

Mind Games

Eph 4:17-24

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Introduction:

Attention: We were getting rid of old toys and the kids ended up wanting to play with them again.

Subject:

This passage, as a piece of direct exhortation about both what is inappropriate and what is appropriate to the believer's calling, continues the address to the readers begun in 4:1–3. God's calling of these particular readers has taken them out of their previous situation as Gentiles, with all the negative connotations the writer has attached to that identification, into a new creation in which ethnic differences are no longer the significant factor, into a body which transcends the Jew-Gentile divide (cf. chap. 2). Now they must walk worthily of such a calling by no longer living as they did before the call took effect, by no longer living as Gentiles

Scripture: Eph 4:17-24

Background:

In such a state, in which the addressees' surrounding society still finds itself, people's thinking has become darkened so that they are blind to the true purpose of life and incapable of apprehending truth. Their relationship to the source of life, God himself, has become broken. This is on account of their culpable ignorance, their hardening of themselves to the sense of God available to them. Accompanying this lack of basic insight is a moral bankruptcy, since dullness of ethical sensitivity has in turn led to general debauchery and unrestrained sexual behaviour, to the active pursuit of all kinds of immorality, and to an insatiable greed which disregards the welfare of others.

Body: Mind is like metal if you keep on exposing it to the oxygen it will rust without care

I. Old Mind (vs. 17-19)

a. Walk no Longer with Mind

i. Walk - to conduct one's life, *comport oneself, behave, live* as habit of conduct

1. "that you are no longer to lead your lives as do the Gentiles." On περιπατεῖν, "to walk, lead a life," see the earlier discussion of its usage in 2:2, 10; 4:1. The infinitive with the accusative is employed here for the imperative in indirect speech (cf. also Acts 21:2, 4). This prohibition, which differentiates sharply between the way of life of the readers and that of the members of the surrounding society, underlines the distinctive quality necessary to any living that is to be

worthy of believers' calling (cf. 4:1). The *μηκέτι*, "no longer," reminds one of the temporal *ποτέ ... νῦν*, "once ... now," contrast schema in both parts of chap. 2. The change of status for the Gentile readers, which was indicated there, has to be accompanied by a change of "walk" (cf. also 2:2, 10). They cannot continue in their actual conduct as they had done in the past and as though none of the immense changes the writer has recalled in chap. 2 had taken place. continue effort, and therefore continual exhortation, is needed if they are to appropriate the effects of those changes.

2.

b. Mind – center of human perception ones intellectual process

a. mind as the seat of thinking and the heart as the seat of feeling is alien to the meanings these terms carry in the OT.

b. This Jewish Christian is impressed by the way in which thinking leads to doing in both negative and positive contexts, by the power of ignorance of God in producing moral corruption, and by the power of a mind renewed in the truth in generating virtue. He also places great importance on the role of Christian tradition and of instruction in that tradition in effecting appropriate Christian conduct. Clearest of all is his conviction that being a Christian means having undergone a radical change—from the old person to the new, from futility of mind to renewal of mind, from the service of deceit to the service of truth, from a process of corruption to one of renewal, from a life of unrestrained passions to one of righteousness and holiness.

c.

ii. Futility- **Romans 8:20** **Romans 1:21** The thought life of the unregenerate is futile and aimless because it lacks divine substance and spiritual insight; it produces a life of purposelessness and ineffectiveness.

1. Ephesians 4:17–18: Unbelieving Gentiles failed to attain the true purpose of the mind, namely, to receive God's revelation which would guide them in their conduct. Since their minds could not receive God's revelation, their understanding was darkened

2. state of being without use or value, *emptiness, futility, purposelessness, transitoriness*

iii. Darkness- 'their foolish minds became unable to see the truth,' and in Eph 4:18 it is sometimes possible to translate 'they were not able to see with their minds.

