

Please give full weight to the word "ATTEMPT," with which this booklet begins. I trust that something of what I have enjoyed from and with the Lord in STUDYING, may be enjoyed by you in READING this. But much richer blessings will be yours if you follow the same PROCESS that produced these notes - Reading the Epistle through often, in a variety of translations. No one way of expressing in English can convey ALL the meaning there is in the Greek original, and even a poor translator may chance on a vivid way of expressing the odd phrase. Besides "In the multitude of counsellors there is safety," Prov 11:14.

Explanation of Signs.

Running text is KING JAMES/New International, as- THE BOOK/Scroll. Other Versions quoted, GN= Good News/ Today's English Version. JBP= JB Phillips. (As translations, neither of these are sufficiently accurate to be adequate, but their attempt to express the original in simple modern language makes them useful at times.) LXX= the Septuagint Greek version of OT. (Checked from Abbott-Smith.) [RT]= Received Text, [Nes]= Nestle's Text, where they differ. OT= Old Testament. NT= New Testament. Ms/Mss= Manuscript/s. 15x= Indicates the number of times the word occurs. On a number of occasions I quote from the old commentary of Bishop Lightfoot, and the modern Emmaus Bible School correspondence course.

marks a Greek word defined for future use. #2:5 means refer to Chapter 2, verse 5 for a definition of the word being used.

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INTRODUCTION

Paul in his epistles sets an example to all who work for God. Areas of weakness, failure and sin - wrong doctrine, wrong attitudes/ actions exist in every Believer/ Church fellowship. Paul never dashes in to attack the erring persons, or to hack out the bad from the good in their beliefs/ practices. To do so is carnal. It ignores the reality of the living body, our limited knowledge, and the consequences of any action. For God's rightful leaders to do so, as Rehoboam did, is to provoke equally carnal rebellion, possibly into total apostasy. By contrast Paul's method is to:

PRAISE all he can. **PROCLAIM** the glorious truths of the **PERSON** of God, the **PROVISION** for their need, the **POSITION** of blessing they've been placed in, and the **POSITIVE PERSONAL** response this calls for.

PERSUADE their minds of the truth, with reasoned arguments. **PLEAD** with their wills to reject error, and receive the truth. He unveils the Glorious Gospel Sunlight, and spreads the Gospel Feast before them before he asks them to give up the guttering candles of Human spiritual philosophy, and throw away the tainted crusts of legalistic religion, and mystical experiences.

So the Epistle is:

PERSONAL - What Paul writes is full of the **LORD** - His Names appear in this Epistle 79x, pronouns for them 39x. It's full of us Believers too - We, us, our, etc appear 150x. All the Lord is, if applied to us= Joy and Glory!

POSITIVE - Instead of panic warnings of the hazards faced by churches/ and reproaches for obvious failures - a negative attitude which would trigger negative responses, **PAUL** writes positively making it easy for them to respond positively. He could do this honestly as he **LIVED BY FAITH**, Gal 2:20 He prayed for them much, bringing the Lord Jesus into every situation, and with Him the possibility of glory and blessing from right where they were. See 1:3.

PERVASIVE - **ALL** is used 33x; **EVE RYONE**, **ALWAYS**, etc, 10x. Salvation is an **ALL** or nothing business. He is **ALL** in relation to the Universe, and in His fullness in **ALL** Believers. If we're **IN** Christ, and He **IN** us, **ALL** is ours, now and forever. No second-rate Christians!

of the "Crisis of Conversion," when we "Believed INTO Christ," and INTO the new status that results. It can't mean JUST accepting as true, INFORMATION about Him, and remaining unchanged

En 8x = IN. In contrast to that "Crisis/ once-and-for-all Change" is the unchanging blessedness of our new permanent state, of being IN Christ, with all the "Process/ Growth/Functioning" that is appropriate to that secure position, and sphere of living.

Sun/Syn 13x = WITH, describes our UNION with Christ, and calls us to live WITH Him in a lifestyle appropriate to that exalted privilege.

LOCAL SETTING- Colosse was in Asia so heard the Gospel while Paul was in Ephesus, Acts 19:10. Lightfoot records that the Temple dues confiscated in the area in AD 62 represented 12000 Jews. These Jews mixed in local religion - an inscription cites a woman as being an Honorary Ruler of a synagogue and Priestess of the Imperial Cult. It seems a mixture of Jewish and local religious ideas were corrupting the church. These GNOSTICS claimed that the physical world/ bodies were EVIL, so God could have contact with men only through a succession of "Principalities and Powers." The sufferings of Christ and Paul could be considered proof they were at odds with these powers.

God moves Paul to USE error as a chance to proclaim the Truth rather than state what the error is, as stating the error would be spreading it. This positive teaching exposes the error as empty folly. It also sets an example - whenever error captures men's interest we must meet that interest with the truth. The enemy IS an Enemy, his attack IS an attack, dangerous, destructive and cruel, but his attack provides the rightful opportunity for his defeat, and humiliation, by those who fight on the side of the One who Conquered at Calvary.

Paul takes up words probably used in the errors - Wisdom, Fullness, Principalities, Powers, Mystery, Teleios etc, and uses them positively or negatively, where appropriate. "FULLNESS," is in Christ alone. Principalities and Powers, were created BY Him, are held together IN Him, and enemy ones totally defeated on the Cross.

1:2 SAINTS/Holy- #Hagios= "Set apart" or Sanctified ones. Christ made us this, Heb 10:14. In Greek usage it meant "Dedicated to God." When freeing a slave the redemption price was given to the temple for the "god" to buy the slave. He was then counted as the property of that god and couldn't be re-enslaved! The saints are "Them that Believed," 2 Th 1:10, not a special group of superior Christians.

Marriage is HOLY MATRIMONY because husband/wife have "Set themselves apart," given themselves to each other, to be Special TO each other, shutting themselves out FROM all other men/ women, sexually. In the Bible CHRISTIANS are called SAINTS, because God has set us apart to be special TO Him, in a close fellowship of love. To enjoy that we must set ourselves apart FROM the "World," and anything unclean, to be His alone, 2 Cor 6:14-18, 11:2-3, Jas 4:1-5. The Lord hasn't yet taken us to His home to share life with Him, but we're "Promised to each other." **1 As we put Him first, keep clear of things hateful to Him, and confess/ forsake our sins when we've failed, we live happily in His love and our desire to be with Him forever grows stronger.

FAITHFUL- Faithful, trustworthy, reliable. 1:4 shows how to be this. BROTHERS/ Brothers- Adelfhos= Male and Female children of the same parents. [We use a lot of such "Inclusive" words. A "Duck-shooter," shoots drakes as well as ducks! INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE saves time, and when Bibles had to be written out by hand, that was important. By God's mercy we don't stand alone, but are a "Family Fellowship," under GOD the FATHER. The whole Word of God, the whole provision in Christ, and the fellowship of the whole body of Christ is ours. Family Likenesses are inherited from human parents. As we've been "Born of God," Jn 1:13, God Himself is the SOURCE of our new heredity, 2 Pet 1:4. A NEW life has begun in us, 2 Cor 5:17. He doesn't work by "Gene Splicing," to add new characteristics, but by grafting in a whole new nature, to replace the old which has to be cut back. The Christian life is a battle between the new and old natures.

Footnote **1 God's Word speaks of us as His children, and being promised in marriage to Christ, to help us understand something of what it is to be a Christian. But we must remember that God is different/wonderful beyond imagination, and our relationship with Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is different from any between humans, just as the HEAVENLY CITY of Rev 21 and 22 is different from any city we know. All EARTHLY illustrations are

meet its needs freely, because it is OURS, and we LOVE it. That's GRACE, and is the way God meets our needs as Christians. BECAUSE WE ARE HIS, AND HE LOVES US. And GRACE insists that we GROW UP, and learn to feed ourselves, pick up what we dropped, and show grace to others too! Adult Christ-likeness is the GOAL, Christ the successful method, Rom 6, and 8

PEACE - The blessed result of GRACE granted, received, and lived in, is PEACE enjoyed. Christians are no longer at odds with God, and they don't NEED to be at odds with themselves and others. As in OT PEACE means a full, abundant life enjoyed by God's people because of their relationship with Him and each other. As a salutation GRACE points to the basis of life in Christ, PEACE to the wholeness, adequacy, and harmony that responding to grace brings.

FROM GOD OUR FATHER - What a joy there is for us in that little word OUR. God is the SUN in the sky, the "FATHER OF LIGHTS" shedding every good and perfect gift impartially on all, James 1:17. But for us, even the smallest natural mercies of daily life are a personal provision made by the "Father of HOUSEHOLD MERCIES / Oiktirmos, 2 Cor 1:3, a personal bond between us, a matter for personal thanks.

AND THE LORD JESUS CHRIST [RT] - The omission of this from NIV may disappoint/puzzle some, but Chrysostom (AD 400) who used the RT confirms that it wasn't in it when he read it. The words were apparently added later to conform to Paul's usual form. In general the more often Ms were copied the longer and fuller they get as Godly scribes would sooner risk adding to the Word of God than subtracting from it. Paul MAY have omitted the words here because he was including them in the next verse.)

1:3 WE GIVE THANKS - Paul chose to look first and foremost for things to thank God for in any situation. Instead of expressing his distress at their failures and follies, and so, distressing and discouraging them, he softens their hearts by reminding them of Gospel Blessings, and so prepares their minds for his further expanding their understanding of them. This builds their confidence in the Lord and the way their fellowship with Him should be enjoyed.

Those of us who are quick to see things to worry about, or to criticise, need to learn this secret, and not disobey God's injunction "In EVERYTHING give thanks." Like Paul we can always thank God for WHO the Saviour is and what He's done. And that where anyone has made some response to the Gospel, and started out on the Christian life, God has begun His unending work of Grace in them, Phil 1:6.

Please, I want that, I thank-you," and stepping out in FAITH trusting Him to make it happen, 2 Cor 1:20-22 (The POWER is already switched on IN CHRIST at His end on all God's promises. Our part as we read them is to put the switch "On" at our end and God STARTS TO MAKE IT REAL IN US, and is glorified in the changes made in our lives.)

The Bible is "The FAITH that was once for all entrusted to the saints," Jude 3 His FULL/FINAL message - TRUTH given us to TRUST, have FAITH in and BUILD OUR LIFE ON. As we do that, sharing our life with the Lord in prayer and action, we become FAITHFUL, loyal and reliable to the Lord, and to others.

IN- En- in, JESUS CHRIST- Eternal life comes from believing in - Eis= INTO Christ, Jn 3:16. From then on our faith rests securely En= IN Christ. If our FAITH is in Christ, we ourselves are secure IN Christ. "Our life hidden with Christ in God," Col 3:3. But unless we're IN CHRIST/CHRIST IN US, we're not Christians, Rom 8:9-17.

We are not IN CHRIST unless we've put ourselves there, by asking Him to save us, and He's not IN US, unless we've asked Him to come into our lives, Jn 1:12-13. For us Christians, Believers in Christ, God's Children, ALL we ARE, HAVE, and HOPE FOR, are IN Christ. If you're not IN CHRIST- What are you doing about it? If you're not sure - why not ASK HELP FROM SOMEONE WHO HAS GONE FROM WHERE YOU ARE INTO THE ASSURANCE OF BEING IN CHRIST, AND HAVING CHRIST IN THEM.

LOVE - #Agape- Sacrificial love, is the CENTRAL word of the Gospel. God's GRACE is His LOVE in action. The PEACE He gives we enjoy knowing He LOVES us. His TRUTH is spoken in LOVE. We have FAITH in Him because we know He LOVES us, Jn 3:16. God pours His LOVE into our Hearts by His Spirit, Rom 5:5. The FRUIT of the Holy Spirit's presence in us is LOVE, JOY, PEACE, PATIENCE, KINDNESS, GOODNESS, FAITHFULNESS, GENTLENESS, SELF-CONTROL, Gal 5:22 We're called, and enabled to live in a joyful fellowship of love with the Lord Jesus, sharing His Love with others, as He commanded in Jn 15:9-12. TO- Eis= INTO. It's an outgoing of heart INTO them/their circumstances. TO ALL SAINTS.

Footnote **2 FAITH is the ordinary word used in everyday living. In this uncertain world characterised by human freewill, all that we do - write cheques, post letters, buy and sell - is in some sense "IN FAITH." Some of us do so confidently, some with timid uncertainty. It's the reliability of a BANK that gives value to its cheques. The distinctive feature of CHRISTIAN Faith is the OBJECT of our trust, CHRIST HIMSELF, as revealed in the Word of God, by The Holy Spirit. We live by FAITH, not so much in the promises of God, but in the person of the CHRIST of those promises, 2 Cor 1:20 Gal 2:20

but our hearts should go out to all His OWN. FAITH rests on the past, LOVE works in the present, HOPE looks forward to and prepares for the FUTURE. Love has content - it involves FAITH/TRUTH + PEOPLE, all the saints.

1:5 FOR THE Faith- #1:4 and Love that spring from- Dia- Lit. Because of. NIV repeats the words to make the meaning explicit. GN So your faith and love are based upon what you hope for.

HOPE - #Elpis- In the Bible Hope isn't a hazy, lazy, wishy-washy "Hope for the best." But as a Gardener sows GOOD seed in good well-prepared ground, hoeing, weeding, and watering, BECAUSE HE HOPES FOR A GOOD CROP, the Christian's HOPE is the confident assurance that God keeps all His promises. This enables us to LIVE by them. See FAITH, **2. The place of HOPE in ordinary life is well summed up in this verse: "In HOPE the King doth go to war, In HOPE the Lover waits full long, In HOPE the merchant sails afar, In HOPE Just men do suffer wrong, In HOPE the Farmer sows his seed, Thus HOPE helps thousands in their need." Our HOPE in Christ is better than that - Literal translation of Heb 11:1 can run "Faith is.. the TITLE DEEDS of things unseen." LAID/STored UP- As is "A crown of righteousness," 2 Tim 4:/8. "APPOINTED unto men once to die," Heb 9:27. The HOPED FOR result of their lifestyle will be waiting for them in Heaven.

WORD - Logos- A thought expressed, message, not the mere form of words. OF TRUTH- A statement that corresponds with reality. When we speak the truth, we say what really IS. GOD Himself is the REALITY that lies behind all that exists, making it what it is. The Lord Jesus is the TRUTH that expresses that reality, Jn 14:6. The GOSPEL Good News about Him, and us, is the WORD OF TRUTH. As He knows the TRUTH of all things, all He says is TRUTH, to be trusted in the face of all apparent contradiction from our senses, minds, feelings, and any testimony from man or demon. Clay can be gilded, and gold muddied but in spite of appearances, clay is clay, and gold is gold.

In Greek "truth" is Alethos= Nothing forgotten, and nothing hidden. Nothing is hidden from God, and nothing left out of His calculations. The Gospel is a plain, open statement, no small print hiding awkward things from us. Even if we understand only a little of what it says, what we understand is TRUE TO THE WHOLE. The SOURCE and NATURE of the Gospel is OPEN to view in Scripture. Heresies have hidden sources - human desires, religion, superstition, OR claim to be HIDDEN meanings of Scripture others haven't noticed.

doesn't BEAR FRUIT. In God's order the FRUIT may be different in different individuals and cultures, but will always be changes TOWARDS greater Christ-likeness. A spendthrift squandering his money on selfish pleasures, when converted may not become a careful, money-saving citizen, but remain penniless - giving money to the Lord's Work, and the poor. The Gospel is a REPRODUCTIVE organism, whose "Seed is in itself," Gen 1:11-12. The middle voice used here in the Greek fits the idea that the Plant, unlike annuals, doesn't exhaust itself in seed bearing, but continues indefinitely to flourish/bear fruit.

KNOW/Understood- Epignosis- To observe, discern, recognise. It suggests a directed attention to gain a fuller personal-experience knowledge. To want to know God's will is all that's needed, Jn 7:17. (Gnostics and Mystery Religions offered to reveal "Knowledge," to those who qualified by cash payment, unusual devotion, etc.) Paul makes it clear that they got the full deal when they responded to Jn 3:16. Certainly they didn't understand/Oida it all then, nor did the Preacher. But this is knowledge associated with PERSONAL KNOWLEDGE OF A PERSON- Ginosko. They came to know God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. There's nothing they needed to add to that/no-one else they needed to know. Such knowledge grows from spending time with the other person - opening hearts and minds to each other, and entering selflessly into their fellowship and service. It's a Living GROWING knowledge of ever-increasing fellowship that may well grow forever - Deity is INFINITE. "I KNOW/Ginosko in part, then shall I KNOW FULLY/Epiginosko, even as I am FULLY KNOWN/Epiginosko, 1 Cor 13:12.

THE GRACE OF GOD IN TRUTH- Truth gives security, as in 1:5. Where there's no deception or illusion, there's no possibility of disappointment or disillusionment. We may misunderstand, especially misinterpret the TRUTH to make it mean what we'd like it to mean, but coming closer to the Lord, and the experiences of life strip that from us. What has been revealed to us is TRUTH, absolute and certain, our task is to will to know it and do it.

1:7. LEARNED- Manthano- To learn from enquiry and observation, by spending time with- from Mathetes = a Disciple. EPAPHRAS, DEAR FELLOW SERVANT- Syndoulos- Fellow slave. FAITHFUL- 1:2. MINISTER- Diakonos- a Servant, worker. One who does any kind of work in the church. Peter says the Apostles should DEACON the Word, rather than DEACON tables, Acts 6:2-4. Doulos- bondsman describes a servant in relation to his Master. Diakonos- in relation to his work. FOR/On YOU/our behalf- He was God's servant in

1:9-14 Paul's GOAL for them - a GOOD, and GROWING LIFE

(Fruitful fellowship with an invisible God based on Faith, Hope, Love.)

