

Ephesians 5

D. FROM DARKNESS TO LIGHT, 5:3-14

³*But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people. ⁴Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving. ⁵For of this you can be sure: No immoral, impure or greedy person -- such a man is an idolater -- has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. ⁶Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of such things God's wrath comes on those who are disobedient. ⁷Therefore do not be partners with them. ⁸For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light ⁹(for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) ¹⁰and find out what pleases the Lord. ¹¹Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them. ¹²For it is shameful even to mention what the disobedient do in secret. ¹³But everything exposed by the light becomes visible, ¹⁴for it is light that makes everything visible. This is why it is said:*

*“Wake up, O sleeper,
rise from the dead,
and Christ will shine on you.”*

The specific exhortations in the previous paragraph (4:25–5:2) focussed on the differences between the old life and the new, particularly in relation to speech and conduct. The apostle ended this section on a positive note with his admonition to love as Christ had loved us and given himself up for us (5:2). In this present paragraph (vv. 3-14), the contrast is between believers and sinful outsiders (as in 4:17-21), and is presented in terms of the imagery of light and darkness (vv. 8-14). The key verb *peripateo* (‘walk, live’), which is a catchword in each section of the paraenesis (from 4:1), appears again at v. 8 in the exhortation, ‘Live as children of light’.

The passage falls into two parts: the first, vv. 3-7, which begins on a negative note, admonishes believers to have nothing to do with the sexual vices and greed of the Gentile world. It concludes with two warnings about the serious consequences of indulging in sexual immorality, namely, exclusion from the divine kingdom and experiencing God’s wrath (vv. 5, 6). The second part, vv. 8-14, which is connected with the first by v. 7, presents a sustained contrast between light and darkness. A list of virtues (v. 9) and the quotation of a (possible hymnic) fragment (v. 14) are employed, as Paul reminds his readers of the change that has taken place in their lives. Once they had belonged to the dominion of darkness. Now through their relationship to their Lord they are members of the realm of light. Let them then live as children of light (vv. 8b-10). This will mean that the fruit of the light will

be produced in their lives (v. 9), that they will discover what pleases their Lord (v. 10), and that they will no longer participate in the fruitless deeds of darkness (v. 11). The conclusion (v. 14b) sums up the call to leave behind the realm of darkness and death.

1. Abstain from immorality and greed, 5:3-7

3. Paul begins a fresh series of warnings against behaviour that is completely alien to a Christian lifestyle, returning to the contrast between the Christian community and outsiders found in the earlier exhortatory material of 4:17-24. Sexual sins dominate as he turns from the theme of self-sacrificial love (5:2) to its opposite, self-indulgent sensuality, from behaviour that imitates God and walks in love to a manner of life that is diametrically opposed. The sins of sexual immorality and greed are particularly in view later in the paragraph when mention is made of ‘the deeds of darkness’ and ‘what is done in secret’ (vv. 11, 12). Two of the three vices listed here, ‘impurity’ and ‘covetousness’, have already appeared in the triad of 4:19 (see the discussion there). As in the fivefold parallel catalogue of Colossians 3:5, *porneia* (‘sexual immorality’) is mentioned first. It heads the list of works of the flesh (Gal. 5:19) from which believers are to abstain (1 Thes. 4:13) or shun (1 Cor. 6:18) and, as here, the apostle regularly brings to the attention of his Gentile readers the incompatibility of sexual immorality and the kingdom of God (1 Cor. 6:9; cf. 5:9-11; Col. 3:5). The term denotes any kind of illegitimate sexual intercourse, especially adultery and sexual relations with prostitutes.¹ One who surrenders to it indicates ultimately that he has broken from God. In contrast to the loose living that prevailed in the Hellenistic world, the New Testament (and in particular Pauline) teaching required unconditional obedience to the prohibition against ‘fornication’ (note Paul’s warnings to the Corinthians: 1 Cor. 5:1; 6:12-20; 7:2; 10:8; 2 Cor. 12:21).

Although the second vice here in Ephesians, *akatharsia* (‘impurity’), can signify unrestrained sexual behaviour, and is sometimes combined with *porneia* (1 Thes. 4:3, 7; Gal. 5:19; 2 Cor. 12:21), the expression ‘every kind [*pas*] of . . .’ points not only to sexual impurity but much more besides (see on 4:19). Like ‘sexual immorality’ it is a work of the flesh (Gal. 5:19) and is incompatible with life in the Spirit (1 Thes. 4:7, 8). The presence of these two vices points to the immoral state of the pre-Christian life, to the behaviour of the person whose actions are determined by his or her commitment to natural lusts. It was all too easy for Gentile converts to slip back into pre-conversion ways—hence the admonition.

At Colossians 3:5 ‘greed’ (*pleonexia*) appeared as the final vice in a fivefold list, and was especially accented as a gross sin. There the apostle began with the outward manifestations of sin (‘sexual immorality’) and moved to the inward cravings of the heart (‘ruthless greed’), from fornication to covetousness. Here in Ephesians, *pleonexia* occurs at the end of a (threefold list). It is distinguished from the two preceding vices by the disjunctive particle ‘or’ (*e*), as Paul moves from the acts of immorality and uncleanness to

¹ The *porneia* word-group was employed in the LXX (rendering the Hebrew *za'na[h]*) to denote unchastity, harlotry, prostitution and fornication (Gn. 34:31; 38:15; Lv. 19:29; Dt. 22:21). In later rabbinic literature the noun was understood to include not only prostitution and any kind of extramarital sexual intercourse, but also all marriages between relatives forbidden by rabbinic law (cf. Str-B 2, 729-730). Incest (*T. Rub.* 1:6; *T. Jud.* 13:6; cf. Lv. 18:6-18) and all kinds of unnatural sexual intercourse (e.g. *T. Ben.* 9:1) were regarded as fornication (*porneia*). Note the discussion between B. Malina, ‘Does *Porneia* Mean Fornication?’ *NovT* 14 (1972), 10-17, and J. Jensen, ‘Does *Porneia* Mean Fornication? A Critique of Bruce Malina’, *NovT* 20 (1978), 161-184.

their inner spring—‘greed’, that insatiable desire to have more, even the coveting of someone else’s body for selfish gratification.

All these forms of sexual immorality and greed are so serious that they must not even be mentioned among God’s people. The negative disjunctive particle *me\de*, which is best rendered ‘not even’, together with the repetition in v. 12, ‘it is shameful even to mention the things done by them in secret’, indicates that believers should not only shun these sins, but also avoid thinking and talking about them. Clearly, such vices will be mentioned in lists as here, but they are not to become the subject of Christians’ conversation. Thinking and talking about sexual sins ‘creates an atmosphere in which they are tolerated and which can . . . even promote their practice’.² The motivation for the avoidance of such conversation is what is fitting³ for ‘saints’ (cf. 1:1). The absence of the definite article before this noun accents the qualitative note, namely, their holiness as God’s people. They are reminded that he has called them to be holy and blameless before him (1:4). It is *appropriate* that their lifestyle be consistent with this holy calling (1 Thes. 4:3-7).

4. The warning of v. 3 about avoiding sexual sins is here continued in the triad of terms that refer to sinful speech: *obscenity*, *foolish talk* and *coarse joking* about sex are to be avoided as entirely inappropriate among those who are saints. Over against these and the preceding vices of v. 3, however, stands thanksgiving, the fundamental Christian response of gratitude, expressed by those who have experienced God’s grace in Christ (cf. 1:3-14).

Each of the words used for sinful speech, *obscenity*, *foolish talk* and *coarse joking*, appears only here in the New Testament. The first, *aischrote\is*, points generally to ‘indecent behavior; ugliness, or wickedness’.⁴ However, in the present context this abstract noun is best understood concretely as signifying disgraceful speech,⁵ and in the light of the preceding sexual sins is rendered *obscenity*. The second term, *mo\rologia*, means ‘foolish or silly talk’. The third word in the triad, *eutrapelia*, was used in classical Greek in a good sense of ‘wittiness’ or that sense of wit which was regarded as essential to good social converse. Even in early times, however, the term could have negative connotations, perhaps ‘buffoonery or some kind of inhumane or degrading jesting’. Van der Horst thinks that the context of Ephesians 5:4 suggests the meaning of *coarse joking* that has suggestive overtones and double entendres.⁶ All three terms refer to a dirty mind expressing itself in vulgar

² Lincoln, 322

³ The verb *prevpei* (‘fitting, proper, right’) appears as a motivation at 1 Tim. 2:10; Tit. 2:1, while a similar motive, *ajnh'ken* (‘fitting, proper’) is used here in v. 4; cf. Louw and Nida, 1.627. The appeal to what was fitting was a Stoic criterion for behaviour, but Paul does not use it in the Stoic manner to speak of conduct that is in accord with nature (cf. Best, 80).

⁴ Louw and Nida, 1.758; BAGD, 25.

⁵ So BAGD, 25. The Colossians parallel (*aijscrologiva*, 3:8) suggests Paul has this more specific connotation in view. Hoehner, 423, however, thinks that *aijscrovth* signifies ‘shame’ in a general sense, in relation to both conduct and speech, and therefore it serves as a good transition term for the next terms which focus on sinful speech.

⁶ P. W. van der Horst, ‘Is Wittiness UnChristian? A Note on *eujtrapeliva* in Eph. v.4’, in *Miscellanea Neotestamentica*. Vol. 2, ed. T. Baard, A. F. J. Klijn and W. C. Van Unnik (Leiden: Brill, 1978), 163-177, esp. 175, who is followed by Lincoln, 323. Aristotle, who regarded *eujtrapeliva* (‘wittiness’) as a

conversation. This kind of language must be avoided as utterly inappropriate among those whom God has set apart as holy.

In striking contrast⁷ to all forms of sexual immorality and obscene language, *thanksgiving*, the distinctive mark of Christian speech, is enjoined on the readers. Some writers have suggested that noble talk or truthful speaking would have been a more appropriate antithesis here. But thanksgiving stands over against the six preceding vices of vv. 3, 4, not simply the vulgarity and obscene speech of v. 4, and it indicates a fundamentally different attitude: 'Whereas sexual impurity and covetousness both express self-centred acquisitiveness, thanksgiving is the exact opposite, and so the antidote required; it is the recognition of God's generosity'.⁸ Thanksgiving was almost a synonym for the Christian life. It is the response of gratitude to God's saving activity in creation and redemption, and thus a recognition that he is the ultimate source of every blessing. All people, as God's creatures, ought to render thanksgiving and glory to him, but fail to do so (Rom. 1:21; cf. the 'ungrateful' of 2 Tim. 3:2, which describes humanity in the last days). Christians, because of the grace given to them in Christ Jesus (cf. 1:3-14; 15-23) are to live out their lives with joyful thanksgiving. It should be the accompaniment of every activity, being the appropriate response of those who have been filled by God's Spirit (Eph. 5:18-20).⁹ Here in v. 4 thanksgiving reflects a Christian attitude to sex that is antithetical to a pagan attitude with its immorality and vulgarity.

5. Two severe warnings follow. They serve to underline the preceding admonitions of vv. 3, 4, and are intended to motivate the Christians solemnly to heed them (note the introductory *gar*, 'for'). These warnings spell out the dire consequences for those who are immoral or sexually covetous: the first (v. 5) speaks with certainty of exclusion from the kingdom of Christ and of God, the second (v. 6) of the experience of the wrath of God.

The opening words of the Greek are an unusual periphrastic construction,¹⁰ though the general sense is clear enough. They may be taken as an imperative and rendered, 'Be sure of this' (NRSV; lit. 'know, knowing'), or as an indicative and interpreted as an

virtue (*Eth. Eud.* 3.7.1234a4-23), was also aware that the term had negative connotations (*Eth. Eud.* 4.8.1128a.14-15).

⁷ Note the strong adversative *ajlla*; *ma'llon*, rendered *but rather*.

⁸ Houlden, 324, whose words are often quoted.

⁹ P. T. O'Brien, 'Thanksgiving in Pauline Theology', in *Pauline Studies. Essays Presented to F. F. Bruce*, ed. D. A. Hagner and M. J. Harris (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), 50-66, esp. 62-63.

¹⁰ *i[ste ginwvskonte*" ('[you] know, knowing'). *i[ste* is a present indicative or imperative of the verb *oi|da* ('know')—normally a periphrasis has the verb 'to be'—while *ginwvskonte*" is a present participle of another verb *ginwvskw*, which means 'I know'. It has been thought that this is a Hebraism of an infinitive absolute construction, which reinforces the idea of the verb, but here the two words for 'know' are not the same. Others, recognizing that it may not be a Hebraism, nevertheless think of it like the infinitive absolute and take the *i[ste* as an imperative ('be very sure of this'). S. E. Porter, 'i[ste ginwvskonte" in Ephesians 5,5: Does Chiasm Solve the Problem?' *ZNW* 81 (1990), 270-276, regards it as an indicative, and suggests that the periphrastic phrase should be understood as a component of a chiastic structure in vv. 3-5. But there are elements of the chiasm that do not fall easily into place. See also his *Verbal Aspect*, 286, 362, 465, and note further BAGD, 556, and BDF §353(6); 422.

affirmation, *For of this you can be sure* (lit. ‘you know, knowing’). Either way Paul is drawing attention to a certainty:¹¹ persistent sinners are excluded from God’s kingdom. In v. 3 he had denounced the sins of *sexual immorality, impurity* and *greed*. Now he returns to them, censuring those who habitually practise them.¹² As in Colossians 3:5 the danger of covetousness is emphatically stressed: here the person who practices unrestrained sexual greed is an idolater.¹³ The sins of covetousness and idolatry stood together in Jewish exhortations and were condemned as part of the horrors of paganism;¹⁴ in particular, fornication and sexual lust were linked with idolatry.¹⁵ Along with greed for riches and power, sexual lust is an idolatrous obsession; it places self-gratification or another person at the centre of one’s existence, and thus is the worship of the creature rather than the Creator (Rom. 1:25).

It is certain that persistent sinners like the *immoral, impure* and *greedy* have no part or lot in God’s heavenly kingdom. Believers have already been assured that they have a secure hope of inheriting the glorious life to come (see on 1:14, 18 above). But they are here warned not to live like unbelievers for unbelievers are not going to inherit the kingdom of Christ and of God. Those who have given themselves over to immorality, impurity and greed, even if they call themselves Christian, show that they are excluded from eternal life. The apostle is not asserting that the believer who ever falls into one or other of these sins is automatically excluded from God’s kingdom. Rather, what is envisaged here is the person who has given himself or herself up without shame or repentance to this way of life.¹⁶

Paul found it necessary to warn his converts repeatedly about this. He reminded the Corinthians that *the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God*, and then proceeded to describe this unrighteous behaviour in the list of ten vices that follow (1 Cor. 6:9-10; cf. Gal. 5:21). Some of the Corinthians had lived like this in the past. But they had been washed, sanctified and justified (v. 11). The fact, however, that they still needed to be warned against

11 The demonstrative pronoun *τουτο* refers to the content which follows, *οτι πασ πορνου κτλ.* (‘that every immoral person . . .’).

12 The three nouns used refer quite specifically to the persons who commit the acts described in v. 3: *πορνου* (‘immoral’), *ακαθαρτου* (‘impure’) and *πλεονεκτου* (‘greedy’) are cognate with the words of v. 3, and in the same order. The Semitic *πασ . . . ουκ* construction is again used to negate the verb (cf. A. T. Robertson, *Grammar*, 753), while *πασ* before an anarthrous noun means ‘everyone’ (BDF § 275[3]). Accordingly, ‘no one’ in any of these three classes has an inheritance in God’s kingdom.

13 *πλεονεκτου ος εστιν ειδωλωλατρος* (‘covetous person who is an idolater’). The neuter relative pronoun *ος* is probably the original reading (rather than the masculine *ος*, ‘who’), since it has stronger manuscript support and, as the more difficult reading, might have been changed by early scribes to the masculine. The neuter relative pronoun picks up the whole idea or general notion of covetousness (A. T. Robertson, *Grammar*, 713, BDF §132[2]), but still should be rendered by ‘who’. The singular relative refers to the covetous person not all three preceding nouns.

14 According to *T. Jud.* 19:1, greed seized control of a man, led him away from God and held him captive in idolatry. Elsewhere in Jewish thought ‘greed’ was soundly condemned (by Philo, *Spec leg* 1:23-27; cf. G. Dellinger, *TDNT* 6, 270; for rabbinic examples see Str-B 3, 606, 607; and note the negative judgment on possessions in relation to covetousness in the Qumran writings: 1QpHab 6:1; 8:11, 12; 1QS 10:19; 11:2, etc.).

15 Wis. 14:12; *T. Reub.* 4:6; *T. Jud.* 23:1.

16 Stott, 197.

such vices even after their conversion shows how strong was the temptation, in a pagan environment, to go back to the old ways.¹⁷

The apostle's language here about not sharing in the heavenly inheritance is rather striking: first, unlike the earlier instances in his paraenesis where the verb to inherit appears in the future tense ('will not inherit . . . ' 1 Cor. 6:9, 10; Gal. 5:21), Ephesians uses the present: the immoral person 'has no (*ouk echei*) inheritance'. It is possible, with Porter, to regard this as a 'future-referring present',¹⁸ so indicating that evildoers will not have any future lot in the divine kingdom. But it is better to understand the present tense, 'has [no inheritance]' (which grammaticalizes imperfective aspect), as signifying a process, without reference to past, present or future: no immoral person has any part in the divine kingdom.

This aspectual interpretation is confirmed by the double expression, *the kingdom of Christ and of God*, which is unique to the New Testament (cf. Rev. 11:15). There is a tendency in Paul's letters to distinguish two phases of the heavenly kingdom, reserving the expression, 'the kingdom of God', for its future and eternal aspect (1 Cor. 6:9, 10; 15:50; Gal. 5:21),¹⁹ while 'the kingdom of Christ' denotes the present phase of God's rule (1 Cor. 15:24; Col. 1:13; cf. also Eph. 2:6; 2 Tim. 4:1, 18), and which is destined to merge with the future. So in 1 Corinthians 15:24 Christ, after reigning until all things are put under his feet, delivers up the kingdom to God the Father. Thus, the double formulation, *the kingdom of Christ and of God*, signifies the divine kingdom in both its present and future aspects, from which those who have given themselves over to immorality, impurity and greed are excluded. One and the same kingdom belongs to and is ruled by Christ and God.²⁰ Let the readers, then, heed Paul's exhortations. Those in slavery to their sexual appetites are surely excluded from the rule of Christ and God.

6. It is all too easy for believers to be influenced by the surrounding world and to succumb to its ways of thinking and behaving. The result is that what is acceptable to the culture of the day becomes acceptable in the church. This is particularly true in contemporary Western society in the area of sexual morality.

Paul now underscores his first warning (v. 5) with a second as he urges his readers to heed the admonitions to avoid sexual immorality and obscene speech (vv. 3, 4). They should not be misled by anyone (*me\deis*) who encourages sexual permissiveness, thinking that such activities are a matter of indifference. Arguments of this kind are empty (*kenos*) and devoid of the truth (cf. Col. 2:4, 8), because they do not reckon with God's holy judgment on sin. The identity of those who might try to lead them astray is not specifically indicated.²¹ They

17 Bruce, 371.

18 S. E. Porter, *Verbal Aspect*, 230-232.

19 Other instances of 'the kingdom of God' (e. g. Rom. 14:17; 1 Cor. 4:20; Col. 4:11; 1 Thes. 2:12; 2 Thes. 1:5) are more general in their reference.

20 Note the discussion of the grammatical issues relating to this phrase in M. J. Harris, *Jesus as God. The New Testament Use of Theos in Reference to Jesus* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1992), 261-263.

21 The verb *ajpatavw* signifies to 'deceive, mislead' (cf. 1 Tim. 2:14; Jas. 1:26) and is akin to the cognate noun *ajpavth* ('deception, deceitfulness') which has already appeared in Eph. 4:22.

may be members of the Christian community (perhaps with libertine or gnosticizing tendencies), who do not take sin seriously. But the context, with its references to ‘the sons of disobedience’, ‘partakers with them’ (v. 7) and ‘you were once darkness’ (v. 8), may point to unbelieving Gentiles who tried to justify their vices as matters of indifference.²² This suggestion has the merit of maintaining the ‘insider/outsider’ contrast that runs through the passage. Whatever the source of the temptation, though, the readers are not to be led astray.

The powerful reason (*gar*) for not being deceived by such hollow arguments is that ‘on account of these things’, that is, the vices denounced in vv. 3-5, God’s holy and righteous anger against sin is coming on the disobedient.²³ As in 2:2 the forceful expression ‘sons of disobedience’ points not to those who commit the occasional act of disobedience but to men and women whose lives are characterized by disobedience. They do not submit to God’s authority; instead, they prefer to rule their own lives and go their own way. The present tense (*comes*) has been understood to indicate that even now such sinners experience something of the divine wrath. Others suggest that the present tense of this verb (*erchetai*) often has a future meaning, thereby indicating that the divine wrath will be manifest on the last day, or else it occurs in both present and future. However, the present tense (which grammaticalizes imperfective aspect), probably depicts the action taking place as a process: *those who are disobedient* already experience the divine wrath (cf. Rom. 1:18-32), although its full manifestation will not be seen until the end of the age.

7. Since the consequences of living an immoral life are so serious, the readers are strongly urged not to become partners with disobedient Gentiles in their sinful behaviour. Although the words *with them* may be taken to refer to the vices previously described (vv. 3-5), it is preferable to understand the antecedent as the persons themselves, namely, ‘the sons of disobedience’.²⁴ But Paul is not prohibiting all contact or association with such people, as the NRSV (‘do not be associated with them’; cf. RSV) seems to imply.²⁵ If this is what the apostle meant, then they would need to go out of the world altogether (note his argument in 1 Corinthians 5:10)! Rather, the adjective *symmetochos*, which appears in the New Testament only here and at 3:6, is used to signify ‘one who shares in a possession or a relationship’.²⁶ Accordingly, the readers are to make sure that they do not share with disobedient Gentiles in their immorality, and from the judgment that rightly falls with it (cf. 2 Cor. 6:14–7:1). Those who participate with Jewish believers in the promise of Christ Jesus through the gospel (3:6) cannot be joint-partners with pagans in their sins. The two forms of participation are mutually exclusive.

²² Note especially Meyer, 269, who thought that unbelieving Gentiles may have tried to entice Christians back to their old Gentile way of life. Cf. also Schnackenburg, 220, and Lincoln, 325. Barth, 567 and Best, 51, on the other hand, think that it is erring church members who are in view.

²³ For a discussion of the ‘wrath’ of God and the ‘sons of disobedience’, see on 2:2, 3.

²⁴ So Meyer, 270, Bruce, 372, and Schnackenburg, 221, among others.

²⁵ The Qumran writings urged the members of its community to practise a radical separation, particularly from other Jewish groups (1 QS 1:4, 5; 5:10, 11; CD 6:14, 15).

²⁶ Louw and Nida, § 57.8.

8. The positive reason (*gar*) for believers not being involved with the disobedient in their immoral conduct is not, in this case, the future judgment of God (as in v. 6), but the mighty change that occurred in their lives when they were converted. This whole paragraph, commencing with v. 8, plays on the rich symbolism of light and darkness, and again Paul introduces the ‘once-now’ contrast schema (see on 2:1-10, 11-22) to focus attention on the transfer of dominions experienced by believers. Once they had belonged to the rule of darkness (cf. Col. 1:13), but now because of the new relationship with their Lord they are identified with the realm of light. How contradictory it would be, then, for them to become involved with the immorality of the past. If they are *light*, then let them behave as *children of light*, and this will mean living by values that are diametrically opposed to those of their surrounding society.

Already the difference between believers and non-Christians has been depicted in terms of the ‘old person’ and the ‘new’ (Eph. 4:22, 24). Now that distinction is made through the imagery of darkness and light: unbelievers are darkness, Christians are light.²⁷ This symbolism of light and darkness was popular in ancient religions generally, and appears regularly in the Old Testament,²⁸ the Qumran literature²⁹ and elsewhere in the New Testament, especially the Johannine material.³⁰ In Ephesians darkness represents ignorance, error and evil (cf. 4:18), and in particular comes to signify immorality as the way of life of those who are separated from God. Light, on the other hand, stands for truth, knowledge (cf. 1:18) and now holiness, all of which come from God.

Surprisingly, the readers are not simply presented as having been in the realm of darkness but are now in the sphere of light, although this would have been true enough (cf. Jn. 8:12; 1 Pet. 2:9; 1 Jn. 1:5-7; 2:9). It is not their environment or the surroundings in which they and the rest of humanity live that is in view. Rather, they themselves were once *darkness*, but now are *light in the Lord*. Those ruled by the dominion of *darkness* or of *light*, represent that dominion in their own persons. So when they were converted, it was their lives, not their surroundings, that were changed from darkness to light. This radical transformation had taken place *in the Lord*.³¹ He is the one who has made the decisive

27 The imagery of darkness and light is used elsewhere in connection with conversion: Acts 26:18; Col. 1:12, 13; 1 Pet. 2:9; note also Heb. 6:4; 10:32. Cf. Philo, *De Virt.* 179.

28 Light stands for life and salvation whose source is God (Ps. 27:1; Is. 9:2; 10:17; 42:6, 16; 49:6; 60:1).

29 The symbolism of light and darkness in the Qumran material often signifies the two ways of life in relation to God. This is especially evident in the War Scroll (1QM 1:1-16; 3:6, 9; 13:16; 14:17) as well as the Rule of Discipline (1QS 1:9, 10; 3:13, 19-21, 24, 25); so K. G. Kuhn, ‘The Epistle to the Ephesians in the Light of the Qumran Texts’, in *Paul and Qumran*, ed. J. Murphy-O’Connor (London: Chapman, 1968), 115-131, esp. 122-124, who is followed by many recent commentators.