1. lack of information that may result in reprehensible conduct, *ignorance, unawareness, lack of discernment*

2. Unbelieving Gentiles failed to attain the true purpose of the mind, namely, to receive God's revelation which would guide them in their conduct. Since their minds could not receive God's revelation, **their understanding was darkened** (Rom. 1:21; 2 Cor. 4:4), being **separated** (lit., "alienated"; cf. Eph. 2:12) **from the life**

3. This prepositional phrase now makes clear that the Gentiles' ignorance is culpable. At the center of their thinking, feeling, and volition, they have hardened themselves to God and to the knowledge of him that was available to them
- 4.
- iv. Hardness of Heart-
 1. state or condition of complete lack of understanding, *dullness, insensibility, obstinacy*
 2. The idea of insensitivity or callousness involved in "the hardening of their hearts" is continued in the use of the perfect participle ἀπηλγηκότες, lit "having ceased to feel pain" and therefore in this context "their moral sensitivity having become dulled."
 3. Heart- of inner awareness
- v. Callous- to be filled with a heavy sense of loss or deprivation, *be despondent*
 1. Matthew 13:15: *This people's heart has become calloused; they hardly hear with their ears, and they have closed their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts and turn, and I would heal them.*
- c. Given Over-
 - i. Given Over
 1. In this depiction, the lack of moral feeling and discernment on the part of the Gentiles means an inability to exercise any restraint in their plunge into degrading activities. Their part in actively pursuing and seeking out evil is brought out in both εἰς ἐργασίαν, "for the practice, pursuit," and ἑαυτοὺς παρέδωκαν, "they have given themselves over."
 - ii. *Sensuality*- lack of self-constraint which involves one in conduct that violates all bounds of what is socially acceptable, *self-abandonment*
 - iii. *Impurity*- a state of moral corruption, *immorality, vileness*
 - iv. *Greediness* - the state of desiring to have more than one's due, *greediness, insatiableness, avarice, covetousness*

Transition: 4:20–24. In contrast (*de*) with the "old man" (vv. 17–19) believers **did not come to know** (lit., "learn") **Christ that way**. Their minds are no longer darkened; their lives are no longer alienated from God; their hearts are no longer hardened and impure

Romans 12:1-2: *Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing, and perfect will.*

II. New Mind (vs. 20-24)

- a. Learn - to gain knowledge or skill by instruction= Christian Teaching
 - i. Taught Truth
 - 1. Probably more significant than the use of the name Jesus is the introduction of the concept of truth in this context. As has been noted, ἀλήθεια occurred earlier in connection with ἀκούειν in 1:13, “having heard the word of truth,” where this word of truth was immediately explained as “the gospel of your salvation” (cf. also Col 1:5, 6), and “truth” has this same force in Paul in Gal 2:5, 14; 5:7; 2 Thess 2:10, 12, 13. Truth as the content of the gospel and of the apostolic tradition through which that gospel is transmitted becomes the main focus of ἀλήθεια as that term is used in the Pastorals (cf. 1 Tim 2:4, 7; 3:15; 4:3; 6:5; 2 Tim 2:15, 18, 25; 3:7, 8; 4:4; Titus 1:1, 14). From the surrounding context in Eph 4:17–24, it becomes clear that the truth of the gospel tradition that can be summed up in Jesus, according to v 21, controls the whole of believers’ lives and includes the ethical implications of the gospel as they had been developed in the Church’s catechesis.
 - 2.
- b. Lay aside old self- take off rid oneself
 - i. Former - to a period of time preceding another period of time, earlier
 - 1. The readers had been taught that becoming believers involves a radical break with the past, the putting off of the old person. The imagery of putting off the old person and putting on the new is that of decisive change. Its meaning can be compared to that of the Synoptic language of repenting because of the coming of the kingdom (e.g., Mark 1:15). ἀποτίθεσθαι is employed in relation to a variety of sins in Rom 13:12; Col 3:8; Eph 4:25; Heb 12:1; Jas 1:21; and 1 Pet 2:1. But here it is not just particular vices that are to be put off but the whole old person who was leading a life dominated by sin.
 - ii. Lay Aside
 - 1. Behind the language and concepts of this passage lies Col 3:8–10 (Ephesians, however, has replaced the ἀπεκδύεσθαι of 3:9 with the ἀποτίθεσθαι of 3:8), and behind that lies a cluster of passages in the undisputed Paulines. “Putting off” is, as we have seen found in Rom 13:12 where it is in close juxtaposition with “putting on the Lord Jesus Christ” in Rom 13:14. “Putting on” is again employed in an exhortation in 1 Thess 5:8, while in Gal 3:27 to have put on Christ is equated with to have been baptized into Christ. Nowhere in the undisputed Paulines is this clothing imagery linked with the notion of the old or new person. In fact, the only occurrence of that notion is in Rom 6:6 where it is said that the believer’s old person was crucified with Christ.
 - 2. The change of clothing imagery signifies an exchange of identities, and the concepts of the old and the new persons reinforce this. These

