such as Acts 8: 32, although we are not saying that Eph. 5: 14 is based on the Septuagint. Sayings such as 1 Tim. 1: 15 may have been such as were extant amongst saints in Paul's day and which became inspired when written by the hand of Paul at the Spirit's behest

I. E. P.

Things may be said, and oral traditions transmitted which are quite true, but do not have the authority of the Word of the Lord. When Paul, by the guidance of the Spirit, incorporated them in his writings, they were given that authority.

Jr. L. H,

3. From **Aberdeen** (J. Johnston): (i) What does Proverbs 6: 1-5 mean? (ii) Can you give a present day example of this ?

(i) Proverbs 6: 1-5 as well as Proverbs 11: 15. 17: 18, 22: 26-7 warns against the folly of getting into a position of unlimited liability. By agreeing to pay the debts of another without first finding out how much those debts are and whether the person who stands surety has sufficient money to pay them the latter runs the risk of losing all. As Prov. 22: 27 graphically shows the guarantor may run the risk of returning home and having no bed to lie on! The Lord Jesus (Luke 14: 28-9) used a similar principle to illustrate the disciples bearing his own cross. One of the outstanding cases of suretiship was that of Judah (Gen. 43: 9, 44: 32) who, in keeping with the sense of the verses in Proverbs, restricted his standing surety to the family circle. In the New Testament, the Good Samaritan (Luke 10: 35) clearly made careful enquiry and arranged to monitor his expenses in agreeing to pay whatever the hapless victim spent during his recovery. Then we have the case of the Lord Jesus Himself (Heb. 7: 22). Is it not the case that He knew in advance what it would cost Himself to pay the debt of Calvary?

(ii) A simple, modern example, which shows well the folly described in the Scriptures, would be if a man were to go to the civil court and agree to stand bail in the next case that came up. He would not know the sums involved nor the character of the person involved and take a huge gamble as to whether he would not be financially ruined at the end of the day. On a more sophisticated level the matter of suretiship is relevant to present day insurance. A person who drives a car without proper insurance (which is illegal in most countries) may have to pay unknown costs if he is responsible for an accident. Nearer to home, perhaps, an assembly is in effect the surety for all who enter its premises. Were an accident to happen, say for example in youth work, then the assembly is responsible to make redress to the victim if such is required. It can be imagined that not to have made provision against such liabilities, which may be considerable, could result in huge financial penalty.

I. E. P.

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Bible Studies

A magazine for the exploration of the Word of God [Acts 17: 11]

EDITORIAL

8412

With this issue we conclude our study of the Epistle to the Ephesians. As we have seen, it follows the characteristic Pauline scheme of beginning with teaching about spiritual realities, and following this with exhortation to a life based on faith in them. The apostle showed the Ephesians the security of the great hope to which they were called based on "the exceeding greatness of His power to usward who believe", and the privilege they had in being members of the Body of Christ. He then taught them the consequences of this in their behaviour towards each other in the family and assembly, and in their walk before the world. Such a scheme of exposition can be recommended to all teachers of the Word. Doctrinal truths taught without application can seem merely academic, if the hearers have not the spiritual maturity to apply them themselves. On the other hand, exhortation without any appeal to fundamental reasons for the actions urged can appear mere hectoring. The Scriptural model combines the two.

In the last paragraph of the letter, the emphasis is on the defence of all that has gone before against the wiles (Gk-*methodeia* - cunning scheme) of the Devil. The Christian is opposed by real, active and intelligent spirit beings, headed by Satan himself. Their current strategy is concealment, while working on the minds of men through popular media of news and entertainment. Few people now believe in the existence of Satan although evidence of his work is everywhere, so the strategy seems to have been largely successful- Scripture clearly reveals to us the powers which are against us, and this should stimulate us to take up "the whole armour of God" to defend ourselves. As well as the defence of our own spiritual lives, we have also the responsibility for "the defence and confirmation of the gospel" (Phil 1: 7). and in the current climate of opinion, in which even some of

those who profess to be defenders of the faith are undermining it, this responsibility is a very serious one. May we conclude our year's study by resolving to handle more skilfully the "sword of the Spirit", and resort more to prayer for God's help in the conflict,

P. L. H.

CARRIED AWAY

One of the characteristics of the closing days of Paul's life was the shrinkage of churches of God, as contained in his second letter to Timothy, "This thou knowest, that all that are in Asia turned away from me" (1: 15). The days came when even the seven last New Testament churches of God ceased. Shrinkage in numbers often has a discouraging effect upon human effort and as Paul writes truthfully and sincerely of the trends of his day he also encourages Timothy to "be strengthened in the grace that is in Christ Jesus" (2: 1)

An analysis of the reasons for loss of numbers within present day assemblies may produce three categories:

1. Those leaving to move to other assemblies;
2. Those called "home" to rest;
3. Those who have been carried away from us.