1:9. FOR THIS CAUSE /Reason- Therefore. Because of all this. Not just the LOVE - but all that has led up to this statement here. Paul lists four requests - Wisdom/ spiritual understanding; A worthy walk; abundant power; a thankful spirit. SINCE I HEARD.. PRAYING - How good it is when every time we hear of Believers, or meet them we respond in this way.

DESIRE /Asking- Aiteo- To ask a favour of a superior, as Acts 3:2. It implies the right of God/the Superior to decline the request, or to decide what form of response would be appropriate, according to their superior wisdom, and love. This needs to be our attitude in praying. (Erotao, asking of an equal, is used of our Lord asking the Father.)

FILLED WITH KNOWLEDGE - As in 1:6. To KNOW Christ as Saviour is good, but full knowledge alone will protect against error. It's desperately important that new converts USE the first thrill and love of fellowship, and the joy of obedience they experience to go forward, praying and working towards fuller knowledge because: A. "Nature abhors a vacuum." Unless we are FILLED WITH THE FULL KNOWLEDGE OF GOD something else will fill the space! B. The opportunity will pass. The Manna ungathered, melted. C. The desire to know the Lord better, and the capacity to do so will soon be lost if not responded to. A man who doesn't eat for long enough loses both appetite, and the capacity to digest food.

KNOWLEDGE OF HIS WILL - If we LOVE someone, we're eager to find out what pleases them so we can enjoy time spent together. As we spend time LOVE and KNOWLEDGE increase together, if they are worth knowing and loving. SPIRITUAL WISDOM and UNDERSTANDING grow out of our spending time with the Lord like that. Unless we seek filling with an ever fuller knowledge of His will, we can't complain if when we FEEL our need, we can't contact Him.

WISDOM- #Sophia- Insight into the true nature of things, abstract realities, principles, 1 Cor 2:7-8; Mt 16:16-17; 2 Pet 3:15; Acts 6:10. SPIRITUAL- #Pneumatikos- from Pneuma= Wind, breath, spirit, so invisible and powerful. The word is not used until after Pentecost. UNDERSTANDING- Sunesis- To set together, to understand. We need ALL that God offers us in His Word,

tongue, and tone of voice when I remember that. In 2 Cor 5:9 Paul said he "laboured to be acceptable to the Lord" all the time.

UNTO ALL WELL PLEASING/May please Him in every way- PLEASING OUR SAVIOUR becomes important to us because we LOVE Him. Daydreaming is fine, in a way, but learning to LIVE a WORTHWHILE LIFE in fellowship with the one you love is more to the point. GN Then you will be able to live as the Lord wants and will always do what pleases Him. We will always do what makes God happy. "We LOVE God, because He loved us first," 1 Jn 4:7-21, and show that by increasingly living up to our privileges as Children of God. Cp Ephesians chapter 4.

BEING FRUITFUL/Bearing fruit IN EVERY GOOD WORK - BEARING FRUIT, GROWING. This is "ACTION PACKED" living. As the Lord said "Why call me LORD if you don't do what I tell you," Lk 6:45 Salvation is a BIRTH CERTIFICATE at the beginning of a life, not merely an admission-to-Heaven ticket. C.S. LEWIS rejected Charles Kingsley's "Be good sweet maid, and let who will be clever." adding that to be good in this world takes all the cleverness we've got. Paul would add "and a great deal more - ALL THE SPIRITUAL WISDOM AND UNDERSTANDING OF EVER FULLER KNOWLEDGE OF THE WILL OF GOD that Christ can give you."

FRUIT is the outward and visible expression of what had already been working unseen within, displaying its true nature, Mt 7:16.

EVERY GOOD- Agathos- Good in character and beneficial in effect. We were CREATED with this in view, Eph 2:10. (Not the alternative word for GOOD- Kalos= GOOD LOOKING, attractive, which GOOD works aren't always, in human eyes.)

INCREASING/growing IN THE KNOWLEDGE- Epignosis- #1:6. Increasing fellowship knowledge of God and His will fuels action, "Fruit," in fellowship with God and His will. This in turn leads to fuller "Full Knowledge." GN Your lives will produce all kinds of good deeds, and you will grow in your knowledge of God. The Emmaus course on Colossians says Note the advance. KNEW the GRACE of God, 1:6; KNOWLEDGE of His WILL, 1:9; KNOWLEDGE of GOD, 1:10. The first involves salvation, the second, Bible Study, the third Christian Service. FILLED, 1:9, fruitful, 1:10, FORTIFIED, 1:11.

1:11 Being STRENGTHENED- Dunamoo- Made powerful with ability power. We're MADE STRONG BY HIM, able to COPE with the stress of life. WITH ALL MIGHT/Power- Dunamis- The doubling makes it emphatic. Being

life that glorifies God is not all triumphant success, or escaping suffering of body, mind, spirit, pocket, or reputation. JBP So that you will find yourselves able to pass through any experience and endure it with courage. To remain in the will of God under persecution may be dangerous, but as a Jewish Rabbi Akiba said, when reading the Torah was banned by Rome - being in the water might be dangerous for a fish, but to be out of it was death!

LONG SUFFERING- Makrothumia- Long Temper- opposite of short tempered. Self restraint in the face of provocation. Victorian commentator Trench said, "Hypomene is the temper that does not easily succumb under suffering, as opposed to cowardice or despondency. Makrothumia is the restraint that does not hastily retaliate when wronged" - avoids violent revenge. LXX uses this word, of God in Ex 34:6.

JOYFULNESS /JOY, follows. Those who "Seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness," Mt 6:33 ENDURE by His POWER, and have added to them JOY, and all else they need to become Christ-like Rom 8:28-30 Joy is an attitude that affects every area of life - yours, and of those around you.

1:12 GIVING THANKS- JBP You will even be able to thank God in the midst of pain and distress, because you are privileged to share the lot of those who are living in the light. Realising that "He that spared not His own Son," will "freely give us all things" for our blessing, including painful things, Rom 8:32 helps in this. TO THE FATHER WHICH HATH/Who has MADE US MEET/Qualified you- Hikanoo- To be made sufficient/adequately equipped. It's used of having "SUFFICIENT food," Jn 6:7. TO BE PARTAKERS OF/Share in THE INHERITANCE- Kleros- A lot or possession. "The LOT fell on Matthias" Acts 1:26 "Not as Lords over God's HERITAGE," 1 Pet 5:3. What we have in Christ is not what we have chosen, earned, or even desired, but what God has chosen for, and allotted to, each one of us. Being BORN of God qualifies us for the inheritance.

SAINTS- Our inheritance is with others God has set apart for Himself. IN the Kingdom of LIGHT- the territory we inherit, in which we walk, is marked by LIGHT. God is LIGHT, and walking with Him in the LIGHT, gives fellowship with each other/cleansing from all sin, 1 Jn 1:7. Our inheritance is wonderfully guarded and kept safe for us. No enemy, no lover of darkness can get at it/exist in the light. No moth or rust can corrupt, and no thief steal- Let's lay up our treasure THERE, in Heaven, Matt 6:19-21. Let's enjoy our life in the Kingdom of Light here and now. We've been fitted for it.

citizens in the land of light - So Egypt/Canaan contrast.

OF DARKNESS - Adam and Eve chose darkness. We were born there, and left & ourselves would have remained there. Satan's power is limited to the Darkness of the "Flesh," and "World." All who have received Christ as their Saviour have been delivered from Satan's service, territory, and power. As a result Satan has no Authority-Power/ rightful Lordship over those who accept their place in union with Christ crucified and risen. "Sin shall not have DOMINION/ LORDSHIP over you for you are not under the Law, but under Grace," Rom 6:14. Christ on the cross broke Satan's power over those united with Him, 2:15; and as He said in Mt 28:18 He has "ALL POWER/ Exousia in Heaven and earth." But when He ENFORCES that power, the opportunity for men to repent will end for ever, 2 Pet 3:9.

Our Lord is PATIENTLY waiting for us to reap a harvest of sinners for Him. While he waits, Satan is free to continue to rebel, harass, and destroy, to the limit that we give him the opportunity. Satan's authority is limited to THE DARKNESS. When we choose to allow ourselves to function in THE DARKNESS - think, feel, speak, act, in fleshly self-motivated ways, we're to that extent in the KINGDOM OF DARKNESS and at the mercy of Satan acting in rightful Lordship over us. We're following Satan, acting in independence of God.

TRANSLATED US/Brought us into- Lit. Transferred us. INTO- E is THE KINGDOM OF HIS DEAR SON/The Son He loves- "All hail King Jesus, All hail Emanuel!" But not in the sense that like those 5000 He once fed, we think in terms of us MAKING Him King - the kind of King that suits us, because He will give us what WE WANT - food, health, possessions, Jn 6:15. He's already King, and to Him every knee shall bow. Our part is to say "AMEN" to that, and gladly proceed to live in fellowship with Him, crucified, buried, and risen - Doing all we do without murmuring and disputing, at what we are given to suffer or enjoy, Phil 2:9-14. Lightfoot "The essential of the Kingdom already exists in spiritual sovereignty, capable of expression now, although its visible manifestation lies in the future."

The VISIBLE Kingdom was rejected by the Jews, and they Crucified the KING, but until He returns to set up that KINGDOM we belong to His spiritual Kingdom, and are equipped to live and function in it in fellowship with HIM. THE KING HIMSELF, though invisible, is all-important as the object of our FAITH, LOVE, HOPE. Paul emphasizes what every believer is potentially, rather than his level of attainment, to encourage us to lay hold of it, and live up to it.

that is taken for granted, rather than spelled out here, and in Rom 3:24; 8:23
1 Cor 1:30 Heb 9:15.

FORGIVENESS - Aphesis- A dismissal, sending away, "Case dismissed." Aphesis isn't used in the LXX for the forgiveness/remission of sins, but of the Year of Jubilee RELEASE from all debts etc. Being taken over the border into the Kingdom of Light RELEASES us from our sins, debts, obligations and their power over us. Darkness can't pursue us into the Light, but tries to lure us back over the border into slavery, Jas 1:14-16; Jn 8:34. RESCUED, REDEEMED, FORGIVEN, so we've given up any claims to anything in the land of darkness - to take up and enjoy the property God has given us in the Kingdom of Light, and Love.

1:15-23 Our KING and COMMANDER - WHO HE IS

A. In relation to the Godhead.

1:15 WHO/He IS THE IMAGE - #Eikon- Representation and Manifestation, as WORD expresses Reason/ Thought. Eikon is used in LXX for Man in the IMAGE of God, Gen 1:26-27. Adam failed to represent God adequately. The Son was sent as His representative to care for His interests, and to reveal His heart of love for mankind. Christ is the visible likeness of the invisible God. Jesus Christ is VISIBLY all that GOD is INVISIBLY. God as God, is totally incomprehensible to man, 1 Tim 6:16. God in Christ, revealed Himself as fully as man is capable of perceiving Him, Jn 1:1-2, 14. **3 Seeing Him= Seeing the Father Jn 14:9. That IMAGE is conveyed in the Gospel, 2 Cor 4:4-6; Heb 1:1-3. The VISIBLNESS, here. The EXACTNESS of the likeness, Heb 1:3.

Footnote **3 All words, and statements, about God and Eternal/Spiritual things always are and MUST be puzzling. Try to explain to a toddler why he mustn't poke nails into electric power points, and you'll begin to understand God's problem in trying to explain Himself/ His Salvation to US. Electricity, and Death, are facts beyond a toddler's understanding. So is God's Nature and Saving action, to the wisest of us.

God in Wisdom and grace takes up and uses words/ situations in this visible world of our experience. BUT, they're always inadequate to convey the reality/ truth, accurately in a

treated as FIRSTBORN in this sense Deut 21:16-17.)

2. He is BORN, not CREATED. There is CONTINUITY OF BEING between Father and Son. He SHARES the SAME NATURE, LIFE, and BEING. It wasn't an event in TIME, with something before and after. In TIME, everything is lined up and made to happen one after the other, so we can cope with it. ETERNITY ISN'T LIKE THAT - Christ is eternally THE SON, and THE SLAIN LAMB, Rev 5:6. (At Bethlehem the child BORN was also the Son GIVEN, Isa 9:6.) Even we were CHOSEN IN HIM, to be LIKE HIM, before the world was made, Eph 1:4, Rom 8:29-30
3. FIRSTBORN were specially set apart for God, Ex 4:22, Ex 13:1-16; Num 3:1-13, 39-51. (Heb 12:23 "Assembly of FIRSTBORN" = those set apart to God?)
4. The role of the FIRSTBORN in the family is to MEDIATE the Father's will, teach it to younger ones, see that they do it, accept responsibility for them in the absence of the parents. And, to set an example, be the pattern of behaviour, establish the trail for the others to follow. The LORD provides the way, and sets the pattern of sonship for all the sons He's bringing to Glory, Heb 2:10.

The Scripture uses FIRSTBORN Literally, Lk 2:7. Figuratively "Israel is my FIRSTBORN," = had a distinctive place in God's purposes, Ex 4:22-23 David, LASTBORN in the family, would be God's FIRSTBORN in a unique superiority/supremacy, Ps 89:20-27. Rabbi Bechai wrote of GOD as being FIRSTBORN in relation to the world.

EVERY CREATURE/Over all Creation- Ktisis- That which is created. From Ktizo= Creator, used of the founder of a city, colony, etc. That Christ is not in any sense part of Creation is carefully stated.

1:16 IN/By HIM WERE CREATED ALL THINGS- IN HEAVEN/EARTH, VISIBLE/INVISIBLE- Making clear that every possible being/power is included. THRONES - The position of Ruler, as in "Give Him the THRONE of His father David," Lk 1:32 DOMINIONS/Powers- Kuriotes- spheres of Lordship. Kurios= Lord. Jude 8 PRINCIPALITIES/Rulers- Arche- Beginning, government, rule. First in time and place. "This BEGINNING of miracles," Jn 2:11. POWERS/Authorities- Exousia- Those with freedom and right to act. These words sum up the totality of all possible HUMAN/ ON EARTH/ VISIBLE powers/ authorities, and any possible ANGELIC/ IN HEAVEN/ INVISIBLE ones - those functioning gladly to the glory of God, or with Satan in rebellion against Him. Having stated the universal ALLS, Paul lists those most likely to be considered in some sense Rivals of the SON. Jewish and other

1:17 HE IS BEFORE- Pro- Before- in place as "BEFORE the door," Acts 12:6, and time "The prophets that were BEFORE," Mt 5:12. All exists in relation to Him. Nothing happens behind His back!

BY/h HIM ALL THINGS CONSIST/Hold together- Sunistemi- Sun= with, Histemi= To stand. Latin Consisto= stand together. "Two men STOOD WITH Him, Lk 9:32 "The earth STANDING OUT OF the water," 2 Pet 3:5. GN In union with Him all things have their proper place. Everything fits together because of Christ. Held in being by the Word (Expression of His thought) of His Power, **4 Heb 1:3; Gen 1:1; Jn 1:3; Heb 11:3. Is one harmonious whole. He gives the solidarity, order and purpose that makes Creation a Cosmos as opposed to Chaos.

ALL- Everything from the seeming infinity of Space to the infinitesimal atomic. ANGELS of Glory, and SATAN/demons heading for Hell. And you and I exist at this moment BEFORE THE FACE OF CHRIST JESUS, able to live/move, think/act, N and BECAUSE OF Him, Acts 17:28 Heb 1:1-3.

Footnote ** 4 The characters in a book/play owe their origin, continued existence, and the roles they play, to the Author, and are totally under his control. In a well-written book these characters are self-consistent, and assume to the reader an independence of functioning. So much so that they may seem to us to have a real existence of their own, and their Creator may be ignored. This seeming independence is true also of every being, power, or thing in the Universe. God is their Author. They continue to exist, and play their roles, including the exercise for good or ill of the free-will He has granted them, ONLY BY His deliberate intervention. Although they may abuse their delegated powers in rebellion and bitter opposition to Him, He still USES these powers to produce ULTIMATE Good. "Even man's WRATH is made to praise Him, and the remainder/ overflowing/ surplus to the fulfilling of his will, He restrains," Ps 76:10.

Even Satan owes his origin and continued existence to the Lord, whose gifts and calling are never taken back, Rom 11:29. His stewardship, like others', will run its course, until called to account, when it is righteous to do so. Meanwhile God over-rules his malice so that only those who choose to follow his "I am my own God, I will do what I wish" path are vulnerable to his actions. Fallen man, in choosing to follow Satan into rebellion, placed himself at his mercy, and our natural self remains that way to this day.

Only in Christ Crucified can we escape, once and for all. Only as crucified with Christ can we live that way while we're in this body. The moment we act self-righteously, self-indulgently, self-anythingly we step out from the shelter of the Cross and are fair game for Satan's

existence, in Grace stoops to be pre-eminent, all in all, in the Church. A body is worthless without a head. Any member of it is useless if not in touch with the Head/abiding in Christ, Jn 15:5.

The body is the means by which we express ourselves. He has chosen the Church to be the means by which He expresses Himself in the world.

Pain or pleasure is registered by the Head, and direction to do something about it is then sent to other members. We should always be praying as we interact with other members in the Body.

WHO/He IS THE BEGINNING - Arche- First in time, and source. Captain/Author of our Salvation," Heb 2:10. The first to go through Death and emerge triumphant, Heb 2:14-15. He is the FIRST in whom all who are saved enter into life - the Fountainhead of Life. JBP Life from nothing began through Him, and life from the dead began through Him, and He is therefore justly called Lord of All.