30 Jn. 1:4, 5, 7-9; 3:19-21; 8:12; 9:5, etc.; 1 Jn. 1:5; 2:8. In Paul it appears at Rom. 13:12, 13; 2 Cor. 4:4, 6; 6:14; Col. 1:12, 13; 1 Thes. 5:5; 1 Tim. 6:16; 2 Tim. 1:10. For further details see G. L. Borchert, *DPL*, 555-557.

31 The antithetic parallelism of the first two lines shows that the words in the second line, *ejn kurivw/* (‘in the Lord’), are without parallel in the first, and make the decisive difference. With darkness there is no qualifier, but with light there is the additional phrase *ejn kurivw/*:

h\te gavr pote skovto,"

nu'n de; fw''' ejn kurivw/.

difference, and it is through their union with him that they have entered a new dominion and become *light*.

The implications of this change are now put positively. Their behaviour must conform to their new identity. Paul moves from the ‘indicative’ of what they are in the Lord to the ‘imperative’ of how they should live. Since the readers are now *light*,³² then they are to walk as *children of light*, that is, their lives are to be characterized by light. What this involves is indicated in the verses that follow. Once again the key verb *peripateo* (‘walk, live’), which has appeared at significant points in the paraenesis of the letter (see on 4:1, 17; 5:2, 15; cf. 2:2, 10), is used.

9. In a brief aside³³ Paul explains first what it means to live as children of light by referring to three Christian graces: *goodness, righteousness and truth*. These are depicted as ‘the fruit of light’, and stand in stark contrast to the ‘unfruitful works of darkness’ (v. 11).³⁴ In addition to its literal meaning of ‘fruit’ or ‘produce’, *karpos* is employed in a figurative sense to denote the result, outcome, or profit of an action.³⁵ So the apostle can use the term metaphorically of the good results he looked for from his ministry (Rom. 1:13). Here *karpos* signifies the ethical outcome of light which is viewed as a divine power. Light has marked effects on those who receive it. It manifests itself in the graces of *goodness, righteousness and truth*, and these reflect the character of God himself (see on 4:24). In this sense, then, the fruit of light is very close in meaning to the ‘fruit of the Spirit’³⁶ (Gal. 5:22; cf. the ‘fruit of righteousness’, Phil. 1:11).

The three characteristics which briefly depict what the new life is like remind the reader of points already covered, especially in 4:20–5:2. The first, *agathosyne* (‘goodness’)

‘For you were once darkness,

but now [you are] light in the Lord’.

32 Again the realized eschatological note is struck in the letter: believers are even now *light in the Lord*, just as the church is already without spot or wrinkle (5:27). But as elsewhere in the Pauline corpus the present responsibilities that flow from the readers being in Christ are considerable.

33 V. 9 is rightly rendered by the NIV (cf. RSV) as a parenthesis. *dokimavzonte* (‘examining’) introduces a participial clause that further defines what it means to walk as children of light (v. 8).

34 Literally, ‘the fruit of light *consists in* all goodness, righteousness and truth’. There is no verb in the sentence and needs to be supplied; together with the following prepositional phrase, *ejn pavsh/ajgaqwsuvnh/ ktl.*, it signifies ‘consists in’ or ‘is characterized by’. The fruit of light expresses itself in the sphere of goodness, righteousness and truth. Cf. Hoehner, 437.

35 Louw and Nida, § 42.13, regard this as a figurative extension of the literal meaning of *karpov*, ‘fruit’, the natural result of what has been done—‘deed, activity, result of deeds’. On Paul’s use of *karpov*, see P. T. O’Brien, *Philippians*, 80-81.

36 Several manuscripts (including Π^{46} D² Y 88 104) read ‘the fruit of the Spirit’ (*pneumatov*), rather than ‘the fruit of light’ (*fwtov*). The latter, however, is the better attested reading with both widespread and early manuscript support (including Π^{49} a A B D* a number of minuscules, as well as important versions and Fathers) in both the Alexandrian and Western textual traditions. Further, ‘the fruit of light’ (*fwtov*) fits the context better, while the reading *pneumatov* (‘of the Spirit’) has probably come into the tradition from Gal. 5:22.

has a range of meanings as wide as the cognate adjective ‘good’, though it can have the nuance of ‘generosity’, as in the Old Testament when it sometimes refers to the Lord’s goodness.³⁷ According to Ephesians, God has created his people in Christ Jesus for the purpose of *good* works (2:10). Similarly, Paul intercedes for the Colossians that they may ‘bear fruit in every *good* work’ (Col. 1:10). The ‘new person’ of Ephesians has been created to display those ethical qualities that belong to God himself, such as *righteousness* and holiness which have their origin in his *truth* (4:24). As a result, the new person speaks the *truth* in love (4:15, 25), since he or she has found the *truth* in Jesus (4:20).

Goodness, righteousness and truth, as the fruit of light, are supernatural characteristics, the result of God’s creative activity. Yet within the flow of Paul’s paraenesis, especially the imperative, *Live as children of light* (v. 8), the readers themselves are expected to demonstrate these Christian graces. Once again in this letter, divine activity and human response are carefully balanced (cf. Phil. 2:12-13, and see on 4:24). The trilogy is reminiscent of the statement in Micah 6:8, that God requires human beings to act justly, to love mercy and to walk humbly with him.³⁸

10. After the brief parenthesis of v. 9, Paul spells out the manner in which he wants his readers to *live as children of light*, that is, as those who ‘discern what is pleasing to the Lord’. The verb *dokimazo* can mean to ‘put to the test, examine’, or it can refer to the result of the examination, and so signify to ‘accept as proved, approved’.³⁹ In this context it has the former sense of examining and evaluating issues⁴⁰ in order to determine the right course of action, here described as ‘pleasing the Lord’ (cf. Col. 1:10).⁴¹

The *dokimazo* word-group plays an important role in the apostle’s ethical teaching. Particularly close to our text is Romans 12:2, where the Christians in Rome are urged to be transformed by the renewing of their minds so that they may be able to test and approve (*dokimazo*) the good (*agathon*), pleasing (*euaireston*) and perfect will of God. In his prayer-report of Philippians 1:10 Paul prays that believers’ love may increase in knowledge so that

³⁷ *ajgaqwsuvnh*, which does not occur in classical Greek, appears some fourteen times in the LXX and covers a wide semantic range, including beneficence someone has shown (Jdg. 8:35; 2 Ch. 24:16), kind generosity (in this case the Lord’s, Ne. 9:25, 35), moral goodness (Ps. 52:3), together with well-being and happiness (Ec. 4:8; 5:10, etc.). Louw and Nida, § 57.109, render the word by ‘generosity’: it refers to ‘the act of generous giving, with the implication of its relationship to goodness’. Note the discussions in C. Spicq, *TLNT* 1, 3, 4, and Hoehner, 436-437.

³⁸ The list of three have parallels also in 2 Ch. 21:30 and the Qumran literature (1QS 1:5; 8:2), although these graces are not described as ‘fruit’ in any of these references.

³⁹ BAGD, 202; cf. Louw and Nida, § 27.45. Other instances of the former sense are 1 Cor. 11:28; 2 Cor. 13:5; Gal. 6:4; 1 Thes. 2:4; 5:21; 1 Tim. 3:10, while examples of *dokimavzw* pointing to the result of the examination and so signifying to ‘accept as proved, approved’ (e.g. 1 Cor. 16:3; 2 Cor. 8:22; Phil. 1:10). Hoehner, 439, is one recent writer who understands the verb here in the sense of ‘approving’.

⁴⁰ C. Spicq, *TLNT* 1, 356, thinks that *dokimavzw* signifies here in Eph. 5:10, as on other occasions in Paul, to “discern” what is important to do, the best course to follow, the decision to make, and especially to discern what is pleasing to the Lord’.

⁴¹ In both texts *Lord* refers to the Lord Jesus, rather than God.

they may be able to *choose* (*dokimazo*) the really important issues in their lives, while in 1 Thessalonians 5:21 the readers are taught to *test* everything and hold fast to what is good.

The Jew who knew God's will was to approve (*dokimazo*) what was essential on the basis of the law (Rom. 2:18).⁴² Christians, however, have 'learned Christ'. They have responded to the gospel and received further instruction about him (4:20, 21) from those specially equipped by the ascended Lord Jesus (4:11; cf. 2:20; 3:5). Thus, their lives were shaped *in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus* (4:21). This Christ-centred instruction, which focusses on the truth of the gospel, is the yardstick by which believers are to discern in specific situations what pleases their Lord. Those who belong to the light are to live as children of light: they are to grow corporately and individually, and their over-arching goal is to please the Lord Jesus Christ in all circumstances (cf. Rom. 12:2; 14:18; 2 Cor. 5:9; Phil. 4:18; Col. 3:20).

11. Walking as children of light (v. 8) not only entails the fruit of light being produced in their lives (v. 9); it also excludes participation in the unfruitful works of darkness. Because light and darkness are incompatible, it is completely inappropriate to live in the light (with its resulting *goodness, righteousness and truth*), and then to adopt the *lifestyle* of those who are still in darkness. The readers have already been urged to live as children of light (v. 8); now they are admonished not to participate in the unfruitful works of darkness.⁴³ Earlier they had been warned not to be partners with disobedient Gentiles (v. 7), and this was understood, not as prohibiting all contact or association with them, but of believers not taking part in their immorality. V. 11 now makes this explicit with its mention of not participating (*synkoino*)⁴⁴ in their evil deeds.

The sharp dichotomy between light and darkness, which began in v. 8, thus continues: light yields the fruit of *goodness, righteousness and truth*, but darkness produces only 'works' (like the 'works of the flesh', Gal. 5:19) which are useless, unproductive, sterile (Mt. 13:22; Mk. 4:19; Tit. 3:14; 2 Pet. 1:8; Jude 12).⁴⁵ These works cannot please the Lord (contrast v. 10). Their source is *darkness*, and they bear the marks of this realm,⁴⁶ that is, the dominion of death. Further, the people themselves who carry out these actions can be described as *darkness* (note that believers, in their former condition, were called 'darkness', but now they are 'light', v. 8): their works reveal their true condition and show that they embody this realm in their own persons.

⁴² Which is in line with the Rule of Discipline at Qumran where returning to every commandment of the law of Moses is the means by which one seeks God's will (1QS 5:9).

⁴³ The positive exhortation *tevkna fwto*," *peripatei'te* ('walk as children of light') continues with the negative *kai; mh; sugkoinwnei'te ktl.* ('and do not participate in [the unfruitful works] . . .').

⁴⁴ The synonymous verb, *sugkoinwnevw* ('to participate with, to be in partnership with, to associate with'; Louw and Nida, § 34.4), is used at Phil. 4:14 of the Philippians' sympathetic participation with Paul in his affliction, while at Rev. 18:4 the saints are warned to come out of fallen city, Babylon, lest they *share* in her sins.

⁴⁵ See C. Spicq, *TLNT* 1, 56-57.

⁴⁶ The genitive *skovtous* ('of darkness') is both a genitive of source and a characterizing genitive.

The negative admonition not to participate in the fruitless deeds of darkness, is now balanced by its positive counterpart: instead (*mallon de*), believers are to *expose them*. Since the object of this reproofing activity, both here and in v. 13⁴⁷ (where *elengcho* appears again), is ‘the unfruitful *works*’ rather than the persons themselves, the verb is best understood in the sense of ‘bringing to light or exposing’ these deeds,⁴⁸ rather than convincing or convicting those⁴⁹ engaged in such activities. Both the flow of the argument and the context of darkness suggest that the fruitless deeds which are exposed are the sins of unbelievers. The conduct of the children of light will shine as a beacon to others, revealing evil deeds for what they are. To interpret *elengcho* along these lines of exposing sin for what it is, is not to suggest that Christians should necessarily remain silent, or fail to speak out against evil. But the particular point being made here is that of living a godly lifestyle and showing evil to be evil.

12. A further reason (*gar*) is now given for both the positive and negative aspects of the exhortation in v. 11: the readers are to have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness; instead, they are to expose them, ‘*because it is shameful even to mention what is done by them in secret*’.⁵⁰

The earlier expression, ‘the fruitless deeds of darkness’ (v. 11), is a general one, and could include sins done openly as well as those committed secretly. Such a description focusses on their evil character—they belong to the realm of darkness—and the fact that they are utterly futile. These ‘works’ are the sexual vices (perhaps even perversions) mentioned in v. 3, not immoral pagan religious rites, as some have suggested. They are now described as ‘the things done in secret’: those who commit them (that is, the ‘disobedient’ of vv. 6, 7) do not want their sins to be brought out into the open (cf. Jn. 3:20). But their dark deeds are so abhorrent, Paul asserts, that it is ‘shameful even to mention’ them, much less to do them.⁵¹ He utterly repudiates these sexual sins, but desires to convey their seriousness without mentioning the details of the depravity. Paul and his readers knew what they were, and he

47 The object is implied, from the first clause, in v. 11 and explicit in v. 13: ‘*all things* (*ta; de; pavnta ejlegcovmena*) are exposed [by the light]’.

48 So BAGD, 249. Against T. Engberg-Pedersen, ‘Ephesians 5,12-13: *ejlevgcein* and Conversion in the New Testament’, *ZNW* 80 (1989), 89-110, who has argued that the root meaning of the verb *ejlevgcein* is that of confronting somebody or something with the aim of showing him or it to be at fault. He claims that in Ephesians believers are enjoined not only to have nothing to do with the works of darkness, but also to confront them by verbal reproof in order to show their falsity. But, in this context, it is the deeds themselves which are to be confronted, and this occurs by their being *exposed* through a godly lifestyle. F. Porsch, *EDNT* 1, 428, aptly comments: the exhortation encourages Christians to *expose* “the unfruitful works of darkness,” so that their true (dark) character might come to light’.

49 Whether understood of fellow-believers being corrected or rebuked when they fall into sin (so Gnllka, 255-256; and Best, 52, 82), or unbelievers being urged to be converted (so K. G. Kuhn, ‘The Epistle to the Ephesians’, 124-131).

50 Cf. Lincoln, 330.

51 The *kaiv* before *levgein* is to be understood ascensively: it is shameful ‘*even to mention*’, let alone to do the things done in secret. The tacit contrast is with *poiei'n* (‘to do’). Cf. Meyer, 273.

will not dignify them by naming them. Instead, he wants the light of the gospel to shine through the readers' lives and expose these deeds for what they are.

13, 14a. The meaning of these verses is not entirely clear, and this has given rise to a variety of interpretations. The flow of the argument is from the exposure of the deeds of darkness (v. 11), through their illumination by the light (v. 13) to a focus on the light itself (v. 14). It appears, then, that the process by which darkness is transformed into light is being described.

Believers used to be darkness, but now they have become light in the Lord (v. 8). By their righteous lifestyle they are to show up the 'works of darkness' for what they are (v. 11). What happens when this exposure occurs is now explained: 'Everything is illumined⁵² by the light'.⁵³ 'Everything' (*ta panta*) refers not to all things generally, but to all that is done in secret, that is, the hidden sexual sins about which he has been speaking (v. 12). Darkness hides the ugly realities of evil, but the light makes them visible. Evil is then seen for what it is without any possibility of concealment.

But the light has positive effects as well as negative ones. Within the flow of the argument the further explanation (*gar*) of v. 14a, 'for everything that is illumined is light', suggests this. Admittedly, Paul's language is compressed, but the logic appears to be that the light not only exposes; it also transforms (cf. 2 Cor. 4:6). The disclosure of people's sins effected through believers' lives enables men and women to see the nature of their deeds. Some abandon the darkness of sin and respond to the light so that they become light themselves. This understanding is confirmed by v. 8, which speaks of the transformation that had taken place in the readers' experience, and by the confession of v. 14b. Furthermore, it is in line with John 3:19-21, which refers, on the one hand, to the failure of a person in darkness to come to the light, lest his or her deeds be exposed, and on the other, of the person who does the truth and comes to the light in order that his or her deeds might be revealed for what they are. J. B. Phillips' oft-quoted rendering brings the force of v. 14a out well: 'It is even possible (after all, it happened to you!) for light to turn the thing it shines upon into light also'. The light thus has a two-fold effect on the prevailing darkness: it makes visible and transforms.

A number of other interpretations, however, understand the light as shining on believers rather than transforming those outside of Christ:⁵⁴

⁵² The finite verb *fanerou'tai* (as well as the participle *fanerouvmenon* in v. 14a) is best understood as a passive ('made visible, illumined'), rather than a middle voice with an active sense; so BAGD, 852-853, and most commentators.

⁵³ The prepositional phrase *uJpo; tou' fwtoV* ('by the light') could be taken with either *ejlegcovmena* ('exposed') or *fanerou'tai* ('is illumined'). The difference in meaning is slight, but the phrase is probably better taken with the latter: light is not explicitly mentioned with the exposure in v. 11, and on this interpretation v. 13 is read consistently with it. Light is now appropriately linked with the illumination. Also, prepositional phrases in Ephesians tend to precede the finite verb or participle they qualify rather than follow them (cf. 1:4). So reading *uJpo; tou' fwtoV* with *fanerou'tai* is preferable. Cf. Meyer, 275-276, Schnackenburg, 226, Lincoln, 330-331, and T. Moritz, *A Profound Mystery*, 113; against Hoehner, 447, Snodgrass, 273, and many EVV, including NIV and NRSV.

⁵⁴ Note the recent discussions of Schnackenburg, 227, Lincoln, 330-331, T. Moritz, *A Profound Mystery*, 113-115, and Hoehner, 448-449.

(1) Schnackenburg, for example, thinks that the parenthesis of v. 14a is simply ‘a general statement which illustrates the function of light’, and reiterates the point of v. 8, namely, that believers have become light in the Lord.⁵⁵

(2) Hoehner, for his part, claims that the context is about the restoration of believers. They have become copartners in the works of unbelievers. When their deeds are exposed and shown to be the unfruitful works of darkness, ‘the believer, with the aid of the Spirit will change to the fruit of light, namely, goodness, righteousness, and reality (v. 9)’.⁵⁶

(3) Moritz rejects the suggestion that the shameful things are themselves being turned into light by the process of illumination.⁵⁷ When an object is exposed to the light it does not become light. It simply reflects the light as long as it remains in the light’s sphere of influence.⁵⁸ Accordingly, he understands Christ’s illuminating activity to refer to the Christian. As the shameful things are being exposed by believers, they are shone upon Christ himself, who is the light, and so revealed. The one ‘who is illumined by the true light in this way’, that is, the believer, will continue to be shone upon by Christ, and so ‘equipped to expose further shameful things’.⁵⁹ The intention of the passage, which explains the presence of the early Christian hymn (v. 14b), is ‘to remind the readers that the past is best left behind and that they must continue to expose themselves to the light of Christ’.⁶⁰

Several of these arguments, particularly those of Moritz, have considerable force. But, on balance, we consider that the passage is describing the process by which darkness is transformed into light. The function of the light is twofold: it exposes the sins of unbelievers and transforms them so that they enter the realm of light (cf. Col. 1:13).

14b. The exhortatory material of vv. 8-14 is now brought to its climax with a quotation, introduced by the same formula as the citation from Psalm 68:18 in Eph 4:8: ‘this is why it says’ (*dio legei*). Although this introductory formula suggests the quote stems directly from the Old Testament,⁶¹ and the substance of the citation is scriptural, the words do not correspond precisely to the biblical text. As a result, there has been considerable debate regarding the source of the quotation, as well as its underlying ideas, with Old

⁵⁵ Schnackenburg, 227.

⁵⁶ Hoehner, 449 (cf. 445-449). Similarly Best, 52, claims that it is ‘the reproof of one member of the community who has sinned by another’ that is in mind; in this way hidden sin is brought to light. Best then argues that the following hymn (v. 14b) supports this interpretation (but see below).

⁵⁷ He argues that the introductory *gavr* (‘for’) does not explain the previous statement, ‘everything exposed becomes illumined by the light’, and must be understood as consecutive since it makes an additional point; T. Moritz, *A Profound Mystery*, 114-115.

⁵⁸ T. Moritz, *A Profound Mystery*, 113-114.

⁵⁹ T. Moritz, *A Profound Mystery*, 114.

⁶⁰ T. Moritz, *A Profound Mystery*, 115.

⁶¹ The origin of quotations in 1 Cor. 1:31; 2:9; 3:19b; 9:10; 15:33; 2 Cor. 4:6; 1 Tim. 5:18b. 2 Tim. 2:19b is not entirely clear, even though an introductory formula appears; cf. T. Moritz, *A Profound Mystery*, 97.

Testament texts such as Isaiah 26:19 ('You who dwell in the dust, awake and shout for joy!'), 60:1 ('Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you'), and Jonah 1:6 ('How can you sleep? Arise, call upon your god!') being suggested, along with other material from, for example, the mystery religions and Gnostic thought. Most recent scholars reject the notion that v. 14b is an altered quotation from the Old Testament,⁶² and prefer to understand it as a fragment of an early Christian hymn that was originally associated with baptism. The readers would be reminded of the summons to awake and the promise they received at their baptism. As a result, they are now urged to live in the light of that life-changing experience.

However, several caveats to the current scholarly view need to be entered before we can satisfactorily nail down the meaning and function of this hymnic piece within the flow of vv. 8-14. As T. Moritz has claimed (97-116), the issues seem to be more nuanced than the scholarly consensus allows. First, the links with and dependence on the Old Testament context of Isaiah are considerably stronger than most recent writers concede. Given the other connections between Ephesians and Isaiah that have already been noted,⁶³ it is necessary to examine Isaiah 26:19 and 60:1, 2 within the wider theological and salvation historical context of this Old Testament prophecy. Secondly, whatever the original setting of this three-line hymn (whether baptismal or not), the argument of Ephesians 5:8-14 has to do with believers' behaviour, and the possible effects of this on those who live in darkness. The hymnic piece must be interpreted within the flow of these verses, not in some supposed 'earlier life'.

(1) Although Ephesians 5:14b does not correspond precisely to any Old Testament text, or apparently to a combination of such texts, it nevertheless has structural, linguistic and conceptual connections with Isaiah 26:19 and 60:1-2.⁶⁴ According to Moritz (100-105), this three-line early Christian hymn was influenced by these Old Testament passages. The following points are noted:

(a) The rhythmic pattern of Isaiah 26:19 is close to that of Ephesians 5:14b, while there are significant verbal connections between the two texts.⁶⁵ Both verses use *aniste\mi* ('rise, arise') and *egeiro* ('wake, rise, get up') as well as the term 'the dead' (*hoi nekroi*). The address in Ephesians to the 'sleeper', which is a euphemism for death (check Barth

⁶² Neither the mystery religions nor Gnostic sources provide an appropriate background for understanding either the imagery or the main elements of the citation.

⁶³ Note the links between Eph. 2:13, 17 and Is. 57:19; Eph. 4:30 and Is. 63:10; Eph. 6:14, 15, 17 and Is. 59:17; cf. 11:5; 52:7.

⁶⁴ Is. 26:19, ajnasthvsontai oiJ nekroiv
 kai; ejgerqhvsontai oiJ ejn toi'" mnhmeivoi"
 kai; eujfranqhvsontai oiJ ejn th'/ gh'/.

Is. 60:1, 2, Fwtivzou fwtivzou, jIerousalh;m
 h{kei gavr sou to; fw"
 kai; hJ dovxa kurivou ejpi; se; ajnatevtalken.
 ijdou; skovtoß kai; gnovfoß kaluvyei gh'n ejpΔ e[qnh
 ejpi; de; se; fanhvsetai kuvrioß kai; hJ dv/xa aujtou' ejpi; se; ojfqhvsetai.

⁶⁵ T. Moritz, *A Profound Mystery*, 101-102.

refs.), corresponds to the mention of ‘those in the tombs’ (Is. 26:19). The Isaiah text appears in a narrative, and so the verbs are in the indicative mood. Ephesians, on the other hand, uses imperatives rather than indicatives. This does not indicate a lack of connection between the two texts (as Noack complains); only that Paul has adapted the narrative material to a new exhortatory setting.⁶⁶

(b) There are substantial links between the Ephesians context and Isaiah 60:1-2.⁶⁷ The light-darkness motif which dominates the opening verses of this Old Testament passage provides a natural point of connection with Ephesians 5:8-14. In the third line of the hymn, the original ‘Lord’ (*kyrios*) has understandably been changed to ‘Christ’, while the more powerful and intense verb *epiphausko* (‘shine’) appears in place of the more common *phaino* (‘appear’). This New Testament hapax was used in the LXX to describe the shining of the sun (Jb. 31:26) and the moon (Jb. 25:5), and it conveys the idea of a dominating, transforming light in the midst of darkness. The final line of the hymn, then, with this strong verb *epiphausko* (‘shine’), summarizes these opening, programmatic verses of Isaiah 60 with their reference to the glory of the Lord rising over Zion like the sun and effecting the transformation of the Lord’s people. This wider Old Testament context is not unimportant for helping us determine the function of the hymnic piece within Ephesians 5:8-14.

(c) The textual differences between Ephesians 5:14b and Isaiah 26:19; 60:1, 2, on the one hand, and the linguistic and conceptual connections between the Old Testament material and the Ephesians reference, on the other, are best accounted for if one assumes that an early Christian hymn has been based on these two Old Testament passages.⁶⁸ Perhaps, too, the call to awake in Ephesians 5:14b is consistent with and was inspired by similar calls in the prophecy of Isaiah (52:1, ‘Awake, awake! O Zion’; cf. 51:9, 17; 60:1, 2).