There have been cases in which the last category accounts for 50 per cent of the loss. As this is a high attrition rate let us examine it more closely. In the New Testament there are six passages in which the phrase "carried away" occurs:

1. Rom 32: 36 (RVM) This first reference deals with being "carried away" in a good sense.
- 2 Gal 2: 11-15
3. Eph 4: 5, 31-20 (carried about)
- 4 Heb 13: 8-9
- 5 2 Pet 3: 3, 4. 11, 17-18
- 6 Jude 12, 16-21 (carried along)

These other five emphasize being carried away in a bad sense

The words in Greek:

Before we look closely at each passage in context, let us consider the words used in each case. It can be seen that two Greek words occur. On three occasions, the word "*periphero*" is used from which we derive our English word "periphery". It means: to be carried about or carried around in circles or cycles. An example of this is when paper or debris is caught in a wind and frequently is seen to act as though caught in a whirlwind. It is used in Ephesians 4,

Hebrews 13 and Jude.

On the other three occasions,, the word is "*sunapago*", It means: to be led away together with. It is used in Gal 2: 2; 2 Peter 3; and Rom 12

The believer's walk:

We may well ask ourselves under what conditions and climate can brethren and sisters be *carried away* ? A careful analysis will show the answer lies in the *way we walk*. In every passage, being carried away is the direct result of the manner of the walk of the individual concerned. Let us consider each passage to draw lessons and guidance from them, starting with the Galatians scripture.

1. "But when they came, he (Peter) drew back and separated himself and the rest of the Jews dissembled likewise with him; inso-much that even Barnabas was *carried away (sunapago)* with their dissimulation. But when I saw that they walked (*orthopodeo*) *not uprightly* according to the truth of the gospel¹¹ (Gal 2: 12-14)

If we are walking uprightly (i. e. in a straight line; following a course of conduct by which one leaves a straight track for others to follow) according to the truth of the gospel we shall not be led away together with others in a bent-up. doubled-up walk, along a crooked path.

2. "Walk worthily of the calling wherewith ye were called with all lowliness and meekness. . . . Giving diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. . . . that we may be no longer children, tossed to and fro and *carried about (periphero)* with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, in craftiness, after the wiles of error". (Eph. 4: 1, 2, 3, 14, 17).

Being carried about as children is likened to going around in circles in contrast to attaining unto a full grown man by walking worthily. Walking here is the figurative behaviour of brethren and sisters in the Lord and embraces every aspect of their lives. "Worthily" indicates that what is done and said should *carry weight* with others with whom daily contact is made, The Greek word is "*axios*" and is the one from which we get our English word "axle", An axle is designed to distribute the weight of the loaded vehicle to the road through its wheels. If, however, it is not evenly loaded, although the vehicle may be perfectly road-worthy it will not be acceptable to other road users and be rejected. In order to carry weight our practice and doctrine must be balanced so that verses 2 and 3 of Ephesians 4 are essential to walking worthily, Children who are carried about, walk as the Gentiles

(nations) walk in **the** vanity (emptiness) of their mind.

3. "Jesus Christ (is) **the same** yesterday **and** today, **yea and for ever**. Be not *carried away* (*periphery* by divers **and strange** teachings; for it is good **that the heart be** established by **grace**; not by **meats**, wherein **they that** occupied **themselves** (Mg. - walked - *peripateo*) were not profited" (Heb **13: 8-9**)

This **passage** shows **that** partaking of **the altar** is equivalent to **the** figurative walking. **It** involves receiving from the **altar that** which will stabilize **or** sustain one's life. Those who **served the** Tabernacle **ate** of **the meats** which **came to them** through **the altar but they were** not profited **by them**. This indicates **that** walking **by that** which satisfies **the flesh** does not establish **the** heart in spiritual things. The provisions of **the law have been superseded** by something which establishes **the hearts**. They partook of **the** provisions of **the law**. We partake of our altar which is Christ.