FIRSTBORN FROM AMONG THE DEAD - We were DEAD in our sin. He joined us/ took our place, was made sin for us, becoming obedient unto Death for us. Now as FIRSTBORN FROM THE DEAD He brings us to Glory, Heb 2:10. The FIRSTBORN/essential Preceder in the Church, the family of the redeemed, as in Creation. Any people resurrected previously, lived, died, and rose in Him, as much as any who will rise in the future. THE PRE-EMINENCE/Supremacy-Diotrephes loved to have this, 3 Jn 9, so robbing Christ of His rightful place. Beware of his attitude.

A. (Cont) In Relation to the Godhead.

1:19. FOR IT PLEASED THE FATHER THAT IN- En= IN Him, inherently there from Eternity. not Eis= INTO Him, HIM SHOULD/God was pleased to have ALL His FULLNESS - As the baskets were FULL, Mk 6:43 DWELL - *Katoikeo- To settle down PERMANENTLY, not Temporarily Skenoo, as in Jn 1:14. LXX "Jacob DWELT in the land," Gen 37:1. JN Darby's translation reads IN HIM ALL FULLNESS (Of the Godhead) WAS PLEASED TO DWELL. See also 29. The word "GOD" isn't in the Greek. It's saying that it was fitting, right, and appropriate for all fullness to dwell in Him. It was nonsense to speculate about a series of Spirit beings having power to help or harm people. The totality of all that EXISTS is in Christ. He is equipped to make absolute/complete reconciliation. And also, as everything there is, IS/exists in Christ, His own won't suffer cutbacks in supply.

1:20 HAVING MADE PEACE/By making peace THROUGH THE BLOOD - Used LXX "The life is in the BLOOD, given on altar to make atonement Lev 17:11.

Himself entered this Rebel scene, identified Himself with us, took our place, triumphed over sin, death and Satan; and invites all men to share the triumph of His resurrection life. TO RECONCILE - With PERSONS, making peace where there has been enmity. With THINGS - as reconciling items in balance sheets it restores them to right relationship with each other to make a true/harmonious statement. (Aorist tense - this happened at a point in time, with permanent effect.) ALL THINGS - Including intelligent beings, but not limited to them. UNTO HIMSELF - God doesn't need reconciling. He has no need to change. He takes the initiative and provides reconciliation - the means by which all things can be brought back into relation to Himself. What things were alienated from God, and as a result, in wrong relationships with each other - out of harmony, ineffective, and frustrated? **5

ON EARTH - The FALL affected ALL CREATION. The ground cursed, brings forth weeds, Gen 3:18. MAN by rebelling against God, lost the authority and ability to exercise control over Creation, Gen 1:26 That's frustrating to it, and to us. All Creation Groans/ is subject to vanity. Believers are already reconciled, 1:21. Our bodies, with the material creation, WILL BE liberated/glorified, Rom 8:18-25

IN HEAVEN - God has revealed little of the nature and consequences of the rebellion of Satan/ Angels, merely brief statements, 2 Pet 2:4; Jude 6 and hints, Isa 14:12-15; Ezek 28:12-17, etc. He does make clear that by inciting Adam and Eve to rebel, Satan over-reached himself, and provided a link in the chain whereby God in the Cross provided for the reconciliation of the Universe, and the putting down of ALL rebellion. PHYSICAL sacrifices for PHYSICAL uncleanness were shadows of THE sacrifice Christ made of Himself on the Cross to provide the SPIRITUAL REALITIES of atonement for sin, cleansing, reconciliation/ fellowship between God and man, Heb 9:23

Satan, and all on his side, are doomed for ever, Rev 20:10-15. It's quibbling to say that "Things under the earth," aren't included. In this passage Heaven and Earth are the only subdivisions of the ALL things, anywhere. Satan, and rebel angels are said to be in the Heavens, Eph 6:12, (Same word as Eph 1:20) with access to Heaven, Job 1:6-7, Rev 12:10.

Footnote **5 RECONCILIATION, as Balancing Accounts, is I believe the key. J Denney wrote "The Demonic, etc are Reconciled by subjugation," quoting 1 Cor 15:28 As Scripture makes dear, the CROSS provided the RIGHTEOUS BASIS for both the Justification, Reconciliation etc of the Believer, AND the Judgment and Condemnation of the Unbeliever. How the Cross deals with Angelic rebellion isn't our business. But, all Mankind are Potentially reconciled by His cross. We, as Ambassadors have a genuine offer of

of mankind, obedient unto death, even the cursed death of the cross. To Him every knee shall bow, Phil 2:10. Some already bow freely, joyfully worshipping, being transformed into His likeness. His will is their will. His joy their joy, forever.

The rest who insist on continuing to pit their God-given wills against the Gift of Everlasting Mercy, and against God the Giver, ("I would - but you would not," Mt 23:37-38) will eternally own Him Lord while gnashing their teeth at that fact. They will be totally under His control, unable to please themselves ever, for ever, because it did not on earth please them to please Him.

The Lord's death on the Cross provided an unchallengeable basis on which to RIGHTEOUSLY RECONCILE/ BRING INTO A STABLE PERMANENT RELATIONSHIP WITH HIMSELF all in heaven and earth. A relationship of eternal FELLOWSHIP/ FULFILMENT, for those rebel sinners who surrendered. A relationship of ETERNAL SEPARATION/ FRUSTRATION for Satan, rebel angels, and those rebel sinners who by persisting in choosing their fellowship, in spite of all that God can do for them, join them in the Lake of Fire, Heb 10:26-31.

D. In Relation to YOU and ME

1:21 AND YOU- The LORD of the Universe, HEAD of the Church universal, condescends to be Pre-eminent - All in All - in my life and yours.

ALIENATED- Belonging to another, alien, outsiders. Their and our state as unsaved. ALIENS, "ALIENATED from the life of God," Eph 2:12; Eph 4:18. With neither the ability, nor desire to be friends with God. WE, were alienated, not just our behaviour. When we were reconciled to God we disowned our behaviour AND the self that so behaved. We took God's side as opposed to it, committing ourselves to renounce it/consent to the death of the self that behaved like that.

ENEMIES IN YOUR MINDS- Our thinking, the way we see things. The tenses used indicate a continuing hostile attitude fighting against Him. Afraid He'd rob us of the sins we enjoyed as in Jn 3:19-21. The problem between us and God is entirely on OUR side. We're hostile to Him and His claims/ blessing/ will, because He's a threat to our right to do what is Evil. Men hide from God, as small children hide from parents when they've done wrong. They shut HIM out of their lives, not wanting to think about Him. Scared to die and meet Him.

Christ's physical Body- Stated fully so we know that it isn't referring to the Church which is His Body. His Holy humanity was total. It was by MAN/Anthropos sin entered the world, Rom 5:12-15. Man sinned and must bear the Judgment. It seems that only by becoming MAN, could God the Son rightly become "The Lamb of God taking away all sin," Jn 1:29. MAN must pay the penalty. MAN must win the Victory, and the only MAN who could do that was the GOD-MAN. Heb 10:19-20 sums up what He has accomplished for us.

THROUGH DEATH- The separation of soul from body, God from man. Our Lord endured both for us so that we, like the prodigal Son, would be WELCOMED HOME by God as OUR FATHER. In this verse we LOOK BACK at the love shown on the Cross, Gal 2:20 and AHEAD to the Glory.

TO PRESENT- "Brought Him to Jerusalem to PRESENT Him," Lk 2:22. Some are PRESENTED to the Queen. The three words that follow express absolute purity and acceptability. JBP So that He might welcome you to His presence clean and pure, without blame or reproach. On the Cross Christ provided perfect Holiness, Righteousness, etc for us, and in a sense this took us over/became ours at conversion. God is working it in us, and we are working it out daily. In the Glory it will blossom into its fullness, when we will, IN CHRIST, be seen as:

HOLY- #1:2- Set apart for God, and approved by Him. Fitted for his presence, totally His, totally acceptable. UNBLAMEABLE/Without Blemish- In LXX describes acceptable sacrifices. "FAULTLESS," Jude 24 Freedom from cause for shame, so freedom from shame itself. Consciously Spotless - unembarrassed in relation to ourselves. We'll feel good about the way we are, as we will know that we're what God wants us to be/made us for.

UNREPROVABLE/Free from accusation- In relation to OTHERS, not merely investigated and acquitted, but there being no grounds for accusation. Facing public scrutiny joyfully confident that beyond our clear conscience, God who is Holy and knows everything sees us as totally Holy and acceptable, Rom 8:33. Our worst enemies could find no fault, and our best fiend wouldn't wish us to be different.

IN HIS SIGHT- Katenopion- Set before His eyes. Right before HIM in full view. We'll APPEAR/BE MANIFESTED/DISPLAYED before the Judgment Seat of Christ - all we've been, said, thought, done will be reviewed, dealt with, and what remains, will IN, CHRIST manifest His wisdom and glory forever. What passes THAT test has no fear of reproach. Heaven is now our HOME, and when we get there we'll be seen to have been fully prepared to display His Glory there. Does it sound too Good to be TRUE? WELL NO - Considering

There's a question-mark over every profession of Faith in Christ Jesus. Those who SAY the Saving words, PRAY the Saving prayer, make the Saving Confession of faith, and begin to live appropriately - to all appearances identical - may remain in the sight of God eternally divided, because it's their HEART/MIND RESPONSE to Him that counts.

IF the Lord has "Begun a goodwork" in that life, He'll continue working in it with a view to/until, the day of Christ when it will be PRESENTED FAULTLESS, Phil 1:6, Phil 3:9, Heb 7:25, Jude 24. Since the Lord is doing that, we're called to co-operate with Him. IF it's empty profession, made for some selfish reason, that's all it is. There's no uncertainty as to who are His - He KNOWS them, but all who call themselves CHRISTIAN are committed to giving up sinning, 2 Tim 2:19.

IF, reminds us to act on the promises of God and so "Make our calling and election sure," 2 Pet 1:10. It's not meant to encourage morbid fear, constant introspective soul-searching, or pleading with God to reward our earnest efforts with what He's already given freely in grace. It reminds us that Saving Faith, is a persevering, living thing, growing in fellowship with God's Word, Rom 10:17; 1 Jn 5:13. The GRACE of God has DONE everything/PROVIDED everything that Almighty God can do for mankind, but we're responsible to CONTINUE in it, Acts 13:43, not receive it in vain, 2 Cor 6:1, and not despise it and use it as an excuse for loose living, Rom 6:1-2, Jude 4.

Scripture consistently affirms the permanent reality of Salvation received and enjoyed AND the constant challenge to demonstrate possession of this by a consistent life - a FAITH that is seen to WORK. ETERNAL LIFE, received as a gift, is a commitment to LIVING, not a TOY to be played with when we feel like it. It's like the gift of a FARM to be farmed, a BUSINESS to be run, or, as the GIVING of marriage partners to each other is, a commitment to a shared life and future.

In John 15 those visibly grafted into the Vine show by the outcome of His life bearing fruit in them that they're His, or withering into death/destruction show they never received it. So in the Parable of the Sower, subsequent life TESTS/PROVES the reality of all professions of participation in the eternal blessedness of the redeemed.

Scripture gives no excuse for anyone to say "Once saved, always saved, I'm saved so I'll drift comfortably to heaven." To claim to have laid hold of eternal grace, Love, Life and fellowship with the Lord, yet spurn it, ignoring the Lord and His Word, is nonsense.

of the Gospel means to Believers.

1:24:5 The CHALLENGING LIFE of FAITH

(Paul PATTERNS the LIFE and REVEALS ITS SECRET

The Lord Jesus Christ is GOD, CREATOR, and loving SAVIOUR. We WERE His enemies. We WILL BE presented in Heaven, in perfect joy and glory. We need to learn the privileges of our position, and the fullness of provision made in Christ so we won't settle for less!

We NEED examples we can CHOOSE to follow. Salvation doesn't just happen to us. When we're YOUNG, we don't become Christ-like by dashing around pleasing ourselves. When we're OLD we don't become Christlike by dozing in a lazy-boy chair, with or without TV.)

1:24 WHO NOW/REJOICE IN MY SUFFERINGS/What was suffered. Rejoicing in persistent painful effort, as an essential part of achieving a goal, is normal for Olympic Gold medal winners, Concert Violinists, etc. ALL Christians lose the right to please themselves, and gain sneers. SOME, like Paul, are beaten up, etc. as well, Acts 5:40-42 8:3; Heb 10:32-34 That's in the prospectus - Mk 8:34-38 Jn 15:18-25

FOR YOU- The PERSONAL element in worthwhile suffering. The suffering and joy of child bearing go together, Jn 16:21. Christ suffered on the Cross to PROVIDE Salvation, Heb 12:2. Paul rejoiced in suffering to PROCLAIM that Salvation, far and wide. To Paul it was revealed that God now received Gentiles on equal terms with JEWS, Eph 2:11-22 To preach this meant bitter persecution from Christ-rejecting Jews, who resented Jews fellowshiping with Gentiles at the Lord's table, Acts 13:50 14:5, 19; 17:5-9, 13; 2 Cor 11:23-33

AND FILL UP THAT WHICH IS BEHIND OF/What is still lacking in regard to THE AFFLICTIONS- Thlipsis- Pressure- Anything that burdens the spirit. OF CHRIST- The sufferings which the work of Christ still entails. **6

1:25 A MINISTER/Servant- 1:23 ACCORDING TO THE DISPENSATION/ Commission- Oikonomia- Lit Stewardship. Oikos= House, Nomos- Law, So House law, the management of the household. God had chosen to place Paul (and us, Mk 13:34) in His household with certain responsibilities, pleasant and unpleasant, 1 Cor 9:17; Eph 3:2-6.

Footnote **6 WHAT SUFFERINGS OF CHRIST WERE INCOMPLETE?

1 Cor 12:26 In evangelising to build His Church, and in shepherding it, "The Sufferings of Christ flow over into our lives," 2 Cor 1:5 NIV.

WHICH IS GIVEN TO ME FOR YOU TO FULFIL/ Present to you THE WORD OF GOD/ in its fullness- JBP That I might fully declare God's Word - that sacred secret which up till now has been hidden in every age, every generation, but which is now as dear as daylight to those who love God. Paul's ministry was to complete the revelation of the Word of God, and to preach it widely, in loving, close involvement with those who believed. This letter is written in that spirit of fellowship, not as a sermon, or text-book.

When we've heard the Gospel/ Good News, we're responsible to tell others. ALL of it, not just the parts that people want to hear. Paul could have watered it down to avoid conflict with Jews - but didn't.

1:26 THE MYSTERY- #Mysterion- That which is known only to the Mustes= the initiated. That which could never be discovered independently, thought out, or imagined, but must be revealed by someone who already knew it. Here, the mystery is the truth of God that couldn't be known until He chose to reveal it, especially concerning the Church.

HID- "HIDDEN from the wise, revealed unto babes," Lk 10:21. AGES - Aion- A period of time of indefinite length marked with its own distinctive characteristics. These truths were hidden in OT ages. GENERATIONS- A begetting or birth, generation, successive generations.

MADE MANIFEST/ Disclosed- Literally Shine out. As dear as daylight.

1:27 TO WHOM/ Them GOD WOULD/ Has chosen- God actively chose to make it known. JBP those to whom God has planned to give a vision of the full wonder and splendour of His secret plan for the sons of men.

MAKE KNOWN THE RICHES OF THE GLORY/ The glorious riches- The Glory of God when He is revealed and can be appreciated for what He is by His saving presence among His people. For Paul these outweighed any suffering it cost to be their chosen channel.

AMONG THE GENTILES - Weymouth translated this as How vast a wealth of Glory for the Gentile world is implied in this truth, the truth that Christ is in you.

CHRIST IN YOU- That the Lord of the Universe would indwell every individual Believer in Christ was a secret no-one could have guessed. **7 Jews had the

1:28 PREACH/Proclaim WARNING/Admonishing- Noutheteo- To put in mind. Used in LXX ELI Never RESTRAINED his evil sons, 1 Sam 3:13. "WARN the unruly," 1 Th 5:14. Paul poured out the proclamation of Gospel Truth, AND worked at getting their minds to respond. No take-it-or-leave-it attitude. He was involved personally with the hearers.

TEACHING EVERY MAN/Everyone IN ALL WISDOM- #1:9 An awareness of the reality that lies beyond the appearance. GN With all possible wisdom we warn and teach them in order to bring each one into God's presence as a mature individual in union with Christ.

PRESENT EVERY MAN- As 1:22 Note the constant repetition of the universality of the Gospel, and the equality of all in relation to it. PERFECT- Teleios- Having reached its end (Telos) mature, ripe, perfect. The mystery cults it described the inner ring minority. Paul emphasizes that maturity is for ALL - Spiritually, morally, etc. Christ IN you, provides all the potential for everyone to be PERFECT/Mature in Christ. **8 Paul is determined to do all He can to make the POSSIBLE a reality. God's provision demands Man's endeavour.

1:29 WHEREUNTO/To this end I LABOUR- Kopos- Beaten up exhausted. We may FEEL Beaten/ Beaten up at times after witnessing, teaching SS etc. STRIVING/Struggling- Agonizomai- AGONizing as one in an AGONA= Olympic arena. The facial expressions of contestants show their effort! Lightfoot says that Kopos described the preliminary training, Agonizomai, the contest. **9

ACCORDING TO HIS WORKING/With all His energy- The ENERGY comes from God, and He comes with it into our lives. He is doing the work. It is no wonder that we are pleasantly surprised at the result sometimes! WHICH WORKETH MIGHTILY/So powerfully works IN ME - Paul worked VISIBLY, with VISIBLE results BUT THE REAL STRENGTH/POWER CAME FROM CHRIST INVISIBLY IN HIM. We're to visibly work out what the Lord is working invisibly, Ph 2:12-13. GN To get this done I toil and struggle using the mighty strength which Christ supplies and which is at work in me.