(2) The dominant scholarly view claims that the original setting of the Ephesian hymn was a baptismal one. This alleged background then determines the function of the text in Ephesians: it reminds the readers of the summons and promise they received at their baptism. But serious questions have been raised as to whether this was, in fact, the original setting. Even if it could be shown to be the case, the text must still be interpreted within its immediate context. In fact, one wonders whether Paul was interested in baptismal celebrations, at all.⁶⁹

⁶⁶ Note the similar changes in mood from their respective Old Testament texts in Eph. 4:8, 30.

⁶⁷ T. Moritz, *A Profound Mystery*, 102-104.

⁶⁸ T. Moritz, *A Profound Mystery*, 104-105.

⁶⁹ T. Moritz, *A Profound Mystery*, 107-109, has made a detailed critique, with the following pertinent points: (1) There are significant christological (2:4-6) and ecclesiological (5:26) passages in the letter which could easily have been linked with baptism but where no such reference appears. This is all the more surprising given that the Colossians parallel (2:12, 13) makes the connection with baptism explicit. Ephesians 2:5, 6 speaks of the believer’s co-resurrection with Christ, not his burial in baptism. (2) The only mention of baptism in the entire epistle is at 4:5, where a series of *seven* ‘oneness’ terms appears, and baptism is not emphasized in any way. (3) The unity of Jew and Gentile believers in Christ is spoken of in terms of their being reconciled and created as one new man by Christ on the cross, not in relation to their having been baptized into the same body. Moritz concludes: ‘The evidence within Ephesians points clearly in the direction of general paraenetic admonition, not baptismal instruction’.

Is it more accurate, instead, to speak in terms of conversion?⁷⁰ [This is the way Moritz takes it. ‘It may be conceded that the first line of the hymn may refer to a pre-conversion “sleep” (kaqeuvdwn - present), the second line to the fundamental turn-around at conversion (ajnavsta - aorist) and the third line to the ongoing “walk” (peripatei'te - v15) under the influence of Christ, the light (ejpifauvsei). However, to remind the addressees of the difference in ethical outlook before and after conversion is not necessarily the same as to direct them back to the event of baptism’.]

And what is the point of it? How is v. 14b endorsing v. 14a, or is it as Moritz suggests simply a consequential statement, rather than a causal one? Does v. 14b function as an *inclusio* in relation to v. 8: you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord? Is it to encourage the readers that Christ’s light is able to shine on others, just as it shone upon them? Is there a hint at an evangelistic thrust?

If the readers are reminded of their conversion, then the following context doesn’t give any hint of a focus towards the outsider, except perhaps in terms of believers making the most of every opportunity in relation to them.

The conjunction *dio* (‘therefore’) is linked with v. 14a, as well as v. 8, where the imagery of light and darkness began. The readers ought to know that whatever is revealed or lit up by the light becomes part of the realm of light, because they themselves had experienced the light in this way when they had been converted (cf. v. 8).

Sleep, death and darkness are striking figures which describe the condition of the individual apart from Christ. Conversion is an awaking from sleep, a rising from death and being brought out of darkness into the light of Christ.

The hymn calls upon the non-Christian, as a *sleeper*, to awake and *rise from the dead*. Sleep was sometimes used as an image of physical death (cf. Jb. 14:12), although in this context, sleep and death refer to the condition of spiritual death which has been brought about through sins (Eph. 2:1, 5). Sleep is also the situation of forgetfulness and drunkenness which is part and parcel of the sinful world of darkness (1 Thes. 5:5-8; Rom. 13:11-14). The connection between Christ and the light shining has already been made in connection with the language of Isaiah (see above). There are further links with Old Testament imagery for shining light in relation to the Lord coming to save his people: ‘make your face shine upon us that we may be saved’ (Ps. 80:3, 7, 19; cf. Dt. 33:2; Ps. 50:2), while elsewhere in the New Testament Christ is presented as a shining light.⁷¹

By citing this early Christian hymn Paul reminds the readers of their conversion: they had been summoned by the divine call to awaken from their sleep of spiritual death and to turn from the old life. They had responded to this summons and the mighty light of Christ shone upon them in their response. Let them now live out the ethical implications of this wonderful change (v. 15), the implications of which Paul will spell out in the following

⁷⁰ T. Moritz, *A Profound Mystery*, 108-109.

⁷¹ Lk. 2:32; Jn. 1:4, 5, 9; 3:19-21; 8:12; 9:5; 12:46; Rev. 1:16. Cf. Lincoln, 332.

verses. At the same time, the readers are reminded that Christ's light which had transformed their darkness was able to change the lives of others also.

For further details on Christian behaviour, see Lincoln, 334-335, and Schnackenburg, 229-231.

E. BE CAREFUL HOW YOU LIVE: GENERALLY AND WITHIN THE CHRISTIAN HOUSEHOLD, 5:15—6:9

In the three preceding paragraphs (4:17-24; 4:25–5:2; 5:3-14) Paul has used the language of 'walking' (*peripateo*); 4:17; 5:2, 8) to depict the contrast between the readers' lifestyle in Christ and that of outsiders. Now, in the following section of the letter (5:15–6:9), the same verb appears for the last time as the apostle urges his readers to be careful how they *walk*. This is then amplified in terms of general Christian living (5:18-21) and three basic relationships within the believing household: wives and husbands (5:22-33), children and parents (6:1-4), slaves and masters (6:5-9).

For the sake of convenience, we shall look at each section separately. However, thematically and structurally 5:15–6:9 form a well knit unit. The instructions in the household code of 5:22–6:9 follow on directly from the admonition of 5:21 (*Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ*), which itself is a significant outworking of the exhortation to be filled with the Spirit (v. 18). There is an evident movement within the whole unit, and no sharp division should be made between each of the paragraphs.

The passage begins (5:15) with the final occurrence of the key verb, 'walk, live' (*peripateo*), which has already been employed some four times in chapters 4-6 to spell out the ethical implications of the eternal plan of God which, among other things, involves the readers being reconciled in Christ and made part of God's new humanity (chaps. 1-3). The 'topic sentence' in which this key verb occurs, *I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received* (4:1), introduces the paraenetic material, and it is grounded in (*oun*, 'therefore') these first three chapters of the letter. At 4:17 the readers are urged to *walk* in holiness, and not to fall back into the patterns of thinking and behaviour of their former Gentile way of life. At 5:2 the admonition to *walk* in love explains what is involved in being imitators of God, while at v. 8 those who were once darkness but have now become light in the Lord are to *behave* as children of light, that is, they are to live by values that are opposed to those of the surrounding society. The final instance of this key paraenetic verb 'walk' occurs in the admonition to the readers to be very careful how they *live* (v. 15). This will involve them in being wise (v. 15), in understanding what the Lord's will is (v. 17), and in being filled with the Spirit (v. 18)—the last of which results in the readers speaking to each other in psalms, singing to the Lord, giving of thanks to God and submitting to one another (vv. 19-21).

1. Be careful, then, how you live, 5:15-21

¹⁵Be very careful, then, how you live --not as unwise but as wise, ¹⁶making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. ¹⁷Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's will is. ¹⁸Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit. ¹⁹Speak to one another with psalms,

hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord, ²⁰always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. ²¹Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.

Ephesians 5:15-21 has been aptly called a ‘summary climax’⁷² of the paraenesis in chapters 4-6. At the beginning of this paragraph the key verb, ‘walk, live’ (*peripateo*), which Paul has used to define the Christian ethic, appears once more. The passage further explains what it means to *live a life worthily of the calling you have received* (4:1), the opening admonition and ‘topic sentence’ of the lengthy exhortatory material that extends from 4:1–6:9.

Although v. 15 begins the next major unit in the structure of the letter (5:15–6:9), the paragraph it introduces (5:15-21) has links with what precedes, as well as with what follows. *Living* as wise people (v. 15) is akin to *living* a life of love (v. 2) or *walking* as children of light (v. 8). As those upon whom God has lavished his grace and *wisdom* (1:8; cf. v. 17), they are now urged to live consistently with this, namely, as those who are *wise* (5:15). Such a lifestyle stands in contrast to that of the *unwise*, pagan Gentiles whose *thinking* is futile and *understanding* is darkened (4:17, 18). The importance of *thanksgiving* was underscored in the previous paragraph (5:4; cf. also 1:16). There the giving of thanks was to characterize the readers’ speech. Now in v. 20 this fundamental Christian response of gratitude for all that God has done is to be offered regularly to him in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and as the proper response of those who are filled with the Spirit. Finally, the striking exhortation to *be filled with the Spirit* (v. 18) is connected with and builds upon the earlier references in the letter to the Holy Spirit’s work in the lives of believers (1:3, 13, 14, 17; 2:18, 22; 3:16; 4:30; cf. 6:17, 18). It is this exhortation about the Spirit that sets the direction for the rest of the paragraph (vv. 19-21), for what is involved in being filled with the Spirit is explained in the four clauses introduced by the participles ‘speaking’, v. 19; ‘singing’, v. 19; ‘giving thanks’, v. 20; and ‘submitting’, v. 21.⁷³

This exhortatory material of vv. 15-21 continues the contrast between the behaviour of the people of God and that of unbelievers. In the previous section (vv. 3-14), Paul had presented this contrast in terms of light and darkness, as he focussed on issues of sexual morality. Now, in vv. 15-21 the paraenetic thrust is more general (although some interpret the exhortations more particularly in relation to the community’s corporate worship), and the contrasting patterns of behaviour are presented in terms of wisdom and folly. The first exhortation, *Be very careful, then, how you live* (v. 15), which stands like a heading, is explained by three antitheses, ‘not . . . but’, in the following clauses: (1) not as unwise, but as wise (v. 15b); (2) not foolish, but understanding the Lord’s will (v. 17); (3) not drunk with wine, but filled with the Spirit (v. 18).⁷⁴

⁷² Snodgrass, 286.

⁷³ On the relationship between the imperatives of v. 18 (‘Do not get drunk’ and ‘be filled with the Spirit’) and the following five participles, see on vv. 18-21.

⁷⁴ The three contrasts of vv. 15, 17 and 18, which amplify the meaning of the general admonition in v. 15a, *blevpete ou'n ajkribw" pw" peripatei'te* (‘Be very careful, then how you live’), are parallel, as their form with *mhv . . . ajllav* (‘not . . . but’) show:

mh; wJ" a[sofoi ajllA wJ" sofoiv . . .

15. Once again Paul uses the key verb *peripateo*\ ('live, walk') to draw out the implications of what it is to *live a life worthily of the calling you have received* (4:1), as he admonishes his readers to take great care in the conduct of their Christian lives. Literally the text reads 'watch carefully, then, how you walk'. The adverb rendered 'carefully' (*akribos*) signifies something done accurately, precisely, or after close attention has been given. Together with the imperative 'watch',⁷⁵ it indicates that this admonition regarding godly behaviour is both important and urgent.

How (*pos*) one should walk is then explained by the first of three contrasts, *not as unwise, but as wise*. Although these adjectives *asophoi* and *sophoi* have not appeared earlier in Ephesians, wisdom language has already turned up on three significant occasions in the letter. These earlier instances provide us with some clues as to how we should understand 'wise' and 'unwise' in this context. According to 1:8, 9 it was God's intention that believers should understand his saving plan. He therefore lavished his grace upon us 'in all *wisdom* and insight' by making known to us the divine mystery, the content of which is his consummate purpose to sum up all things in Christ. In the following intercessory prayer (1:17-19) the apostle prayed that God, who had given his Spirit to the readers at their conversion, might impart this same Spirit of *wisdom* and revelation for them to understand more fully his mystery and to live in the light of it. The *mysterion* had already been made known in Christ (1:9-10), but the readers needed to grasp its full significance. The third reference is to the manifold *wisdom* of God (3:10) which had to do with his richly diverse ways of working that led to a multi-racial, multi-cultural community being united as fellow members of the body of Christ (3:10). That divine wisdom is integrally related to the mystery. The latter is shaped by the divine wisdom; at the same time it is reflected and revealed in the mystery.

So wisdom and mystery go together. Truly to understand the mystery is to be *wise*, and commits believers to bringing their lifestyle into conformity with God's wonderful plan of saving men and women in Christ. To be *wise* is to grasp the significance of the Lord's will, as the parallel contrast in v. 17 makes clear ('do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord's *will* is'), which is another way of referring to his saving plan. All of this necessarily involves the *wise* person walking worthily of the Lord (cf. Col. 1:9, 10). But the *unwise* live as those who despise or have no true understanding of God's gracious purposes.⁷⁶

mh; givnesqe a[frone", ajlla; sunivete tiv to; qevlhma tou' kurivou

mh; mequvskesqe oi[nw/ . . . ajlla; plhrou'sqe ejn pneumati

'Not as unwise, but as wise . . . ' (v. 15b),

'don't be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is' (v. 17).

'Do not get drunk with wine . . . , but be filled with the Spirit' (v. 18).

⁷⁵ Although some texts read *pw''' ajkribw'''*, so associating 'carefully' with 'walking' rather than 'watching', the external evidence is in favour of *ajkribw''' pw'''*, with the adverb modifying the watching (note the discussion of Metzger, *Textual Commentary*, 608, Schnackenburg, 234, and Lincoln, 337; against Hoehner, 453-454).

⁷⁶ They have no insight into 'the true nature of things'; Hoehner, 458.

The contrast between wisdom and folly, the wise and the foolish, has its roots in the wisdom traditions of the Old Testament, not least in relation to the two ways teaching of Proverbs (4:10-14; 9; 10:8, 14; cf. Ps. 1, etc.), which is reflected in the later Qumran literature.⁷⁷ According to the Proverbs, the way of wisdom that members of the covenant community are to walk requires insight and understanding into God's will. This involves not simply an intellectual knowledge (though it is included), but also a skill in living, an ethical walk. To be wise in this sense is to demonstrate a perception and understanding that works itself out in practice (cf. Pr. 1:1-7). Ultimately, however, this wisdom of the Old Testament, is for the covenant community, and is therefore set within the context of God's redemptive plan for his people. Those who know his saving purposes should behave in a holy way as the people of God.

It has sometimes been claimed that the interests of Ephesians, here and elsewhere, are narrower than those of Colossians (cf. 4:5), where specific reference is made to believers' behaviour in relation to outsiders. Best, for example, contends: 'Ephesians gives no advice on how to live in relation to the world outside the church'.⁷⁸ But Paul's purpose in this passage has a slightly different focus; it is more distinctly nuanced than Best implies. By using wisdom language the apostle presents the broad sweep of God's redemptive plan, the mystery, for he wants to expand the readers' horizons and encourage them to live in the light of God's declared intentions. This will have ramifications for all their relationships, with fellow believers in addition to those outside God's people, as the following verse makes clear. Furthermore, the so-called mission thrust of Ephesians (see) casts serious doubt on Best's contention that the interests of the author are 'inward' rather than 'outward'.

16. Those who are *wise* will have a right attitude to time. An expression, 'you are buying time', similar to the one used here (*making the most of every opportunity*), appears in Daniel 2:8⁷⁹ in relation to the Chaldeans who were unable to tell Nebuchadnezzar his dream, and so attempted to gain time before their death. If the meaning is the same in Ephesians, the force would be that believers are living in the last days, and so they should try to gain time in order to walk in a manner that pleases the Lord. The verb *exagorazo* ('buy', 'buy up', 'redeem') is drawn from the commercial language of the market-place, and its prefix (the preposition *ek*), denotes an intensive activity, a buying which exhausts the possibilities available. It seems better, then, to understand the expression as metaphorical signifying to

⁷⁷ K. G. Kuhn, 'The Epistle to the Ephesians', 125-126, draws attention to 1QS 4:24 as a close parallel to this use of 'wise' and 'unwise': the sons of light walk in wisdom, while the sons of darkness walk in foolishness.

⁷⁸ Best, 82.

⁷⁹ *kairo;n uJmei''' ejxagoravzete (LXX).*

‘make the most of the time’.⁸⁰ Believers will act wisely by snapping up every opportunity that comes.⁸¹

The reason (*hoti*) for taking full advantage of every occasion is that *the days are evil*. Although this temporal expression has been understood simply as a general description of the presence of evil in the world which has now become ‘widespread and arrogantly powerful’,⁸² Paul’s language, given his eschatological perspective, suggests an additional nuance. In continuity with Old Testament and Jewish apocalyptic thought, the apostle distinguished two ages, ‘the present age’ and ‘the coming age’,⁸³ which is the time of salvation. The former was called ‘this present *evil (pone\ros)* age’ (Gal. 1:4; cf. Rom. 8:18). In apocalyptic literature evil was understood to characterize the last days generally;⁸⁴ this age was dominated by rulers or demonic powers which were doomed to pass away (1 Cor. 2:6, 7). The notion that ‘the days are evil’ (*pone\roi*) appears to be similar to the idea of ‘this present evil age’ in Galatians 1:4 (cf. ‘the *evil day*’, Eph. 6:13).⁸⁵ These ‘evil’ days are under the control of the prince of the power of the air (Eph. 2:2), who is opposed to God and his purposes. He exercises effective and compelling authority over men and women outside of Christ, keeping them in terrible bondage (2:1-3). But the Ephesian Christians have already participated in the world to come, the powers of the new age have broken in upon them, and they have become ‘light in the Lord’ (5:8). Although they live in the midst of these evil days as they await their final redemption, they are neither to avoid them nor to fear them. Rather, they are to live wisely, taking advantage of every opportunity in this fallen world to conduct themselves in a manner that is pleasing to God. How this is done is amplified in the following verses.

80 See R. M. Pope, ‘Studies in Pauline Vocabulary: Redeeming the Time’, *ExpTim* 22 (1910-11), 552-554; and F. Büchsel, *TDNT* 1, 124-128. Cf. Louw and Nida, § 65.42, (an idiom, literally ‘to buy out the time’) to take full advantage of any opportunity — ‘to make good use of every opportunity, to take advantage of every chance’. The middle voice signifies a personal interest of the subject; so A. T. Robertson, *Grammar*, 810; cf. D. B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 421.

81 The participial clause *eixagorazovmenoi to;n kairovn* specifies the means or manner by which the command for the readers to be wise is to be carried out, that is, by *making the most of every opportunity*.

82 Mitton, 188; cf. Snodgrass, 288, and Best, 52. A. Lindemann, *Die Aufhebung*, 232-234, argues that because the present time is evil, the wise person does not have to show it any respect, but can exploit it to the full. But Lindemann’s particular exegesis, as well as his desire to abrogate temporal categories from Ephesians, has not commended itself to scholars. Here, the text asserts that one is to take advantage of the opportunity, not disregard it, because the days are evil.

83 A key statement in Jewish apocalyptic literature about the division of time into two aeons is 4 Ezra 7:50, ‘The Most High made not one age but two’.

84 *T. Dan* 5:4; *T. Zeb.* 9:5, 6; 2 Tim. 3:1; 2 Pet. 3:3.

85 So Arnold, 113. Following G. Harder (*TDNT* 6, 554; cf. BAGD, 271, and R. Dabelstein, *EDNT* 2, 1), Arnold understands the eschatological associations of the expression, ‘the days are evil’, to indicate that Paul stresses the note of ‘urgency in view of an implicit speedy end (i.e. *parousia*)’. It is doubtful, however, whether this nuance has compelling support from the immediate context (cf. note the cautions of Lincoln, 342, and Hoehner, 456).

17. The general exhortation of v. 15, which urges the Christian readers to be very careful how they live, is further explained by this second contrast:⁸⁶ they are admonished not to be foolish but to understand what the Lord's will is. Although this exhortation is parallel to v. 15b (*not as unwise but as wise*), it is not simply a restatement of the former: there is a development of thought in v. 17 and a slightly different focus on the Lord's will.

The adjective *foolish* (*aphro\|n*), like the references to wisdom and folly in v. 15, has its roots in the wisdom traditions of the Old Testament. It describes the 'fool' (Pr. 10:18, 23) who is careless (Pr. 14:26; 21:20), lacks understanding (Pr. 17:18) and who despises wisdom (Pr. 1:22). He refuses to acknowledge dependence on God, and acts foolishly and presumptuously. This person lacks discernment in practical living.⁸⁷ Believers are to be very careful how they live, and *therefore* (*dia touto*)⁸⁸ they should not return to the *senseless* ways of the past (Eph. 4:18). In sharp contrast and as a corrective to being foolish (*alla*),⁸⁹ they are urged to understand the Lord's will.

The 'will of God', which is clearly a Pauline phrase,⁹⁰ turns up in important contexts of Ephesians. In the first half of the letter (chaps. 1-3) it is used broadly of God's saving plan, various facets of which are described in different contexts. At 1:9, 10 God's will is identified with the *mystery*,⁹¹ which is a comprehensive concept, the content of which is his intention to sum up all things in Christ. God, who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of *his will* (1:11), predestined men and women for adoption as his sons and daughters (1:5). Similarly, it was through the will of God, that is, in line with his gracious redemptive plan, that Paul was called to be an apostle of Christ Jesus (1:1; cf. v. 11).

Significantly, in the latter half of Ephesians (chaps. 4-6) the two references to the divine will (4:17; 6:6) appear in exhortatory contexts where the stress falls upon believers' responsibility to work out that will day by day. With broad brush strokes the apostle has painted the will of God on a large canvas in the first three chapters of Ephesians; now in the latter half of the epistle he moves to the fine details of the divine masterpiece. According to 6:6 God's will is that which is *done* from the heart by slaves when, as bondservants of Christ who serve their Lord wholeheartedly, they obey their masters. (Cf. Col. 4:12, where God's

⁸⁶ On the three contrasts in vv. 15, 17 and 18 see n.

⁸⁷ Louw and Nida, § 32.52, comment that *a|frwn* involves 'not employing one's understanding, particularly in practical matters', and they render it as 'foolish, senseless, unwise'. Cf. D. Zeller, *EDNT* 1, 184-185.

⁸⁸ Hoehner, 457, thinks that the *dia; tou'to* ('on account of this') draws the foregoing discussion of vv. 15, 16 to a conclusion. It is better, however, to regard v. 17 with its introductory *dia; tou'to* as providing a further exhortation based on v. 15: because it is necessary to walk *ajkribw"* ('carefully'), therefore . . . ; cf. Abbott, 160.

⁸⁹ As already indicated, the *ajllav* functions as a strong adversative. It is also likely that the clause which it introduces, with its focus on understanding the content (*tiv*) of the Lord's will, provides the counter or corrective to being foolish. Note the similar function of the *ajllav* in Phil. 4:6 (cf. P. T. O'Brien, *Philippians*, 491-492).

⁹⁰ Rom. 1:10; 2:18; 12:2; 15:32; 1 Cor. 1:1; Gal. 1:4; 1 Thes. 4:3; 5:18; 2 Tim. 1:1.

⁹¹ It has already been claimed (see on 1:9) that the genitive '[the mystery] *of his will*' (*tou' qelhvματο" ajjtou'*) is one of apposition, and should be rendered, 'the mystery, namely, which he [God] willed'.

will appears in the context of an intercessory prayer for believers to stand firm and be perfect in the light of the final day.)

Turning to the phrase ‘the *Lord’s* will’ at 5:17, several important features are to be noted:

(a) Believers are exhorted to *understand* the divine will, even though God has already made it known (1:9). The apostle is not suggesting that the readers have no insight into this will; rather, in a *paraenetic context* he is admonishing them to appropriate it more fully for themselves. God has revealed to them the mystery of his will in the Lord Jesus Christ. Let them lay hold of it and understand its implications in their day-to-day living. An imperative following an indicative which states what God has already done is characteristically Pauline. Further, it is another example of the interplay between the divine action and the human (cf. Phil. 2:12, 13, where the Philippian Christians are urged: ‘work out your salvation with fear and trembling’ *because* ‘the One who works mightily in you is God who produces in you both the determination to work and the power to carry it out—all in accordance with his good pleasure’).

(b) The verb used here in Paul’s exhortation is *synie\mi*, which signifies to ‘understand, comprehend, gain insight into something’,⁹² while the content to be grasped⁹³ is the divine will. Both the immediate and wider contexts of v. 17 make it plain that the apostle does not have in view simply an intellectual understanding of the Lord’s will. The cognitive dimension is clearly included, but in true Hebraic fashion the believers’ understanding of God’s gracious saving plan is to lead to right conduct.⁹⁴ In fact, living in a godly and blameless fashion is an essential element of the will of God since this was the goal of the readers’ election in Christ (1:4, 5). Because the divine plan has to do with the summing up of all things in him (1:9, 10) and the formation of a people in the Creator’s image who bear the family likeness (cf. 4:24), then wise and careful behaviour is part and parcel of the divine will.

(c) Somewhat unusually, Paul speaks of the *Lord’s* will (*tou kyriou*), rather than God’s,⁹⁵ which is his customary expression (cf. the parallel Rom. 12:2). Although some take *kyrios* to be a reference to God,⁹⁶ elsewhere in Ephesians ‘Lord’ refers to Christ, and should be so understood here. The difference may not be particularly significant. However, there is a christological focus within the preceding paragraph (vv. 8-14), and a flow of thought that begins with the mention of believers now becoming light in the *Lord* (v. 8), moves to their finding out what pleases the *Lord* (v. 10) and climaxes with a statement about *Christ* shining upon them (v. 14). References to the ‘Lord’ and ‘Christ’ are bracketed as a rhetorical device

⁹² BAGD, 790; cf. Louw and Nida, § 32.26.

⁹³ The verb *sunivete* (‘understand’) is followed by *tiv to; qevlhma tou' kurivou*, an accusative of content signifying (‘what the Lord’s will is’).

⁹⁴ Bruce, 379, aptly remarks: ‘The doing of his will is not a matter of irrational impulse but of intelligent reflection *and action*’ (emphasis added).