old and new persons are not simply Adam and Christ as representatives of the old and new orders

3. Putting off the old person has already taken place through baptism, which transferred believers to the new order. This injunction is not an exhortation to believers to repeat that event but to continue to live out its significance by giving up on that old person that they no longer are. They are new people who must become in practice what God has already made them, and that involves the resolve to put off the old way of life as it attempts to impinge. **This is made clear by the qualifying phrase which precedes the mention of the old person—"as regards your former way of life."** The use of ἀναστροφή, "way of life," recalls the use of the cognate verb in the earlier depiction of the Gentile readers' past in 2:3. It should now be plain to them that learning Christ means giving up that Gentile past and its practices.

4.

- iii. Corrupted- to cause deterioration of the inner life, *ruin, corrupt*
- iv. Lust - a desire for something forbidden or simply inordinate, *craving, lust*
- v. Deceit - Delusion or false dealing with another

c. Renewed

- i. Renewed *be renewed=(let yourselves) be renewed in the spirit of your minds*

1. It makes no sense to continue with that former way of life, since it has no future. As opposed to the new person, who is in a process of renewal, the old person is in a process of moral corruption (cf. also the use of the noun φθορά in Rom 8:21; Gal 6:8), a rottenness and decay which will end in the final destruction of death (cf. also 1 Cor 3:17b; 2 Pet 2:12). The old way of life has already been described as one of death in 2:1, 5. 2 Pet 1:4 links the corruption in the world with ἐπιθυμία, "desire." The same link is found here in v 22 as the old person is depicted as being corrupted because of the desires which come from deceit. Again, there is a reminiscence of the earlier portrayal of the Gentile past in 2:3, where it is the desires of the flesh that characterize the old life (for ἐπιθυμία with negative force cf. also Col 3:5; Rom 1:24; 6:12; 7:7, 8; 13:14; Gal 5:16, 24; 1 Thess 4:5).

ii. Spirit of your Mind

1. In line with Paul's thought, the present focus for renewal is not the body but the inner person, the mind, although as the next verse makes clear, this has consequences for external actions. The idea here is functionally equivalent to that of Col 3:10, which speaks of "being renewed in knowledge." There is to be a constant development of believers' perception which will result, in practice, in their ability to choose the good.

d. Put on your New Self –

- i. New Self

1. The “new self” (v. 24) is literally “the new person,” who is (literally) “created according to God,” which means according to his image or likeness. Paul probably alludes to the way God originally made Adam and Eve in his image, and says that the new person that a Christian has become is equipped with moral purity because he or she is made like God morally. Thus, he points out, one should live like it—as blamelessly as Adam and Eve did before they disobeyed. “Clothing” and “unclothing” provide a natural image, used in the Old Testament and Greek literature, for “putting on” and “putting off” or “removing” some kinds of behavior (Job 29:14; Ps 109:18; especially Is 61:3, 10; see comment on Rom 13:12), other attributes (2 Chron 6:41; Ps 93:1) and so forth.
- ii. Likeness of God – According to God
- iii. Righteousness
- iv. Holiness of the Truth
 1. The choice of righteousness and holiness as the ethical qualities that are specified underlines the point that the new humanity has been recreated to be like God, because both are characteristics of God in LXX Ps 144:17 and Deut 32:4 (cf. also Rev 16:5). As the new creation in God’s likeness, believers are to be righteous as he is righteous and holy as he is holy. ὁσιότης, “holiness,” occurs elsewhere in the NT only in Luke 1:75 where it is again in conjunction with δικαιοσύνη, “righteousness.” The latter term denotes in Ephesians not God’s putting humanity in a right relationship with himself nor that right relationship itself, the characteristic Pauline usages, but an ethical virtue
 2. The evil desires which characterized the old person sprang from deceit (v 22). Now, by contrast, the virtues which characterize the new person can be said to come from the truth. This truth is ultimately divine reality which has been disclosed in the gospel and the apostolic tradition (cf. 1:13; 4:21). By its very nature it gives rise to such virtues as righteousness and holiness
 3. Here in 4:24, the portrait of the new person as created in God’s likeness in the righteousness and holiness which come from the truth functions as a challenge to the readers to enter into and to live out that which through their baptism they already know themselves to be. In this way, it is made clear to them that God has not accomplished some instant or total transformation but has made it possible for them to participate in the truth and thereby produce those ethical qualities appropriate to being like God.
 - 4.