Footnote **8 Apple trees are covered in blossom, but the tree can bring only a fraction to maturity. God has provided in Christ, through His Word, 2 Tim 3:16-17; His Church, Eph 4:11-16; and our co-operation, Jas 1:4 - in fact ALL things, Rom 8:28-30 that ALL Believers should come to the perfection of Christ-likeness. A wonderful example of Infinite grace, wisdom and power.

DISHES WITH YOU, or be agreeable to Dad, Mom, Brother, Sister, Son, daughter, OR the Boss, or.. - and He's nudging you. IF you give in and are willing, you'll find you can. Let's not live as if we were ordinary people, fighting for our RIGHT to come first/get the best of ordinary things.

2:1. I WOULD THAT YE KNEW/Want you to Know- #Oida- Understand. Paul, was under God, at great cost to himself, the source and channel of the Gospel by which they were saved. If they realised his deep personal concern for their welfare, it would help them obey his letter. HOW GREAT/How much CONFLICT/I am Struggling- Agon- as 1:29

SEE N MY FACE IN THE FLESH/Met me personally- It's difficult to pray earnestly for even our nearest and dearest. Paul's response to God's work in him, 1:29, enabled this loving concern. Those with no platform ministry, may be effective soldiers in prayer.

2:2 COMFORTED/Encouraged- Parakaleo- Called alongside to help. The Holy Spirit is in us as Parakletos/Comforter with the wisdom, power, and love we need. Paul put himself alongside them in His prayers. HEARTS KNIT TOGETHER/United- To settle into a shared conviction, "COMPACTED by that which each joint supplies," Eph 4:16. IN LOVE - #1:4- Outgoing unselfish care for others and their welfare as seen in the LORD. If you love someone it sharpens your mind to understand how to get time with them, how to please them.

UNTO ALL/that they may have the full RICHES- Which will produce - FULL/Complete- A fullness, abundance, completeness + fruitfulness? UNDERSTANDING- Sunesis- To set together, understand. The ability to take individual facts, and put them together to see the over-all pattern of their interaction and significance, and so act wisely. God wants adult SONS and DAUGHTERS not mindless slaves. Beyond the ability to "Put two and two together," we need to learn to "Set together" the facts of situations, WITHIN the revealed will of God. Placing ourselves in the hands of our Lord THE central fact of the universe, 1:17, His Holy Spirit gives us SPIRITUAL UNDERSTANDING.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT/May know- Epiginosko- Fuller and increasing personal experience/ Fellowship knowledge. JBP May your spiritual experience become richer as you see more and more fully God's great secret, Christ Himself! For it is in Him alone, that men will find all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. MYSTERY- #1:26 FATHER- [RT.] AND OF CHRIST/Namely Christ- Christ is the secret of God means that Christ reveals/ is the revelation of, God's truth.

we gain the knowledge we need and the skill to act on it, so that His will can be done. The Father has qualified/equipped us to share life in the Lord's Kingdom, 1:12, by God the Son being IN US with all we need.

Equipment made a great difference in the recent "Gulf War," but it would have been worse than useless without the preparation. Are WE spending time in Prayer/Bible Study, learning WHAT's ours to use, and HOW to use it? All we NEED is HIDDEN In Christ, given freely like the Manna in the wilderness. BUT we gather for ourselves- or starve. Maybe God COULD feed the new life in us with an intravenous drip, as some HOSPITAL patients are. It's better to buy food, cook it, chew and taste it. ALL WE KNOW OF CHRIST IS IN THE BIBLE. He's in us by His Spirit, who makes Him known to us as we read, Rom 8:9-11; Jn 16:12-15; so we learn to share life with Him.

If Bible Reading is boring to you, You may need help. Find a friend to do Bible study with - Even a daily phone chat about your daily reading helps. Or, buy one of the many EMMAUS, or other Bible Study Courses and send in answers for us to mark! It's mutually encouraging fellowship in the Lord.

Or perhaps you don't read your Bible OFTEN enough/aren't USING IT. Appetites fade when we skip too many meals. Eating without working it off is unhealthy. Regular turning to God's Word to enjoy fellowship with Him, and going out to do what it says, makes it exciting. Reading a Car Manual IS boring, if you don't have a car, or the car you've been given is sitting in the shed because you're scared to try driving it. Reading love letters WRITTEN TO SOMEONE ELSE would soon get boring. UNTIL OUR HEART TURNS TO CHRIST WE CAN'T SEE THE POINT OF WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS, 2 Cor 3:13 - 4:1. It's food, for the new life we're Born-Again into. Butterfly Caterpillars have no appetite for nectar. The Bible IS BORING, UNLESS CHRIST IS IN YOU. He's NOT in You, unless you asked HIM IN. He is GOD ALMIGHTY, but waits UNTIL WE ASK HIM TO COME IN AND TAKE CHARGE.

Any real Christian will tell you Receiving Christ into their life was the best thing they ever did. We may feel awkward talking about such important personal things, but you'll find they'll be glad to help you. Anyone who receives Christ as Saviour can learn to live the Christian life, as Christ Himself is LIVING IN THEM.

2:4-5 THIS I SAY/I tell you this- Paul now gives the REASON for his earnest prayer, and for his emphasis that ALL is in Christ. BEGUILE/Deceive-Paralogizomai- To reckon wrong, deceive by false reasoning. JBP I write this to prevent you from being led astray.

orderly ranks that stand their ground in battle. Christ must be central. Time/ thought spent on supposed alternative spiritual helps detached from Him is an insult to Christ and robs us of blessing. The temptation to focus attention on Bible Study, Church or social work, and largely ignore Christ is a common snare of Satan.

2:6-10 RECEIVED CHRIST? - Go on in HIM

2:6 RECEIVED- The word implies given to us for us to pass on to others, as in 1 Cor 15:1, 3; Gal 1:9, 12; Phil 4:9; 1 Th 2:13; 4:1; 2 Th 3:6.

CHRIST JESUS THE LORD - Not just things/ ideas one might discard, but the LORD HIMSELF. When we receive HIM, it's for Him to use us, not vice versa. HE's the central point of the Gospel, and that centrality is often attacked. The full title reminds us of the fullness of God's provision- THE CHRIST of all OT PROMISES. JESUS, God become Man for our Salvation. The LORD of all the Universe. We start with Him.

CONTINUE - As we began in simple obedient Faith in Christ as proclaimed in the Gospel, step out daily trusting the promises of God, and experiencing His presence and power. "All the promises of God are YES / switched on at His supplying end and our responsive acceptance/ AMEN switches them on at our receiving end 2 Cor 1:20 The Living Bible puts it as Just as you trusted Christ to save you, trust Him too with each day's problems. Live in vital union with Him.

SO WALK to live- Peripateo- Walk around, a step at a time. TIME is linear. Everything is lined up so you face ONE STEP at a time. You don't have to KNOW EVERYTHING/ DO everything, at once - just the NEXT step. The enemy tries to get us in a panic about all sorts of things - like Martha dashing around working for Jesus. Be like Mary - choosing the one important thing - listening to HIM, Lk 10:38-42

All Believers are "Going places with God" Heavenward, on their own two feet, in fellowship with the Lord, by the miracle of His presence within them. Yet not driven willy-nilly, or carried effortlessly. We WALK, an intermittent yet persistent process, each step under our control, and the progress not dependent on our feelings, or the sunshine/ rain, pleasure/ pain of the road. No-one can walk for you - and unless you move your feet - if others push you fall flat!

2:7. ROOTED- The tense indicates "Having been permanently planted." A plant's ROOTS being out of sight are easily ignored but their value is shown in the

YOU WERE TRUSTING the life of fellowship with Christ that grows out of your faith in Him. But equally out of THE Faith set out in God's Word, Jude 3

ABOUNDING/Overflowing- Receiving Christ doesn't chain us down, confine and restrict us. The Christian life in God's will is full, bubbling over with the joy of gratitude felt, and thanksgiving expressed, if we choose to. JBP your lives overflow with joy and thankfulness.

THANKSGIVING/Thankfulness- Eucharisteo. Linked with Charis - Grace, gift of grace - we should respond by giving thanks, being thankful. Failure to do this is tragic, read Deut 28:47-48 To rejoice and be thankful is for Paul the mark of the Christian. We should echo Ps 116. For us to take all God offers, and rejoice in it, brings joy to Him. **10

2:8. BEWARE THAT/See to it that- Keep keeping your eyes open. Take heed. Be WARY! Be on the look out against. An urgent warning. SPOIL YOU/Takes you captive- Literally to carry off as spoil. Make you their slave. Take over your life. Trap you and deprive you of your freedom. Having been freed into fellowship with Christ, how foolish to let Sects or Cults take over your life.

PHILOSOPHY- Love of wisdom. See Acts 17:18. To the Greeks the highest exercise of the mind/ finest expression of Humanity. Maybe it is. BUT it's still worthless, or worse. Emil Bruner's "LAW" sums it up well. While the fallen human mind is reliable enough for objective sciences such as Maths, it becomes less reliable - as demonstrated by the increasing difficulty of getting agreement - as the subject studied/ discussed moves towards the centre of man's being. Finally when it comes to Philosophy, and Theology, men's minds are so unreliable that any agreement between them is a matter of chance - Because it was at THE CENTRE OF MAN'S BEING, IN HIS RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD, he fell. EM Love of wisdom isn't evil in itself, unless detached from/unsurrendered to Christ, and so becomes an alternative centre to Him.

VAIN/Hollow- God has revealed Himself in Christ, in Scripture. To continue to "Search for Truth," by philosophical speculation, or to use the Bible to construct one's own system is VAIN, deceitful, and deceiving - therefore destructive of all good. Speculative philosophy gives human cleverness abundant scope, but is totally detached from the reality of creation, or Scripture; ingenious, but empty.

Footnote **10 To say "I wish I could KNOW God as my FATHER, and Jesus my SAVIOUR, HERE ON EARTH NOW, and FOREVER in HEAVEN, but I could never be good enough," is pointless when God the Son Himself died to MAKE US GOOD ENOUGH, and offers to indwell us to work on and complete that Salvation in us, Phil 1:6; 2:12-13. IF WE'RE IN

down to share in marriage, or business partnerships, with unbelievers, 2 Cor 6:14-18. Don't let us drift along with the crowd, or be content to watch the same TV serials they do. The moment we meet with dirt we are to GET OUT FAST, so as to live in happy fellowship with HIM. Christians form His promised Bride. Our Lord hasn't come for us yet, but we need to be loyal to Him, and be chaste and pure for Him, 2 Cor 11:2-3. And the good things we do to please Him are what we'll wear at the wedding, Rev 19:7-8. This fact makes all alternative selfish ways of living worse than useless.

DECEIT/Deceptive- "DECEITFULNESS of riches," Mt 13:22 Sin, Heb 3:13; Lusts, Eph 4:22 No matter how high sounding, moral and idealistic HUMAN philosophy and religion may be, it's a cheat that cheats even the Cheaters who create and teach it. Christ alone is the Water of Life. Water represented in a picture may be a triumph of human genius, but it quenches no thirst. It deceives through empty, seductive philosophy that follows mere human traditions, a philosophy based on cosmic powers rather than Christ.

AFTER/That depends on HUMAN TRADITION- The accumulated Religious Wisdom of men, heathen or Christian - ceremonies, confessions, experiences, is never unmixed Good. Each generation must search the Bible for itself, check traditions against it, lay hold of what is of God. Christ in His Word is our only resource. Paul HAD followed "TRADITIONS" before conversion, but the Gospel He was preaching/writing came directly from God, Gal 1:13-24. The Emmaus course defines a tradition as "the fixation of a custom which at some point was convenient and relevant to a particular circumstance." To take up a discarded system as an alternative to the final revelation in Christ, was tragic.

RUDIMENTS/Basic principles- Stoicheion- An element or first principle, from Stoicheo= to march in rank. "ELEMENTS melt," 2 Pet 3:10, 12. Rudiments of religion, Jewish or Heathen, Gal 4:3, 9; Col 2:20 Heb 5:12. Or elementary ideas in general. Only AFTER NT times was the word used to mean Elemental Spirits, etc. Paul writes of RUDIMENTS of the world, vs 8; the OT, vs 16; Spiritual experiences, vs 18.

THIS WORLD- Kosmos- Order, Beauty, arrangement, used of the physical universe as they knew it, the social order etc but here it is specifically THIS KOSMOS of Human Philosophy and Religious Tradition. The kinds of things Godless people have always done to try to please "Gods," or "Spirits," to gain merit, or show spiritual superiority - BUILD temples and shrines. Give up foods - become vegetarian. Go on pilgrimages. Make Sacrifices, Pay a Priest/Witch Doctor to pray for them, take curses off them, supply charms, tell them what to

might have suggested already. It makes God's being eternal in The Word, and was embodied at Bethlehem.

Moses was wonderful. We owe a debt to Luther, etc. BUT the GOOD and USEFUL in them, and all they/ their service lacked, is ETERNALLY IN CHRIST ALONE. For the full content of the Divine nature lives in Christ, in His humanity, and you have been given full life in union with Him.

2:10 ARE COMPLETE Have been given fullness IN HIM/Christ- Without Jewish rites or ritual, Greek Philosophy, Mystical aid or experiences, or human works. The SUPPLY is infinite, our capacity limited, we should ask for/seek, all we can, Eph 3:14-21. All the fullness of God dwells in Christ. Christ dwells in us. With such a banquet provided why should we insult Him by working for, buying, or begging the crumbs of human Philosophies and Religion. Everything of spiritual good that any human can ever enjoy is ours in Christ - available for us in fellowship with Him.

HEAD- Source and controller. OF/Over- ALL PRINCIPALITY/Rule.. POWER/ Authority- As in 1:16; Mt 28:18.

2:11-15 CIRCUMCISION and BAPTISM - Symbolism and Reality

2:11 IN WHOM/Him ALSO YOU ARE/Were CIRCUMCISED- Aorist indicative tense. Our present state is determined by Christ's action in the past.

CIRCUMCISION MADE/Done WITHOUT HANDS- JBP Not by any physical act. (See Mk 14:58; Jn 2:19-21; 2 Cor 5:1.) Jewish circumcision was DONE WITH HANDS. It was a physical thing people could do/ must do. God's promise to personally "Circumcise hearts," Deu 10:6 was fulfilled in Christ. He now takes direct action by His Spirit to bring us into relationship with Himself, Jn 1:12; 3:6-8; 1 Cor 12:13. What God does, is done WITHOUT ANY ACTION DONE BY HUMAN HANDS. This verse rules out any claim that Christening babies brings them into a Saving or Covenant relationship with God. Our part is to bring the Gospel to bear on them, and lovingly encourage them to respond, praying earnestly that God by His Spirit will in His own time work the invisible, uncontrollable action of the New Birth, Jn 3:5-8.

IN the PUTTING OFF of THE BODY OF THE SINS OF THE FLESH/The sinful nature- The human personality formed INDEPENDENTLY of God, centred on self - "I want! Give it to ME! It's MINE! I'll do what I like!" and so instinctively

Footnote **11 Jewish circumcision, put off/put to death/surrendered to God, a TOKEN PIECE of a male's skin to bring him into a covenant relationship with God entitling him to live in the Land of Israel. It committed him to make his whole body/nature conform to God's will. Any failure turned the blessings of the Covenant into a curse, demanding the death of the sinner, OR a substitute, Gal 3:10-14; 5:2-6. A Stop-gap provision until Christ came - Gal 3:21-25 Salvation in Christ deals with THE WHOLE body, the inner reality of our sinful nature, and breaks its power over us. We now are to apply that victory/ death, to the outward manifestation of it. He gives us the desire and power to do so- Romans chapters 6, and 8 Phil 2:12-16.

PHYSICAL circumcision marked out a man as being a Jew. The indwelling of Christ by His Spirit, marks Christians out, Rom 8:9-11.

All the OT pointed forward to, and prepared the way for, the coming of CHRIST. When He was rejected by the Jews they continued all the OT forms of OT religion. But, disconnected from God and His purposes, they became JUDAISM - the Jewish religious system outside the fellowship and purposes of God. Yet, in endeavouring to keep true to what they know of Him through the OT they are keeping their race in line for future blessing, as seen in Romans chapters 9 to 11.

2:12 Having been BURIED WITH HIM- Lit Co-buried, as also Rom 6:4. BAPTISM- From Bapto= to dip in and under, as in dyeing cloth. ALL born of the Spirit have been baptised by the Spirit into the invisible Body of Christ, to live in fellowship with it/Him, 1 Cor 12:13. That reality is symbolised in Believers' baptism in water, which also expresses our joining the visible fellowship of God's people.