⁹⁵ A number of manuscripts, including A 81 365 (and several of the versions) read *tou' qeou'* (‘[the will] of God’), thereby bringing the text into line with the usual Pauline expression. However, the more difficult reading, *tou' kurivou* (‘of the Lord’), is clearly original.

⁹⁶ So, most recently, Hoehner, 461.

to frame the paragraph which then leads into our final paraenetic section of the letter (5:15–6:9). Furthermore, a christological focus is consistent with the apostle’s earlier statement that these believers have already ‘learned Christ’, and that their lives were shaped *in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus* (4:20, 21). Christ-centred instruction, with its focus on the truth of the gospel, enables them to discern in specific situations what *pleases the Lord* (v. 10). Let them now reflect upon what the will of the Lord Jesus Christ entails and act upon it.

In our contemporary context, the ‘Lord’s will’ is frequently understood by Christians to refer to matters of personal guidance, and thus to God’s immediate plans for their future. But the divine will in the Pauline letters, particularly in Ephesians, has a different focus, without neglecting the personal dimension. The ‘will of God’ is closely related to, even identified with, God’s gracious saving plan and, as a significant element of this, the formation of a people into the likeness of Christ who will be pure and blameless on the final day. These priorities are presupposed in the apostolic injunction of v. 17. The contemporary preoccupation with personal guidance is wrongly focussed if it is not understood first of all within this framework of God’s gracious saving purposes for his world. Personalised concerns about ‘guidance’ may, in fact, be evidence of a *folly* which stands in contrast to, and needs to be corrected by, a true understanding of the Lord’s will.

18-21. The third contrast which further amplifies what it means for the Christian readers to live carefully and wisely (v. 15) is provided by the two-fold exhortation of v. 18, which begins with the prohibition against getting drunk and concludes with the positive admonition, ‘Be filled by the Spirit’. It is the latter which is particularly emphasized and which sets the direction for the rest of the passage. Paul’s primary concern is to urge his readers to live by the Spirit continually. This exhortation plays a key role within the parenetic material in Ephesians 4-6. It brings to a conclusion the long series of exhortations that began in 4:17, and leads into the participles that deal with Christian relationships generally (vv. 19-21) and those within the Christian household more specifically (5:22–6:9).

Although the point is often missed in the English translations, verses 18-21 form one long sentence, with five participles modifying the imperative, ‘be filled by the Spirit’: ‘speaking [to one another]’ (v. 19a), ‘singing’ (v. 19b), ‘making music’ (v. 19b), ‘giving thanks’ (v. 20) and ‘submitting [to one another]’ (v. 21).⁹⁷ The basic structure of the sentence is as follows:

Do not get drunk on wine, . . .
 But be filled by the Spirit,
 speaking to one another
 with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs
 singing and making music with your hearts to the Lord,

⁹⁷ The NIV, for example, hides the structure of the Greek. It uses five sentences with six commands and one participle to translate the one sentence (vv. 18-21): the commands are ‘do not get drunk’, ‘be filled’ (v. 18); ‘speak’, ‘sing’, ‘make music’ (v. 19) and ‘submit’ (v. 21), while the one participle is ‘giving thanks’ (v. 20).

giving thanks to God

for all things

in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ

submitting yourselves to one another

in the fear of Christ,

wives to husbands . . .⁹⁸

Although these participles have been understood as imperatival (particularly the last one, ‘submit [yourselves to one another]’, v. 21), it is better to regard them as dependent participles⁹⁹ of result¹⁰⁰ which describe the overflow or outworking of the Spirit’s filling believers. Spirit-filled Christians are people whose lives are characterized by singing, thanksgiving and mutual submission.

V. 21 is a hinge verse which leads into the household codes of 5:22–6:9. Many commentators link it with what follows, so that the paragraph runs from 5:21 to 6:9. But this structure obscures the fact that all *five* participles (including ‘submitting’ of v. 21) modify the imperative ‘be filled [by the Spirit]’, and that the ‘house codes’ which follow in 5:22–6:9 are ‘*explicit instances of submission within the body of Christ*’.¹⁰¹ On the other hand, to commence a separate paragraph at v. 22 destroys the relationship to the theme of submission

⁹⁸ Cf. G. D. Fee, *God’s Empowering Presence*, 719.

⁹⁹ The reasons are as follows: (1) the imperatival participle is less frequent in the New Testament, than some have contended. Note the recent discussion of D. B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar*, 650-652 (cf. 613 for further bibliographical details); contra BDF §468(2). (2) The semantic and stylistic situation of Ephesians 5:18-21 is different from that of other instances of the imperatival participle. In this paragraph all five participles are anarthrous and follow the main verb, plhrou'sqe (‘be filled’). Stylistically, Ephesians has other examples of dependent participles, the most obvious example of which is 1:3-14 where several are strung together. (3) The asyndeton at v. 22, together with the lack of an imperative uJpotavssesqe (‘submit’), has led texts (e.g. NA²⁷) and translations (e.g. RSV, NRSV, NIV), as well as commentators, to consider that uJpotassovmenoi has been borrowed from v. 21, and taken as an imperative. But in spite of the distance from v. 18, uJpotassovmenoi is best read with the four preceding participles—there are no indicators in the Greek that it should be taken otherwise. The asyndeton at the beginning of the household tables in v. 22 is unusual for Ephesians: this passage on the household is the only major section in the body of the letter which commences without a conjunction. It suggests that 5:22–6:9 is not a separate unit but is more closely connected with the preceding than many have allowed. So D. B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar*, 651 (cf. 639, 644-645, 659), who adds that it is as though the instruction in vv. 18-21 is ‘ringing in the ears’ of the hearers as they turn to the section on the extended family. Cf. G. D. Fee, *God’s Empowering Presence*, 719, and Snodgrass, 286-287.

¹⁰⁰ This fits the context better than the suggestion that these are participles of means, manner or attendant circumstances. Cf. the discussion of D. B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar*, 639, 644-645. Recently Lincoln, 345, G. D. Fee, *God’s Empowering Presence*, 721, and Snodgrass, 287 (cf. Schnackenburg, 233) have taken the participles as describing the beneficial results of being filled by the Spirit.

¹⁰¹ Snodgrass, 286 (his emphasis). See n.

in v. 21,¹⁰² while the English translations (cf. NIV) which commence a fresh paragraph in v. 21 lose ‘the focus on submission as an essential mark of being filled with God’s Spirit’.¹⁰³ Thematically and structurally 5:15–6:9 forms a well-knit unit.

18. The opening prohibition, ‘Do not get drunk with wine’, is rather surprising and one wonders how much the readers would have been prepared for it. The more specific nature of the admonition, the wording of which corresponds with the LXX of Proverbs 23:31 (see below), introduces a change from the preceding general exhortations. Is there some particular reason for this prohibition, or is it part of the more general exhortatory material which also acts as a foil to the positive exhortation to be filled by the Spirit? The following suggestions merit consideration:

(1) Some have alleged that Paul was aware of misconduct among Christians in Asia Minor, similar to the supposed (though unlikely) drunkenness at the Lord’s Table in Corinth (1 Cor. 11:21). There is, however, no evidence to support this. Further, one would have expected the apostle to be more specific in his criticism had drunkenness been the particular problem within their congregational meetings.

(2) Others understand Paul’s prohibition to be directed against pagan mystery cult celebrations, especially the cult of Dionysius, the god of wine, in which the Gentile Christian readers may have previously participated. A major feature of this worship was the holding of orgies that included heavy intoxication with wine. The purpose was to cause Dionysius to enter and fill the worshipper’s body so that he or she would comply with the deity’s will. Interpreting the prohibition of v. 18 against this background is obviously attractive: Being filled by the Spirit is to be substituted for getting drunk with wine, speaking in psalms and singing in one’s heart to the Lord stand in sharp contrast to the ‘raving of drunken worshippers singing praises to Dionysius’,¹⁰⁴ while Christian behaviour in marriage, which is expounded in vv. 21-33, must take the place of sexual debauchery in the name of Dionysius. But the real difficulty with this interpretation is the lack of clear evidence. Although such cults were widespread, there is nothing to suggest that they had a continuing influence in the churches of Asia Minor.

(3) From 4:17 on Paul has drawn a sharp contrast between behaviour which characterizes the unbelieving world and that of God’s people. In 4:17-24 the pagan life-style is painted in dark colours and the readers are urged not to go back to these old ways. Instead, as men and women who have ‘learned Christ’ (v. 20), they are to live according to the ‘new man’. The antithesis between the two ‘ways’ continues first in the concrete exhortations of the following paraenesis (4:25–5:2), then in terms of the light-darkness contrast at 5:8-14, with its particular mention of their having become ‘light in the Lord’ (v. 8), and finally with reference to wisdom and folly in the material immediately preceding (vv. 15-17). The

¹⁰² Note the repetition of the word ‘fear’ in vv. 21 and 33; the term functions as a rhetorical device bracketing the section (vv. 21-33) together as a unit as the apostle returns to the same theme with which he began.

¹⁰³ Snodgrass, 287. See n.

¹⁰⁴ C. Rogers, ‘The Dionysian Background of Ephesians 5:18’, *BibSac* 136 (1979), 249-257, esp. 257, who is followed, among others, by T. Moritz, *A Profound Mystery*, 94-95; cf. M. Hengel, *Between Jesus and Paul*, 188.

rejection of drunkenness at v. 18 (with its contrasting exhortation to be filled by the Spirit) is a continuation of this same antithesis, for drunkenness is depicted in the Pauline paraenesis as epitomizing the ways of darkness (1 Thess. 5:6-8; Rom. 13:12, 13).¹⁰⁵ It leads to¹⁰⁶ dissipation (*asotia*), that is, to sexual excess and debauchery,¹⁰⁷ for those who are drunk give way to dissolute and reckless deeds. Drunkenness lay at the centre of the destructive and unacceptable lifestyle that belonged to the readers' past, and was no longer consistent with membership of the new people of God. The apostle's prohibition, then, is part of more general exhortatory material, and is not as abrupt or sharply different from the preceding admonitions as might first appear.¹⁰⁸ Further, Paul's use of an Old Testament wisdom text (Pr. 23:31), which appears within a paragraph (vv. 29-35) that rejects drunkenness as inappropriate for those who belong to the Lord's covenant people,¹⁰⁹ makes sense within the immediate flow of the paraenesis where the readers are being urged to walk *wisely* (Eph. 5:15-18).

(4) The prohibition, 'do not get drunk with wine', serves as a foil to its positive counterpart, 'be filled by the Spirit', which is the apostle's particular concern. While the warning never¹¹⁰ to get drunk is a timely one, it is the latter admonition which receives the emphasis, and the results of this infilling are amplified in the participial clauses which follow (see above). The readers have already been told that they have been 'sealed' by the Holy Spirit, and that they must not 'grieve' him (1:13; 4:30). Now they are bidden to be filled by

¹⁰⁵ Note the other New Testament references to this vice: Mt. 24:49; Lk. 12:45; 1 Cor. 5:11; 6:10; 1 Tim. 3:8; Tit. 2:3; 1 Pet. 4:3.

¹⁰⁶ *ejn w/ ejstin ajswtiva* means 'in which is excess'. The relative prepositional phrase *ejn w/* ('in which') picks up the previous clause *mh; mequvskesqe oi[nw/* ('don't get drunk with wine'), not simply the noun *oi[nw/* ('with wine'): it is in the drunkenness caused by wine that there is excess or recklessness.

¹⁰⁷ *ajswtiva* (which according to Louw and Nida, § 88.96, signifies behaviour which shows lack of concern or thought for the consequences of an action—'senseless deeds, reckless deeds, recklessness') is condemned in Tit. 1:6 (children of elders must not be guilty of 'debauchery') and 1 Pet. 4:4 (where it is associated with drunkenness and previously characterized the lives of those converted from paganism). At Lk. 15:13 the corresponding adverb (*ajswvtw*) describes the 'riotous living' by which the prodigal son wasted his inheritance.

¹⁰⁸ Cf. G. D. Fee, *God's Empowering Presence*, 720, following Schnackenburg, 236, and Lincoln, 345-346. A. W. D. Hui, 'Concept', 311, thinks that 5:15-21, 'contrasts two completely different lifestyles. The Spirit-filled life of the believer stands in opposition to the licentious life of the drunkard'.

¹⁰⁹ The wording of this prohibition against drunkenness coincides fully with the LXX A text of Proverbs 23:31 (*mh; mequvskesqe oi[nw/*). Some contend that its use in Ephesians is indirect, having been mediated through Jewish ethical traditions. Attention is often drawn to the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* (esp. *T. Jud.* 14:1; cf. *T. Iss.* 7:2-3; *T. Jud.* 11:2; 12:3; 13:6; 16:1), since warnings against drunkenness are there, as in Ephesians, linked with warnings against debauchery (cf. Gnllka, 269, Lincoln, 340, and note the discussion of T. Moritz, *A Profound Mystery*, 94). While the mediation of this text through Jewish ethical traditions is possible, it may be more complicated than is necessary, given the way that the Old Testament is handled elsewhere in Ephesians.

¹¹⁰ The exhortation in the present tense (*mh; mequvskesqe*) does not signify that the Ephesians had been getting drunk and that Paul was urging them to stop. Rather, it has the sense of prohibiting a course of action, viewed as an ongoing process. Note the discussion of D. B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar*, 714-717, following the ground-breaking work of K. L. , 'Aspect in Imperative Constructions in New Testament Greek', *NovT* 27 (1985), 201-226; cf. A. T. Robertson, *Grammar*, 854, 890, C. F. D. Moule, *Idiom Book*, 21, S. E. Porter, *Verbal Aspect*, 357, and *Idioms*, 54.

the Spirit, and this is consonant with their living as children of light (v. 8) and walking wisely (v. 15).

The wording of Paul's imperative is unusual, since it is unparalleled elsewhere in the Bible. Rather than admonish his Christian readers to 'be full of the Spirit', which might be a closer counterpart to being full of wine, the apostle urges them to 'be filled continually¹¹¹ by the Spirit'. The usual rendering of this exhortation is 'be filled *with* the Spirit', which is rather ambiguous, since 'with' may be understood instrumentally (and therefore equivalent to 'by'),¹¹² or, in line with the dominant view, it may be taken to refer to the Holy Spirit as the content with which believers are filled. Some interpreters, following the lead of J. Armitage Robinson, think that *plevrousthe en pneumati* signifies both (1) *by* the Spirit that believers are to be filled, and (2) *with* the Spirit as the content of the fulness.¹¹³ But the latter raises important syntactical difficulties. There are no other examples in the Greek Bible of the verb *plevroo* ('fill') followed by the preposition *en* with the dative case (as *en pneumati* here) to indicate content.¹¹⁴ The flow of the argument does not demand such an interpretation (in fact, the reverse is true), while understanding *en pneumati* as an instrumental dative,¹¹⁵ indicating the *means* by which believers are filled (i.e. by the Holy Spirit),¹¹⁶ is preferable syntactically and makes better sense.

On this interpretation, the content of the filling is not specifically mentioned. However, the earlier uses of the 'fulness' (*plevroo*) language in Ephesians are determinative for understanding what that fulness is here at 5:18. According to 1:23 the church as Christ's body already shares *his* fulness. (At Col. 1:19; 2:9, the divine fulness is perfectly found in Christ, and from him believers have already come to fulness of life [*este peplevro\menoi*,

111 The present imperative (plhrou'sqe) suggests that the Spirit's infilling is to be continual.

112 Hoehner, 464, 465, argues for an instrumental understanding of *en pneumati*, but translates the exhortation: 'Be filled *with* the Spirit' (emphasis added).

113 Robinson, 203-204, considers that the preposition *en* signifies instrumentality (or agency: cf. 1 Cor. 12:3, 13; Rom. 15:16), so that the clause is rendered: 'Let your fulness be that which comes through the Holy Spirit'. But he concludes that while 'Be filled with the Spirit' is 'not strictly accurate, [it] suffices to bring out the general sense of the passage'. Note also Bruce, 379-380; Snodgrass, 290; Lincoln, 344, who states: 'Believers are to be filled by the Spirit and thus also filled with the Spirit'; and G. D. Fee, *God's Empowering Presence*, 721, who thinks that *en pneumati* indicates the 'means' by which believers are filled. However, he then claims that it is 'but a short step' to seeing the Spirit as the 'substance' with which one is filled.

114 Normally verbs of filling are followed by a genitive case to indicate the content with which one is filled (cf. Phil. 1:11). There are three possible instances of *plevroo* ('fill') taking a dative of content (Rom. 1:29; 2 Cor. 7:4; Lk. 2:40), but no clear examples with the preposition *en* plus the dative case.

115 The instrumental use of *en pneumati* is consistent with other references in Paul (1 Cor. 12:3, 13; Rom. 15:16), while in the present context the notion of the Spirit as the instrument in sealing believers appears: at 4:30 the Holy Spirit of God is the one 'by whom' (*en w/l*) they were sealed. See the writers listed at n. 113, as well as D. B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar*, 375; and Hoehner, 465. Although some exegetes acknowledge that *en pneumati* could denote the sphere of the Spirit, most prefer the instrumental sense; note Hoehner's discussion, 465.

116 Earlier commentators understood this difficult expression to mean, 'be filled in one's own spirit' (note, for example, Abbott, 161-162). But this view has not convinced later scholars on the grounds that it is not consistent with Pauline usage generally, the context of the letter as a whole (where, apart from 2:2, all twelve other instances of *pneuma* refer to the Holy Spirit), or the immediate context.

2:10].) In the ‘hinge’ prayer of 3:19, which introduces the latter half of Ephesians, the apostle’s climactic petition is that his Christian readers will ‘be filled to all the fulness of God’ (*eis pan to ple\ro\ma tou theou*), a reference not simply to the Father but to the triune God who is the content of this fulness. According to 4:10 the ascended Christ is the agent who fills all things, and this he does by giving spiritual gifts (i.e. gifted ministers) to his people (4:11). The final goal to which the body of Christ is moving is mature manhood, and this is defined in terms of the fulness of Christ (4:13).

In the light of these earlier instances of the ‘fulness’ language, then, we conclude that the content with which believers have been (or are being) filled is the fulness of (the triune) God or of Christ. No other text in Ephesians *focuses* specifically on the Holy Spirit as the *content* of this fulness. It is better, then, to understand 5:18 in terms of the Spirit’s mediating the fulness of God and Christ to the believer,¹¹⁷ a notion which is generally consistent with Pauline theology. This conclusion accords well with the parallel passage in Colossians, ‘Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another in all wisdom by means of Spirit-inspired psalms, hymns and songs, singing thankfully to God with your whole being’ (Col. 3:16). It also synchronizes with the preceding context of Ephesians 5:15-17, where believers are urged to walk wisely (v. 15) and to understand what the Lord’s [i.e. Christ’s] will is. They will be enabled to do this as the Holy Spirit mediates God’s or Christ’s fulness to them.

It is obvious from these references to the fulness terminology in Ephesians that the exhortation to be filled by the Spirit is part of the eschatological tension between the ‘already’ and the ‘not yet’.¹¹⁸ The church as Christ’s body *already* shares his fulness (1:23). Yet Paul’s petition for his readers (3:14-19), which is based on God’s mighty salvation effected in the Lord Jesus and described in the first three chapters of Ephesians, is that they might be filled to all the fulness of God (v. 19). Paul’s intercession presupposes that the readers have *not yet* been filled: God begins to answer this petition in the here and now, and he will consummate his work on the final day when the readers are filled with *all* his fulness. Similarly, the body of Christ has *not yet* reached mature manhood; it is moving towards the fulness of Christ (4:13). And in the process the Holy Spirit is powerfully at work transforming believers both individually and corporately into the likeness of Christ.

Further, although there is a strong emphasis on God’s activity in bringing his people to fulness, this transforming work is not done apart from their personal involvement. Once again, the interplay between the divine and the human emerges. The petition of 3:19, which anticipates this exhortation, is addressed to ‘the Father’, and this, together with the passive ‘that you may be filled’, makes it clear that God is the one who accomplishes this total infilling. According to 4:10, Christ fills all things and gives special ministers to his people which leads ultimately to his body reaching fulness. In 5:18 it is ‘by the Spirit’ that God’s people are filled. At the same time believers, both individually and corporately, are to be wholly and utterly involved in this process of infilling. All are actively engaged in building Christ’s body so that it reaches mature manhood, that is, his fulness (4:12-13). All are urged to be imitators of God, and this involves walking in love after the pattern of Christ’s love

¹¹⁷ Lincoln, 344. D. B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar*, 375, on the grounds that Christ is the agent of the filling in 4:10, claims that in 5:18: ‘Believers are to be filled *by* Christ *by means of* the Spirit *with* the content of the fullness of God’.

¹¹⁸ Surprisingly, for all that is said about the emphasis on realised eschatology in Ephesians, the majority of the ‘fulness/filled’ references are part of the eschatological ‘not yet’.

(5:1, 2). Believers are the recipients of the exhortation at 5:18 for, although we do not fill ourselves, we are to be receptive to the Spirit's transforming work, making us into the likeness (i.e. fulness) of God and Christ. We are to be subject to the Spirit's control (cf. 1:17; 3:16), which is tantamount to letting Christ's word rule in our lives (Col. 3:16), so that we may walk wisely (Eph. 5:15)¹¹⁹ and understand more fully the Lord's will (v. 17). The goal is to attain to what in principle we already have in Christ—fulness and spiritual maturity.

19. If drunkenness leads to dissolute behaviour, then Spirit-filled Christians whose lives are characterized by singing, thanksgiving and submission present a very different picture. These divinely inspired expressions of joy and gratitude are reminiscent of the opening doxology (1:3-14), where Christians are encouraged to praise the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ for having blessed us with every spiritual blessing in Christ (v. 3). Now, those who are being filled by God's Spirit are able to join the apostle in offering appropriate praise to the triune God for all that he has done in Christ.

Of the five participles (vv. 19-21) that follow the exhortation to be filled by the Spirit, and which describe the results of that infilling,¹²⁰ the first three have to do with singing: 'speaking [with psalms, hymns and songs]', 'singing' and 'making music' (v. 19). The verse may be structured as follows:

'Speaking to one another in Spirit-inspired psalms (*psalmoi*), hymns and songs (*o\ dai*)

'singing songs (*ado*) and making music (*psallo*) with your heart to the Lord'.

Given the frequent repetition of key words, cognate terms and synonymous expressions in Ephesians, the parallelism of this verse suggests that the two halves should be taken closely together. 'Speaking in psalms and songs' is the same as 'singing songs and making music', a point which is underscored by means of the chiasmic relationship between the nouns *psalmos* ('psalm') and *o\ de* ('song') of the first clause and the verbal forms of the *same* words (*ado*, *psallo*) in the second. Accordingly, the apostle is not referring to two separate responses of speaking in songs (v. 19a) and singing (v. 19b), but is describing one and the same activity from different perspectives. Each clause, then, has its own particular focus and emphasis:

(1) The first has a horizontal and corporate dimension with its reference to believers addressing one another, presumably in formal worship as well as on other occasions,¹²¹ in Spirit-inspired psalms, hymns and songs (v. 19a). This is akin to Colossians 3:16, on which Ephesians 5:19 may be based, where members of the Colossian congregation are to teach and admonish one another in psalms and hymns. In Ephesians the more general verb 'speak'

¹¹⁹ A. W. D. Hui, 'Concept', 306-307, observes that in Ephesians the Spirit, who is active in the believer's ethical life (3:16), imparts 'wisdom and revelation' to God's people (see on 1:17).

¹²⁰ Note the discussion above.

¹²¹ Many recent scholars assume that the speaking in Spirit-inspired songs takes place in public 'worship'. While this is no doubt included, the text does not suggest such a restriction. Presumably believers filled by the Spirit could edify one another in informal ways as well.

(*laleo*) replaces the specific ‘teach and admonish’ (of Col. 3:16), but the sense appears to be the same:¹²² the apostle has in view mutual instruction, edification and exhortation which take place in a range of songs prompted by the Spirit.¹²³ That such hymns can be described as ‘spiritual’ says nothing about their spontaneity; instead, the focus is on the source of their inspiration, namely, the Holy Spirit. And the fact that believers address one another¹²⁴ in these psalms and songs shows that Paul has intelligible communication in view, not meditation, unknown speech or glossolalia.

It is not possible to distinguish sharply between each of the three terms, ‘psalms’, ‘hymns’ and ‘songs’. They are the most common words used in the LXX for religious songs,¹²⁵ and occur interchangeably in the titles of the psalms. The first, *psalmos* (‘psalm, song of praise,’)¹²⁶ is employed by Luke of the Old Testament psalms,¹²⁷ though it came to be used more generally of a song of praise (1 Cor. 14:26; Col. 3:16) of which the Old Testament psalms were probably regarded as spiritual prototypes. The second term, *hymnos* (‘hymn’),¹²⁸ denotes any ‘festive hymn of praise’ (LXX Is. 42:10; cf. Acts 16:25; Heb. 2:12). In its two New Testament occurrences it refers to an expression of praise to God or Christ (Col. 3:16 and here). The third word, *o\de* (‘song’)¹²⁹ is used in the New Testament of the song in which God’s acts are praised and glorified (cf. Rev. 5:9; 14:3; 15:3). Although firm distinctions cannot be drawn between the terms, nor can an exact classification of New Testament hymns¹³⁰ be made on the basis of the different words, taken together ‘psalms’, ‘hymns’ and ‘songs’ describe ‘the full range of singing which the Spirit prompts’.¹³¹ Through these songs members of the community who are continually filled by the Spirit will instruct, edify and exhort one another.

122 So several recent exegetes including Lincoln, 345; M. Hengel, ‘Hymns and Christology’, 79; and Hoehner, 468; cf. G. D. Fee, *God’s Empowering Presence*, 722.