We **learn** therefore from Heb. **13: 9** **that** if we walk totally by **the** words of **grace** coming from our **altar**, our **hearts** will **be** established **and we shall** not **be** carried away by **the** words of divers (variegated, colourful) **and strange** (alien or foreign) teaching. There **are** many who go round in circles looking **at** different teachings like coloured pictures in **a gallery** which **attract them**, in **the way** in which **an art gallery** attracts **the** attention of artists,

4. "Ye therefore, beloved, knowing **these things beforehand**, **be-ware** lest, being *carried away* (*sunapago*) with **the** error of **the** wicked, **ye fall** from your own steadfastness (or stability) (2 Peter **3: 37**)

This epistle sounds **out the** warning to those who **are** beloved in **the** Lord and live in **the last days** (**3: 3**) **It** identifies **the danger** of being carried **away** or **led away** together with **the** error of **the** wicked **by** ceasing to **walk** in **all** holy living **and** godliness (**3: 31**), **and** falling from **personal steadfastness**. This is walking on **one's own way** (*poreuomai*) "after **the flesh**" (**2: 10**); "after their own **lusts**" (**3: 3**) **Peter's** guidance is, "**but** grow in **the grace** and knowledge of our Lord **and** Saviour Jesus Christ" (**3: 18**).

5 "These **are they**. . . clouds without water, *carried along* (*periphero*) by winds" **Jude 12**.

Jude encourages us to walk surefootedly in **the way of the** Lord, **Only** surefooted persons **can contend earnestly** for **the** Faith* **Those** who **are taken up** with "their **lusts**" (v. **16**) "**ungodly lusts**" (v **18**) will find **themselves** stumbling, **carried** along, going round **and** about in circles

6. "Be of the same mind one toward another. Set not your mind on high things, but condescend (*be carried away* RVM, *sunapagomai*) with things that are lowly or (^h*be carried away* with them that are lowly" RVM (Rom 12: 16),

It seems strange that the AV and RV give "condescend" as the translation of the word "*sunapagomai*" which is misleading whereas in other passages it is uniformly translated "carried away". The New Testament Scriptures clearly teach that the walk of the disciple of the Lord Jesus is governed by the mind # Our walk will be harmonious with others if we are of the same mind one toward the other, Setting the mind on things above "where Christ is seated on the right hand of God" (Col 3: 1) stands in contrast to setting our mind on the high things of earth. By focussing our minds on the superheights, we shall be *carried away* (led away together with) the lowly things of earth and the lowly Person of our Lord Jesus Christ, True disciples of the Lord are people engaged in lowly things, who "walk in love" to those within (Eph 5: 2) and "walk in wisdom toward them that are without" (Col 4: 5),

Having diagnosed the causes of such a heavy loss of disciples in the way they walk, it may help us all to be aware of the causes so that we may apply ourselves to the remedies available to us from our excellent Physician.

R. A. Parker

THE SPIRITUAL WARFARE (Ephesians 6: 10-24)

From **Ajgunle**: God-given strength for sure victory over every foe was seen in the armour of God (Eph. 6: 10 compared with 2 Timothy 2: 1), The components are many but the armour is one whole. At all times the Christian needs it either for defence or for attack* We noted that the war is fought in relation to a stand, not physically but spiritually (Compare v. 11 with Galatians 1: 6-9)_TThe "evil day" of v. 13 would allude to a time of surprise attack by the enemy, The foes are unseen forces highly organised but doomed for certain defeat, being under a defeated arch-enemy, Satan.

"Righteousness" as the breastplate suggests to us the conscious act of living out the truth within* It is not to be expected that the Christian warrior should come to terms of peace with his foes; rather he should be on the alert with the gospel of peace to lead away fallen humanity from the camp of the enemy to God., "The fiery darts" may be thrown from afar or from a close range. The Holy Spirit, given His rightful place in the Christian life, will bring to remembrance the word of faith for the occasion. "The helmet of salvation" is a component of

the armour for the head. We believe the Christian should fight intelligently. It has been suggested that the hope of the coming of the Lord is spoken of in the "helmet of salvation". This is a crowning hope which should spur the Christian on from victory to victory. Among the things of the armour to "take up" is the sword of the Spirit, the word from God. We are instructed here about the necessity of keeping in communication with the great Commander and moving forward in His authority. The path of faithfulness may be discovered and maintained by "all prayer and supplication". We noted finally, that the armour of God is the armour of light and no one in darkness can put it on.