WHEREIN ALSO YE ARE RISEN/and raised WITH HIM- Lit Co-raised. Providing the new life for us to live in fellowship with the Risen Christ. THROUGH THE/your FAITH IN THE OPERATION/power OF GOD WHO RAISED HIM FROM THE DEAD- Faith in the risen Christ unites us with Him crucified, buried, and in renewed life. Our faith is an element in the process, but the whole is the work of God. Identification with His Death detaches us from the old life, man's world, religious efforts. Identification with Christ raised puts us in touch with God's world, and everything there. Our natural spiritual DEADNESS is no problem. Christ's body lay dead in the tomb, and yet was raised. As we acknowledge/ approve our deadness, Christ's resurrection life is free to manifest itself in/ through us, in its mighty power, Eph 1:19-20

response to the Spirit he came from. Condemning and calling on the Lord to save us. The FULLNESS of that new life will be our experience at our Lord's coming. We SYMBOLISED it by being publicly immersed in water to confess our union with Christ. The CHALLENGE of it is ours to live out daily by His Grace, Gal 2:20 Col 2:11. Earnest religious people may copy this Christian Lifestyle hoping to please God/qualify for heaven by DOING things. Sadly that's empty play-acting. A Christian, like a bird, becomes one not by trying to fly, but by being BORN one, and working out that nature as God WORKS in us, Phil 2:12-13. "Run John and work, the law demands, But gives him neither feet nor hands. A better word the Gospel brings, Bids men to FLY - and gives them wings!"

HATH HE /God QUICKENED/Made alive TOGETHER WITH HIM/Christ HAVING FORGIVEN/He forgave- Charizomai- To bestow a favour unconditionally. The restoration to the relationship with God that had been broken by man's sin. Our GUILT ceases to be a barrier between us and God - the consequences of sins we've sown may still have to be reaped. YOU/us ALL TRESPASSES /sins- Paraptoma again.

2:14 BLOTTING OUT/Having cancelled- Sins BLOTTED OUT, Acts 3:19. WIPE AWAY all tears, Rev 7:17; 21:4. Curses blotted out, Num 5:23 THE HANDWRITING /written code- The written list of acknowledged debts signed by the Debtor, was the normal meaning in Greek. OF ORDINANCES /with its Regulations- Dogma- A verdict, or decree. The Law... ORDINANCES, Eph 2:15. A DECREE of Augustus, Lk 2:2. THAT WAS AGAINST US, WHICH WAS CONTRARY /stood opposed to US-ADVERSARIES, Heb 10:27. Actively acting against us until their demands are met. GN Cancelled the unfavourable record of our debts with its binding rules. Living Bible - He blotted out the list of charges proved against you, the list of His commandments you had not obeyed.

The LAW was like a Policeman with a SUMMONS saying Ed Read must face God's Judgment Court because he's broken God's LAW: "In 1929 he died to his mother, hit his younger brother spitefully - I'll stop at CHILDISH SINS! Every effort to avoid facing God about our sins adds to the list/increases the danger that our chance to do so will be wasted. JBP Christ has utterly wiped out the damning evidence of broken laws and commandments that always hung over our heads.

TOOK IT OUT OF THE WAY /away- Ek Mesos- Out of the midst. Suggesting it was a central fact, unavoidable, not peripheral. Word of Life version He cancelled the bond that stood against us with all its claims, snatching it up and

hormone Spray will KILL THEM. The Cross of Christ is the hormone spray that will go right down into our sinful Human Nature, and ultimately destroy it completely. BUT WE MUST APPLY IT CONTINUALLY. Christ Crucified replaces the Law for all Believers, Rom 10:4. He sets us free, but we don't become lawless, Rom 8:2-4. Sin and the Law have lost power over us because GRACE brings us to repentance, confession, and cleansing from every sin we fall into, Rom 6:9. We can Walk in the light with God in fellowship with His people, 1 Jn 1:7.

And he has dealt with Satan and all Evil powers

2:15 AND HAVING SPOILED/disarmed- as PUT OFF the old man, Col 3:9. PRINCIPALITIES/Powers. POWERS/Authorities- as 1:16. If Spoiled/Disarmed is an adequate translation, the meaning is simple. If not, the best suggestion I can make is - He Created/holds them in being. At the close of His sinless human life, they had no claim on Him, Jn 14:30 Yet if the statement in Greek is taken literally it says that He stripped them off Him - Why did He have to do this?

By disobeying GOD/obeying Satan, Adam placed mankind at the mercy of Satan/ Evil Powers. Christ took up humanity, lived it sinlessly, and, in identification with us, took our sin with all its consequences on Himself, 1 Pet 2:24; 2 Cor 5:21. Evil triumphed in His Betrayal, and crucifixion, yet "By DEATH He destroyed him who has the power of death, and delivered us," Heb 2:14-15. Weymouth translates as The hostile princes and rulers He stripped off from Himself and boldly displayed them as His conquests when He triumphed over them in the cross.

MADE A SHOW OF THEM OPENLY/Public Spectacle TRIUMPHING OVER THEM- As a Roman Emperor, welcomed home as triumphant Saviour of the Empire, paraded after him vanquished enemies. GN He made a public spectacle of them by leading them as captives in His victory procession. IN IT by the Cross- or IN HIMSELF. All "In Christ," share his victory, and the freedom to live unhindered in fellowship with Him.

2:16-23 JUDAISM etc is to be RESISTED

2:16-17 LET NO MAN JUDGE- Krino- To judge, criticise. "JUDGE not," Mt 7:1. "Who are you that JUDGES another's servant," Rom 14:4. We mustn't let

provision for controlling the flesh, taken away the claims of LAW, and triumphed over the Spiritual Enemies of man, He in His fullness indwells us so we may share His sufferings/victory in His work of bringing sinners to repentance, 2 Pet 3:9; 2 Cor 5:18-21.

ALL THIS IS REAL, ETERNALLY TRUE, BUT INVISIBLE TO US AND EVERYONE ELSE. Our old unsaved thoughts and feelings recur, and the world seems unchanged, but on the authority of God's Word we're to set out to let what He says is true about us be VISIBLE each day. Neither the awesome Holiness of God, nor the threatening or seducing power of Satan should prevent our stepping out daily to live by Faith in Christ Himself. We must resist "Alternative religious systems."

IN MEAT/by what you eat OR DRINK - Applying equally to OT Food laws, or Religious vegetarianism filtering in from the East.

IN RESPECT OF/with regard to AN HOLYDAY/religious festival- Heorte- Used of Jewish Feasts, especially Passover, 24x in NT and in LXX. NEW MOON Celebration- Tabernacle worship, Num 28:11, and Synagogues also, celebrated each new moon. Heathen also used new moons as Holy days. SABBATH DAYS - The WEEKLY Sabbath, was the constant concern of the Jew, Mark 2:23-24, etc. but in LXX the word included the Feast Days. Christ Himself is our Sabbath Rest. We must keep our eyes on Him, not on OT laws, or human rules about hours and form of Meetings, Bible Versions, Hymn book etc. Biblical principles alone matter.

SHADOW- JBP All these things have at most a symbolical value, the solid fact is Christ. Heb 8:5 speaks of the Tabernacle, furniture, ritual, etc as a temporary visible "shadow" on earth of the eternal, Heavenly spiritual realities. They pointed forward to Christ, FORESHADOWING His role as sacrificial Lamb, Jn 1:29, Priest, Heb 8:9, 10, etc, and how we should live, 1 Cor 5:6-8; Heb 13:11-14, etc. THINGS that were TO COME - Mello- To be about to be - foreshadowed. THE BODY/reality however IS OF/found in CHRIST- He, the body casting the shadow, has already come. How foolish to be concerned with the things that foreshadowed His coming, and prepared people to understand the significance of Who He was, and what He did.

2:18 LET NO MAN BEGUILE YOU OF YOUR REWARD/disqualify you for the prize- Used of umpires disqualifying runners. This warns us that if we switch our efforts at pleasing God onto a non-biblical basis, doing so must disqualify us. 1 Cor 3:10-15. See Gal 5:7-8. They had entered according to the Gospel rules, and begun to run according to them. The false teachers were distracting them, trying to trip them up, divert them from the course, etc. They must ensure their actions don't force the righteous judge to disqualify them.

on. To step out in vain speculations, or unbidden by God, or out of the bounds of his revealed will. F F Bruce notes that Embateuo is used in an inscription from the Temple of Apollo at Klaros as a technical term for some step in a mystery ritual. Their claim to superior knowledge is based on mystical/ecstatic experiences.

Footnote **14 The World-war II American R.C. Military Missal, has on P 84 "I believe that it is very helpful to my Christian Life to have special devotion to my Guardian Angel, reverencing him and calling upon him, especially in time of temptation."

THINGS HE HAS (NOT [RT]) SEE N- Horao- To see, by prolonged looking with a discerning mind. He's made a STUDY of it. Made it his business to SEE what he can see in that direction, whether it's there or not! Scribes copying were unsure whether HAS, or HAS NOT conveyed the truth best. The experiences "SEE N" could be subjective experiences (supernatural, drug-induced, or emotional hysteria) real within their minds. But they've NOT SEEN them because they're not events in the real, objective world, testable and confirmable to an honest enquirer. Eliphaz boasted of his "Experience," Job 4:12-21, and spoke confidently for God because of it - but God dswoned him.

Self-inflating pride in private experiences is the result of not maintaining contact with the "Head." When any member starts to do its own thinking he steps out of Biblical reality into a fantasy world of his own that refuses to submit to what Scripture has to say.

VAINLY/ble notions- Without cause or purpose. PUFFED UP/puffs him up- Berkeley translates as "Braggs of visions, puffed up without cause by his fleshly mind. GN puffed up by his human way of thinking. FLESHLY/Unspiritual- Sarx- The totality of human inheritance from Adam. The personality formed in independence of God. MIND- Nous- The seat of reflective consciousness, perception, feeling, judging, determining. Such a one takes his stand on his own experience, he is inflated with empty pride in his human reflections when he should be in close contact with the "HEAD."

2:19 NOT HOLDING/He has lost connection with- Krato- To be strong, to prevail, to lay hold of. Herod LAID HOLD OF John, Mt 14:3. THE HEAD- Christ the CONTROLLING HEAD of the Church, every individual member, and the inter-relationships that enable it to FUNCTION/GROW to human blessing and the Glory of God. The FOUNTAINHEAD of all wisdom, holiness, love, power - all that's good and beautiful. When self or human religion come between us and Him, we cut ourselves off from it all. GN Has stopped holding on to Christ, who is the head of the body. Under Christ's control the whole body is nourished and held together. JBP In his devernness forgetting the

and enjoying/experiencing an fellowship with Him. Were to find our direction and sufficiency and satisfaction in HIM, and not listen to self-appointed teachers.

Footnote ** 15 (For insensitive souls.) The words NOT HOLDING THE HEAD always remind me of Dad killing a rooster back in my country childhood. When its head was severed, the body burst into frantic activity, but it accomplished nothing. There's a lot of exciting activity in some Churches, "Miracles," "Prophecies," "Healings," "Demons Cast Out," prolonged "Praising God," etc. Claiming freedom from obeying Scripture helps to make it lively. But when the frantic excitement quiets down, most of it is seen to be mere froth and bubble.

Here's an example that may give a sense of proportion re apparent and real Success/ Blessing, On opposite sides of the Luapula River in Zaire in the 1950s were two Mission Stations. The Pentecostal one boasted they baptised 1000 converts a year. The Open Brethren one baptised only 20 to 30 a year. BUT AS A RESULT, 250 BELIEVERS, Godly and consistent in life, gathered to worship, at BOTH places, each week. Let's thank God for the 250 transformed lives at both places.

BY JOINTS/Ligaments- That every JOINT supplies, Eph 4:16. Paul's statement parallels those of the Greek doctor Galen, and of Aristotle who wrote of CONTACT and ATTACHMENT preserving unity and order and communicating life and energy. BANDS/sinews- #Sundesmos- That which binds firmly together "The BOND of iniquity," Acts 8:23 "Peace," Eph 4:3; "Perfectness," Col 3:14.

HAVING NOURISHMENT MINISTERED/supported- "MINISTER seed to the sower," 2 Cor 9:10; "An abundant entrance MINISTERED," 2 Pet 1:11. KNIT/held TOGETHER- As 2:2. The way the skeleton is fitted together, holds together and functions, with its shaped joints and sinews, has long been a source of wonder. The terms were understood then in a general way - but fit the increased knowledge gained since.

INCREASETH/grows- as 1:10, WITH THE INCREASE OF GOD/as God causes it to grow- Impossible if disconnected from the head. We're tempted to ADD to the Gospel ideas/experiences which are attractive to us, and SUBTRACT things that make self uncomfortable. To do either insults Christ/makes His work in us ineffective, Gal 5:1-4.

2:20 WHEREFORE SINCE YE BE/Since you- As you. A conditional Greek clause that doesn't imply uncertainty, but is a way of stating a fact from which certain consequences are to be spelled out. DEAD/died- Apothnesko WITH

The OT Laws about physical actions (Clean/unclean foods, hand-washing, Mk 7:1-23 offering sacrifices etc) laid the foundation for an understanding of spiritual truths/principles. These are also called Stoicheion, Heb 5:12. (Much as infant school blocks etc are used to teach Mathematical Truths) These prepared people for the SPIRITUAL REALITY OF CHRIST, and life in fellowship with Him, Gal 4:3-10. Now that He has come, urging the use of OT ordinances or heathen ones was like telling University Students to go back and play with Infant Blocks. See 22.

WHY AS THOUGH LIVING/you still belonged IN THE WORLD/to it, ARE YOU SUBJECT TO/do you submit TO ORDINANCES/its rules- Dogmatizomai- To subject oneself to an ordinance. It isn't Hypotasso= to take one's appointed place/role/position, Jas 4:7, as the Lord requires us to. But a choosing to place oneself in a position that ignored/defied the revealed will of God- His Word, His Holy Spirit. Paul is saying that it's unreasonable for us to allow religious leaders to impose their rules on us. Yet our fleshly human nature, even at its most virtuous, likes to have solid ground under its feet - a defined programme, measurable progress, etc.

2:21-22 TOUCH NOT/Do not handle, TASTE NOT/Do not taste, HANDLE NOT/Do not touch- (KJV follows LATIN not Greek.) Don't touch this! Don't eat that! Don't.. physical actions, so controllable, and producing a superficial "visible purity/holiness," Mt 23:25-26

WHICH ARE ALL TO/these are all destined to- Eis- into PERISH WITH THE USING/use- Full using. The things forbidden are PHYSICAL, have no permanent value in themselves, and will perish with this physical world. FOOD, when used to the full, ceases to be FOOD, it "Perishes in the using." Any reward earned by keeping such rules is in this life only, Mt 6:2. Paul echoes Mt 15:10-20 Mk 7:1-23

AFTER THE/because they are based on COMMANDMENTS AND DOCTRINES OF MEN/human commands and teachings- As Mt 15:9. Like the superficial "Fear of the Lord," routines taught by apostate Israelite priests to the Samaritans! 2 Ki 17:27-28

2:23 WHICH THINGS/Such regulations HAVE INDEED A SHOW/appearance OF WISDOM- #1:9. They appear wise to men because human wisdom, viewing things from our human point of view, designed them to do so. GN Of course such rules appear to be based on wisdom.

Human religion makes a virtue out of repression - treating the human body and its desires as the enemy of the soul. Gnosticism taught that the body is so vile that holiness required renouncing all bodily pleasures, but failing that, doing vile things couldn't defile it! All such ideas insult the Creator/Redeemer, 1 Tim 4:1-5. God's Word teaches that our body/nature is a potential instrument of righteousness if surrendered to the Lord and used for Him, Rom 6:13. PRIDE can exist with the most severe asceticism, and pride in self-sufficiency is at the heart of all human rebellion.

The construction in the Greek doesn't make the meaning clear, and Mss vary as scribes struggled to make it clearer. As a number of the words are used only here, they may be technical words of the false religion that was growing up. As a result translations have honest variations, but the general meaning is clear enough. Eg JBP I know that these regulations look wise with their self-inspired efforts of worship, their policy of self-humbling, and their studied neglect of the Body. But in actual practice they do honour, not to God, but their own pride. Living Bible says These rules may seem good, for rules of this kind require strong devotion, and are humiliating and hard on the body, but they have no effect when it comes to conquering a person's evil thoughts and desires, they only make him proud. RSV These have indeed an appearance of wisdom in promoting rigour of devotion, self-abasement, and severity to the body, but they have no value in checking the indulgence of the flesh. The Translators Handbook suggests Which (rules about diet etc) have indeed a reputation for wisdom, with their voluntary religiousness and self-mortification and severity on the body, but have no value at all in combatting sensual indulgence. A summary of the alternatives to/distortions of, the Gospel warned against here has been placed in a closing Appendix.

The Lord have mercy on US, not merely peasant women crossing themselves and lighting candles before an image, but US liberated, educated, Bible-Oriented, orthodox, evangelical Believers, active in the Lord's Work, but somehow content to experience the Lord we proclaim and profess to rejoice in, as a GOD AFAR OFF.

Introduction to the second half of Colossians

Epistles START with declarations of the Person of God, the Salvation He's provided in Christ, our position in relation to Him and it, and the dangerous alternatives that face us. This is essential because Salvation is NOT OF WORKS, but Faith laying Hold of TRUTH and functioning in GRACE, Eph 2:9-10; Phil 2:12-16.

to SERVE US, by helping us become CHRIST-LIKE, Rom 8:28-30. GOD IS IN US. Let us can, and MUST NOT, frustrate His working, Eph 4:30 1 Th 5:19.

We need to learn to see ourselves in the mirror of Scripture as what we SEE OURSELVES AS BEING decides what we ATTEMPT to be. But what we ARE, and the RESOURCES we have, determines our success or failure in our attempts to be what we see ourselves as being. In 1944 during WW2, an Airman in the Pacific climbed high into a tree, shouted to his friends below "I'm a P 40 dive bomber" and took off! He wasn't. We Believe what God says we are - or we too crash. About 20 years ago I saw in a second-hand shop, scrawled on a student's desk "I'm NOTHING! All I ever could be or do IS WORTH NOTHING!" When us Christians FEEL like that, we can remind ourselves that "The Son of God LOVED me and GAVE HIMSELF for me," Gal 2:20

In this book we've already learned what Christ the Lord of Glory, Creator/Sustainer of the Universe has DONE for us, and IS in us. It's NOT us TRYING TO BE CHRISTIANS by what we DO - Following OT LAW, Religious principles/rituals, having Spiritual experiences. It's choosing moment by moment to BE WHAT GOD HAS MADE US IN CHRIST!