123 While the adjective *pneumatikai* (‘prompted by the Spirit’), consistent with Greek usage, agrees grammatically with the last term *wj/dai* (‘songs’), it refers to all three nouns. So most exegetes; against G. D. Fee, *God’s Empowering Presence*, 653-654.

124 As in 4:32 the reflexive pronoun *eJautoi* (‘to yourselves’) functions as the reciprocal pronoun *ajllhvlwn* (‘to one another’); cf. A. T. Robertson, *Grammar*, 690.

125 M. Hengel, ‘Hymns and Christology’, 80.

126 BAGD, 891; Louw and Nida, § 33.112; and H. Balz, *EDNT* 3, 495-496.

127 Lk. 20:42; 24:44; Acts 1:20; 13:33.

128 BAGD, 836; Louw and Nida, § 33.114; and M. Rutenfranz, *EDNT* 3, 392-393.

129 BAGD, 895; Louw and Nida, § 33.110; and W. Radl, *EDNT* 3, 505-506.

130 New Testament scholarship has claimed that Phil. 2:6-11; Col. 1:15-20; 1 Tim. 3:16, etc. may provide examples of early Christian hymnody. M. Hengel, ‘Hymns and Christology’, 81, following R. Deichgräber, suggests that in early Christian worship there is more evidence of hymns to Christ than of hymns to God. For further discussion and bibliographical details see R. P. Martin, in *DPL*, 419-423.

131 E. Lohse, *Colossians and Philemon* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1971), 151; cf. M. Hengel, ‘Hymns and Christology’, 80.

(2) The focus of the second clause is singing with one's whole being to the *Lord Jesus*. The two participles 'singing songs' (*ado*) and 'making music' (*psallo*) should be considered as one unit, since they are conjoined by 'and', and together, rather than separately, are followed by the one qualifying expression: *in your heart to the Lord*. Both verbs *ado* ('sing') and *psallo* ('sing, sing praise')¹³² pick up their cognate nouns from the previous clause. The additional words 'with your heart' do not specify an inward disposition (NIV *in your heart*), as though the apostle is referring to silent worship in contrast to 'with your voices'. Rather, *heart* here signifies the whole of one's being. The entire person should be filled with songs of praise, thereby expressing the reality of life in the Spirit.

In the Colossian parallel the singing is addressed to God (Col. 3:16). Here in Ephesians praise is offered *to the Lord* which, in the light of this chapter (vv. 8, 10, 17, 20) as well as the rest of the letter, refers to 'Christ'.¹³³ Hymns in the Book of Revelation are addressed both to God and to Christ (5:9, 13; 7:10; 12:10), and a regular feature of other so-called hymns of the New Testament (e.g. Phil. 2:6-11; Col. 1:15-20; 1 Tim. 3:16) is their focus on Jesus as Lord, the Son through whom God has brought his eschatological salvation. Pliny's famous letter to Trajan which described Christians as meeting early to sing antiphonally a hymn to Christ as to God is often cited as evidence of songs directed to Christ (*Epistles* 10.96.7).

(3) In the light of this exegesis, then, v. 19 describes the singing of psalms, hymns and songs by those who are Spirit-filled from different, though closely related, perspectives. The two clauses of v. 19, refer not to two separate responses or activities, but to one and the same action, each with a slightly different focus. To start with, the 'audiences' are distinct. According to v. 19a, believers speak in psalms, hymns and songs *to one another*, reminding each other of what God has done in the Lord Jesus Christ. A further distinction is the purpose of this singing, namely, to instruct and edify members of the body. In a sense, this singing has a horizontal and corporate focus to it. In v. 19b, the singing and making music are directed *to the Lord Jesus*. This activity thus has a vertical focus and a personal dimension, for believers praise the Lord Jesus 'with their whole being'. It is in and through the singing and making music, by which other members of the body are instructed and edified, that praise is offered to the Lord Jesus. The same singing has a twofold function and purpose.¹³⁴

20. Christians filled by the Spirit will not only sing hymns to Christ but also offer regular thanksgiving to God the Father in the Son's name for the riches which have been lavished upon them. The introductory participle *eucharistountes* ('giving thanks') is the fourth in a series of five (cf. vv. 19, 21) which describe the results of the Spirit's filling believers. This participle has four modifiers that draw attention to significant features of the

¹³² For the view that *yavllw* means to make music by singing, without any suggestion of musical accompaniment, see BAGD, 891; and Hoehner, 473.

¹³³ M. Hengel, 'Hymns and Christology', 81, comments that 'to the Lord . . . must certainly be given a christological interpretation'. Cf. Gnllka, 271; Schnackenburg, 237-238; and J. Adai, *Der Heilige Geist*, 229, 449.

¹³⁴ G. D. Fee, *God's Empowering Presence*, 722, correctly observes that 'singing of all kinds . . . functions *both* to instruct the believing community *and* to praise and adore God' (emphasis added). Cf. Snodgrass, 291: 'The purpose of singing is both praise to God and instruction of believers'.

Thirdly, Christians direct their thanks to the ultimate source and goal of all things, *God the Father*,¹⁴¹ and they do this *in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ*. In the Colossians parallel the whole of life is to be lived under the authority of the Lord Jesus and in grateful allegiance to him. Every activity is to be done in his name and accompanied by the giving of thanks to God the Father through him (Col. 3:17). Although Ephesians 5:20 is the only reference in the New Testament to thanks being offered in Jesus' name, elsewhere it is said to be 'through him' (in addition to Col. 3:17, note Rom. 1:8; cf. 1 Cor. 15:57), which means that thanksgiving could now be addressed to God through him as the mediator who had opened the way to the Father's presence. 'Name' in these passages refers to all that a person stands for and what he has accomplished.¹⁴² Accordingly, Christians filled by the Holy Spirit give thanks to God the Father on the basis of who Jesus is and what he has accomplished for his people by his death and resurrection. The 'unconscious' trinitarian focus of the passage is very powerful indeed.

21. Finally, believers whose lives have been filled by God's Spirit will be marked by submission within divinely ordered relationships. As we have seen, v. 21 is a hinge verse: the verb 'submitting' (*hypotassomai*) is the fifth and final participle that is dependent on the imperative 'be filled' (v. 18), and it concludes the list of responses that should characterize the Spirit-filled living of those in Christ (vv. 18-21). At the same time, v. 21 introduces a new topic of 'submission' which is then developed throughout the household table (5:22–6:9), particularly in 5:22-33 which presents the longest statement in the New Testament on the relationship of husbands and wives.

The key verb *hypotasso* ('submit') literally means to 'arrange under'.¹⁴³ It regularly functioned to describe the submission of someone in an ordered array to another person who was above the first in some way, e. g. the submission of soldiers in an army to those of superior rank. The term appears some twenty-three times in the Pauline corpus¹⁴⁴ and has to do with order. Barth¹⁴⁵ discerns two groups of statements: (a) when the active *hypotasso*

¹⁴¹ This is an example which fits the Granville Sharp rule where there is an articular personal noun *tw/qew/* ('God') followed by *kaiv* ('and') together with an anarthrous noun in the same case that describes the first noun, *patriv* ('Father'). For a detailed discussion see D. B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar*, 270-290; and note Hoehner, 477.

¹⁴² Snodgrass, 291. On the significance of the 'name' in a variety of New Testament contexts, see H. Bietenhard, *TDNT* 5, 270-281, *DNTT* 2, 652-655; and A. B. Luter, *DPL*, 626-628.

¹⁴³ *uJpotavssw*, which appeared in Greek literature relatively late, meant in the active voice to 'place under', 'subordinate', and in the middle to 'order oneself under' a leader (cf. Josephus, *Jewish War* 2:566, 578; 5:309), to 'subject oneself' out of fear or to 'submit oneself voluntarily' (cf. Col. 3:18). In the LXX the word was not very common, but was employed in the active voice meaning to 'place under', 'subordinate', especially of God who makes creatures subject to man (LXX Ps. 8:7), the people subject to David (143:2), to the nations (17:48), and the nations to the Israelites (46:4). The middle voice of the verb denotes to 'subject oneself', 'acquiesce in' and to 'acknowledge someone's dominion or power', such as Yahweh's and his people's (1 Ch. 22:18). It came to mean to 'surrender to God' (Ps. 36:7; 61:2, 6) and to 'humble oneself before him' (2 Macc. 9:12). For details see G. Delling, *TDNT* 8, 40. Cf. Louw and Nida, § 36.18. C. Spicq, *TLNT* 3, 424, 425.

¹⁴⁴ The cognate *tavgma*, 'order', 'division', and *diataghv*, 'ordinance', 'direction', appear once each, *tavxi*, 'order', twice and *uJpotaghv*, 'subjection', 'subordination', four times.

¹⁴⁵ Barth, 709-715; cf. G. Delling, *TDNT* 8, 41-45.

(‘subordinate’) is used (or the so-called divine passive), the power to subject belongs to God alone (1 Cor. 15:24-28; Rom. 8:20; Eph. 1:21, 22; Phil. 3:21);¹⁴⁶ (b) the apostle uses middle indicatives, participles or imperatives of the verb *hypotassomai* to describe the subordination of Christ to God, members of the congregation to one another, believers with prophetic gifts, or wives, children and slaves (1 Cor. 15:28; 14:32; Col. 3:18; as well as Eph. 5:21, 22, etc.). In the forty or so New Testament occurrences the verb carries an overtone of authority and subjection or submission to it.

The meaning of this verse, however, is disputed for several reasons: first, is this submission to be understood as ‘mutual’? Secondly, how does the content of v. 21 relate to the household table (5:22–6:9) with which it is closely linked (see above)? There are two main lines of interpretation in response to these questions:

(1) A widely held view is that v. 21 states a general principle of *mutual* submission by all Spirit-filled Christians to others in the body of Christ. In the subsequent verses of the household table, where the roles of husbands and wives, parents and children, masters and slaves are set forth, the focus is on specific kinds of mutual submission in the light of this general principle. The following arguments are advanced in support of this interpretation:

(a) The verb ‘submit’, it is argued, means to act in a loving, considerate, self-giving way towards one another. Such a voluntary yielding to the needs of others, is an example of that self-sacrificing love which is to characterize the Christian community. It is urged elsewhere in the New Testament (cf. Phil. 2:3),¹⁴⁷ not least in Ephesians itself, where ‘bearing with one another in love’ is necessary for ‘making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit’ (4:2, 3), and it is the pattern of Christ’s love for the church which is held out for husbands in 5:25-31.

(b) It is claimed that this view does justice to the reciprocal pronoun *allelous* (‘[submitting] to one another’). Bilezikian, for example, recognizes that the natural meaning of the verb ‘submit’ wherever it appears in the New Testament is ‘to make oneself subordinate to the authority of a higher power . . . to yield to rulership’. However, the addition of the reciprocal pronoun *to each other* in Ephesians 5:21 ‘changes its meaning entirely . . . By definition, mutual submission rules out hierarchical differences’. He rejects any thought of obedience to authority in vv. 21-24, claiming instead that it is appropriate to speak of ‘mutual subjection’ and this ‘suggests horizontal lines of interaction among equals’.¹⁴⁸ For Bilezikian, then, the presence of the reciprocal pronoun ‘to one another’ is decisive. As a result, v. 21 controls our understanding of 5:22–6:9. Mutual submission requires that all Christians, regardless of status, function, sex or rank are to serve one another in love (Gal. 5:13). All become subordinate to one another, and ‘there remains no justification for distinctions among them of ruler and subordinate’. Bilezikian concludes that ‘mutual subjection as defined on the basis of Ephesians 5:18-21 refers to relationships of

¹⁴⁶ Cf. Rom. 13:1; Heb. 2:8; 1 Pet. 3:22; Lk. 10:17, 20.

¹⁴⁷ According to G. Delling, *TDNT* 8, 45, this general rule of ‘mutual submission demands readiness to renounce one’s own will for the sake of others, i.e., *ajgavph*, and to give precedence to others’. Both Delling and E. Kamlah, ‘*U*potavssesqai in den neutestamentlichen Haustafeln’, in *Verborum Veritas. Festschrift für G. Stählin zum 70. Geburtstag*, ed. O. Bocher and K. Haacker (Wuppertal: Brockhaus, 1970), 237-243, consider that being subordinate (*u*potavssomai) bears a close semantic relationship to Christian humility (*tapeinofrosuvnh*), which appears in Phil. 2:3.

¹⁴⁸ G. Bilezikian, *Beyond Sex Roles* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1985), 154.

reciprocal servanthood under the sole lordship of Christ'. This 'reciprocity of such relationships renders hierarchical distinctions irrelevant within the Christian communities of church and family'.¹⁴⁹ Accordingly, wives are to submit to husbands and husbands are to submit to wives, in exactly the same way.

(2) A different interpretation recognizes that v. 21 is a general heading urging Spirit-filled believers to be submissive or subordinate. The particular ways in which Christians are to submit to others are then specified in the household table for wives, children and servants. It is not mutual submission that is in view, as understood above, but submission to appropriate authorities. The following reasons are advanced in favour of this:

(a) The primary argument concerns the meaning of the verb *hypotasso*. As already indicated, the term regularly functioned to describe the submission of someone in an ordered array to another who was above the first, that is, in authority over them.¹⁵⁰ Further, none of the relationships where this verb appears is reversed: husbands are not told to be subject to (*hypotasso*) their wives, nor parents to children, nor the government to citizens, nor disciples to demons. The term is 'never "mutual" in its force; it is always one-directional in its reference to submission to an authority'.¹⁵¹ In its other New Testament instances the semantic range of *hypotasso* does not include acting in a thoughtful or considerate way, or showing mutual courtesy, deference or respect. The term, then, should not be assigned a meaning in Ephesians 5:21 outside its semantic range, especially when its usual meaning makes good sense in this context. This is not to say that acting in a loving, considerate, self-giving way is absent from the household table; only that other words are used to describe this loving service (cf. vv. 25, 28, 29).¹⁵²

(b) The pronoun 'one another' is not always fully reciprocal. Although advocates of the mutual submission interpretation assume that the relationships expressed by the Greek pronoun *allelous* are always symmetrical (and so must mean 'everyone to everyone'), this depends entirely on the context. On occasion, the pronoun does have a fully reciprocal significance (Eph. 4:25; cf. Jn. 13:34, 35; 15:12, 17; Rom. 1:12). But in other contexts a symmetrical relationship cannot be in view. So, for example, Revelation 6:4, 'so that men should slay one another (*allelous*)', cannot mean that each killed the other at precisely the

¹⁴⁹ G. Bilezikian, *Beyond Sex Roles*, 156. Note also C. S. Keener, in *DPL*, 583-592, esp. 588. The majority cited in the bibliography (592), with some variations, support the notion of 'mutual submission' (view [1]).

¹⁵⁰ Elsewhere in the New Testament the verb is used of the submission of Jesus to his parents (Lk. 2:51); of demons being subject to the disciples (Luke 10:17, 20—it certainly cannot mean to 'act in a thoughtful or considerate way'); of citizens who are subject to governing authorities (Rom. 13:1; Tit. 3:1; 1 Pet. 2:13); of the universe which is subject to Christ (1 Cor. 15:27; Eph. 1:22); of unseen powers subject to him (1 Pet. 3:22); of Christ who is subject to God the Father (1 Cor. 15:28); of church members subject to their leaders (1 Cor. 16:15, 16; 1 Pet. 5:5); of the church being subject to Christ (Eph. 5:24); of servants who are subject to their masters (Tit. 2:9; 1 Pet. 2:18); of Christians being subject to God (Heb. 12:9; Jas. 4:7); and of wives who are subject to their husbands (Col. 3:18; Tit. 2:5; 1 Pet. 3:5; cf. Eph. 5:22, 24). For full details see W. Grudem, in *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, 493.

¹⁵¹ W. Grudem, in *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, 493 (original emphasis).

¹⁵² Accordingly the suggestion (see n. 148), that showing 'humility' (*tapeinofrosuvnh*; Phil. 2:3; Eph. 4:2), and 'bearing with one another in love' (*ajnecovmenoi ajllhvlwn ejn ajgavph*; Eph. 4:2) are semantic equivalents of 'being subordinate' (*ujpotavssomai*), is false.

same time as he or she was killed.¹⁵³ Likewise, Galatians 6:2, ‘Bear *one another’s* burdens’, does not signify that ‘*everyone* should exchange burdens with *everyone* else’, but that ‘*some* who are more able should help bear the burdens of *others* who are less able’ (cf. also 1 Cor. 11:33; Lk. 2:15; 21:1; 24:32).¹⁵⁴ In the present context, then, given that *hypotasso* is one-directional in its reference to submission to authority, and that the pronoun *allelous* does not always indicate a symmetrical relationship, it is preferable to understand the clause, ‘submitting to one another’, to refer to submission to appropriate authorities, not mutual submission.¹⁵⁵

(c) The flow of the argument. V. 21, ‘being submissive to one another in the fear of Christ’, is a programmatic statement which introduces the topic of ‘submission’, and this is developed in the household table of 5:22–6:9. The verse is tightly linked with what immediately follows: there is no verb in v. 22, and so ‘submitting’ must be understood from v. 21 for its meaning and sense. The idea of ‘submission’ is unpacked in v. 22 without the verb being repeated. It is as though the apostle is saying: ‘Submit to one another, and what I mean is, wives submit to your husbands, children to your parents, and slaves to your masters’. To interpret v. 21 by abstracting it from the context, not only misunderstands how the verb *hypotasso* would be grasped by a first century reader, but also fails to see the natural flow of the apostle’s argument.¹⁵⁶ What submitting to one another means is spelled out in the household table, with its ordered array in society. And submitting to one another is a significant outworking of being filled by the Spirit.

To conclude. On grounds of semantics, syntax and the flow of Paul’s argument we prefer the latter interpretation. The apostle is not speaking of *mutual* submission in the sense of a reciprocal subordination, but submission to those who are in authority over them.

If this subordination is the result of the Spirit’s infilling believers, then its motivation is ‘the fear of Christ’ (*phobos Christou*).¹⁵⁷ Although many modern translations tone down *phobos* to ‘reverence’ or ‘respect’ (cf. RSV, NEB, JB, NIV, JNB, NRSV), these renderings

153 The natural meaning is ‘so that some would kill others’. To suggest that *ajllhvloi* is fully reciprocal does not make sense.

154 Note the discussion of W. Grudem, in *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, 493-494.

155 This is the line taken by J. B. Hurley, *Man and Woman in Biblical Perspective* (Leicester: InterVarsity, 1981), 140-144; S. B. Clark, *Man and Woman in Christ* (Ann Arbor: Servant, 1980), 74-76; and W. Grudem, in *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*, 493-494. Against G. Bilezikian, *Beyond Sex Roles*, 154, the addition of the reciprocal pronoun *ajllhvloi* (‘to each other’) does not change the meaning of the verb *uJpotavssomai* at all.

156 Because J. P. Sampley, *‘And the Two Shall Become One Flesh’: A Study of Traditions in Eph 5:21-33* (Cambridge: University Press, 1971), 116, 117, regards this submission as mutual, he runs into difficulties integrating v. 21 (‘a general admonition calling for the submission of each one to the other’) with the following household code. The latter reflected a viewpoint with which the author did not entirely agree. To solve the difficulty Sampley treats v. 21 ‘as the author’s critique of the basic stance of the Haustafel form wherein one group is ordered to be submissive to another group vested with authority over it!’ Lincoln, 366, rightly asks: ‘if he disagreed with it, why would the writer have made such extended use of it as is made in this letter?’ Unfortunately, Lincoln’s own solution, which fails to understand *uJpotavssomai* in terms of submission to appropriate authority, is unsatisfactory.

157 The motive of ‘fear’ turns up seven times in the household tables in addition to this reference: Eph. 5:33; 6:5; Col. 3:22; 1 Pet. 2:17, 18; 3:2, 6. The repetition of the term ‘fear’ at Eph. 5:33 serves to bracket vv. 21-33 together as a unit: Paul returns to the same theme with which he began.

are too soft to catch the nuance intended. 'Fear' is still the best translation, for although it does not convey the idea of 'terror' or 'intimidation' for those who are in Christ, it signifies a sense of awe in the presence of one who is Lord and coming Judge.¹⁵⁸ The motive of the fear of God is prominent in the Old Testament, especially as the appropriate response to his mighty acts. It is significant in the laws of the Old Testament (Lv. 19:14, 32; Dt. 13:11, 17:13) as well as in Old Testament piety generally (Ps. 103:11, 13, 17; Pr. 1:7; 23:17), and leads to obedience to his will.¹⁵⁹ On four other occasions in the New Testament is *phobos* followed by one of the persons of the Godhead in the objective genitive. This is the only instance of the fear of *Christ* being mentioned. Elsewhere reference is made to 'the fear of the Lord' (Acts 9:31; 2 Cor 5:11) and 'the fear of God' (Rom. 3:18; 2 Cor. 7:1). The three Pauline texts are in the context of judgment, and thus point to the believer's godly fear in view of the final day. As Käsemann aptly notes: 'The fear of the Lord is no empty rhetorical phrase here'.¹⁶⁰ In the light of Christ's power and holiness believers will be subordinate to those who are in authority over them.

Concluding summary of vv. 15-21.

2. Relationships within the Christian Household, 5:33–6:9

Discussion of the household codes: Lincoln, 355-365, Hoehner, 481-490.

Schnackenburg, 241.

For Eph. it is clear that the author knows the *Haustafel* in Col. 3:18–4:1 and takes them as his basis; we find the same restriction to three times two groups, the same order and the same intention. But it is just as clear that the author has developed and deepened the instruction. Concentrate on the unusual features, the introduction of scriptural quotations (5:31; 6:2f.) and even more on the theological enrichment of the *paraclesis* on marriage.

After the previous section on life in the Christian congregation and how it is revealed especially and in exemplary fashion in a spiritual service of worship, the transition to the *Haustafel* is not simply to be understood as a turning to the 'domestic' life of Christians. The inherited schema represents rather an instruction which is intended to illustrate what is important for the realization of Christian existence as a (242) whole. Christian life in the everyday world is oriented on Christ who desires to establish his rule of mercy and love in the Church, in the respective congregation, in the concrete situation of the individual Christian. Marriage, the normal and at the same time exemplary case of the closest co-existence of Christians, presents itself especially as a representation of a Christian life lived according to the will and instruction of the Lord (cf. v. 17) in the light of the Mystery of Christ and his Church.

¹⁵⁸ Note the discussions of this phrase by Barth, 662-668, and J. P. Sampley, '*And the Two*', 117-121.

¹⁵⁹ H. R. Balz, *TDNT* 9, 189-219; and Lincoln, 366.

¹⁶⁰ E. Käsemann, 'Ministry and Community in the New Testament', in *Essays on New Testament Themes* (London: SCM, 1964), 78, cited by Hoehner, 480.

In this household table Paul deals with concrete human relations within the ancient *oikos* ('house', 'household'), not with abstract ordinances. The first of the three pairs in the table to be addressed are wives and husbands. This lengthy section, which is the longest statement in the New Testament on the relationship of husbands and wives, comprises twelve verses (vv. 22-33). The second pair concerning children and parents consists of only four verses (6:1-4), while the third, relating to slaves and masters, is treated in five verses (6:5-9). Of the lengthy section devoted to wives and husbands, forty words are addressed to wives and 115 to husbands.

In line with the programmatic statement of v. 21 which introduces the topic of 'submission', the three paragraphs of the household table which follow are given as examples of Christian submission. The subordinate member is mentioned first and is exhorted to be subject (*hypotassomai*) or to obey (*hypakouo*). Wives, children and slaves are addressed equally with their husbands, fathers and masters. They too are ethically responsible partners who are expected to do 'what is right' (6:1), 'as to the Lord' (5:22; cf. 6:5), just as the husband, the father and the free man. But the exhortations to subordination do not stand alone; the second member of each pair is immediately addressed and reminded of his responsibilities. The twin admonitions stand together and the first ought not to be interpreted apart from the second. Each member of the family or household stands in his or her place within the created order (at 1 Cor. 11:9 Paul expressly mentions the creation ordinances) and has certain responsibilities.

a. Wives and Husbands, 5:22-33

²²Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord. ²³For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. ²⁴Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything. ²⁵Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her ²⁶to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, ²⁷and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. ²⁸In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. ²⁹After all, no one ever hated his own body, but he feeds and cares for it, just as Christ does the church--³⁰for we are members of his body. ³¹"For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh." ³²This is a profound mystery --but I am talking about Christ and the church. ³³However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.

Pick up the points of Moritz, 131-133, esp. 133, and Lincoln, 352, re the interrelation of Christ and the church with marriage.

Apart from the hinge statement of v. 21, in which believers are to submit to one another in the fear of Christ, and which is unpackaged in the household table of 5:33-6:9 (see above), this paraenesis of 5:21-33 falls into three main sections. The first, vv. 22-24, urges wives to be subordinate to their husbands as to the Lord. V. 22 provides the initial exhortation, and this is grounded (*hoti*) in the husband's headship over his wife, which is like

Christ's headship over the church (v. 23). In v. 24 the admonition is repeated and reinforced by the additional words, 'in everything'. This time the sequence of the sentence is reversed so that the analogy of the church being subject to Christ precedes the exhortation to wives to be subordinate.

The second section, which is the longest in the household table, is the exhortation to husbands in 5:25-32. This comprises two parts, the first (vv. 25-27), in which husbands are admonished to love their wives as Christ loved the church, and the second (vv. 28-32), where the exhortation to love their wives is repeated, but this time grounded in the person's love for himself and Christ's love for the church.