G. Okwena M. Imoukhuede

From Birkenhead: As Paul concludes his writings to the Ephesians, the Holy Spirit guides his mind with regard to the Christian stance. The believer's position, seated, and his walk, have already been considered, but there is a time when he must stand for that which the Scriptures teach, and must be prepared to defend not only himself, but his position also.

Paul uses an analogy which he knows will be easily understood by his readers, and likens the Christian defence system to that of the Roman soldier. He takes individual items of armour and compares the protection given by them with that afforded to the Christian by God.

In verse 14 truth and righteousness have a double implication, being that of their own behaviour, speech and manner of life, and also that which is given by God and which none can question with success [Comment 2]. Verse 15 suggests that the gospel is in itself a defence. Knowing those things which result from the acceptance of the Saviour, the Christian can readily display to others by word and action the assurance which comes from the knowledge of sin forgiven and that peace which may be gained from faithful service. A different approach is envisaged dependent upon the form of attack

Verse 16 deals with personal faith including that of a doctrinal nature, which will enable the believer to extinguish attacks which may start as small darts of fire, but develop to a full conflagration (spiritually) Verse 37 suggests the assurance of salvation which will protect from attacks on the mind, causing the believer to question his position, but with the knowledge of the Word of God as a sword, an attack can be repulsed and turned into an advance.

It is a mistake to stretch the imagery too far, as verse 12 tells us that our wrestling is against spiritual attacks which may take a physical form, but require a spiritual defence. Thus the imperfections

of the soldier's defence can be overcome by the taking up and putting on of the "whole armour of God" and conducting ourselves in the spirit of verse 10, i. e. "strong in the Lord, and in the strength of His might". In our own strength we cannot hope to stand against the wiles of the Devil or "the powers... of... darkness. . . . in the heavenly places". Our position would be untenable. In God's grace with His help and His teaching, our position can be fortified, and our stance assured, for we know that no temptation will assail that we are not equipped to defeat (1 Cor. 10: 13).

Prayer plays a significant part in the establishment and maintenance of the Christian's armour and Paul assures that prayer can strengthen the armour of another. Paul's closing salutation seeks to reassure the saints as to his welfare as he envisages the Christian concern they will have for him. and he commends them with reassurance as to God's love towards them.

R. C. Halpin, C. N. Williams

From Cowdenbeath: The enjoyment of those blessings that we have considered in earlier studies and the responsibility we have to behave as those who have received such blessings can be clouded by the work of the Devil. Paul's timely warning is to ensure that we are equipped to resist such temptations. The strength we need is not from within ourselves but is from the Lord. In fact, the armour we are counselled to 'take up' and 'put on' is supplied by God. It is described as the whole armour of God, but it is our responsibility to put it on - to put it all on. Spiritual protection is vital since the Devil is crafty. We never know where he might strike next, but if we equip ourselves properly, not only will we be able to survive Satan's attacks but we may cause him to retreat (i. e. "having done all, to stand").

In considering the armies of the Devil we noted the four grades of his angels (v. 12) the Devil's counterfeit to the four angelic orders mentioned in Col. 1: 16 [Comment 11.

The fact that the combat is described as a 'wrestling' suggests close combat by an opponent who seeks to cling to us before gaining the mastery.

The items of armour signify the following:

girding of loins with truth suggests a real knowledge of God's word, the best preparation for conflict;

the breastplate of righteousness suggests a righteous behaviour that **will** eschew every suggestion of evil. Since this is something we have to **put** on it is not that righteousness which is imputed to us (2 Cor. 5: 21);

the shod feet to give sure footing in close combat suggest the sure knowledge of our salvation through faith in Christ. We are to be at peace in the enjoyment of it.

the shield of faith is that which protects the whole body. We understand that the word for 'shield' is unique to this passage in the New Testament and signifies a large "whole-body shield". Roman darts or small arrows apparently contained a burning substance which did a lot of damage although small in size. The analogy is most appropriate to the evil thoughts and doubts sent by the Devil to afflict us.

the helmet of salvation is protection for the head and suggests to us a mind at peace in the sure knowledge of God's full salvation.

the sword of the Spirit is explained as the Word of God. The sword is not ours but God's. We are to learn to use it for our defence. Our great example is the Lord Jesus during His wilderness temptations (Luke 4: 1-12).

It has often been observed that no provision is made for the back. We are to resist the Devil face-to-face.