3:1-4 LOOK UP, LIVE UP, WITH EYES ON CHRIST

3:1 IF/Since- If not sure, step out in obedience. Trust God to make it clear, step by step, including sending us back to BEGIN by receiving Christ if we've not really started there. YE THEN BE RISEN/You have been raised- Sunegairo-Co-raised. WITH CHRIST- It was Christ Crucified, Buried, Risen that we received at Conversion, and are identified with, as Baptism proclaims.

SEE K/Set your hearts on- God has left us free to choose who and what we will love. What we really LOVE determines our priorities, Mt 6:21. All the natural things of life, neutral in themselves, are to be used to serve this new life. We must THINK, ACT, and SEEK Heaven/ things that are from Heaven, and which we will in due course take to Heaven. THINGS ABOVE WHERE CHRIST SITTETH/ is seated- Is enthroned. ON/at THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD- The position of power and authority.

3:2 SET YOUR AFFECTIONS/Mind- Where we direct our attention and thoughts is up to us. KEEP SETTING your HEART/MIND to build your daily life on GOD'S FACTS. ACTING on the FACTS. The tense indicates rational, purposeful, persistent, painstaking effort to enjoy to the full God's wonderful

to stewardship as in 323 &c. (Our attention isn't directed to Christ/ the Spirit within. It's impossible to distinguish His witness from that of our own spirit, Rom 8:16. Yet the FACT of His being with/ in us is to be acknowledged thankfully, and relied on as we ask God to guide and enable us.)

BECAUSE Man sees only the outward, 1 Sam 16:7, our heart's attitude to God must be made obvious by what men see, Mt 5:16. When we wake each morning, HE's waiting for us to ask His wisdom, love, power, and holiness to help us in all we face that day. Talk to Him, Listen to Him. To BEGIN the day with Him, OPEN THE WINDOW OF YOUR LIFE TOWARDS HEAVEN Dan 6:10 - That's where HE belongs, and we do too!

3:3-4 FOR YOU ARE DEAD/died- The Living Bible reminds us that we should have as little desire for this world as a dead person has. Our real life is in Heaven. YOUR LIFE IS now HID/hidden WITH CHRIST IN GOD- We have glimpses/ foretastes only of the REALITY of Christ/our eternal life. He and IT may become VISIBLY ours for ever, at any moment.

WHEN CHRIST WHO IS YOUR/our (Some Mss have Our as the scribe thought Paul meant to include himself, Others have Your if they thought he didn't mean to include himself.) LIFE SHALL APPEAR/appears- Phaneroo- To be manifested. From Phaino= To shine out. The OUTSHINING of the reality at present hidden. As a seed buried in the ground must die increasingly, so that it can spring up into life in the light as a plant, so we are at present. Our life, in its freedom and glory, will be manifested when our Lord manifests His glory to us. OUR/Your- the writer including himself or not, makes no difference. This is in the Aorist tense= it will happen at a point in time with permanent effect.

YOU ALSO WILL APPEAR WITH HIM IN GLORY- Appear and be manifested - shown to be what we are in Christ, by His Grace. Let's put ourselves gladly into His hands as clay NOW to mould us into an exquisite porcelain representation of Christ. Unless we prefer to remain a beer mug, or a child's money box!

3:5-11 Take Responsibility for EVE RYTHING IN YOUR LIFE

A succession of Aorist Imperatives tie this section together. PUT TO DEATH 5 things (5-7), GET RID OF 5 things (8-11), 5 things to PUT ON (12-14,) Finally to support and hold in place all virtues - LOVE.

3:5-7. FIRST- PULL OUT THE OBVIOUS WEEDS/SINS- Don't wait for GOD to deal with them. Ask His help to obey Him. ATTEMPT to, He will act. First the habits to be

FORNICATION/Sexual immorality- Porneia. illicit sexual intercourse. Men reap the consequences of corrupting God's gifts Rom 1. UNCLEANNESS/ Impurity- Akatharsia- "Full of dead men's bones/UNCLEANNESS," Mt 23:27. (Although it obviously corrupts, some psychologists try to argue that pornography has a Cathartic/Cleansing effect!)

INORDINATE AFFECTION/Lust- Pathos- Passionate desire. GOOD or BAD in Greek, in NT always bad. "Vile AFFECTIONS," Rom 1:26 EVIL CONCUPISCENCE/Desires- Epithumia- A strong desire/craving - generally Evil in NT but "With DESIRE I have DESIRED to eat the Passover with you," Lk 22:15. STRONG desires, are seldom good in ordinary humans!

COVETOUSNESS/Greed- A desire to have more - As last of a series sums up the fact that putting any DESIRE above the will of God is IDOLATRY. His children's right is to ask from the Father, but continued desire for what He doesn't grant is worshipping the God Mammon Mt 6:24 The Emmaus course notes that the list begins with acts, and ends with motives. Impurity and greed sum up human selfishness/sin. Similar lists of vices are in 1 Cor 6:9-10; Gal 5:19-21; Eph 5:1-5; 1 Pet 2:1; 4:1-3.

3:6-7 FOR WHICH THINGS SAKE/Because of these- Desires and actions. THE WRATH OF GOD- He cares deeply for all He's made. The UNCLEANNESS of Sin offends His HOLINESS, its FOLLY/WEAKNESS His WISDOM/POWER, its INJUSTICE, His RIGHTEOUSNESS, and LOVE, must avenge its CRUELTY. God's ANGER has nothing in common with resentful human outbursts, OR cold blooded retaliation. Because God IS Love, He must hate evil.

COMETH/Is coming ON- Inevitably, because God is who, and what He is. CHILDREN OF DISOBEDIENCE- [RT.] Huios/ SONS, not Teknon/ BORN ONES. It's their chosen lifestyle, not the result of the source of their life. The Lord said of His critics the Pharisees "You are of your Father, the Devil," Jn 8:44 The Devil being the source of their proud rejection of the will of God, and the pattern of behaviour they were following in their desire to murder Him for speaking God's truth to them.

IN WHICH/These ways YE ALSO WALKED/used to walk- As 1:10. You yourselves, OR you also like others. God makes it clear that it's not superior NATURAL virtue that marks out Christians from others, but the Grace of God in the Gospel, Eph 2:1-16; Titus 3:3-8. WHEN YOU LIVED IN THEM/in the life you once lived- We've nothing to boast of, or desire to return to. We lived

man - even though Godless people may take them to be natural RIGHTS essential to life.

ANGER- A natural reaction to being badly treated, or spoken about. Our RIGHT to BE ANGRY at others must be given up. Anger moves people to feel/ plan/ say/ do nasty abusive things. Bury anger daily, Eph 4:26 WRATH/Rage- Inward indignation, nursed by thinking about injuries done to us, and the outburst of rage that results. MALICE- Ill-will that takes pleasure in the misery/pain of others. The desire to see them suffer for what they've said/done against us.

BLASPHEMY/Slander- Evil speaking- against God, or man. Here it's the outworking of Anger in verbal abuse, or slander. FILTHY COMMUNICATION/language- Shameful, defiling language. OUT OF/From YOUR MOUTH/lips- Jas 3:1-18 is essential reading.

3:9 LIE NOT- We must give up our RIGHT to tell "Convenient Lies." Includes pretending to be better or worse than we are or were. **16 TO ONE ANOTHER/each other- Reciprocal. SEE ING/since YOU HAVE PUT OFF THE OLD MAN/self WITH HIS DEEDS/practices- What we used to be and do.

Footnote **16 This isn't simple in practice. Biblically no lie is an act in itself. THE Truth, and THE Lie, are separate, opposing Kingdoms. To believe or tell a lie, is, for the moment, to enlist in the service of THE lie. A disloyal and dangerous action stepping out of the protection of THE TRUTH, and with the potential for unknown disasters.

There is in our natures an inevitable conflict between HONESTY, and COMFORTABLE POLITENESS. The relative importance placed on these varies in different races, cultures, and classes in society. As a Headmaster, dealing with parents I had to adjust to such differences as:

Racial- The blunt forthrightness of Dutch people needed to be met with equal forthrightness. Maori instinctive politeness/ respect for authority needed to be met differently. Blunt questions would insult them, forcing them to hide resentment, and lie politely. And slam the door shut on further communication and co-operation.

Cultural- Parents in Poor and Rich areas required different approaches from their children. Using technical words/ exact definitions, effective with educated parents was a barrier with less educated, a potential insult. The different priorities of Male/ female parents had to be kept in mind. The instinctive protectiveness of mothers, good in itself, was a barrier to frank speaking that needed careful handling.

Religious- Under a rigidly enforced religious system people learn to cushion its harshness by polite lying to self/others. The system's conviction that it's SPIRITUALLY superior allowed

of the need for HONESTY, POLITENESS, etc are in fallen man HALF VIRTUE/ HALF VICE. God shows in 3:10 that N CHRIST, we're back on target, to BE, GROW INTO, and FUNCTION IN, Christ-likeness. The "HALF-VIRTUES" valued by different racial, religious, and cultural groups, are not lost in the process, it's the "HALF-VICE" aspects that are suppressed, leaving each individual's distinctives freed to function to make strong, harmonious, effective, and beautiful the body of Christ, Eph 4:15-16.

To see the TRUTH about ourselves or others is terrifying, and crippling, except in a context of LOVE. The fallen human mind instinctively flees from the light of truth, to hide in the darkness of self-deception. Only the Grace and Truth, LOVE that came in Christ, sets us free to come to the Light, and walk in the Light.

WITHOUT HONESTY/CONFORMITY TO TRUTH- Nothing is secure.

WITHOUT LOVE - Nothing is of any value.

It's speaking the TRUTH in LOVE that BUILDS the Body Of Christ.

3:10 HAVE PUT ON THE NEW MAN/Self- Neos- New in time, recently begun. The OLD dates from Adam, and birth; the New, only from Christ, and conversion. In Eph 2:15 the NEW man is Kainos= new and different, but that comes next in this sentence. WHICH IS Being RENEWED- Anakinoo- Ana-Again. Kainos= New and different from what we were when born into our natural life. The inward man is being RENEWED daily, 2 Cor 4:16. GN God its Creator is constantly renewing in His own image in order to bring you to a full knowledge of Himself. IN- Eis- Into. KNOWLEDGE - The fellowship/experience kind, as in 1:9.

The LAW was merely a restraint on the fallen Nature. In Redemption, we became in some sense "Partakers of the Divine Nature." In every Believer God has taken up His Creation purpose as a CONSTANTLY RENEWING EFFORT using all that surrounds us - Rom 8:28-30 to bring us into His likeness. Our visible behaviour increasingly reflecting His invisible character granted to us, 2 Pet 1:3-4; Rom 8:2.

AFTER/h THE IMAGE - #1:15. LXX uses it in Gen 1:26-27. God, in Redemption provides for/challenges us to take up His original purpose for man. We're a portrait of Christ in the process of being drawn, each intended to become Christ-like in their distinctive way.

PUT ON.. PUT OFF - Our essential, unseen self is CLOTHED by the behaviours we display. Just as we dress appropriately for our position, or the work we're called to do so our behaviour must be appropriate to our new status as God's children and servants. Christ is all in all to the Universe. We're to put HIM on,

RACIAL- GREEK/JEW- Racial pride is vital to the survival of any race.
RELIGIOUS- CIRCUMCISION/UNCIRCUMCISION- Source of Jewish PRIDE.
CULTURAL- BARBARIAN, SCYTHIAN- despised by Religious JEW, and cultured GREEK alike. Scythians were viewed as the wildest/most uncouth.
BOND/Slave- Slaves were viewed as THINGS. Aristotle defined a slave as a living tool, a tool as an inanimate slave. In the Church Slaves could be elders. A Roman lady Perpetua, and her slave Felicitas faced martyrdom holding hands.

CHRIST IS ALL AND is IN ALL - Literally All things, and in all, Christ is. The NEW DISTINCTIVE of Christians - CHRIST IN YOU - has rendered trivial all lesser distinctives of birth, culture, or achievement. We must hold them lightly and submit them to be used for the furtherance of CHRIST and CHRIST-LIKE NESS in all we meet. This requires us to drop all rights and prejudices. Christ must be ALL to us. Bishop Lightfoot wrote "It is CHRIST alone - not Christ, AND the Church, sacraments, repentance, goodness, prayers, sincerity, and charity - that matters.

IN US- CHRIST Himself is OUR NEW IDENTITY. We need to crowd out the old darkness of attitudes and habits by welcoming Christ into ALL our thoughts, plans, day-dreams, friendships, activities....

IN OTHERS- As we deal with other Christians, We are dealing with Christ in them. Whatever we say or do to them, we are DOING TO CHRIST.

Our NATURAL DISTINCTIVES of RACE, etc give people a sense of DENTITY, perhaps SUPERIORITY, cut them off from each other, pit US, against THEM, and are sources of pride, criticism, competition, jealousy, despising, etc. Distinctions of function remain in the church - Elder, Deacon, Evangelist etc and distinctions abolished in the Church such as Master and Servant still have a rightful place in the world. The nature/potential He gave each of us is for His purposes of grace, for the good of the "Body."

3:12-17 WHAT HE WILL FILL YOUR LIFE WITH

(PUT ON NEW- The Gospel is MORE POSITIVE than NEGATIVE - DON'T rush a new convert to PUT OFF ALL the old habits and friends- He'll be shivering naked and embarrassed, and feel Christ asks the impossible. EMPHASIZE the putting ON of NEW habits, interests, friends. They should be glad to get rid of the "Filthy Rags" of the old life that OFFEND US. But, the "Filthy rags" the Bible talks of are OURS - the

HOLY- #1:22 It jars God when we choose not to act in Holiness. BELOVED/ Dearly loved- Agapao- from Agape, Jn 3:16 love/. BOWELS OF MERCIES/ Compassion- Splanchnon- Bowels. Used literally in Acts 1:18. Concern for others shown by feeling churned up inside. KINDNESS - Oiktimos- Household mercies, as in "Father of MERCIES," 2 Cor 1:3. Loving forethought and care for those of the household.

HUMBLENESS/Humility- Lowliness of mind. Recognising that God values us ALL, has loving, disciplining care for all. An awareness of our unworthiness before God, and our dependence on His Grace. Remembering what His Grace has made us in Christ saves us from self-rejection or a poor self-image, and moves us to appreciate the rights and value of others. MEEKNESS/ Gentleness- "An in-worked grace of the soul whereby the believer accepts what God gives as good, and what man gives as being under God's good hand and beneficial for the soul even if unpleasant." The Godless/carnal assume that MEEKNESS is either unawareness, or cowardice. (Meekness is almost unaware of such verdicts!)

Our Lord, conscious of the angelic legions at His call, was meek. Meekness is strength under control, able to deny self and to walk in grace towards all men. A fruit of the Spirit that enables a believer to place the will of God before personal rights. It's the opposite of rudeness, self-interest and self-assertiveness, and the pride that's concerned with being treated in ways that pander to it. Because it's not occupied with self, meekness avoids being too depressed or exhilarated by circumstances.

LONGSUFFERING/Patience- #1:11. LOVE, JOY, PEACE are attractive but soon wither unless we welcome this fruit of the Spirit.

3:13 FORBEARING/Bear with- Essential when dealing with those whose backgrounds and basic assumptions differ from our own. Without it misunderstandings, mutual hurts, etc are inevitable. ONE ANOTHER/Each other- The need/potential offence is mutual. Remembering this helps us to act more wisely and lovingly.

FORGIVING/Forgive- Charizomai- Charis= Grace. To bestow a favour unconditionally, show Grace towards. IF ANY HAVE A QUARREL- Whenever cause for offence or complaint occurs. Whatever grievances you may have AGAINST ANY/one another- As 3:9. Any real or imagined injury, differences of doctrine, speech or behaviour which might be seen as offensive.

perfect unity- Living Bible Most of all let love guide your life, for then the whole church will stay together in perfect harmony. Even great virtues need love to keep them in their proper place and proportion, Gnostics said KNOWLEDGE was the bond of perfection. Paul says LOVE is. LOVE is the cover-all that keeps us dean, dry, and tidy through any storm. Unforgiven things are loose ends flapping around to trip us up- or rips that give embarrassing glimpses of what's beneath the surface in our life!

GOD LOVES YOU - STEP OUT DRESSED IN HIS LOVE, AND SHOW IT TO OTHERS. "God is LOVE, Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in Him," 1 Jn 4:16. Two Godly "brethren," George Mueller and Harold St John, both spoke of soaking themselves in God's Love for a half hour before facing each day - That should make us easier to live with.

3:15 LET- It's not forced or unnatural growth. It's allowing what God is doing within us to show. Rather like letting a seed or bulb sprout grow, flower, and possibly fruit, revealing what was in it, awaiting the chance to be LET out, by our planting it appropriately.

PEACE- As 1:2. OF GOD/Christ- The Source, Grounds, and Sustainer of that Peace. FAITH, not FEAR or FLESH, enables this. If the FLESH rules, we are slaves of our feelings. If FEAR rules, we are slaves of our worries. If we place all things in our Lord's hands and rest in HIM, His peace rules within, and we can live at peace with those around, not goaded into desperate attacks on them. See Phil 4:1-9.