Elements of the first and second sections (vv. 22-24 and vv. 25-28a) are structured in a similar way. First, a command is given (to 'wives' [v. 22], and 'husbands' [v. 25], respectively). Then Christ's relationship to the church is presented as the model to emulate ('as . . . Christ' [v. 24]; 'just as Christ' [v. 25]). Finally, the command is reiterated ('so also wives . . .' [v. 24]; 'in this same way . . .' [v. 28]). The significant variation is Paul fills out in greater detail Christ's relationship to the church in the second section (that is, with reference to husbands) than he does in the first.

More details and perhaps a flow chart (when exegesis is completed; cf. Moritz, 131-137; Schnackenburg, 243-244; and Lincoln, 352-354).

22. Within the marriage relationship wives¹⁶¹ are addressed first, and they are urged to be subordinate to their¹⁶² husbands as to the Lord. Although the verse does not contain any verb,¹⁶³ 'submit' carries over from v. 21, with the imperative being understood instead of the participle (*hypotassomenoi*). The notion of submission in the preceding verse is now unpacked without repeating the verb.¹⁶⁴ As we have already seen, the key word *hypotassomai* has to do with the subordination of someone in an ordered array to another who is above the first, that is, in authority over them. At the heart of this submission, expressed by *hypotassomai*, is the notion of 'order' (*taxis*). God has established certain leadership and authority roles within the family, and submission is a humble recognition of that divine ordering. The apostle is not urging every woman to submit to every man, but wives to their husbands. The use of the middle voice of this verb (cf. Col 3:18) emphasizes the voluntary character of the submission. Paul's admonition to wives is an appeal to free

¹⁶¹ Here the nominative case with the article (aiJ gunai'ke"), rather than the vocative, is used in address (cf. BDF, §147[3]). It is 'wives' who are in view, not women generally.

¹⁶² Although the adjective i[dio" originally signified what was 'one's own', by New Testament times it differed little from a reflexive or possessive pronoun. In this context it is rendered 'their husbands' (so BAGD, 369; Bruce, 384; Schnackenburg, 246).

¹⁶³ The verb 'submit' does not appear in the best Greek text, so that the verse is dependent for its sense on the participle of v. 21. This is the reading of Π⁴⁶ B Clement Origen and several Greek mss. according to Jerome. Other textual traditions supply some form of uJpotavssein ('submit') before or after toi" ijdivoi" ajndravsini ('their husbands'), such as uJpotavsseiqe ('be subject') or uJpotassevsqwsavn ('let them be subject'). Most editors argue for the omission of the verb because it is the shorter reading and it is likely that later scribes included the verb for the sake of clarity. For a detailed discussion see B. M. Metzger, *Textual Commentary*, 608-609.

¹⁶⁴ D. B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar*, 659.

and responsible persons which can only be heeded voluntarily, never by the elimination or breaking of the human will, much less by means of a servile submissiveness.¹⁶⁵

The idea of subordination to authority in general, as well as in the family, is out of favour in a world which prizes permissiveness and freedom. Christians are often affected by these attitudes. Subordination smacks of exploitation and oppression that are deeply resented. But authority is not synonymous with tyranny, and the submission to which the apostle refers is not inferiority. Wives and husbands (as well as children and parents, servants and masters) have different God-appointed roles, but all have equal dignity because they have been made in the divine image, and in Christ have put on the new person who is created to be like God (4:24).¹⁶⁶ Having described the single new humanity which God is creating in his Son, with its focus on the oneness in Christ of all, especially Jew and Gentile (Cf. Col. 3:11; Gal. 3:28), the apostle 'does not now [in this household table] destroy his own thesis by erecting new barriers of sex, age and rank in God's new society in which they have been abolished'.¹⁶⁷ That the verb *hypotasso* can be used of Christ's submission to the authority of the Father (1 Cor. 15:28), shows that it can denote a functional subordination without implying inferiority, or less honour and glory.

The motivation for the wife to be subject to her husband is spelled out in the final phrase, *as to the Lord*.¹⁶⁸ The general admonition of v. 21 to be submissive in 'the fear of Christ' finds concrete expression for the wife in the marriage situation: as she is subordinate to her husband so in that very action she is submitting to the Lord. Her voluntary response is not called for because of her role in society, nor is it to be understood as separate from her submission to Christ. Rather, it is part and parcel of the way that she serves the Lord Jesus (cf. Col. 3:23 of servants who engage in whole-hearted work for their masters and in that very action serve their heavenly Lord).

23. The reason for the wife's submission to her husband is now expressed through the causal clause: 'for (*hoti*) the husband is head of the wife as Christ also is head of the church'. On two earlier occasions in Ephesians the key term 'head' (*kephale*) has been used, both with reference to Christ (1:22; 4:15). Now, for the first time, the husband's headship is stated as a fact, and made the basis of his wife's submission. The origin of this headship is not elaborated here, although in the fuller treatments of 1 Corinthians 11:3-12 and 1 Timothy 2:11-13 it is grounded in the order of creation, especially the narrative of Genesis 2 (cf. 1 Cor. 11:8, 9).

¹⁶⁵ Cf. Barth, 609. M. J. Harris, *Colossians and Philemon* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 178, comments: 'It is a case of voluntary submission in recognition of the God-appointed leadership of the husband and the divinely ordained hierarchical order in creation (cf. 1 Cor. 11:3-9)'.

¹⁶⁶ 'Equality of *worth* is not identity of *role*', as J. H. Yoder, *The Politics of Jesus* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972), 177, aptly remarks (cited by Stott, 218).

¹⁶⁷ Stott, 217. Note his timely discussion of v. 22 in the light of contemporary attitudes (215-220).

¹⁶⁸ 'Lord' (*kuvrio*) is not a reference to the husband, as some have claimed. The plural 'to their lords' (*toi" kurivoi*) would have been written to correspond to 'to their husbands' (*toi" ijdivoi* ajndravsin).

In each of the instances of *kephale* in Ephesians the term signifies ‘head’ as ‘ruler’ or ‘authority’,¹⁶⁹ rather than ‘source’.¹⁷⁰ At 1:22 *kephale* expresses the idea of Christ’s supremacy and authority over the cosmos, especially the evil powers, which he exercises on behalf of the church (cf. Col. 1:18; 2:10). His rule over his people is described at 4:15, and this headship is expressed in his care and nourishment, as well as in his leadership of them in the fulfilment of the divine purposes.¹⁷¹ Here the headship of the husband, in the light of (a) the usage at 1:22, (b) the general context of the authority structure of the Greco-Roman household,¹⁷² and (c) the submission of the wife to her husband within marriage in vv. 22-24,¹⁷³ refers to his having authority over his wife; thus he is her leader or ruler.

The mere presence of the terms ‘head’ and ‘submission’ in this context does not of itself ‘establish stereotypes of masculine and feminine behaviour’.¹⁷⁴ Different cultures may assign different roles for men and women, husbands and wives. What is important here is that the nature of the husband’s headship in God’s new society is explained in relation to Christ’s headship. The husband is head of the wife *as also*¹⁷⁵ Christ is head of the church. ‘Although [Paul] . . . grounds the fact of the husband’s headship in creation, he defines it in relation to the headship of Christ the redeemer’.¹⁷⁶ Christ’s headship over the church is expressed by his loving it and giving his life for it, as vv. 25-27 so clearly show. This will have profound implications for the husband’s behaviour as head of his wife (v. 28).

The additional words, ‘he himself is the Saviour of the body’, at first sight appear rather surprising, and have caused exegetes to question whether they refer to the husband’s role as his wife’s protector, or are part of the Christ-church/husband-wife analogy, thereby

169 So W. Grudem, ‘Does *kephale* (‘head’) Mean “Source” or “Authority Over” in Greek Literature? A Survey of 2,336 Examples’, *TrinJ* 6 (1985), 38-59; and ‘The Meaning of *Kefalh* (‘Head’): A Response to Recent Studies’, *TrinJ* 11 (1990), 3-72.

170 Advocates of the meaning ‘source’ include S. Bedale, ‘The Meaning of *kephale* in the Pauline Epistles’ *JTS* 5 (1954), 211-215; G. D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 502-505; C. C. Kroeger, ‘The Classical Concept of *Head* as “Source”’, in *Equal to Serve. Women and Men in the Church and Home*, ed. G. G. Hull (Old Tappan, NJ: Revell, 1987), 267-283.

171 C. E. Arnold, ‘Jesus Christ’, 365.

172 For recent discussions of authority structures in the Greco-Roman family see Lincoln, 357-359; and Hoehner, 499.

173 Cf. Lincoln, 369.

174 Stott, 225.

175 *wJ* *kaiv* has comparative force, ‘as also’. Cf. BAGD, 897; and Hoehner, 497.

176 Stott, 225. Contra Schnackenburg, 246, who acknowledges that Paul argues from creation in 1 Cor. 11, but considers this argument is ‘no longer convincing to us’. It loses its status in the light of Christ’s headship, expressed in Eph. 5:23b. But if we assume that the ‘author’ of Ephesians is reflecting a view similar to that expressed in 1 Cor. 11, why should the words, ‘as Christ is head of the church’, overthrow the husband’s headship? It is better to speak of the latter being defined or explicated in the light of Christ’s headship. K. H. Fleckenstein, *Ordnet euch einander unter in der Furcht Christi. Die Eheperikope in Eph 5, 21-33* (Wurzburg: Echter, 1994), 216, understands the role of the husband as ‘head of the wife’ to be derived from ‘the patriarchal structure of the ancient family’, but does not tie it to creation.

signifying that as Christ is the Saviour of the body, so also the husband is in some sense the saviour of his wife. While the term ‘saviour’ could possibly be taken in a general sense of protector or provider of the wife’s welfare, so that the analogy of Christ’s relationship to the church can be paralleled in the husband’s ‘saving’ his wife, both syntax and usage are against it.

Instead, the clause is specifically focussed on Christ, not the husband: the personal pronoun *autos* (‘he himself’) is emphatic by its presence and position, and clearly refers to Christ. Nowhere in the context is the wife regarded as the husband’s body like the church is Christ’s body.¹⁷⁷ Further, the term ‘saviour’ (*so|te|r*) which turns up twenty-four times in the New Testament always refers to Jesus or God, but never to human beings.¹⁷⁸ To interpret the words, then, of Christ¹⁷⁹ fits appropriately within the flow of the apostle’s argument. Paul has been urging wives to be submissive to their husbands. The reason for this turns on the headship of the husband, which is parallel to Christ’s headship or rule over the church. Paul then adds that the person (*autos*) who is head of the church is none other than the one who is the Saviour of the body. His saving activity, especially his sacrificial death (2:14-18; cf. 5:2), was for the deliverance of men and women in dire spiritual peril (2:1-10).

[Later in the paragraph the apostle will urge husbands to exercise their role as head of their wives in loving service, patterned after the example of the Lord Jesus whose headship was demonstrated in his loving the church and giving himself up for it, in order to present it faultless to himself (vv. 25-27).]

24. The church’s submission to Christ is now presented as the model of the wife’s submission to her husband. The exhortation to wives in v. 22 is repeated and reinforced with the addition of the words ‘in everything’ (*en panti*). Here, however, the sequence of v. 22 is reversed. The analogy of the church being subject to Christ is mentioned before the admonition that *wives should submit to their husbands in everything*.

Although the NIV’s introductory *now* does not indicate it, the verse begins with the adversative conjunction *alla* (‘but’), which provides a contrast with the preceding clause, ‘he himself is the Saviour of the body’ (v. 23c).¹⁸⁰ This is not true of the husband’s relationship

177 The husband and the wife are ‘one flesh’ (5:31), and husbands are to love their wives ‘as their own bodies’, but this is a reference to the husbands’ bodies not the wives’.

178 Of Jesus: Lk. 2:11; Jn. 4:42; Acts 5:31; 13:23; Phil. 3:20; 2 Tim. 1:10, etc. Of God: Lk. 1:47; 1 Tim. 1:1; 2:3; 4:10, etc.

179 The suggestions that 1 Cor. 7:16 (with its reference to the believing spouse being the instrument of the unbelieving spouse’s salvation) and Tob. 6:18 (where Tobias marries his cousin Sarah to save her) provide significant parallels to the husband being the saviour of his wife, have been shown to be unconvincing by Lincoln, 370, and Hoehner, 500, 501.

180 So the majority of commentators, including Calvin, Alford, Meyer, Abbott, M. Barth, Sampley, Schnackenburg, Lincoln and Hoehner. This is better than regarding the *ajllav* as having resumptive (‘consequently’; so Robinson, 124, 205; and Bruce, 385) or consecutive force (S. F. Miletic, “*One Flesh*”, 102-103). The variations in the English versions (‘therefore’: AV; ‘but’: RV, ASV, NASB, NEB; ‘and’: TEV, JB, NJB; ‘now’: NIV; or the conjunction was left untranslated: RSV, NRSV) indicate something of the difficulties the translators had in understanding the force of the conjunction (so Hoehner, 502).

to his wife. Although he has responsibility for her welfare, he is not her saviour (see on v. 23). So by means of the adversative *alla* ('notwithstanding this difference')¹⁸¹ Paul makes the distinction between Christ and the husband, before comparing the church's submission to Christ with the wife's submission to her husband.¹⁸² By using the same verb *hypotassomai* (a middle voice) the apostle stresses the willing character of the church's submission to Christ, and thus underscores what has already been asserted in v. 22 about the free and voluntary nature of the wife's subordination to her husband.

But what is involved in the church's submission to Christ, and what light does this throw on the wife's submission to her husband? The church's relationship to Christ is the focus of attention in several passages within Ephesians, and these spell out important facets of its submission to its Lord. God has graciously placed everything under Christ's feet and caused him to be head over all for the benefit of the church. The church gladly submits to his beneficent rule (1:22). Christ is the vital cornerstone on whom God's building is constructed. As this new community looks to Christ it grows and progresses to its ultimate goal of holiness (2:20, 21). Christ indwells the hearts of his people, establishing them so that they may be able to comprehend the greatness of his love (3:17, 19). The church receives Christ's gift of grace (4:7), and the ministers he gives for the purpose of enriching the whole body (4:11, 12). The church thus grows towards its head, the ultimate goal of which is the whole measure of Christ's fulness (v. 13), and it receives from him all that is necessary for this growth (vv. 15, 16). In submitting to its Lord, God's people had 'learned Christ': they welcomed him as a living person and were shaped by his teaching (v. 20). This involved submitting to his rule of righteousness, and living by standards and values completely different from what they had known. The church is to imitate Christ's sacrificial love (5:2). It seeks to please its Lord (5:10), by living in goodness, holiness and truth, and by understanding his will (5:17). His people sing praises to him (5:19), and live in godly fear and awe of him (5:21). Accordingly, the church's submission to Christ means 'looking to its head for his beneficial rule, living by his norms, experiencing his presence and love, receiving from him gifts that will enable growth to maturity, and responding to him in gratitude and awe'.¹⁸³ It is these attitudes that the wife is urged to develop as she submits to her husband.

The additional element which reinforces this exhortation (cf. v. 22) is the concluding phrase, 'in everything' (*en panti*). In the Colossians household table the similar expression (*kata panta*, 'in everything') is used of the *obedience* of children to parents (Col. 3:20), and of slaves to masters (Col. 3:22; cf. Tit. 3:9). Although this phrase has raised modern questions about the *limitations* of a wife's submission to her husband (arising out of the contemporary desire to control the scope of someone's authority, specifying what decisions a

181 Cf. Abbott, 166.

182 The comparative particle *wJ* ('as') begins the comparison and this is balanced by the adverbial particle *ou{tw* ('so') and the conjunction *kaiv* ('and') which introduce the second clause. Wives (*aiJ gunai'ke*) are the subject of the admonition, and the present middle imperative *uJpotassevsqwsan* ('let them be subordinate') needs to be supplied (A. T. Robertson, *Greek Grammar*, 394).

183 Lincoln, 372. Cf. S. F. Miletic, "One Flesh", 43, who aptly comments that 'the Christ/church relationship provides direction ("to the Lord"), perception (husband as "head" as Christ is "head") and example (church as paradigm) for the wife's act of subordination'.

person in authority can make),¹⁸⁴ ‘in everything’ indicates that the wife is to be subordinate to her husband *in every area of life*. In this sense it is all-encompassing, and is not, as some have suggested, restricted to sexual matters or some other special sphere of their relationship. ‘No part of her life should be outside of her relationship to her husband and outside of subordination to him’.¹⁸⁵ Just as the church is to submit to Christ in everything, so in every sphere wives are expected to submit to their husbands. The motivation for doing this is a true and godly reverence for Christ (5:21; cf. v. 33).

Furthermore, the exhortation to be subordinate ‘in everything’ should be read within the flow of the argument in the chapter. By God’s design husband and wife are ‘one flesh’ (v. 31; Gn. 2:24), and the divine intention is that they should ‘function together under one head, not as two autonomous individuals living together’.¹⁸⁶ This subordination of wife to husband ‘has a practical aspect in that it creates a greater effectiveness in their working together as one’.¹⁸⁷ And it anticipates God’s ultimate intention of bringing back all things into unity in Christ (1:10; see below).

The question, then, as to whether the wife is to submit to her husband regardless of what he commands is not addressed. But, the words ‘in everything’, however they are interpreted, are not intended to reverse the instructions and exhortations already laid upon *all* believers in the paraenesis of Ephesians 4-6. This admonition to wives in the household table cannot be interpreted as a kind of grid through which all the earlier exhortations are filtered in the interests of serving the husband’s authority.¹⁸⁸ Further, it goes without saying, that wives are not to be subordinate in matters that are sinful or contrary to God’s commands (cf. Acts 5:29).

There is no suggestion that this exhortation to be submissive is intended to stifle the wife’s thinking or acting. She should not act unilaterally, but rather submit willingly to her husband’s leadership. ‘Just as the church should willingly submit to Christ in all things and, if it does so, will not find that stifling, demeaning, or stultifying of growth and freedom, so also wives should willingly submit to their husbands in all things and, if they do so, will not find that stifling, demeaning, or stultifying’.¹⁸⁹ As with the other admonitions in the household table God sets forth these instructions for our good.

184 Rightly noted by S. B. Clark, *Man and Woman*, 83.

185 S. B. Clark, *Man and Woman*, 83. If ‘in everything’ refers to every sphere of the husband-wife relationship, then it confuses the issue to speak of ‘complete obedience’ or ‘full and complete subordination’ (as Lincoln, 373, does).

186 G. W. Knight, ‘Husbands and Wives as Analogues of Christ and the Church. Ephesians 5:21-33 and Colossians 3:18-19’, in *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood. A Response to Evangelical Feminism*, ed. J. Piper and W. Grudem (Wheaton, IL.; Crossway, 1991), 170. He adds that the wife’s ‘submission is coextensive with all aspects of their relationship’.

187 S. B. Clark, *Man and Woman*, 81.

188 Barth, 620-621, points out that ‘in everything’ cannot mean mere blind obedience, especially when it would mean acting contrary to God’s commands. On the other hand, it is inappropriate to ‘compil[e] a short or long list of exemptions to prove that “in everything” actually means “not in everything” (621)!

189 G. W. Knight, ‘Husbands and Wives’, 170.

Accordingly, the wife's submission to her husband is *not conditional* on his loving her after the pattern of Christ's love or showing his unceasing care for her. Later the apostle will make it clear that husbands are not to rule their wives insensitively (vv. 25-27). Those in authority should not 'lord it over' those who are led (2 Cor. 1:24). But the wife's response of submission, which is not an unthinking obedience to his leadership, is to be rendered gladly, irrespective of whether the husband will heed the injunctions explicitly addressed to him or not. Contrary to much contemporary western thinking, there is no suggestion that wives are to be submissive to their husbands only if their husbands are loving. We have already seen, that the church's submission to Christ leads to blessing, growth and unity for God's people. Similarly, the wife's submission to her husband, as she seeks to honour the Lord Jesus Christ, will *ultimately* lead to divine blessing for herself and others.

25. The wife's subordination to her husband has its counterpart in the husband's duty to love his wife.¹⁹⁰ This exhortation to husbands begins the second main section of the household table (vv. 25-32).¹⁹¹ It is by far the longest and consists of two parts: in the first (vv. 25-27), husbands are urged to love their wives as Christ loved the church, while in the second (vv. 28-32) the admonition is repeated and again grounded in Christ's love for the church as well as in the husband's love for himself.

Although the husband's headship (v. 23) was mentioned in the section addressed to his wife (vv. 22-24), Paul does not here, or elsewhere for that matter, exhort husbands to rule over their wives. They are nowhere told, 'exercise your headship'! Instead, they are urged repeatedly to love them (vv. 25, 28 and 33). This love is not simply an affectionate feeling (the more characteristic verb for which was *phileo*, to 'feel or show affection'), or sexual attraction (for which one would have expected *erao*, to 'love with sexual desire'), but involves the husband's unceasing care and loving service for his wife's entire well-being. Elsewhere in both Old and New Testaments the command to love demands the total response of those addressed (cf. Lv. 19:18; Mt. 5:43; 19:19). Here too, husbands are to respond wholeheartedly to the apostolic injunction. Their love, as a result, will involve an act of the will, and is not simply an emotional or physical response. Earlier in Ephesians *love* is seen as a grace that all believers are to show in their relationships with others (1:4; 3:17; 4:2, 15, 16; 5:2). Now it is required of husbands in relation to their wives.

The model and ground¹⁹² for the husband's love for his wife are Christ's love for the church. The character and description of that love are amplified in the following clause, *and*

¹⁹⁰ This does not mean, as Snodgrass, 296, claims, that: 'In the final analysis submission and *agape* love are synonymous'. See above on 5:21, 22.

¹⁹¹ Exhortations to husbands to love their wives occur only infrequently outside the New Testament (see Ps. Phocylides 195-197; and in the rabbinic tradition *b. Yeb.* 62b; cf. Lincoln, 374), while the *ajgavph* word-group does not appear in any extrabiblical Hellenistic rules for the household; so W. Schrage, 'Zur Ethik der neutestamentlichen Haustafeln', *NTS* 21 (1974-75), 1-22, esp. 12, 13.

¹⁹² As in 4:32 and 5:2 *kaqw;*" *kaiv* ('just as also') has both comparative and causal force. It is part of the New Testament's 'conformity' pattern in which God or Christ's saving activity, especially Christ's sacrifice on the cross, is presented as a model of the life style to which believers are to 'conform' (see on 4:32).

gave himself up for her.¹⁹³ Again the verb ‘gave over’ (*paradido\mi*), together with the reflexive pronoun ‘himself’ (*heauton*), stresses the fact that Christ took the initiative in handing himself over to death (5:1, 2). He went to the cross as the willing victim, and this action on behalf of his people was the supreme demonstration of his love for them. Such self-sacrificing love provided the earlier warrant for calling *all believers* to serve one another in love as they imitate God (vv. 1, 2).¹⁹⁴ Now it furnishes the basis¹⁹⁵ for the exhortation to husbands to sacrifice their own interests for the welfare of their wives. Their love, which is modelled on Christ’s love for the church, means they will be willing to make even the ultimate sacrifice of life itself.

In the Old Testament the image of marriage was often used to depict the covenant relationship between Yahweh and his people, Israel.¹⁹⁶ Jesus took over this teaching and boldly referred to himself as the Bridegroom (Mk. 2:18-20; cf. Jn. 3:29). He presented ‘himself in the role of Yahweh in the divine marriage with the covenanted people’.¹⁹⁷ Paul expands on the image in 2 Corinthians 11:1-3 and here in Ephesians 5, and focuses particularly on ‘the sacrificial steadfastness of the heavenly Bridegroom’s covenant-love for his bride’.¹⁹⁸ It is this sacrificial love which husbands are to imitate.

If they heed this apostolic injunction, husbands will not behave in an overbearing manner. All areas of married life will be characterized by this self-giving love and forgiveness. The original order of the Creator, which was troubled by the rule of sin and self-centredness, and which ended in the tyranny of eros and the slavery of sex, can be lived in love and forgiveness.

26. If Christ’s love for the church is to be the model for husbands in its self-sacrifice, then it is also to be their pattern in relation to its goal (vv. 26-27). Accordingly, Paul

193 Stott, 227, notes that Paul uses five verbs to indicate ‘the unfolding stages of Christ’s commitment to his bride, the church’, namely, ‘loved’, ‘gave himself’, ‘sanctify’, ‘cleansed’ and ‘present’. These, he claims, ‘trace Christ’s care for his church from a past to a future eternity’. The words, *Christ loved the church*, ‘preceding as they do his self-sacrifice on her behalf, seem to look back to his eternal pre-existence in which he set his love upon his people’. Although this last point is quite acceptable theologically, it is better, in the light of the apostle’s usage elsewhere, to understand *kai; eJauto;n parevdwken uJpe;r aujth* (‘and gave himself up for her’) as exegetical of *hJgavphsen th;n ejkklhsivan* (‘[Christ] loved the church’). Both expressions refer to the cross.

194 Note the earlier references in Ephesians to Christ’s death and its significance (1:7; 2:15, 16; 5:1, 2).

195 At 5:2 the object of Christ’s loving and giving himself up is ‘us’; here in v. 25 the words are repeated, except that the object is ‘the church’. Cf. Bruce, 386, 387; and K. H. Fleckenstein, *Die Eheperikope*, 187. The difference, however, does not necessarily mean that a sharp distinction is being made between ‘us’ as individuals and the church as a corporate whole.

196 Is. 54:5-8; Je. 2:1-3; 31:31-32; Ezk. 23; Ho. 1-3. For further details see R. C. Ortlund, *Whoredom. God’s Unfaithful Wife in Biblical Theology* (Leicester: Apollos, 1996), the focal point of which is ‘God’s marital love and . . . his people’s presently harlotrous but ultimately faithful response’ (176).