Conclusion:

Summary

Between them and their former Gentile lifestyle stands the teaching which can be summed up in Christ, the instruction in the tradition through which the risen Christ shapes the character and lives of believers. The writer is assured that they have not been instructed falsely in such a way as would reproduce the Gentile pattern of life but according to the truth in Jesus, the norm which should call forth the desired quality of life. Three fundamental aspects of that life are set out in vv 22–24. First, it involves stripping off the rotting garment of the old humanity. The old person is in a process of decay which will lead to final ruin, a process brought about through the evil desires generated by deceit, by an ultimately illusory view of life. Believers must live out the significance of what has already taken place through baptism and abandon the old person that they no longer are. Second, since they are not yet completely new, they must allow themselves to be continually renewed in the inner person, particularly in the mind. Third, this restoration to right thinking will result in right conduct, because the readers are to put on the fresh clean clothing of the new humanity with its just and holy living. The new identity, already achieved for believers, has to be appropriated so that its distinctive ethical qualities will become evident. The new person is created to be like God, and this likeness is exhibited in the righteousness and holiness that epitomize a life in a right relationship to God and humanity and also recall characteristics of this God himself. The existence of the new person is ultimately related to the truth of the gospel and of the apostolic tradition, a moral truth able to give rise to the virtues of righteousness and holiness in those who receive it.

Word Studies

Walk - **to conduct one's life, comport oneself, behave, live** as habit of conduct¹

Futility- In other portions, Paul used *mataiotes* to depict the futility that has its source in the thought life of fallen man. He characterizes the “thoughts of the wise” as being futile (1 Cor 3:20), and he describes the Gentiles as those living “in the futility of their minds” because “they are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of their ignorance and hardness of heart” (Eph 4:17–18, NRSV). **The thought life of the unregenerate is futile and aimless because it lacks divine substance and spiritual insight; it produces a life of purposelessness and ineffectiveness.** Salvation from *mataiotes* for now comes from the indwelling Spirit of Christ (see Rom 8:10–11, 26–27) and in the future will be given when Christ returns and the believers (along with all creation) receive their full redemption (see Rom 8:22–25).²

Darkness of mind- It is rare that one can combine the concept of ‘becoming dark’ with incapacity to understand or comprehend. Sometimes a parallel figure of speech may be employed by using an expression such as ‘to not be able to see.’ For example, in Ro 1:21 it is sometimes possible to translate **‘their foolish minds became unable to see the truth,’** and in Eph 4:18 it is sometimes possible to translate **‘they were not able to see with their minds.’**³

¹ William Arndt et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 803.

NRSV New Revised Standard Version

² Walter A. Elwell and Philip Wesley Comfort, *Tyndale Bible Dictionary*, Tyndale Reference Library (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2001), 503.

³ Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1996), 385.

state of being without use or value, *emptiness, futility, purposelessness, transitoriness*⁴

MIND One's intellectual processes in a narrow sense or, more broadly, the sum total of a person's mental and moral state of being.⁵

For Paul, the action of conversion is considered to be a "renewing of the mind" (Rom 12:2; Eph 4:23). In both cases, the process is one whereby God takes control of the mind of a person through the Holy Spirit and leads the thoughts of that person into proper channels. Thus, the renewed person is given power to make proper value judgments. Such people have new minds with which to make spiritual discernments (1 Cor 2:15–16).⁶

Ignorance- lack of information that may result in reprehensible conduct, *ignorance, unawareness, lack of discernment*⁷

Hardness - state or condition of complete lack of understanding, *dullness, insensibility, obstinacy*⁸

Sensuality- lack of self-constraint which involves one in conduct that violates all bounds of what is socially acceptable, *self-abandonment*⁹

Impurity- a state of moral corruption, *immorality, vileness*¹⁰

⁴ William Arndt et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 621.

⁵ Walter A. Elwell and Philip Wesley Comfort, *Tyndale Bible Dictionary*, Tyndale Reference Library (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2001), 897.

⁶ Walter A. Elwell and Philip Wesley Comfort, *Tyndale Bible Dictionary*, Tyndale Reference Library (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2001), 897.

⁷ William Arndt et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 13.

⁸ William Arndt et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 900.

⁹ William Arndt et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 141.

¹⁰ William Arndt et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 34.

Greediness - the state of desiring to have more than one's due, *greediness, insatiableness, avarice, covetousness*¹¹

Commentary Studies

Form/Structure/Setting

In terms of its structure and sequence this pericope has two parts—the exhortation not to live like the Gentiles (vv 17–19) and a more positive counterpart setting out the type of life that is in accord with the Christian tradition (vv 21–24). Each part can be further divided into two subsections. The basic exhortation, no longer to live as the Gentiles, is expressed in a formulation indicating the importance, urgency, and authority the writer attaches to his exhortation (v 17ab).

¹¹ William Arndt et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 824.

This is followed by an extended negative depiction of Gentile thinking and conduct, in which the writer, in characteristic fashion, strings together participial clauses, prepositional phrases, and a relative clause (vv 17c–19). Distinctively Christian thinking and conduct is first encouraged by contrast and in terms of tradition—“But that is not the way you learned Christ”—where Christ stands for the Christian tradition in which the readers were taught (vv 20, 21). **That tradition in its ethical aspects is then spelled out through the use of three infinitives, the first again emphasizing the difference from the readers’ previous way of life and involving putting off the old person, the second and third finally expressing the writer’s positive expectations and involving being renewed and putting on the new person characterized by righteousness and holiness (vv 22–24).**

This pericope is similar to other paraenetical material which defines a community by marking it off from other groups. The main formal characteristics of such material include explicit prohibitions or other negative assertions with hortatory force and the setting out of the relation between the addressees and outsiders in antithetical formulations which may include mention of virtues and vices or of a temporal relationship (e.g., once/now; no longer) or take the form “*not* this, *but* that.” Here in 4:17–24 we find the prohibition “you are not to lead your lives ...” (v 17), the contrast between believers and the Gentiles (v 17), the negative picture of the Gentiles and their vices (vv 17–19) which is set over against “learning Christ” and “the truth in Jesus” (vv 20, 21), the temporal references “no longer” (v 17) and “your former way of life” (v 22), and the antitheses between putting off the old person (v 22) and putting on the new person (v 24), and between “the desires which come from deceit” (v 22) and “the righteousness and holiness which come from the truth” (v 24). Eph 5:3–14 and 5:15–20 also contain this type of material, as do 1 Thess 4:3–8 and 5:1–11. There are also parallels in the paraenesis of Hellenistic philosophical literature, e.g., *The Epistles of Crates* 6, 7, 18, 19, 21 (cf. K. Berger, “Hellenistische Gattungen im Neuen Testament,” *ANRW* 2.25.2 [1984] 1340–41).¹²