Appropriately, the exhortation concludes with a call to earnest, regular and all-embracing prayer without which victory cannot be assured. Prayer is essential communication for the Christian soldier in battle. He does not fight alone. It is significant that such prayer is not only on our own behalf but for all the saints. We recognised the need to uphold one another, a further emphasis on relationships that we have seen throughout our study of Ephesians.

R. I. Shaw

From Derby: Every believer in Christ is on Satan's "hit" list. The day we feel strong Satan will win; we win only in God's strength (v. 10; 1: 19).

We must also call down God's strength for each other (v. 18). It is as well our foe is unseen and unseeable (v. 12), but Satan works through things we see and feel and know, that is our desires, aspirations, our bodies and the flesh.

Put on Christ (Gal. 3: 27). Put on the whole armour of God, Remember the wiles and the craftiness of Satan.

Loins girded with Truth. Jesus said Satan is a liar (John 8: 44). He has no answer to truth. Keep the belt of truth bright, for on it hangs the sword of the Spirit which is the word of God. Even "white" lies

blunt that sword **in our hands**.

Breastplate of Righteousness. Satan wants our hearts **and his aim is to harden them**. Col. 3: 1-3 gives our **defence**. "I don't care" is **Satan's victory**.

Feet shod with the preparation of gospel of peace. A soldier's feet must **be well covered; on them he stands and marches**. **Stand firm** on the hope of **the gospel (John 10: 28-30)**. This is our **sure rock**. This is our **firm ground**.

The Shield of Faith. Not a small round shield but full-length, two-layer, wooden shield. The **fiery arrows stuck in the first layer and were extinguished**. **Fiery darts are other peoples jibes and insults, doubts and false doctrine**. Trust God, **keep faith with Him**. **He is able to do more than we can ask or think** (Eph. 3: 20).

Helmet of Salvation. As a man thinks so is he (Prov. 23: 7 AV). Salvation **in Christ is the greatest thing that ever happens to us**. From **it come blessings and help now and in the future, more than our most vivid thoughts can dream up** (1 Cor. 2: 9). Think Christ.

The sword of the spirit, the word of God. Christ used it in the desert, "It is written". It is useless to us unless **we know it, love it, and live it** (Ps. 119: 11). Its power and ability is seen in **Jeremiah 23: 29**. God will not **deny us in defence** or attack.

Nothing less **than the armour will suffice**.

S. Wymer, G. W. Conway

From **Dulwich: Our study** concentrates on **the conclusion of the Epistle**. It deals with **the practical response to the first three glorious chapters, starting from "I therefore" of 4: 1, to the end of the Epistle**.

It can fall into **five sections**:

- (1) v. 10 "Be strong in the Lord, **and in the strength of His might**";
- (2) vv. 11-17 The Christian armour;
- (3) v. 18 **Attendant prayer life**;
- (4) vv. 19-22 **Paul's appeal and communication**;
- (5) vv. 23-24 The benediction.

(1) v. 10. "Be ye empowered" (Marshall). The word "ye", **the subject, could be the church of God at Ephesus, the saints in that Church, or the "all saints" of v. 18** [IComment 3]. The **verb is continuous, the voice has an act, and an activator**. Its **usage is in such Scriptures as 2 Tim. 2: 1, Rom. 4: 20, Acts 9: 22 and Phil. 4: 13**. The **RV margin "Be made powerful" and 2 Tim 2: 1** would suggest **passiveness of the subjects being sustained continually**. To **be strong in the strength of another**

presupposes weakness (1 Cor. 1: 21, 2 Cor. 3: 5), and so the act is one of simple faith, deriving strength from the Lord, through His Word, to overcome the evil one (1 John 2: 14). "Be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of His might" is to rest with confidence on the One who bound the strong man and spoiled his goods. This mighty battle was one of faith - "If thou art the Son of God" was the issue from the temptation to the cross. The Christian warrior must have this strength of confidence in the One who is the Lord of Glory, the Lord of Hosts.

(2) vv. 11-17. The putting on of v. 11, would be the same as that of 4: 24, and the whole armour of God would include the armour of righteousness (2 Cor. 6: 7), and the armour of light (Rom. 13: 12). We certainly have three great enemies: the world, the flesh, and the Devil. To be able to stand against this crafty strategist, we have a complete panoply of principles, truth, righteousness, peace, faith, salvation, and the usage of the Word of God, by the Holy Spirit through us. The wiles and fiery darts suggest a conflict of the mind. See also 2 Cor. 10: 4, 5. Our wrestling is not against flesh and blood. God may chastise, or judge one nation by another in righteousness, but we have no part in this warfare, for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh (2 Cor. 10: 4), but we carry the gospel of peace to all men. Satan's kingdom (Mat. 12: 26) is highly organized at different levels, having the character of wickedness, but its sphere in the heavenlies would seem to be limited (Eph. 1: 20, 21; 2: 2).