197 R. C. Ortlund, *Whoredom*, 139. He adds that ‘the Old Testament expectation of the marriage of Yahweh with his people, to be restored and enjoyed for ever, comes into the framework of New Testament theology through the teaching of Jesus himself’.

198 Stott, 227; cf. Bruce, 386.

proceeds to spell out the purpose of Christ's sacrificial love for the church by means of three *hina*-clauses): that he might 'sanctify her' (v. 26), 'present her to himself' in splendour (v. 27a), and enable her to be 'holy and blameless' (v. 27c). As indicated above, the imagery from the Old Testament about God's relationship to Israel stands behind this use of the marriage analogy. In particular, the background to Ephesians 5:26-27 is probably Ezekiel 16:1-14 which describes God as caring for, washing, marrying and adorning his people with splendour.¹⁹⁹

The first of the three purpose clauses states that Christ gave himself up for the church in order to 'sanctify her'. The basic idea of this verb *hagiazō* ('sanctify, make holy') is that of setting someone apart to God for his service. Christians are described as those who are 'sanctified in Christ Jesus' (1 Cor. 1:2), whom God has set apart for himself in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 6:11). In an expression which is without parallel in Paul's letters, v. 26 stresses the corporate dimension by asserting that it is the *church* (note the emphatic position of *autēn*, 'it') which is sanctified through Christ's death. Some understand the verb here (and the language of sanctification generally) as describing a *process* of moral renewal and change,²⁰⁰ which is preceded by an initial cleansing from sin (the aorist participle *katharisas*, 'having cleansed', is taken to be antecedent to the action of 'sanctifying'). But the verb refers to the church being brought into 'an exclusive and dedicated relationship with God, as the holy people of the New Covenant' (cf. 1 Cor. 1:2; 6:11),²⁰¹ not to an ongoing process of sanctification, while the participial clause, 'cleansing it by washing . . .', is probably best explained along other lines (see below). Through his sacrificial death Christ claimed the church as his own to be his holy people (cf. *hagios* in v. 27). 'Christ died to devote the church to himself in an exclusive and permanent relationship analogous to marriage'.²⁰² There are two elements: a separation from all that is unclean and evil, and a consecration to God and his will.

Closely related to Christ's sanctifying work is his 'cleansing' the church 'by the washing of water through the word'. This cleansing, expressed through the aorist participle *katharisas*, has often been taken as describing an action antecedent to that of the main verb and rendered 'having cleansed'.²⁰³ On this view, the cleansing of the church is thought to precede her sanctification or consecration (which, as we have seen, has been viewed as a process). Other versions and commentators understand the action of the participle to be

199 Note, most recently, Snodgrass, 297-298; cf. T. Moritz, *A Profound Mystery*, 150-151.

200 Note, for example, Stott, 228; Hoehner, 509.

201 D. G. Peterson, *Possessed by God. A New Testament theology of sanctification and holiness* (Apollos: Leicester, 1995), 136. Against 'the common assumption that the New Testament views sanctification as primarily a process', he argues that its 'emphasis falls upon sanctification as a definitive event'. Both Schnackenburg, 249, and Snodgrass, 298, understand 'sanctify' in Eph. 5:26 as a comprehensive expression for Christ's work of salvation.

202 D. G. Peterson, *Possessed by God*, 53. This notion of setting apart as one's own is precisely what one does in marriage, and thus fits the imagery of Ezekiel 16. Whether Paul also had in mind the special meaning of *qadash* in rabbinic literature 'to separate out for oneself' in the sense of marriage, (as J. P. Sampley, 'And the Two', 42, 43, thinks), is doubtful. Note the criticisms of Bruce, 387; Lincoln, 375; and Hoehner, 508.

203 So RV, ASV, RSV, NASB, TEV, NRSV; cf. Meyer, 294; and Stott, 227.

coincident with that of the verb ‘sanctify’, and prefer the translation ‘cleansing’.²⁰⁴ Abbott argued that the cleansing occurred at the same time as the sanctification but logically preceded it.²⁰⁵ However, in the light of recent studies on verbal aspect, neither the main verb *hagiasei* (‘make holy’), which is an aorist subjunctive, nor the aorist participle *katharisas* (‘cleanse’) is temporally based. Because the participle here follows the main verb, it is likely that the cleansing is coincidental with the making holy.²⁰⁶ The two aorists view each action as a complete whole (not as completed), and any temporal reference must be determined from the context. It is best, then, to understand the participle as denoting the means by which the action of the main verb was accomplished. Christ died for the church ‘to make her holy by cleansing her’ (NRSV). Cleansing points to the removal of sin, while sanctification focusses on being set apart to God. To use systematic theological categories, it is positional or definitive sanctification that is in view here, not progressive sanctification.

This cleansing was effected ‘by the washing of water through the word’ (cf. Tit. 3:5). Many commentators assume that ‘the washing’ refers to baptism.²⁰⁷ But references to washing or water do not necessarily point to baptism, and the only specific mention of this motif in the entire letter is at 4:5, where it is listed in a sevenfold confession but is not specially emphasized. Instead, when Paul speaks of ‘washing’, his focus, as in 1 Corinthians 6:11, is on the spiritual cleansing accomplished by Christ rather than on baptism. Nowhere else in the New Testament is the *church* baptized!²⁰⁸

Further, v. 26 is more likely to have been influenced by the marital imagery in Ezekiel 16:8-14 and the prenuptial bath in the Jewish marital customs than by baptismal considerations. Accordingly, the language of ‘the washing with water’ may well have a secondary reference to the bridal bath.²⁰⁹ When Yahweh entered his marriage covenant with Jerusalem, he bathed her with water, washed off the blood from her (v. 9), anointed her with oil and clothed her with magnificent garments, making her so beautiful that she was fit to be a queen. Christ’s death on behalf of the church was to make her holy by cleansing her with the washing of water, and this is analogous to the bridal bath.

The final phrase ‘through the word’ (*en rhemati*) is closely linked by most commentators to the immediately preceding expression, ‘the washing of water’, and understood as accompanying the baptism. It is thus rendered ‘with the word’, and interpreted either as the baptismal confession of faith or as the baptismal formula pronounced over the

204 AV, NEB, JB, NIV, NJB; cf. many recent commentators, including Barth, 626; Schnackenburg, 249; Lincoln, 375; and note Snodgrass, 298.

205 Abbott, 168. Following this, Hoehner, 509, recently suggested that the participle denoted the means, manner or cause (!) of the sanctification, and the expression was best rendered, ‘in order that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her’.

206 S. E. Porter’s researches have indicated that aorist participles following the main verb in the Pauline corpus (there are 42 out of a total 120) show ‘a definite tendency toward coincidental action’; *Verbal Aspect*, 384 (Eph. 5:26 is cited as an example).

207 The definite article ‘the washing’ (tw/ loutw/) has been taken to refer to a specific event, and it is claimed that the readers would probably think of their experience of baptism.

208 So Snodgrass, 298.

209 Recent commentators, including Bruce, Lincoln, and Hoehner (cf. T. Moritz), support the allusion to the bridal bath.

candidate. The latter, it is claimed, would have included a reference to the name of Christ (cf. Acts 2:38), and so to what he had achieved on behalf of believers. But we have already raised serious doubts about any reference to baptism in v. 26, while the term *rhe\ma* ('word') is used nowhere else in the New Testament in connection with baptism. A better interpretation is to join the phrase 'through the word' (*en rhe\mati*) with the 'cleansing', and to understand it as signifying 'through the word of the gospel'. This is precisely how *rhe\ma* is employed elsewhere in Ephesians, namely, as the preached word of the gospel which the Spirit uses as his sword (6:17; cf. Rom. 10:8, 17; Heb. 6:5; 1 Pet. 1:25), and it is consistent with every instance of the term in Paul (except 2 Cor. 13:1), where it denotes words that come from God or Christ. In the present context, the apostle asserts that the church is made pure by a spiritual cleansing ('by the washing of water'), and this is accomplished through the purifying word of the gospel—a notion that is akin to our Lord's words about his disciples being *cleansed* and *sanctified* through the word which he had spoken (Jn. 15:3; 17:7).²¹⁰ This word is not something additional to the spiritual cleansing effected 'by the washing of water', but as the gracious word of the gospel it is the means by which it is accomplished. In the present context this *rhe\ma* is a word of love by which 'the Bridegroom binds himself to his "bride", and brings the church to himself in love'.²¹¹

Christ gave himself to the church to make her holy by cleansing her. This cleansing was effected by a spiritual washing brought about through Christ's gracious word in the gospel. His love for the church is the model for husbands in its purpose and goal, as well as in its self-sacrifice (v. 25). In the light of Christ's complete giving of himself to make the church holy and cleanse her, husbands should be utterly committed to the total well-being, especially the spiritual welfare, of their wives.

27. The goal of Christ's sanctifying and purifying work, and thus the ultimate purpose of his sacrificial love for the church (v. 26), is 'to present her to himself in splendour, without spot or wrinkle or any other blemish . . . so that she might be holy and blameless'. Just as in v. 26 Christ is the one who makes the church holy, so here also he is the subject who presents the church in all its splendour. In Colossians the general notion of presenting believers holy and blameless appears without any specific reference to marriage (1:22), while according to 2 Corinthians 11:2 Paul's role, as the friend of the bridegroom, is to present the Corinthians as a pure virgin to Christ. Here in Ephesians, however, by adding the personal pronoun *autos* ('[he] himself'), together with the reflexive pronoun *heauto* ('to himself'), Paul goes out of his way to emphasize that it is Christ who will present the church to himself—not the friend of the bridegroom, nor the bride herself. He has done everything necessary to achieve this goal.

This presentation of the church as his bride will be 'in all its splendour',²¹² an expression which probably reflects the imagery of Ezekiel 16:10-14, where Yahweh clothes

²¹⁰ Many understand the phrase *ejn rJhvmati* ('through the word') to be an accompaniment of the cleansing. The cleansing is effected instrumentally through the washing of the water, and this is accompanied by the preached word of Christ; Hoehner, 513; cf. Lincoln, 376. Calvin, , takes 'the washing with water' as a reference to baptism, and 'the word' as the promise which explains the meaning of the sacramental sign.

²¹¹ D. G. Peterson, *Possessed by God*, 53, following Barth, 691.

²¹² *e[ndoxo]* ('distinguished; glorious, splendid') is used of the fine clothing one would find in the courts of kings (Lk. 7:25), of the 'glorious' things that Jesus did (13:17) and of the 'glorious' opinion the

his bride in magnificent apparel and jewellery, so that her beauty is ‘perfect because of my splendor that I had bestowed on you, says the Lord GOD’ (v. 14; NRSV).²¹³ Paul does not say when this will happen, but it seems likely that he has in mind the parousia, for it is then that the glorified church will be with Christ for evermore, and will be seen to be ‘glorious’.²¹⁴ The reasons for taking this line are as follows:

(a) It is better to understand *endoxos* (‘glorious’) of the eschatological radiance and brightness of God’s presence on the final day (refs.), than the glory in which the church currently participates (refs.). This glory is the radiance of God, the shining forth and manifestation of his presence. The immediately following statements in v. 27, which depict the church as ‘free from spot, wrinkle or anything of the sort’, amplify and explain what is meant by ‘glorious’, and, in the light of the following purpose clause (that the church ‘might be *holy* and *blameless*’), are best taken as referring to the spiritual and ethical perfection on the last day. The glory is ‘the perfection of character with which the Lord has endowed her’.²¹⁵

(b) The verb to ‘present’ (*pariste\mi*) appears in Pauline contexts where it can only refer to the final day (2 Cor. 4:14; cf. Rom. 14:10; 1 Cor. 8:8).²¹⁶ This is particularly the case when *pariste\mi* is used, as in Colossians 1:22, 28, where the same (‘holy’, ‘blameless’) or similar terms (‘irreproachable’, ‘perfect’) focus on the occasion of the great assize. Believers will be presented perfect in Christ at the parousia.

(c) The closest conceptual parallel to our text appears in 2 Corinthians 11:2 where Paul speaks of his presentation of the congregation at Corinth as a ‘pure virgin’ to Christ. This is best understood as occurring at the end of the world (2 Cor. 11:2),²¹⁷ and is thus akin to Revelation 21:9-11, where in an obvious parousia reference ‘the bride’ of Christ will be presented to him, ‘having the glory of God’.

(d) Finally, it is inappropriate to claim that, because the eschatological emphasis in Ephesians is on the ‘now’ rather than the ‘not yet’, v. 27 must be read the same way, thereby providing further evidence that this epistle is not from the hand of Paul. Ephesians, like the generally accepted Pauline epistles, contains future eschatological statements as well as realized ones (see)! Our text should be interpreted on its own grounds and not ‘straight jacketed’ along such *a priori* lines.

Corinthians had of themselves, in contrast to the apostles (1 Cor. 4:10); cf. BAGD, 263; and Louw and Nida, § 79.19.

213 Cf. Lincoln, 377. For a recent exposition of Ezk. 16 see R. C. Ortlund, *Whoredom*, 101-117.

214 Those who consider Christ’s presentation of the church occurs during this present age include Schnackenburg, Lincoln, Best and Snodgrass, while those who favour a parousia reference include Calvin, Meyer, J. P. Sampley, Stott, Bruce, Morris and Hoehner.

215 Bruce, 389.

216 The verb *parasth'sai* (‘to present’) was often employed in legal language with the meaning ‘to bring another before the court’. Some take 1 Cor. 8:8 and 2 Cor. 4:14 in this way (cf. Rom. 14:10; 2 Tim. 2:15).

217 Cf. P. Barnett, *The Second Epistle to the Corinthians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), 499. Cf. Bruce, 389.

What is meant by the church being ‘glorious’ is now described in physical terms. Using the image of a lovely young woman Paul states that she will be *without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish*. Not even the smallest spot or pucker that spoils the smoothness of the skin will mar the unsurpassed beauty of Christ’s bride when he presents her to himself. Hers will be a splendour that is exquisite, unsurpassed, matchless. For the present the church on earth is ‘often in rags and tatters, stained and ugly, despised and rejected’.²¹⁸ Christ’s people may rightly be accused of many shortcomings and failures. But God’s gracious intention is that the church should be *holy and blameless*, language which speaks of a beauty which is moral and spiritual. Both words have already appeared in Ephesians: the purpose of God’s election of believers from before the foundation of the world is that they should be *holy and blameless* before him (1:4). They have also been used in Colossians of the eschatological presentation of believers before God at the parousia (Col. 1:22). Holiness and blamelessness will characterize Christ’s bride, the church, on that glorious day.

28. Husbands have already been exhorted to love their wives (v. 25a). The warrant and example for this admonition are Christ’s sacrificial love for the church (vv. 25b-27). Now the concluding application (*in this same way*)²¹⁹ is drawn from Christ’s love as husbands are urged again to love their wives. The main point of vv. 25-27 is driven home as Paul reinforces his assertion with a verb that stresses obligation: ‘husbands *ought* to love their wives’.

They are to love them *as their own bodies*, a statement that is rather surprising, and has been regarded as: (1) a descent from the lofty heights of Christ’s love to the rather low standard of self-love; (2) too demeaning and degrading since the wife is viewed simply as her husband’s body,²²⁰ or (3) at best a commonplace that is rather pragmatic in its self-interested approach.²²¹ But the issue is more nuanced than these comments suggest. The statement applies the second great commandment, ‘You shall love your neighbour as yourself’ (Lv. 19:18), in a direct way to the love which the husband should have for his nearest and dearest

218 Stott, 228.

219 It is possible that $\text{ou}\{\text{tw}''$ (‘so, in the same manner’) looks forward to the following wJ'' (‘as’), with the resulting translation: ‘so also husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies’ (cf. v. 33); note Bruce, 391; and Schnackenburg, 252. But, on balance, it is better to understand $\text{ou}\{\text{tw}''$ kaiv (‘so also’) functioning as a conclusion to what began with kaq'' ; kaiv (‘just as also’) in v. 25. The appropriate rendering would then be: ‘just as also Christ loved the church . . . so also ought husbands to love their wives’. This stylistic construction is similar to v. 24 (‘as [wJ''] the church submits to Christ, so also [$\text{ou}\{\text{tw}''$ kaiv] wives . . .’), and is not uncommon elsewhere in Paul (Rom. 5:12 with v. 18; 5:19, 21; 6:4). Cf. J. P. Sampley, *And the Two*, 141; Barth, 630; Lincoln, 378; and B. Witherington, *Women in the Earliest Churches* (Cambridge: University Press, 1988), 59. See the full discussion of Hoehner, 519, 520, including his treatment of the text-critical question.

220 So, for example, Meyer, Abbott and Barth. In order to get round the difficulty, the Greek wJ'' ta ; eJautw'n swvmata is taken to mean ‘as *being* their own bodies’. But the next sentence, ‘he who loves his wife loves himself’ (v. 28b), endorses the obvious meaning while v. 33 suggests that wJ'' eJautovn (‘as himself’) is equivalent to wJ'' ta ; eJautw'n swvmata (‘as their own bodies’). See, among others, Lincoln, 378.

221 Note Best, 79.

neighbour, namely, his wife.²²² In support of this, Bruce points out that ‘neighbour’ (in its Hebrew feminine form) is used repeatedly ‘by the lover in the Song of Songs when addressing his beloved or speaking about her to others’ (Song 1:9, 15: 2:2, 10, 13; 4:1, 7; 5:2; 6:4).²²³ Both Leviticus and Ephesians assume that a person will look after his or her own interests and welfare. Similarly, in the ‘golden rule’ Jesus urged his hearers to treat others as they themselves like to be treated (Mt. 7:12).

The expression ‘as their own bodies’ instead of ‘as themselves’ (the equivalent in the Leviticus text) is presumably due to the influence of Genesis 2:24 which is cited in v. 31. This Old Testament Scripture declares that in marriage husband and wife are ‘one flesh’. In the context of Ephesians 5 ‘flesh’ and ‘body’ are equivalent (note the shift to ‘flesh’ in v. 29a). Husband and wife, then, are regarded as one person, a single entity. Accordingly, the husband’s obligation to love his wife as his own body is not simply a matter of loving someone else just like he loves himself. It is, in fact, to love himself. Finally, the idea of husbands loving their wives as their own bodies reflects the model of Christ whose love for the church can be seen as love for his own body (cf. vv. 23, 30).

29. As he continues to urge husbands to love their wives, the apostle supports (*gar*) and develops his statement that whoever loves his wife loves himself: ‘after all²²⁴ no one ever hates²²⁵ his own flesh, but instead nourishes and cherishes it’. It is natural for people to regard their own bodies as important. Although some eccentrics have engaged in self-mutilation, and ascetics have sometimes regarded it as meritorious to make their bodies uncomfortable, people generally do not act in this way.

On the contrary (*alla*), each person, and Paul has the husband particularly in view, does everything possible to take care of his body (lit. ‘flesh’).²²⁶ He ‘nourishes’ and ‘cherishes’ it, terms full of affection which are drawn from the language of the nursery and are the very reverse of hating one’s body. ‘Nourish’ (*ektrepho*) appears later in the household table in relation to fathers ‘bringing up’ their children (6:4), while ‘cherish’

222 So J. P. Sampley, *And the Two*, 32-23, 139-142; Bruce, 391; G. W. Knight, ‘Husbands and Wives’, 172, 173; Morris, 186; and Snodgrass, 297. Lincoln, 378, 379, thinks that the language of Lv. 19:18 is reflected in v. 33, but is not necessary for the flow of the argument in v. 28 (cf. T. Moritz, *A Profound Mystery*, 149, and Hoehner, 522).

223 Bruce, 391.

224 The *gavr* functions as an emphatic particle (‘indeed, to be sure’), note Rom. 2:25; so J. P. Sampley, *And the Two*, 143; cf. BAGD, 152. The point is further strengthened with the particle *pote* (‘ever’).

225 The aorist tense here (*ejmivshsen*) has been regarded as ‘gnomic’ or timeless since it expresses a general truth, in this case a proverbial saying, with no particular time reference. So K. L. McKay, *A New Syntax*, 47; cf. S. E. Porter, *Idioms*, 38, who comments: ‘One of the ways in which language users refer to events is to see them not simply as confined to one temporal sphere (past, present or future) but as occurring over time and perhaps as representative of the kind of thing which regularly occurs, especially in nature’.

226 What is referred to as ‘bodies’ (*swvmata*) in v. 28a, becomes ‘himself’ (*eJautovn*) in v. 28c, and is changed to ‘flesh’ (*savrux*) in v. 29a. ‘Flesh’ (*savrux*) is used interchangeably here with ‘body’ (*sw'ma*) and therefore without any negative connotation. Most agree that the movement to ‘flesh’ here anticipates the quotation of Gn. 2:24 in v. 31: ‘and the two shall become *one flesh*’ (*ejj" savrka mivan*).

(*thalpo*) appears in 1 Thessalonians 2:7 with reference to Paul caring for the Thessalonians as a nurse cares for her children. Both words do, however, appear within a papyrus in reverse order to describe the husband's duties according to a marriage contract: he is to 'cherish and nourish and clothe her'.²²⁷ Within the flow of Ephesians 5 there is an inner appropriateness in the husband tenderly cherishing and nurturing his wife since they have in fact become 'one flesh' (v. 31).

But it is the powerful example²²⁸ of Christ that is again invoked. For all its imperfections Christ nurtures and tenderly cares for his body, the church. He is both its Head and Saviour (1:22-23; 4:15; 5:23). He gave himself up for the church in order to sanctify it (5:25, 26), and he constantly provides for its nourishment and growth (4:11-16).²²⁹ Let each husband, then, follow Christ's example and be wholehearted in loving and tenderly caring for his wife.

30. In a magnificent supporting statement²³⁰ Paul underlines the fact that both he and his readers are so intimately joined to Christ that they have become part of him. What has been said in the preceding argument about Christ's care for the church applies to them all. They (and we) have been incorporated into Christ and are the very members of his body whom he nourishes and cherishes. 'The "body" is not a vague ecclesiological concept for Paul; rather, it is a term that expresses the solidarity of believers with Christ'.²³¹ Indeed, so intensely personal is this truth that Paul interrupts his style and changes to the first person singular 'we', thereby including himself within the sphere of blessing. He, like them, is a member of Christ's body and knows what it is to be cared for and nurtured by him. Earlier in Ephesians it was stated that Christians are members of each other and this provided the theological motivation for telling the truth (4:25); now it is affirmed that *we are members of his body*.²³²

Further, within the flow of the paragraph, the relationship between Christ and his church is presented not simply as the ideal model for a husband and wife in their marriage. It is also the reality in which they and other Christians are included.²³³ Husbands and wives, like other believers, are profoundly indebted to Christ because they know what it is to be

²²⁷ Preisigke-Kiessling, *Wörterbuch der griechischen Papyruskunden*, 1:460. Noted by Gnilka, 285, Schnackenburg, 253, and Lincoln, 379-380.

²²⁸ Again in Ephesians a comparison with Christ is introduced by *kaqw;*" *kaiv* ('just as also'). See on 4:32.

²²⁹ Arnold, 127, thinks that an element in this 'nourishing' is the provision of divine empowering for believers to enable them to engage in spiritual warfare.

²³⁰ T. Moritz, *A Profound Mystery*, 134, discusses at some length the connection between vv. 29 and 30, and thinks that the causal force of *o{ti* should probably not be pressed. He prefers the rendering 'after all' to 'because'.

²³¹ Snodgrass, 299.

²³² Cf. Robinson, 208, who states that the 'relation of the parts to the whole is here emphasised, as is the relation of the parts of the whole to one another in iv 25'.

²³³ Schnackenburg, 253.

loved and cherished by him day by day. Let the husband, then, who understands Christ's tender affection and nurture, follow this example in his love for his wife.²³⁴

31, 32. Paul has invoked the example of the Lord Jesus Christ nourishing and caring for his church as he urges husbands again to love their wives (vv. 28-29; cf. vv. 25-27). He reminds his readers that they have been recipients of Christ's tender care. After all, they are intimately joined to their Lord and have become part of him (v. 30). Now as the apostle moves to the climax of the paragraph he cites the text that has provided the substructure of his thought throughout, namely, Genesis 2:24, the most fundamental statement in the Old Testament concerning God's plan for marriage.²³⁵ Within its original context the narrator of Genesis 2 describes how woman was taken from the side of man to be his companion. He then adds: 'This is why a man will leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two will become one flesh'.

This key Old Testament text, cited from the Septuagint,²³⁶ has been on view from v. 28 on: the term 'flesh' (*sarx*, which appears in Gn. 2:24) has been used interchangeably at v. 29 with 'body' (*so\ma*) in v. 28. The quotation appears without an introductory formula and its opening phrase, *for this reason*, has been interpreted as linking vv. 22-30, 25-30 or 29-30 to the Genesis text. In our judgment the immediate antecedent of Genesis 2:24 is v. 30, 'because we are members of his body'. The absence of an introductory formula is because the opening words, *for this reason*, dovetail neatly and logically into Paul's argument.²³⁷ The Old Testament text is referring to the union of Christ and his church, and it provides warrant for the assertion that believers are members of Christ's body. Because of the particular focus on the spiritual marriage between Christ and the church, it is only the latter part of the quote, 'and the two shall become one flesh', that serves Paul's purpose.²³⁸

²³⁴ The phrase 'of his body' was later amplified by the addition in some manuscripts of 'flesh of his flesh, bone of his bone', which is self-evidently derived from Gn. 2:23. See the textual note in Lincoln, 351.

²³⁵ Foulkes, 161.

²³⁶ The wording differs only slightly from the LXX: *ajnti; touvtou* ('because of this') replaces *e\neken touvtou* ('for the sake of this, for this reason'), and the possessive pronoun *aujtu'* ('his') is omitted after *patevra* ('father') and *mhtevra* ('mother'). None of these matters is material to the sense of the whole (though see the following note).