As can be seen, the prohibition against living any longer in the manner of the Gentiles in v 17 is reminiscent of Col 3:7, while the last part of the characterization of that previous way of living in v 19 takes over the vices of ἀκαθαρσία, “impurity,” and πλεονεξία, “covetousness,” from the list in Col 3:5. In describing the content of the Christian tradition as putting off the old person in v 22, the writer makes use of this designation from Col 3:9, but substitutes ἀποτίθασθαι from Col 3:8 for ἀπεκδύεσθαι in 3:9. Whereas Col 3:9 talks in general terms of the practices of the old person, v 22 gives a more colorful description which draws on the term ἐπιθυμία found in Col 3:5. In speaking of being renewed and of the new person in vv 23, 24, the writer provides a variation in the use of καινός and νέος and their cognate verbs, reversing that found in Col 3:10, so that where Colossians has νέος for the new person and ἀνακαινοῦν for “to renew,” Ephesians has καινός for the adjective and ἀνανεοῦν for the verb. Finally, v 24 expresses slightly differently the notion of the new person’s creation in relation to God, the more cryptic κατὰ θεόν, lit. “according to God,” replacing κατ’ εἰκόνα, “according to the image” from Col 3:10.

Two further observations should be made about the relation of this passage to Colossians. The use of the participle ἀπηλλοτριωμένοι, “separated, alienated,” in the depiction of the Gentiles in v 18 has more in common with the use of the same participle in describing the Colossians’ former way of life in relation to God in Col 1:21 than it does with its earlier use in relation to the people of God in Eph 2:12. Then the material which has no parallel in Col 3:5–11, the discussion in vv 20, 21 about learning and being taught in the Christian tradition, where the tradition is seen as

¹² Lincoln, A. T. (1990). *Ephesians* (Vol. 42, pp. 271–272). Dallas: Word, Incorporated.

summed up in Christ and as significant for the Christian “walk,” in fact owes much to the thought of Col 2:6, 7. “Received Christ Jesus,” where παραλαυβάνειν is the semitechnical term for receiving something delivered by tradition, is the equivalent of “learned Christ” here in Eph 4. This tradition is related to Christian conduct—“as you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him”—and the verb ἐδιδάχθητε, “you were taught,” is employed in 2:7 (cf. Eph 4:21).¹³

Comment

17ab Τοῦτο οὖν λέγω καὶ μαρτύρομαι ἐν κυρίῳ, “This, then, I solemnly declare in the Lord.” The οὖν, “therefore,” has resumptive force, as the writer takes up again from 4:1–3 his direct exhortation of the readers. μαρτύρομαι, “I testify,” does not have here the specific connotation of bearing witness or of speaking under oath, but in its more general force of “I affirm, declare” still attaches a sense of solemnity and significance to what is to be stated. Used here in conjunction with λέγω, “I say,” it serves to strengthen the importance and urgency of the exhortation (cf. 1 Thess 2:12; also, Jdt 7:28; Josephus, *Ant.* 10.7.2 § 104). ἐν κυρίῳ, “in the Lord,” also functions to lend authority to the exhortation. The writer exhorts with Christ’s authority in the same way that Paul had done (cf. 1 Thess 4:1; also earlier in this chapter in 4:1—“the prisoner in the Lord”). The initial τοῦτο, “this,” has reference to the content of the exhortation which is to follow.

μηκέτι ὑμᾶς περιπατεῖν καθὼς καὶ τὰ ἔθνη περιπατεῖ, “that you are no longer to lead your lives as do the Gentiles.” On περιπατεῖν, “to walk, lead a life,” see the earlier discussion of its usage in 2:2, 10; 4:1. The infinitive with the accusative is employed here for the imperative in indirect speech (cf. also Acts 21:2, 4). This prohibition, which differentiates sharply between the way of life of the readers and that of the members of the surrounding society, underlines the distinctive quality necessary to any living that is to be worthy of believers’ calling (cf. 4:1). The μηκέτι, “no longer,” reminds one of the temporal ποτὲ ... νῦν, “once ... now,” contrast schema in both parts of chap. 2. The change of status for the Gentile readers, which was indicated there, has to be accompanied by a change of “walk” (cf. also 2:2, 10). They cannot continue in their actual conduct as they had done in the past and as though none of the immense changes the writer has recalled in chap. 2 had taken place. continue effort, and therefore continual exhortation, is needed if they are to appropriate the effects of those changes. The prohibition is couched in terms of not living like the Gentiles, τὰ ἔθνη. This is an interesting formulation, since earlier the writer has called the readers simply “you Gentiles” (3:1) but also “you Gentiles in the flesh” (2:11), denoting an ethnic distinction which no longer counts as religiously significant. The latter perspective is apparent here, where the designation, “the Gentiles,” stands for non-Jewish outsiders to the Christian community and where Christians who are ethnic Gentiles are exhorted not to live like Gentiles. This underscores the “third race” mentality of this writer, which emerged from 2:11–22 where the Church was depicted as a new creation, as one new person replacing the two old ethnic entities of Israel and the Gentiles (cf. also 1 Cor 10:32, where Paul himself could divide humanity into three groups—Jews, Greeks, and the church of God).