The armour is of God and from God. The girdle of truth is something we have in the truth of the gospel, basic and central to all other parts of the armour. The breastplate of righteousness is a covering of righteousness for the heart, impenetrable to the fiery darts of the Devil. Not for a moment could our own righteousness withstand the onslaught of the Devil (Zech. 3: 2, Is. 64: 6, Phil. 3: 9) [Comment 2].

"Preparation": Dr. Young gives the alternative "readiness". The Septuagint uses the word to mean ^fa place or base for the altar¹ (Ezra 3: 3). These two thoughts together might suggest a standing in readiness. This is very interesting, as the gospel of peace had its base in the peace offering and the peace offering had its base in the burnt offering (Lev. 3: 5).

In this world of dark estrangement from God, how beautiful is the message of harmony, concord, and friendship (Is. 52: 7). Our shield is the El Shaddai of Abraham (Gen. 15: 1), the Jehovah of David (Ps. 28: 7), and the God of 1 Pet. 1: 5 [Comment 4]. The faith that rests on this shield cannot be pierced. Again, we have a covering in the helmet of salvation, which is a vital protection in this battle of the mind.

The sword of the Spirit would seem to be the use of the spoken word of God, illustrated by the temptation of the Lord Himself and also in His own words (John 6: 63).

(3) v. 18. The line of defence is for all the saints. The value of persevering prayer and supplication in the time of battle is seen in Moses' hands (Ex. 17: 12) being held up before God, determining the success. All prayer is every variety; supplication, petition, and watchfulness. How many battles have been lost by unobserved salients!

(4) vv. 19-22. Paul, who like Joshua of old, was the outstanding leader of the campaign and made known the mystery of the gospel (Jew and Gentile in the Body of Christ), valued intercessory prayer on his behalf for courage and utterance to speak boldly, though an ambassador in chains. Incredible as it may seem, the object of his sending Tychicus was not only to keep saints in touch by information, but to comfort their hearts. About Tychicus we have from Scripture, Acts 20: 4, Col. 4: 7, 2 Tim. 4: 12, and Titus 3: 12, - "beloved brother and faithful minister and fellow servant in the Lord".

(5) vv. 23-24. The peace and grace of the benediction would be appropriate in this Epistle where the truth that Jew and Gentile are fellow-heirs and of the same Body is so graphically unfolded.

The love that comes from the Father, also comes from the Lord Jesus Christ, in the fulness of that title. The faith is not the faith which we exercise of our own volition for salvation, but is due to the increase of revelation given to our own faith. Loving the Lord Jesus Christ in incorruptness would be the same as loving out of a pure heart (1 Tim. 1: 5).

W. Town send

From Liverpool: *Our life is a warfare.* How can we define this warfare?

It was noted that we are instructed to "be subject to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake" (1 Pet. 2: 13), and thus our warfare cannot take on the form of an active struggle against world politics as might be implied by Eph. 6: 12. Rather, it was suggested that our warfare is fundamentally against "the Devil's "schemes", which will often present themselves through world rulers and authorities. It seems that the nature of our warfare is summed up in the phrase, "against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places". Note that the term "heavenly places" does not refer to a geographical location called heaven, but rather it is a broad term for the "spiritual realm". Thus the nature of our warfare is purely spiritual.

The word "wrestle" (v. 12) implies close conflict. Our battle can take on the form of a personal conflict against doubts in our own minds, or, on the other hand, the struggle we have in trying to witness publicly to a world whose mind had been blinded.

The armour of God. This Epistle was probably written by Paul while he was in prison (Eph. 6: 20), and it was suggested that his observations of the Roman guard standing by resulted in this picture of our armour. It is very significant that the first quality mentioned (v. 10) is that which is essential for any kind of warfare, strength. As Christians embarking on our spiritual warfare, our strength and power can only be derived from our union with the Lord Jesus. It is His mighty power which must form the backbone of our strategy.

The armour of God is not part of a "package-deal" that comes with our salvation; rather it is something which we as Christians must "put on". Each item must be considered in this light.

The Belt of Truth: Our armour should be held together by an attitude of truthfulness and sincerity; truthfulness here is referring to Christian integrity rather than scriptural doctrine.