RULE - Brabeuo- To act as umpire, arbitrate, as a continuous action. An Umpire enables a game to go as well as possible. Christ's rulings settle offences fairly, enabling them to be forgotten. In Phil 4:6-7 God's PEACE garrisons our hearts, when we place ourselves and all our cares in His hands. Here it RULES all our relationships with our fellow believers, when we place them into His hands, and let Him have His way. His Peace is to have the last word. IN YOUR HEARTS- Heart peace is a treasure. The Peace He has left us rests in doing the Father's will, and loving our fellow Believers. **17

TO THE WHICH YE ALSO ARE CALLED IN ONE BODY/since as members of one body you were called to peace- A healthy body is one in which all the members are at peace, acting in harmony with one another. EM there is a barren kind of peace obtained by withdrawing into isolation- God's will is the fruitful peace of body-life lived in love.

sing about. God's Spirit lifts us out of the rut of SELF if we let Him. LOVE, JOY, etc come in. Don't shut Him out of any part of your life.)

3:16 LET THE WORD OF CHRIST- The message, from, and about Him. DWELL IN- Ennio- Settle down and be at home in you. In Jn 15:1-11 this is the first half of our "Abiding in Christ," the second half is our ASKING in Christ's Name, and living in obedience to the directions He gives. God's Words need to be a living permanent force within us. They need to be our food, and joy, Jer 15:16.

This verse, being so like Eph 5:18-20 reminds us that Bible study as a self-righteous act is deadening, It's the Holy Spirit who reveals Christ to us and brings us into fellowship with Him, as we read. Equally, emotional spiritual experiences that don't spring from/ conform to the Word of God, are spiritual candy-floss. The more Scripture lives in us/ we live in Scripture, the more naturally our whole life is open to/ filled by the Spirit, and we rejoice within and with others.

Footnote **17 Let God's Peace rule, let dwell, do, submit, love, obey, do not provoke, obey, give, continue, walk are in the present tense. It's moment by moment we have the chances to learn to do and be Christlike, to fellowship/rejoice in each other, and in the Lord Himself.

Memorising Scripture/ thinking about what we read is vital. Translations, books, tapes, and videos are fine. BUT it's only as we make the effort to make Scripture our own, stocking the shelves of our minds with stores of spiritual food, that we'll be ready to take the opportunities to speak and act for our Lord.

RICHLY- Abundantly. It's message enriches us when we let God's Word have its right place in our lives, to teach and challenge us. IN ALL WISDOM- As 1:9. God's WORD provides the inspiration to sing, and the content to be sung, and WISDOM to choose what to sing about.

TEACHING/as you teach- Conveying INTELLECTUAL content, information. ADMONISHING/Admonish- Appealing to THE WILL, as "Let's thank God for that. Let's do what God says." Having our minds informed is never enough we need to be encouraged into DOING what we've LEARN'T. ONE ANOTHER- It's Reciprocal, we always affect each other.

SINGING WITH GRACE/Gratitude IN YOUR HEARTS- Singing not as a formal religious duty, or proclamation of faith, but expressing our hearts' thanks, and promoting thankfulness by what we choose to sing of. Blessings, like house plants, WITHER if you IGNORE them.

God to whom they sang. In NT these, sometimes called "Kantos"=NEW, different, Rev 5:3, 9, etc are the only songs mentioned. PSALMS, HYMNS, SPIRITUAL SONGS aren't clearly distinguished, but seem to run from the solemn and formal, to the less so - something for every mood and situation.

SINGING/as you sing- Ado- To sing an ode Singing confesses/ expresses beliefs, emotions, and attitudes. Any vigour or beauty of words or tune enhances these, and makes them memorable. Singing thoughtfully and heartily in the company of those who share them, further reinforces the effect, and each time we sing it again, the same effect is more easily and strongly experienced. Those saved by the Grace of God have much to sing about. ALL REVIVALS have sprung from a return to God's Word, and have set people SINGING the praises of God, and His Salvation, in hymns and sacred songs drawn from their experience of Scripture Truth. Not all such are of equal value, but time weeds them out. The "Believers Hymn book," lists 111 Hymns written by those involved in the "NT CHURCH /BRETHREN Revival, 49 of these being familiar to me.

Hymns sung move Hearts and wills to thanksgiving, praise and worship. Others arouse hopes and desires for the blessings God offers, or challenge us to obedience. TWO things are vital:

(a) A tune people ENJOY singing - and musical taste varies over the years. Unless it's similar in form to the better current songs of the world, it will not be readily usable by young people or recent converts. (b) Words which flow well, and convey something worthwhile. Tune and words need to blend into an effective whole. Young people have to make an effort to get into the spirit of traditional hymns, but the effort is well repaid if the hymns have good doctrinal and devotional content. Sadly, much recent material, even if selected from Scripture, has no distinctive Christian value or content. It could be sung sincerely by a Jew, a Moslem, or a devotee of "Lord" Krishna.

In Church fellowship, Singing is very important - IT'S THE ONLY CORPORATE ACTIVITY IN A NT STYLE CHURCH - all else is "One at a time," 1 Cor 14:31. All ages and musical tastes should be considered, and we should all make the effort to sing heartily others' favourites.

Singing on one's own, like our praying, should be a NATURAL expression of our joy in the Lord, personal hopes, fears etc. If the tune of one of the more respectable current songs is running in your mind, harness it for Christ by putting your own words to it. Perhaps the greatest virtue of many modern spiritual songs is that they're the kind of thing anyone could make up for themselves. Why not do it.

Picture Theatres." She stood up and said out loud. "If we're not supposed to PRAY in this place, WHAT ARE WE DOING HERE? I'm going home, and so are you." - That's being BIBLICAL!

BY/through HIM- All our doing/saying is to be an outworking of the indwelling, all-providing Christ, manifesting Him, to God's glory. And as 3:23 says Do it HEARTILY - Put all you've got into it. Eating/ drinking, Working/ playing, Witnessing/ worshipping. Don't tip-toe through life, afraid somebody will NOTICE you - Do ALL to the Glory of God! About 100 years ago at a Church Picnic, an Anglican Bishop joined the young men at CRICKET. Afterwards a solemn Christian asked in shocked tones "If the LORD had RETURNED and found YOU with a Cricket bat in your hand, WHAT WOULD YOU HAVE DONE?" He replied "TRIED TO HIT THE NEXT BALL FOR SIX!" That's being BIBLICAL!

Because you and I are IN CHRIST, and CHRIST in us, we of all people can LIVE HEARTILY, with the fewest inhibitions - We've ONLY ONE QUESTION to ask - Is this THOUGHT, FEELING, WORD, ACTION something I can do IN FELLOWSHIP WITH THE LORD JESUS, TO THE GLORY OF GOD? Something I can ASK HIM TO BLESS beforehand/ GIVE THANKS TO GOD FOR, afterwards? That way we can LIVE life to the FULL, for God. He's given us ALL things to enjoy with Him, 1 Tim 6:17-19, 4:1-5 - Everything that has been surrendered to Him, and He has deansed and given back to us

3:18-21 Living Heartily for God in HOME LIFE

(The practical application starts at the heart of social life and brings harmony and joy there See Eph 5:22-6:3; 1 Pet 3:1-7; 1 Tim 2:8-15; Titus 2:1-6.

God addresses each directly. He honours them with the instruction and responsibility to carry it out. He doesn't tell anyone to make others obey God - each has enough to do in training themselves! That the other party or parties are not living up to God's standards at the moment, or are totally Godless, makes no difference. Submit, Love, Obey, Not Provoke, are unqualified commands.)

3:18 WIVES - Gune- Woman, wife. Why FIRST? We're not old, but she's generally the heart of the home, largely responsible for the QUALITY of home life, which centres around her. Her intelligent and loving care builds up her household, Prov 14:1 making the corporate life worthwhile. ALL suffer if a family comes unstuck, but the wife has the most to lose, if, as often, she has put the most into it. It's usually the wife who first looks for help if things go wrong.

the general principle "All are to SUBMIT to each other out of reverence to Christ," Eph 5:21. As God wants her husband to take responsibility for the family unit, and lead it, he must "Submit" to that role, and she must support him in it. HELPMEE T, Gen 2= the one who alone is adequate to HELP her man to understand each situation, help him to make up his mind, help him to stick to it, help him to be strong, and lead. The tense implies persistent effort.

Head-on confrontation is mutually destructive. Given time, a husband's love may well move him to do what his wife wants. Trying to "fast tack" it by showing him he's a fool not to do it her way beforehand, or crowing over him when he comes to see it her way, is unhelpful. A wife needs her husband's LOVE, more than she needs to humiliate him, by showing her cultural, spiritual or intellectual superiority. If she wants a confident, strong and capable husband to share love and life with she has to BUILD one.

YOUR OWN HUSBANDS - Not men in general. AS IT IS FITTING/fit- Appropriate, or CONVENIENT, Eph 5:24, Phil 8 IN THE LORD - The Christian wife's relationship with her husband is to be an expression of her life in Christ.

3:19 HUSBANDS LOVE - #1:4- self-sacrificing loving care. The Christian HUSBAND is to "Submit" to his role, and take responsibility to LEAD, in self-sacrificing LOVING CONCERN for the good of wife and family. He is answerable to God for the family - Gen 3 rules out forever man's hiding behind his wife by saying "She told me to do it." AND answerable to God for loving His wife. "The greatest thing any man can do for his children, is to love their Mother."

The word HUSBAND sums up his role as responsible for "husbanding" his wife and family with thoughtful loving care. That idea came into English from the Christian Gospel. The Greek lacked the idea, and I'm told the Pre-Christian Anglo Saxon terms for husband and wife were LORD = LOAF GUARD, LADY = LOAF MAKE R.

Mutual support in Biblical roles is important. To marry a man you could not respect and follow, or a woman who does not help you to be a Christlike leader, is asking for trouble. BOTH wife and husband are to concentrate on what THEY THEMSELVES must BE and GIVE IN the Marriage, not what they must GET OUT OF IT - or they'll get out. (Marriage is a CASSE ROLE - what you get OUT of it, Depends on WHAT YOU'VE PUT INTO IT!)

LOVE - #1:4. YOUR WIVES - Love his own wife/Submit to own husband, persistently. Christ took up the word Agape, lived it, and showed its potential. We, too, have a potential that can never be realised until Christ takes us up.

3:20 CHILDREN- Teknon- From Tikto to beget, bear- Their life being derived from the parents establishes the parental role of upbringing, training and nurturing to bring that life to maturity. They never cease to be Teknon so mutual responsibilities never cease, but these instructions apply directly to the stage when they're living at home under our care. As Huios/ adult sons/ daughters, hopefully they'll walk with God, in fellowship with us, Rom 8:14.

OBEY - Hupakouo- To listen under, allow self to be trained up by. Continue obeying persistently. God gave children parents to protect them/ train them, but that's ineffective unless parents are habitually obeyed. (God's Fatherly role is ineffective unless we obey.) By PLAYING THEIR OWN ROLES CORRECTLY in their behaviour to one another, parents make such obedience possible and natural.

PARENTS- PLURAL- Don't make their obedience impossible by disagreeing. Our parenting was helped by the teaching of an elder, Silas Stedman', about the Parents having two powers over their children: AUTHORITY, all important in infancy, but steadily reduced as adolescence approaches. INFLUENCE which expands to fill the gap Authority must be used well during the critical early years, so that parents being respected and loved lays a sound basis for life-long influence.

IN ALL THINGS/everything WELL PLEASING/pleases- ACCEPTABLE, As Rom 12:1. Both Parent and Child can bring pleasure to God in this. THE LORD - The title is a reminder that these are ORDERS, not advice.

3:21 FATHERS- Singled out as Head of house, and as they usually spend less time with the children, are likely to be less sympathetic and realistic. One evening meal, having been wearied with the endless childishness of my young school class, I burst out at my son's playing with his food "Stop being so childish!" My wife chuckled "If they can't be CHILDish at 2 years of age, when can they be?" DON'T EMBITTER- To excite, provoke. Parents must correct, redirect and train children. Being young, everything sweeps them off their feet this way and that. It's up to parents to be under better control, avoid over-reacting, and choose a wise time to intervene to maximum advantage. If they're over-excited/ angry/ discouraged, we need to quieten the situation down, and deal with the problem later. Having dealt with it, BURY it- like dead fish, it's better left buried!

LEST THEY /or they will BE DISCOURAGED- The Greek word means that the child feels he can never do anything right, so gives up trying. JBP Don't over-

If we constantly damp initiative, at home/ in the Assembly it's unfair to complain later that they lack initiative. We need to encourage children to be full of ideas and suggestions, be quick to welcome SOME of them, and not JUMP ON any of them with hob-nailed boots! Even at their rash worst a teenager's words or actions, answered with quiet heart concern and intelligent reasoning, will help them to see things as they are/ make wiser decisions. George MacDonald wrote "God is a good Father, easy to please, but hard to satisfy." We must never punish angrily, unjustly, or without explanation, and should always be quick to show appreciation.

Note how roles/ responsibilities lock together to make a strong/ happy whole. Would we be happy if the OTHERS at home lived the way it says we should live here, and in other Scriptures? Is THEIR attitude and behaviour OUR responsibility?

3:22-4:1 Living Heartily for God at WORK

3:22 SERVANTS/Slaves- Doulos- Being such a SERVANT is part of what man was made for. Used in LXX Adam put into Eden to DRESS it= Serve it as a slave, as well as to study it, and be Lord over it. Any good gardener or farmer will know all three roles. Man was under God's orders until he rebelled, and became the slave of his own desires, "He that sins is the SLAVE of sin," Jn 8:34. The Gospel remedy for slaves was not rebellion, but to start working for the PERFECT MASTER, as Paul himself delighted to do. The Master's status determined that of his slave. The slave of an Emperor might rule over Kings - Joseph, Daniel.

OBEY IN ALL THINGS/everything- As 3:22 MASTERS- Kurios- A Lord, one who exercises power. ACCORDING TO THE FLESH/earthly- Their Masters had authority over their life here on earth, nothing more. Everyone was urged to remain at his calling "WITH THE LORD," 1 Cor 7:20-24.

NOT WITH EYE SERVICE/not only when their eye is on you- JBP Not with the idea of currying favour but as a sincere expression of your devotion to God. AS MEN-PLEASERS/To win their favour. BUT IN SINGLENESS /sincerity- Simplicity, sincerity. Not having hidden motives, or being distracted by having two goals in mind, Jas 1:8, Abraham's servant, unwilling to eat until errand told, Gen 24:33 OF HEART AND FEAR OF GOD/reverence for the Lord- Their eye on Him.

real/imagined rights and wrongs, demands for more pay, etc demeans any man. It's been obvious at times that a servant/slave is freer than his tyrant/Master who is the slave of his own passions and whims. The external status is less important than the internal state.

AS TO/working for THE LORD, NOT MEN- Being a factory hand/office drudge/housewife tied to baby care or being crippled/chronically helplessly ill, they say is DE-HUMANISING, Humiliating, Degrading. Certainly BEING A SLAVE in Paul's time WAS. But in ALL those situations, or worse ones, a Christian can lift his eyes to his LORD, and say "I'm doing this, LIKE THIS, to please you, please help me." And Christ within, by His Holy Spirit, will enable him to DO IT WELL. At every moment "The Lord is at hand," seeing our situation, ready to help us be Christ-like in it. And when He Comes, at His Judgment Seat, you and I receive from His hands what we've done in these frail bodies, whether GOOD, or BAD, 2 Cor 5:9-10. Anything done in His Name/strength will be gold, silver, jewels, to His glory and ours, for ever 1 Cor 3:10-16.

Footnote **18 We must be less concerned with what we GET OUT OF IT, than how well we do the work. About thirty years back the boss of a Christchurch timber-yard, walked over to his Yardman and said "Harry, How is it that when I give you orders you don't complain and argue like the others do?" He replied "Well you see, I'm not really working for YOU, the Boss I'm working for is in heaven.." His earthly Boss stopped him and said "Yeah, I thought that was it, but spare us the sermon," and hurried off. The yardman was being Biblical.

History apparently records that even when The Roman Empire was trying to stamp out Christianity, and it was A CRIMINAL OFFENCE TO BE A CHRISTIAN, Auctioneers at the slave markets could get a better price for a slave by SAYING THAT HE WAS A CHRISTIAN.

There's a story of a young builder working for a wealthy man, set the task of building a fine home. He was about to get married himself, and knowing he could never afford such a house, showed his resentment at the unfairness of life, by taking all the short cuts he could, but not letting the shoddy work be too obvious. And when it was done - he was GIVEN it to be his own home, and had to LIVE with what he'd BUILT. YOU and I will live eternally in what we BUILD HERE. LET'S BUILD JOY FOR OURSELVES - JOY FOR THE LORD! AMEN!

3:24 KNOWING/Since you know- #2:1.- Seeing, understanding. THAT OF/from THE LORD YOU WILL RECEIVE THE REWARD - That which is given back in return. JBP Knowing that your real reward, a Heavenly one, will come from

3:25 HE THAT DOETH/Anyone who does WRONG- The warning is directed at the slave, but leads on to the obligation of the master that follows. SHALL RECEIVE/be repaid FOR THE WRONG WHICH HE HATH DONE/his wrong.

NO RESPECT OF PERSONS/Favouritism- The fault of one who recognises the person dealt with as being a personal friend/member of a particular group in society, and so treats them differently from what the circumstances of the case warrants. GN God judges every one by the same standard. God does have respectful regard to, and affection towards certain behaviours, and the people behaving in that way, but God uses the same yardstick in dealing with everyone. God doesn't favour the slave to offset the world favouring the master.