²³⁷ See also Eph. 4:25-26 and 6:2 where Old Testament quotations blend seamlessly into their new literary context, and do not have the kind of introductory formula that appears in Eph. 4:8 and 5:14. Cf. R. C. Ortlund, *Whoredom*, 153. T. Moritz, *A Profound Mystery*, 135, on the other hand, thinks that the change from the LXX text to *ajnti; touvtou* ('because of this') is deliberate and results in a smoother transition from v. 30 to v. 31. His suggestion, however, that vv. 30-32 function as 'an explanatory digression, not as the syntactical climax' of the whole paragraph (135-136) is incorrect. These verses are far more significant to Paul's argument than Moritz allows, and highlight the importance of the Christ-church relationship (the significance of which Moritz has consistently downplayed). See below.

²³⁸ So most commentators. It is not suggested that each part of the quotation applies to Christ and the church, so any allegorizing about Christ leaving his heavenly Father and mother in order to cleave to the church is fundamentally incorrect (cf. Lincoln, 380).

its mention of the mystery's greatness suggests there is a further and more profound dimension to the apostle's citation of the Genesis text. Finally, this approach does not correctly identify the content and referent of 'mystery', while nothing in marriage itself as an institution 'mystically' dispenses divine grace.²⁴³

(2) The 'mystery' is *the union of Christ and the church*.

The second main interpretation takes *mysterion* in Ephesians 5:32 as a direct reference to the union of Christ and his church. It is claimed, over against the first view, that in Ephesians Paul highlights the motif of the church as the body of Christ. It is more consistent, then, within the argument of the epistle to understand *mysterion* as a reference to this larger theme. This approach, it is argued, also fits with other uses of the term in Ephesians. Within the structure of 5:22-33 there is a shift in emphasis (esp. in vv. 28a-32) to the church as the body of Christ, while the immediate antecedent of the Genesis 2:24 quotation is the clause 'for we are members of his body' (v. 30). Further, the demonstrative pronoun in the expression '*this* mystery' probably points to 'a certain aspect of the marital union', i.e. 'the two shall become one flesh', which ties in with the Christ-church relationship.²⁴⁴ Finally, Paul's assertion at the end of v. 32, 'but I speak with reference to Christ and the church', comes by way of contrast,²⁴⁵ and indicates that he is no longer dealing with the physical union of husband and wife but is making clear that the mystery is the union of Christ and the church.

While this interpretation contains many insights which we shall build on, its real drawback is that it fails to take into account the correspondence between marriage and the Christ-church relationship throughout the paragraph, a drawback which the following interpretation seeks to overcome.

(3) The mystery refers to the relationship between *Christ and the church as a typology of marriage*. In support of this view it is recognized that:

(a) Genesis 2:24 has undergirded the paragraph from v. 28 on, and has been applied to human marriage. As noted above, in v. 29 the term 'flesh' (*sarx*), drawn from this Old Testament text, was used synonymously with the word 'body' (*so\ma*, v. 28). At a fundamental level wives are their husbands' bodies because Genesis 2:24 declares that

243 A. J. Kostenberger, 'The Mystery', 87. Note also the criticisms of Barth, 747-749.

244 So J. P. Sampley, '*And the Two*', 86, who admits that *touto* ('this') could refer to any part of the section beginning with v. 21; cf. A. J. Kostenberger, 'The Mystery', 87.

245 *ejgw; de; levgw* ('But I speak') has been taken to indicate: (1) a change of subject matter from human marriage to the relationship between Christ and the church (so A. J. Kostenberger, 'The Mystery', 87), (2) that this particular interpretation of Genesis 2:24 to the union between Christ and the church is his own (Lincoln, 382; though note the criticisms of T. Moritz, *A Profound Mystery*, 143), or (3) that the apostle is saying something about himself, his agenda. *ejgw; de; levgw* ('but I speak') appears elsewhere in Mt. 5, where six times (vv. 22, 28, 32, 34, 39, 44) Jesus gave his interpretation of the Mosaic law in contrast to the generally accepted view. Cf. Lincoln, 382, and Hoehner, 533. See below, n. 000

marriage makes husband and wife one ‘flesh’. Paul was perfectly aware of the literal meaning of this passage and has employed it accordingly.²⁴⁶

(b) The quotation from Genesis 2:24 refers directly to the union of Christ and his church. The immediate antecedent of the citation, as we have suggested, is v. 30. This Pauline affirmation, ‘we are members of his body’, and the Pentateuchal statement, ‘the two shall become one flesh’, ‘spring to life as a breathtaking juxtaposition’, as Ortlund puts it.²⁴⁷

(c) The Genesis text, then, affirms that marriage makes husband and wife one body; it also explicates the union between Christ and the church.²⁴⁸ The parallels between the two are central to the apostle’s argument,²⁴⁹ and their relationship is best understood in terms of typology. ‘The first Adam’s love for his wife as *one flesh* with himself and the last Adam’s love for his own bride, his body are . . . the typology [that] serves Paul’s pastoral purpose of providing a model for Christian marriage which is grounded in primeval human origins and reflective of ultimate divine reality’.²⁵⁰ Theologically, Paul’s argument does not move from human marriage to Christ and his church;²⁵¹ rather, Christ and the church in a loving relationship is the paradigm for the Christian husband and wife.

(d) On this view v. 32 is a summarizing affirmation: ‘this mystery’ (*to mystērion touto*) does not simply refer to the immediately preceding words of v. 30,²⁵² but to the line of thought running through the passage, that is, ‘Christ and the church reflected in the dynamic

246 According to Snodgrass, 299, the ‘relevance of Genesis 2:24 to the relation of husband and wife is assumed’. In 1 Cor. 6:16 Paul uses this text of the ‘one-flesh union’ that is created through the most casual intercourse with a prostitute; cf. B. Witherington, *Women in the Earliest Churches*, 60.

247 R. C. Ortlund, *Whoredom*, 156.

248 A. T. Lincoln and A. J. M. Wedderburn, *The Theology of the Later Pauline Letters* (Cambridge: University Press, 1993), 123, ‘Through his citation and interpretation of Gen. 2.24 in 5.31, 32 the writer stresses both the union of Christ and the Church and marital unity’.

249 Lincoln, 382, helpfully observes that, ‘Christ had already been seen in Adamic terms in Eph 1:22 . . . and so a text that refers to Adam’s bodily union can now be claimed for Christ’s union with the Church’. Cf. Turner, 1242.

250 R. C. Ortlund, *Whoredom*, 156. Cf. G. W. Knight’s comment: ‘Paul saw that *when God designed the original marriage He already had Christ and the church in mind*’ (‘Husbands and Wives’, 176).

251 As R. A. Batey, *New Testament Nuptial Imagery* (Leiden: Brill, 1971), 30, thinks: ‘The author sees in the “one flesh” concept where husband and wife become one body a key for understanding the unity maintained by Christ and his Body, the church’. Note the criticisms of R. C. Ortlund, *Whoredom*, 157-158.

252 It is unlikely that ‘this mystery’ is a reference back to the quotation of Gn. 2:24. Nor should we take the expression to be pointing to a deeper meaning of this Scripture (cf. G. Bornkamm, R. E. Brown, M. Barth, F. F. Bruce, etc.), what M. N. A. Bockmuehl (*Revelation and Mystery*, 204) calls ‘an *exegetical* mystery: a deeper (in this case either allegorical or prophetic) meaning of a Scriptural text which has been elicited by means of some form of inspired exegesis’. This sense of ‘mystery’ is not paralleled elsewhere in Ephesians, or the rest of the New Testament for that matter, although it is found at Qumran (note the criticisms of Lincoln, 381). For Bockmuehl ‘this mystery’ is ‘the deeper meaning of Gen 2:24 [which] points typologically to Christ and the church’ (204). In our view, the mystery has to do with the interplay of human marriage and the divine marriage between Christ and his people.

interplay of a truly Christian marriage'.²⁵³ 'Mystery' is thus used consistently with other instances in Ephesians. Elsewhere *mysterion* points to the once-hidden plan of God which has now been revealed in Jesus Christ. Different aspects of the mystery can be highlighted in any one context; there are not many mysteries but several aspects of the one mystery.²⁵⁴ In Ephesians 3, for example, the particular emphasis is on Jews and Gentiles being brought together in the one body of Christ. Here at 5:32²⁵⁵ there is the same salvation-historical perspective moving from creation to new creation and a focus on the gospel mystery of Christ and the church. 'Both the OT passage and the marriage relationship of which it speaks are connected with the mystery, but their connection is that they point to the secret that has now been revealed, that of the relationship between Christ and the Church'.²⁵⁶ The mystery is not any particular marriage or marriage itself; it is the union of Christ and the church which is reflected in a truly Christian marriage. Such a mystery is indeed 'profound'.

(e) In his final comment, 'but I speak with reference to Christ and the church' (v. 32b), the apostle (*ego*) is in effect saying that, 'Human marriage claims his personal attention primarily because it speaks of Christ and the church'.²⁵⁷ He is telling us something about himself, his agenda. Just as his responsibility before God is to proclaim the mystery of the gospel which speaks of Gentiles being incorporated the body of Christ along with Jews (3:2-9), so too he is aware of the burden of declaring this mystery of Christ and the church.

(f) A Christian marriage, as envisaged in this paragraph, is 'to reveal the mystery of Christ loving his responsive church. Such a marriage bears living witness to the meaning of "two becoming one"'. It reproduces in miniature the beauty shared between the Bridegroom and the Bride. And through it all, the mystery of the gospel is unveiled.²⁵⁸ Further, within the wider context of Ephesians as a whole the union between Christian husband and wife which is part of the unity between Christ and the church, is thus a pledge of God's purposes of unity for the cosmos.²⁵⁹

Of the three views examined above, the last makes best sense of vv. 22-33, particularly the quotation from Genesis 2:24 in v. 31. This approach does not treat the Christ-church relationship as incidental to the household discourse (as does view [1]). It also avoids the pitfall of understanding the whole passage in terms of the Christ-church relationship so that human marriage functions as a secondary theme (cf. interpretation [2]).

253 R. C. Ortlund, *Whoredom*, 157.

254 Caragounis, 136-146, esp. 143.

255 Although Caragounis, 59, n. 15, takes this differently regarding it as 'a special use of the term verging more on the incomprehensibility of the union of the Church with Christ'.

256 Lincoln, 381.

257 R. C. Ortlund, *Whoredom*, 158. See also note [245] on the significance of the expression *ejgw; de; levgw* ('but I speak').

258 R. C. Ortlund, *Whoredom*, 157, 158. G. W. Knight, 'Husbands and Wives', 176, aptly comments: 'Paul saw that *when God designed the original marriage He already had Christ and the church in mind*. This is one of God's great purposes in marriage: to picture the relationship between Christ and His redeemed people forever!' (original emphasis).

259 A. T. Lincoln, in *Theology*, 123.

This particular view of marriage has its antecedents in the Old Testament where marriage is used typologically of the relationship between God and his covenant people. In the earlier Testament the image of marriage was often used to depict the covenant relationship between Yahweh and his people, Israel (Is. 54:5-8; Je. 2:1-3; 31:31-32; Ezk. 23; Ho. 1-3). Jesus took over this teaching and boldly referred to himself as the Bridegroom (Mk. 2:18-20; cf. Jn. 3:29). He presented 'himself in the role of Yahweh in the divine marriage with the covenanted people'.²⁶⁰ Paul expands on the image in 2 Corinthians 11:1-3 and here in Ephesians 5, and focuses particularly on 'the sacrificial steadfastness of the heavenly Bridegroom's covenant-love for his bride'.²⁶¹ [At one level Paul's teaching on marriage is grounded in the Old Testament, while at another level the church's marriage to Christ is prefigured in Adam and Eve.]

33. Paul now rounds off his discussion with two summarizing exhortations in which the duties and responsibilities of husbands and wives are briefly restated. The opening conjunction *plēn*, which is elsewhere used as an adversative ('however, but'), can also conclude a discussion and emphasize what is important. This is its significance here, so it is better to render the word by 'in any case' or 'now'.²⁶²

In the preceding verses the apostle has set forth a high view of marriage. The relationship between Christ and the church has momentous consequences for Christian husbands and wives in their relationships. The Christ-church parallel is not simply an illustration for marriage; it is 'the generating theological centre of . . . [Paul's] entire presentation'.²⁶³ At the same time, this profound theology is intended to serve practical ends. Husband and wife need to grasp clearly the implications of the Christ-church relationship for their marriage. Accordingly, both are addressed, though now in reverse order. Having focussed on the responsibilities of husbands in vv. 25-32, Paul exhorts them²⁶⁴ first. The admonition is individualized: 'let each one of you²⁶⁵ so love his wife as himself'. Every husband in the congregation(s) that received this circular letter, not simply the leaders, is addressed directly and personally. None is exempt from giving himself to his wife in loving service so that she might become what God intends for her.

This injunction picks up the earlier admonition that husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies (v. 28), and also incorporates the exhortation of v. 25 that they

²⁶⁰ R. C. Ortlund, *Whoredom*, 139. He adds that 'the Old Testament expectation of the marriage of Yahweh with his people, to be restored and enjoyed for ever, comes into the framework of New Testament theology through the teaching of Jesus himself'.

²⁶¹ Stott, 227; cf. Bruce, 386.

²⁶² *plēn* functions in a similar way at Phil. 3:16; 4:14; and 1 Cor. 11:11. It is used adversatively at Mt. 11:22, 24; Lk. 22:22, etc. Note BAGD, 669; BDF, § 449(2); A. T. Robertson, *Grammar*, 1187; and most recent commentators. Cf. also M. E. Thrall, *Particles*, 21.

²⁶³ R. C. Ortlund, *Whoredom*, 156.

²⁶⁴ *kai; uJmei* ("you also") which is slightly emphatic, signifies 'you Christian husbands as well as the Heavenly Bridegroom' (Morris, 188).

²⁶⁵ The distributive phrase *oij kaqΔ e{na e{kasto* ("each one of you") individualizes the *uJmei* ("you"), while the imperative *ajgapavtw* ("let him love") is also singular. Cf. Hoehner, 536.

should love them as Christ loved the church. Furthermore, since vv. 31, 32 show that Christ's love for the church involves its becoming one body with him so that he loves the church *as himself*, then Paul can conclude by calling upon the husband to love his wife as himself.²⁶⁶ As in v. 28 (see above) the language echoes the second great commandment, 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself' (Lev. 19:18), and it is applied in a direct way to the love which a husband should have for his nearest and dearest neighbour, namely, his wife. This exhortation does not involve a further command to love oneself; it is assumed that love of self is present in each one of us (see on v. 29). The apostle, then, summarizes what he has already urged in vv. 25-29. Here, however, the injunction is particularized for each individual.

The wording to the wife, as in the case of her husband, is also different from the earlier admonition (v. 22). She too is addressed in the singular,²⁶⁷ and this emphasizes her individual responsibility to heed the apostle's exhortation. Rather than the customary imperative, a different construction is used, but it still has an imperatival force, and may be rendered 'let the wife fear her husband'.²⁶⁸ In place of the earlier exhortation to submit to her husband (v. 22), she is here called upon to 'fear' him. The term *phobeo* ('to fear') is akin to *phobos* ('fear') which appeared at the beginning of the household table (v. 21). Paul ends this lengthy paragraph of marriage paraenesis with an inclusio or envelope: the fear of Christ provided the motivation to be subordinate in the opening appeal of v. 21. Thus, vv. 21 and 33 are the frame for this important passage. Here too 'fear' is a better rendering than 'reverence' or 'respect'. But it is no slavish fear that is in view. Rather, the wife's fear of her husband, which reflects the fear of believers who are subordinate to those in authority over them (v. 21), recognizes his God-given position as head.²⁶⁹ Hers is the answer of a free and responsible person (note the middle voice of the verb 'fear'), which is neither conditional nor due to her husband's merits or performance. Her fear reflects not only what she does but also her attitude in doing it.

266 Lincoln, 384.

267 In the New Testament household codes this is the only verse in which members are addressed in the singular.

268 The construction is *i{na* plus the subjunctive (*i{na fobh'tai*). This is best understood, not as denoting purpose or result, but as one of the few examples of an imperatival *i{na* in the New Testament (Mk. 5:23; 2 Cor. 8:7; Gal. 2:10). The parallel with the imperative *ajgapavtw* in the first half of the verse indicates the independent force of the *i{na*-clause, and the subjunctive *fobh'tai* is the main verb. So among more recent grammarians C. F. D. Moule, *Idiom Book*, 144-145; K. L. McKay, *A New Syntax*, 82; S. E. Porter, *Idioms*, 223-224; and D. B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar*, 476-477.

269 B. Witherington, *Women in the Earliest Churches*, 61, who follows E. Kähler; and G. W. Knight, 'Husbands and Wives', 175.

5:33

Meyer [1880], 288.

Robinson, 122.

Sampley [1971], 128.

Merklein [1973], 57ff.

Barth [1974], 583.

Caird [1976], 78.

Mitton [1976], 188.

Caragounis [1977], 76.

Stott, 230.

V. 33 is a succinct summary of the fuller teaching which Paul has been giving to husbands and wives: . . . It is true that ‘respects’ translates *phobe\tai*, meaning literally ‘fears’, but this verb ‘may express the emotion of fear in all its modifications and in all its degrees from simple respect through reverence up to adoration, according to its object’ [Hodge, 353]. The apostle began with one couplet ‘love’ and ‘submission’. He ends with another ‘love’ and ‘respect’. We have seen that the love he has in mind for the husband sacrifices and serves with a view to enabling his wife to become what God intends her to be. So the ‘submission’ and ‘respect’ he asks of the wife express her response to his love and her desire that he too will become what God intends him to be in his ‘leadership’.

Br. & N. [1982], 133.

Bruce [1984], 395.

The paragraph about the mutual duties and responsibilities of husband and wife, which has launched out into the realm where Christology embraces ecclesiology, is now concluded with an admonitory summing up in which these mutual duties and responsibilities are briefly recapitulated. ‘Do you at least grasp this’ [Robinson, 209. It is ‘closely parallel’ to that of *ajllav* in v. 24] the practical lesson to be learned from the excursus on Christ and the church—that the husband is to love his wife as himself (a further echo of the commandment about neighborly love in Lev. 19:18), and that the wife is to reverence her husband [the conjunction *i\{na* has imperatival force here]. The verb ‘to reverence’ is the ordinary verb meaning ‘to fear’; the character of the ‘fear’ is suggested by v. 21: ‘Be subject one to another in the fear of Christ’. ‘Fear’ in the sense of terror is not in the picture here: ‘there (396) is no fear in love’ (1 Jn. 4:18).

Patzia [1984], 246.

B. Witherington, *Women in the Earliest Churches* (Cambridge: University Press, 1988), 61.

plhvn in v. 33 should be seen as resumptive of the original topic after a digression [!], and so we translate: ‘In any case [BDF §449.2] individually each one of you must love his wife as himself’. We have here a strong imperative—ajgapavtw [Barth, 647]. Paul wishes to stress the husband’s responsibility to love. That Paul can command love suggests that he is talking about loving actions, not feelings, and particularly self-sacrificial actions analogous to Christ’s actions for the Church. Actions can be commanded; feelings cannot. By contrast, the wife is called upon i{na fobh'tai to;n a[ndra. This is a less strong exhortation and probably means something like ‘may she fear the husband’ [Barth, 647]. The point is not that the wife should cower, or be afraid of her husband, but that she should respect him. Kähler suggests that what is meant is that she should respect his God-given position as head. The respect given is due to his headship, not due to his performance or circumstances. It is not conditional, any more than her reverence for Christ depends on performance or circumstances.

Best summed up by Barth, ‘She can have many good reasons to fear her husband, . . . [649-650].

Arnold [1989], 127.

G. W. Knight, ‘Husbands and Wives’, 175.

The last exhortation to wives about how they should submit to their husbands v. 33. The key word here is *respect* (RSV, NASB, NIV, NEB). This rendering of the Greek is proper. Paul uses *respect* here in the sense of treating the husband’s leadership with dutiful regard and deference. Cf. Lv. 19:3 LXX ‘Let every one of you reverence his father and mother). There, as here in Ephesians, the respect called for is primarily to the role the person occupies and not to the particular merits of the person.

Paul probably chose phobeo\ in his final charge to wives to correlate his exhortation to them with his exhortation to all Christians, ‘Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ’. By using a concept he had previously used of the Lord Jesus Christ, he also correlates this concluding exhortation to wives with his initial one (v. 22), which said that they should be subject to their own husbands ‘as to the Lord’.

The respect asked of a wife recognizes the God-given character of the headship of her husband and thus treats him with dutiful regard and deference. Just as husbands have been asked to display their headship through likeness to Christ’s headship over His church, that is, through a love that cherishes and nourishes (vv. 25, 28, 29), so now wives are asked to render their submission in a way that is most like that of the submission of the church to Christ, that is, a truly respectful submission because it is rendered voluntarily from the heart. A wife’s respecting her husband and his headship therefore implies that her submission involves not only what she does but also her attitude in doing it. As with the husband, so with the wife, it is the heart’s attitude of grateful acceptance of the role God assigns to each and the determination to fulfill the particular role with all the graciousness God gives that Paul is urging on both wives and husbands in this last verse of his instruction.

Schnackenburg [1991], 256.

After this consideration of Christ and Church in which the relationship of Christian spouses is given a prototype, the author brings this paracletic to a forceful end. The connecting Particle plhvn which is elsewhere used adversatively (‘however, but’) can also conclude a discussion and emphasize (257) what is essential (now, at any rate) [BDF

§449.2]. Thus both partners are now addressed again, first the husbands, then, looking back to the beginning, the wives. The husbands should also—as Christ does the Church—each for himself love their wives as themselves (a reference back to v. 28b) and each wife should ‘fear’ her husband, treat him with reverence, as the Church does in her ‘subordination’ to Christ (v. 24) and as all members of the Church should do (cf. v. 21). In addressing the husbands and wives separately we see the desire to call both marriage-partners to a positive realization of the exhortations. Although the concept was an elevated one, it should not remain merely an ideal. It is a matter of how they carry out their married fellowship in their daily lives.

C. E. Arnold, *Powers of Darkness*,

A. T. Lincoln and A. J. M. Wedderburn, *The Theology of the Later Pauline Letters* (Cambridge: University Press, 1993),

(93) The remaining uses of the term *ekkle\sia* are all clustered together in the paraenesis, where, in his distinctive elaboration on the household code, the writer’s view of the relationship between Christ and the Church is made the prototype for his instructions about marriage (5.23, 24, 25, 27, 29, 32).

(122) The writer makes clear that the behaviour appropriate to the new humanity is not achieved by total withdrawal from the surrounding society but by living responsibly in the world, in the ordinary structures of human life, as he takes up the form of the **household code** (5.21–6.9). Here he is dependent on Col. 3.18–4.1, which was influenced by a tradition of discussions of household management in Graeco-Roman writings, stemming from Aristotle, which dealt with three pairs of husband—(123) wife, parent—children, master—slave relationships and assigned, as one might expect, the authoritative role to the former and the subordinate role to the latter member of each pair. This writer accepts and even reinforces the basic structures of the patriarchal household, but then within them brings to bear Christian motivations of love and service.

In the marriage paraenesis the writer’s creative use of the analogy with Christ and the Church supports first the appeal to wives to submit themselves voluntarily to and to fear their husbands’ authoritative headship and then, in the larger section of the passage, to husbands to love their wives with the same care that they expend on themselves and, even more, with the radical sort of love that would be willing to sacrifice their lives for their wives. Through his citation and interpretation of Gen. 2.24 in 5.31, 32 the writer stresses both the union of Christ and the Church and marital unity. In the context of this letter as a whole, union between husband and wife can be seen as part of the expression of the unity of the Church and therefore also as playing its part in acting as the pledge of God’s purposes of unity for the cosmos. In contrast to any downplaying of the marital state for ascetic reasons, the paraenesis clearly reveals an attempt to inculcate in the readers an exalted view of marriage.

E. Best [1993], 55.

Turner [1994], 1242.

Paul was perfectly aware of the literal meaning of Gn. 2:24, but he saw the mystery of cosmic unity in Christ, and especially the union between Christ and his body, as in a sense prefigured in the marriage bond. For him there is a typological relationship between creation *in* unity with God and redemption *into* unity with God. That original unity was nowhere better focused than in Adam’s pre-fall union with Eve, and Paul holds that Christ’s union

with the church is its redemptive counterpart. The parallel was not accidental: as Lincoln observes, ‘Christ had already been seen in Adamic terms in Eph. 1:22 . . . and so a text that refers to Adam’s bodily union can now be claimed for Christ’s union with the Church’ (382). But if Paul sees marriage as an illustration of the new-creation union, it must be noted that he also interprets marriage in the light of that Christ-church union—and thereby transforms the concept of the marriage relationship, and gives the world the highest ideal of marriage it knows.

Fee [1994], 722.

Morris [1994], 104.

BDF.

BAGD, 202.

K. H. Fleckenstein, *Ordnet euch einander unter in der Furcht Christi. Die Eheperikope in Eph 5, 21-33* (Wurzburg: Echter, 1994).

Porter, *Verbal Aspect*, 357.

Idioms, 38.

K. L. McKay, *A New Syntax of the Verb in New Testament Greek. An Aspectual Approach* (New York: Lang, 1994), 148.

T. Moritz, *A Profound Mystery. The Use of the Old Testament in Ephesians* (Leiden: Brill, 1996).

K. Snodgrass, *Ephesians. The NIV Application Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996).

R. P. Martin, *DPL*, 419-423.

D. B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar*,