The Breastplate of Righteousness: It is significant that the armour protecting the seat of life, the heart, is associated with righteousness. Our fight can only be successful and remain strong if it is substantiated by our own righteous living. Failure to practise what we preach, will inevitably leave a gaping chink in our armour through which the Adversary could destroy our efforts altogether. Remember God's command "be ye holy; for I am Holy".

Your feet fitted with the readiness which comes from the Gospel of Peace: Our own salvation should be living and fresh to us, making us sure-footed in taking it to others.

The Shield of Faith: Roman shields were often made of wood which had to be soaked in water, so that when they were struck by burning arrows, the fire was quenched. Similarly, our shield of faith should be regularly watered which comes by continuous close communion. Such a shield will render the Devil's fiery challenges harmless.

The Helmet of Salvation: Achieving a salvation from the power of sin in our lives will protect our minds from all corruption. Having our minds protected will help us to hold on to the vision of success in our fight.

The Sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God: Skilled swordsmanship can only come by rigorous training and experience; similarly, our degree of skill in the use of the Word of God depends entirely on our

familiarity with the Bible and its teaching.

Prayer — our communication line. Fighting without consulting the commander leads to confusion and failure. Thus as Christians clad in our armour, we are ready to go before the Lord and wait on Him for His wisdom. Note, our prayer should never be out of habit or insincere; thus we are instructed to pray "at all seasons in the Spirit".

Alert soldiers are not caught out easily! (v. 18).

D. J. Webster

From Nottingham: Armour, generally speaking, reminds people of war or battles. So the armour of God is for the Christian to wear in battle. The battle which the Christian is fighting is not an earthly battle but a spiritual one. It takes place in the believer's own mind and heart. This is where we get the phrase "spiritual warfare". Just as there are spiritual hosts that serve God so there are hosts that serve the Devil. It is against these that the believer is fighting. In order for the Christian to fight, he must first of all put on all the armour of God. It is important to realise that he must put it on himself and no one else can do it for him.

In all there are six pieces of armour, five of which are defensive and only one, "The sword of the Spirit" which is offensive.

(1) v. 14 The belt of truth. The way people used to dress meant that there was a lot of looseness in their clothes and in order to be able to move quickly and not keep tripping up it was important to wear a belt buckled around the waist to tuck in the loose ends (1 Kings 18: 46); so the Christian must not be loose or slack where the truth is concerned. A difficult situation may arise where speaking a "white" lie may be the easy way out, but these thoughts are from the enemy (Eph. 4: 25).

(2) v. 14 The breastplate of righteousness. The breastplate, when fitted in place, offers protection to the heart, in which lie our affections for our Lord Jesus Christ. If our love for Him is to grow stronger then righteousness *must* be a main feature in our lives. The apostle Peter shows a good example which we should follow (1 Peter 2: 20-21).

(3) v. 15 ^TAnd having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace". A Roman soldier wore leather sandals with strapping up to the knee. This offered both firmness to the foot and support to the ankle. Hie Christian warrior is to stand in the firm foothold of the "gospel of peace". An earthly soldier's main object is to shed as much blood as possible, but the Christian's object is different. It

is to bring **the "gospel of peace"** to **men's hearts**. **"Blessed are the peace-makers: for they shall be called sons of God"** (Mat. 5: 9).

(4) v. 16 The shield of **faith**. The shield is probably **the** Christian soldier's **most** important **piece** of armour, because **it** offers overall protection. Behind **the shield of faith**, the Christian is concealed. **The shield of faith is used to quench the fiery darts of the evil one**. **The Devil's hosts throw fiery darts, intended to do as much damage as possible**. It is most important to realise **that without the shield of faith, the Christian soldier is very vulnerable to the enemy**. Attacks from **the Devil may do irreparable damage** (Heb. 11: 6).

(5) v. 17 The helmet of salvation. Protection to **the** head is essential. Paul refers to **the** helmet (1 Thes. 5:8) as the "hope of salvation". So **in every encounter with the enemy, confidence and expectation of God's help will guard our minds from doing foolish, hasty actions** (Ps. 121: 1-2; Ex. 14: 1-14; 1 Cor. 15: 57).

(6) v. 17 **"The sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God"**. The word of God is **the** only offensive weapon available **in the** armour of God. The use of **the** word of God (the Bible) is perfectly shown **in an example in the life of the Lord Jesus when He was tempted by the Devil in the wilderness**. **He answered him with three direct quotes from the word of God and Satan could not reply** (Mat. 4:1-11).