As a SS Teacher I had to battle with the tendency to be thrilled, and show it, when bright responsive children joined, and only mildly appreciative when duller, less showy ones did.

4:1 MASTERS- As 3:22 We all have shop assistants etc working for us. GIVE/provide- Be giving/providing continually and persistently. UNTO YOUR SERVANTS/slaves THAT WHICH IS JUST/right- The Evangelical Revival in England ended Slavery and improved working conditions. That was a right expression of the new life of converted Masters. AND EQUAL/fair- Be fair and just in the way you treat your slaves. God hates the oppression of the poor, Jas 5:1-4.

KNOWING/because you know- #2:1. Not a sentimental/emotional appeal - a simple, business-like reminder to do what is right and fair. A MASTER IN HEAVEN- We all must deal with Him. Let's deal justly and fairly with all who work for us, now, as He does, and will.

4:2-6 Living Heartily for God - in other aspects

(First of all PRAY a lot. Leaders need our prayers. They've a long way to fall - and any failure or disgrace will be BIG.)

4:2 CONTINUE/Devote yourselves- Literally "Be strong towards," Expect praying to require a persistent effort. "We will give ourselves CONTINUALLY to prayer," Acts 6:4. IN PRAYER- WE Vine in his Expository Dictionary reminds us that in the NT prayer is usually addressed to the Father in Heaven, but to the Son at His right hand in Acts 7:59, 2 Cor 12:8, never to Holy Spirit who is

helpers - and in a sense all preachers in all time. Pray for preachers, speak well of them if you want others to benefit from their preaching. Billy Bray told a congregation known for being critics they had less sense than his ducks - which concentrated on the grain thrown to them, and ignored the chaff!

THAT GOD WOULD/may OPEN- If we make it OUR business to open doors- the action may be timely, but without prayer, may be the first step towards self-motivated, self-reliant service in that sphere. A DOOR OF UTTERANCE- GN God will give us a good opportunity to preach his message. For "Open door," see 1 Cor 16:9; 2 Cor 2:12; Rev 3:8.

TO SPEAK/proclaim- Laleo- To put into words. THE MYSTERY- As 1:26-27. Paul was committed to preaching that newly-revealed secret. OF CHRIST FOR WHICH I AM IN BONDS/chains- Paul was called to proclaim that Gentiles and Jews alike who responded to the Gospel became God's people. He was imprisoned for preaching that. It provoked Jewish opposition, and made it impossible for Christians to shelter with them under the legal provision of an "Approved religion." If he'd been content to preach a Judaic Gospel he'd still have been free. Yet even imprisonment furthered the Gospel, Phil 1:12-13.

MAY MAKE IT MANIFEST/proclaim it clearly- Phaneroo- As in 1:26 AS I OUGHT/should- Dei- It is necessary, one must, ought.

4:5 WALK IN WISDOM/Be wise (continually) TOWARDS THEM THAT ARE WITHOUT/outside- Those who are not Believers. I have been rebuked for calling the unsaved "Outsiders" but not to do so denies the truth of their lost state, Eph 2:12. If we are true to the Lord they will see US as "Outsiders" - outside the cosy fellowship of the world. And those who object to seeing them as God does, as being "Outside" the fellowship of His people can hardly call them to repent of their rebellion against God, confess and forsake their sins, and receive Christ as their Saviour. We need to be VISIBLY DIFFERENT from the unsaved around us - "The Only Christ this world can see, Is Christ in you, and Christ in me."

REDEEMING/making the most of- Exagorazo- To buy out of the market, Agora. So competitive public action- purposeful, and costly, not something that happens as we drift along. The Lord REDEEMED us, Gal 3:13. We're to REDEEM the time, making the most of the opportunities that come, in the face of all things bidding for our time.

THE TIME/every opportunity- Kairos- Due measure, proportion, or season. As with seasonal activity in the garden - acting seasonably! This is the SEASON for WITNESS - sowing Gospel seed and reaping the harvest. Acts 1:8. We're

how to give the right answer to everyone. Witty, interesting, pointed, not insipid or dull. Salt gives flavour to the discourse, and it preserves from corruption and renders wholesome. The Lord gave FIRST the Grace "Neither do I condemn thee," then the salt "Sin no more."

THAT YE MIGHT KNOW- #2:1. -, understand and master the skill of, 2:1. HOW YE OUGHT/how to- As 4:4. ANSWER- How to respond to each person. A Ready answer, not a smart one. Our Lord answered the questioning mind/heart of the person, rather than the verbal form of the question. Note the attitude needed 2 Tim 2:23-26 EVERYMAN/Everyone- the whole range of people, individually, appropriate to the nature and circumstances of each individual.

4: 7-15 OPE N-HEARTED GREE TINGS

Promoting Human Fellowship Between Believers. The warmth of informal fellowship in friendly greetings has its place in God's Word alongside the heights of Eternal Truth, of Ch 1, the careful discrimination between truth and error, of Ch 2, and the principles and practices of Triumphant Christian living of Ch 3 There's no need to be more pious than Paul was in such matters - God is named 5x only in this chapter, in contrast to being named 20x in 1:1-17. Simply keeping in touch with His friends, and theirs, is valued/valuable - Speaking the truth in love, about sorrows and joys, zeal, and hesitating service.

4:7-9 ALL MY STATE/The news about me- ALL, not a Public Relations Promotion selection, but fellowship based on openness and shared knowledge, and mutual appreciation of fellowship in Christ - as BELOVED BROTHERS, FAITHFUL SERVANTS, FELLOW-PRISONERS, FELLOW-WORKERS, See Epaphroditus, Phil 2:25

ALL THINGS- Again note the openness that encourages fellowship. Paul sets an example of speaking well of people, as Christ sees them, and they want to be. The news he shares is aimed at COMFORTING/Encouraging all concerned, no gossip, flattery, innuendo or slander to do the Devil's work of discouraging and dividing.

PRAYERS- as 4:2.

STAND PERFECT/firm- as in 1:28 As men of ripe character and firm conviction as to everything that is God's will. COMPLETE/Assured- Pleroo- As in 2:10. IN ALL THE WILL OF GOD- As 1:1.

4:14-15 LUKE PHYSICIAN/The Doctor- Iatros- Related to laomai= to heal.

THE CHURCH IN HIS/her HOUSE - No specific Church BUILDINGS are mentioned in Roman Empire before third century. First recognition of Christian groups being as "Collegia= Burial societies," which gave the right to meet at times - and incidentally worship.

4:16 READ- Anaginosko- To know certainly, again. Ana= again Ginosko= personal knowledge. A personal letter brings a person to our knowledge again, and again, as we read it. Reading God's Word/ personal message to us, strengthens and renews our fellowship with Him.

CAUSE THAT IT BE/see that it is READ- Paul is not only writing/ offering personal fellowship, but encouraging fellowship between them in the treasures of God's truth. Nothing hidden, no favoured few, no divisive affection. Contrast the "Mystery religions," where people paid dearly/ worked hard for the privilege of the supposed superior knowledge it gave! Should we BUY OUR WAY into the mysteries/ secrets of "Successful Christian Living" seminars? 2 Cor 11:7.

AND THAT YE LIKEWISE /you in turn READ THE EPISTLE TO LAODICEA- The letter left at Laodicea could possibly be our Ephesians written as a circular letter to the Asian cities. But there may well have been a letter sent to Laodicea that was not needed for Scripture. Reading the letters sent to each other would make it clear that Paul was speaking openly and honestly, and the more widely known the contents were the less easily they could be ignored.)

4:17 THE MINISTRY/Work- Diakonia- WHICH THOU HAST/you have RECEIVED- Paralambano- To receive alongside as 2:6. The Lord Himself put the gift into his hand - it was given by One who Knew him, Knew what he could/should be and do with it. Knew what the gift was, knew what it was for, and Archippus knew who was giving it. Work that comes OUR way in the service of the Lord/ His people isn't something which just happens, and can

reminder of all the earthly limitations under which he ministered and for which he coveted fellowship in prayer.

GRACE - Don't get disgruntled when being a Christian HURTS, and say "It's all right for PAUL to talk, he hadn't got MY CIRCUMSTANCES to put up with!" Paul hadn't, but when signing this letter to us a chain round his wrist probably clanked. Roman Prisons were well built - solid, cold stone, little light, air, blankets, or food, or ANYTHING. And when he was taken out of prison. It would be to face the Emperor NERO, 2 Tim 4:16-18 - NOT a pleasant prospect! WE, have little reason to grumble.

GRACE IS GOD'S ANSWER TO OUR EVERY NEED, IT'S THRONE ALWAYS OPEN TO US, Heb 4:14-16. GRACE enables us to walk in fellowship with God, who loves us, and with fellow-Believers given to us to love, cleansed of all sin and stain by the precious blood of Christ, 1 Jn 1:7.

GRACE will bring us to see Our Saviour's Face in GLORY, made like Him. Overflowing with mutual JOY, Jude 24-25 AMEN! "Blessed be the Name of the LORD!"

APPENDIX Satanic opposition to the Gospel takes three forms:

(1) PERSECUTION - With the danger of human failure through cowardice.

(2) BAITED HOOKS - Tempting our desires - Jas 1:14-15. 1 Tim 6:6-10, with the danger of our responding "It's MY life I'll please myself."

of Him and His provision.

2:11-15 The CROSS made total provision to deal with the FLESH, the LAW, and EVIL POWERS- Yet Baptism is perverted into a replacement for Circumcision, Law-keeping replaces Grace, and Magic such as the Sign of the Cross, Holy Water, Lifting of curses etc are provided.

2:16-17 Food laws, Holy Days, Sabbaths, are empty shadows to be ignored.

2:18-19 Focussing attention on imagined or real Spiritual Hierarchies, Angelic or Human, even if intended to help us spiritually, in fact cut us off from Christ.

In a corrupt Eastern Court, relatives and court favourites of the Emperor could be cajoled or bribed into gaining favours. The Gnostics imagined a hierarchy of "Angelic powers" and human Spirits initiated into higher mysteries. Their writings discovered at Nag Hamada, etc, claimed that Mary Magdalene stood higher than the Apostles.

This is echoed in less bizarre form by the RC church's hierarchy of interceding Saints, headed by the Virgin Mary. ~~MMM~~ My Military Missal, Authorised by Cardinal Gilroy, 8.12.1942 P 85 "I Believe that my salvation depends upon Mary's mediation in union with Christ because of her exalted position as Mediatrix of all Grace, and nearness to her Divine Son." How foolish/inefficient for our purposes, and insulting to God, who hears all, for us to whisper requests to lesser beings of imagined greater sympathy/interest.

Others are discouraged from personal Bible searching, or wide reading, and told to rely on one "Prophet" or Preacher who stands between them and God. Or taught they must depend on their Priest/Pastor to pray for them, take curses off/bring blessings on them, tell them what to do etc. The worldly-wise "Christian" shops around to find the "Christian Guru" who best gives him, in Christ's name, a sense of security, or will let him indulge in doing what he wishes to do

2:20-23 Being linked with Christ crucified/risen, means we're DEAD to the things of this world, including RELIGIOUS rules. The demonic destructive idea that frustrating the body's desire for food and marriage, 1 Tim 4:1-5, was essential to hdiiness came into the Church when men like Jerome, who believed Buddha was virgin-born, defeated the Mazdean-Bhuddist Manichean heresy by Christianising most of its ideas. The Mazdean Izeshne Sacrifice offered for the living and dead, where the Priest took bread and wine, but the laity only

robbed of the joy of their rightful privileges in Christ, and much of their service disqualified.

It's natural to wish we lived in NT times, Hearing Jesus/His Prophets, REVEAL NEW TRUTH/work Miracles to prove God had sent them. It's Blasphemous Presumption/ Satanic "Angel of light" deception to CLAIM new revelations supported like the NT ones, by Miracles, Heb 21-4.

The RC Church has always claimed to be "Charismatic," authorised by its miracles to TEACH NEW DOCTRINE. The result is a RELIGIOUS SYSTEM which, it claims, will enable its followers to get to Heaven.

MMMTHE SACRIFICE OF THE MASS. P 11 Priest kisses altar and says "We beseech Thee O Lord, by the merits of thy Saints whose relics are here, and of all the saints, to graciously pardon all my sins. Amen. P 48 Those who say AMEN sincerely to the prayer after Mass, earn 10yrs Indulgence= 10 yrs less in "Purgatory," and an extra 7 years by saying "Have mercy on us" 3 times. P 67 After receiving the communion wafer "Jesus remains within you for at least 15 minutes."

P 103-105 list prayers which said sincerely earn indulgence from Purgatory- "My Jesus have mercy," 300 days; "O most Sacred heart of Jesus," 300 days; "Mother of mercy pray for us," 300 days etc.

The CREE D section of MMM includes - "I believe that:

P 81 "The Catholic Church is the only living, infallible guide that can lead me to eternal life." P 90 "that Jesus instituted PENANCE for the purpose of forgiving sins committed after Baptism." P 93 "that I shall be sent to heaven or hell, or temporarily to purgatory, according to my conduct in this life." P 89 "I believe that I am a Christian because I have been christened." "I believe that through Confirmation we receive the Holy Spirit..." [The Anglican Prayer Book has the christened infant born again, made an inheritor of the Kingdom, having, in the person of his God-parent, renounced Satan and his works, and committed himself to live to the Glory of God.]

THE INTENTION IS WELL-MEANING- Our Lord loves and values little children. Parental desire to bring them to Him in dedication/prayer is right, and pleasing to the Lord. The Church's desire to see them saved is good. BUT Circumcision and its Covenant was only a SHADOW of the Spiritual reality provided now in Christ. CHRISTENING, as a religious rite modelled on Circumcision, is only the presumptuous shadow of a shadow banished, in the light of the Spiritual

excuse for the sincere and earnest performance of the spiritual charade of Christening, the equally sincere and earnest Evangelical charade of pushing child or adult through a conversion/ commitment-to-Christ ritual, or a Charismatic enthusiast putting them through the outward form of the so-called baptism of the Spirit, proved by speaking in tongues. A sad memorial stands in Loanda, Angola - The stone throne where the Bishop sat and christened the long lines of slaves as they filed into the slave-ships, claiming to save SOULS while enslaving minds, hearts and bodies.

The REFORMED/ PRESBYTERIAN, and EXCLUSIVE BRETHREN church tradition makes no claim that the child is at the moment of "Baptism" born again. But IN PRACTICE what they claim is little different from the above. In a recent book on the subject it was stated that just as when parents who were USA citizens registered their baby as a USA citizen, and he remained one unless as an adult he repudiated that citizenship. So when the parents were Christians and they entered their baby into a covenant relationship with God, by "Infant Baptism" he automatically remained in that saving covenant relationship, UNLESS HE ACTIVELY RENOUNCED IT!

WE EVANGELICALS MAY BE EQUALLY GUILTY BY PUTTING ENQUIRERS MECHANICALLY THROUGH A SERIES OF QUESTIONS WITH READY-MADE ANSWERS, AND REGARDING THAT AS ASSURING THEM OF SALVATION. William McDonald wisely wrote:- As a safeguard, when helping someone to receive Christ as their Saviour, always ask questions which require thought and must be answered in the enquirer's own words. Their saying "Yes" to set questions may be thoughtlessly given to please you, or escape from you.

The Papacy was a most effective religious system for Christianising and controlling nations, as long as its claim to be the only channel of God's blessing and salvation was believed. The Gospel of Jn 1:12-13; 3:1-16; Rom 10:9, etc was suppressed for 750 years until 1965 because until then RC Laity were forbidden the Bible, and services were in Latin. NO RELIGIOUS SYSTEM HAS SUCH POWER TODAY, but something of the same spirit, and effect, is seen wherever people put supposed ANGELS/ MESSENGERS OF GOD between them and CHRIST/ the written Word of God.

Modern "PROPHETS" form enslaved "Christian Communities," promising followers wealth, and long life without sickness. Televangelists go to prison for misusing \$Thousands. But whatever the follies and distractions, Christ is preached and we rejoice that some will hear His voice, and be saved, Phil 1:15-18. While our joining them in following their Leaders, rather than God,

continually.

The full and final Salvation in Christ, offered freely as a gift, is a Mansion in which men cease to be themselves, and become Christ-like. Instead of rejoicing in it as a finished work, Satanic born Human Pride/ Individualism wants to show its "Do it Yourself" skills by making "improvements," to suit its tastes and comfort. OR Pull it into pieces, re-using Biblical Stoicheoin, (2:8) and those of worldly religion to set up a religious system that suits them better.

The greed, pride, and tinsel of MADE UP/Plastos/plastic Gospels used to exploit men, 2 Pet 2:3, obviously does not "Hold the Head." But neither does "We've maintained a testimony for 60 years with translation, hymn books, form of service unchanged." Years ago a Godly brother warned "At first we gladly transformed our lives because we loved the Lord, but soon we find we're loving ourselves because we do those things." Neither does the desire to be different from other churches, nor the desire to be like them, come from the Head.

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(Criticisms, Corrections & Additions are welcomed. Please feel free to use this material in any way you wish, to the glory of God.)

Other booklets:

Listening to the Lord- I & II Kings; Habakkuk, Ruth, Haggai; Matthew, Romans I & II Corinthians; I & II Thessalonians; 2 Peter & Jude; Revelation.

Looking to the Word- Abortion Protests & Lessons from Sodom; Bible Versions in English; The Believer and Evil; Guidance; Pre-Reformation Church History; AN Groves and the Brethren Movement. The Law, the Lord & Us.

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