Finally **in verse 18 we see the importance of prayer**. **The word "all" occurs three times in this verse:**

- (i) **"All prayer" obviously means prayers of any description and includes confession, worship, thanksgiving or praise.**
- (ii) **"All seasons" means we can pray to God whenever we want to. We do not just pray when we are in trouble, but we should pray at "all seasons" (1 Thes. 5: 17).**
- (iii) **"All saints" shows that we are not in battle alone. There are thousands of warriors in the Lord's army. We all need each others' prayers and support. So the command is to pray for all the saints.**

It is interesting to point out the contrast between the first ten verses of our reading and the last two. How that after going through things to do with warfare and warriors the book of Ephesians finishes on a note of love and grace.

S. Greenwood

From **Paisley**: In his closing message to the Ephesian saints, the apostle reverts to the theme of being strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. He uses similar words to those used in his prayer for the saints in 1: 19 and 3: 16. The secret of strength is the power of the indwelling Spirit of God. It was this that empowered leaders of God's people in Old Testament times, e. g. Gideon (Judges 6: 34) and Samson (Judges 14: 6, 19 and 15: 14) to overcome overwhelming foes.

However, strength in itself is not sufficient in conflict, hence the need for donning the panoply of God. This is a complete suit of armour covering the combatant from head to foot and comprizing both offensive and defensive weapons. The Devil is a wily foe and too often gets the victory against God's people. Ours is an unrelenting conflict and calls for continual watchfulness and prayer. The weapons in the Christian's armoury are powerful, that is truth, righteousness, peace, faith, the word of God, prayer and watchfulness. Our prayers should encompass not only our own needs, but those of all the saints and especially the Lord's servants who bring to others the glad tidings of the gospel and experience the opposition of the powers of darkness. So, from a Roman prison comes a rallying cry to the people of God of all ages. How thankful we are to the Lord for such an epistle, which has been a blessing to so many over so many years, and which has been preserved for us so that it is available to us in our own mother tongue!

J. Renfrew

COMMENTS

1. (Cowdenbeath): This verse certainly refers to demonic beings, but it may not refer to "grades" of angels, but rather to various aspects of their dominion. "Principalities" (*archai*) refers to their rule in the world, "powers" (*exousiai*) to the usurped authority of Satan by which they carry out their work, "world rulers" (*cosmokratai*) to the extent of their influence, and "spiritual hosts of wickedness" to their nature. In regard to good angels, there are similar enumerations to that in Col. 1: 16 in Eph. 1: 21; 3: 10, Rom.. 8: 38 and 1 Pet. 3: 22. On this matter the Expositor's Greek Testament comments "The Pauline passages... show no such identity either in the number or the succession of authorities as would be consistent with a determinate doctrine of graduated orders".

2. (Dulwich): The fact that the breastplate of righteousness had to be "put on" suggests that an action of the individual is in view here. Earlier in the epistle 4: 24 says "put on the new man, which after God hath been created in righteousness and holiness of truth". It is true that our ability to do right derives from God, but we are required to assume an upright character before men.

P. L. H.

3. (Dulwich): The word "finally" in Eph. 3: 10 shows that the "ye" of this verse are those to whom the letter was written who must clearly have been a different group of people from those who were to be the object of their prayers of Eph. 3: 18.

4. (Dulwich): El Shaddai is not mentioned in Genesis 15: 1.

L. E. P.

POSTSCRIPT

The end of another year reminds us of those words of the Lord when He contrasted the end of earthly calendars with the permanence of the Word of God (Mat. 5: 18). It is delightful to compare those words with His later words (Mat. 24: 35) which show that what He spoke had the same standing as the Old Testament Scriptures. When this world is done, the Scriptures which we now study will remain in spite of all that men have tried to do to destroy them. He will be there in spite of all, especially ourselves, because of what He has done. Our experience will exceed those on the way to Emmaeus (Luke 24).

In its little way our magazine enables readers and contributors of many lands to enter into that same experience now. More than that, by the grace of God, Bible Studies has been published for over 50 years enabling the experience of those long since gone home to be with the Lord to be shared with us. It enables us, too, to see the efforts of our seniors when they were young! And, if the Lord does not come, it may enable our successors, in the Lord's will, to see what we made of the incomparable Word. And what shall they say of us? And what will the Lord say to us in that day when we shall all meet at His feet?

I. E. P.

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