17c–19 The picture of the Gentiles style of life is painted in the blackest colors. The writer is not interested in a balanced analysis that would point out positive features of Gentile life, nor is his purpose to enable his readers to feel superior. Instead he wants to provide decisive reasons why they should be distinctively Christian, and the more drastic the contrast, the more effective is his

¹³ Lincoln, A. T. (1990). *Ephesians* (Vol. 42, pp. 273–274). Dallas: Word, Incorporated.

exhortation likely to be. In this sort of characterization he is in line with traditional Jewish apologetic (cf. Wis 12–15; 18:10–19; *Ep. Arist.* 140, 277; *Sib. Or.* 3.220–35), which was taken over by other early Christians, including Paul himself in Rom 1. The elements in the characterization are strung together by the writer in the style typical of the earlier part of the letter, mixing prepositional phrases with participial and relative clauses. It is beside the point to attempt to work out a logically subordinate relationship for each part of the syntax (pace Schlier, 213; Mussner, 134–35). With the exception of the two διὰ, “because of,” phrases, each of which provides the reason for the immediately preceding part of the description, the other elements of the syntax should be treated as coordinates. There is, however, an overall movement of thought which first treats the Gentiles’ thinking and inner disposition before dealing with their conduct. It is worth noting that this movement is repeated on the positive side when mention of renewal as it affects the mind (v 23) precedes any delineation of the virtues (v 24).

ἐν ματαιότητι τοῦ νοῦς αὐτῶν, “in the futility of their minds.” ματαιότης denotes not merely finitude or transitoriness but the emptiness, folly, and ultimate pointlessness that has affected the Gentiles’ faculty of intellectual and moral perception. In Rom 1:21 Paul had talked of humans’ becoming futile in their thinking because of their refusal to acknowledge God. Here too this condition of futility of mind is inevitably connected with that later described as being “separated from the life of God.” Rom 1:21 is itself dependent on Wis 13:1 (cf. also Ps 94:11; Jer 2:5; 1QS 5.19). Elsewhere in early Christianity believers’ former manner of life is characterized as futile in 1 Pet 1:18 (cf. also *Did.* 5.2; *Barn.* 4.10; 20.2; *1 Clem* 7.2; *Herm. Man.* 9.4; 11.8; 12.6; *Ign. Trall.* 8.2) So, because it lacks the right relationship to God, Gentile thinking suffers from a fatal flaw. It has lost its grasp on reality and fallen prey to folly.

Another way of describing this condition is ἐσκοτωμένοι τῇ διανοίᾳ ὄντες, “being darkened in their thinking.” The rarer verb σκοτοῦν is employed here rather than σκοτίζειν. It is found elsewhere in the NT only in Rev 9:2; 16:10. διάνοια, “thinking, mind,” is often interchangeable with καρδιά, “heart,” in the LXX for the center of human perception and is found as a translation of the Hebrew where one might have expected the latter (cf., e.g., Gen 8:21; 17:17; 24:45; 27:41; Exod 28:3). The light has gone out in the seat of Gentiles’ understanding so that they are no longer capable of apprehending ultimate truth. There is a clear contrast with believers, who have been given knowledge and the eyes of whose hearts have been enlightened; (1:17, 18; cf. also the sustained contrast between darkness and light in 5:8–14). Again Rom 1:21, “their senseless hearts were darkened,” provides the immediate background for the formulation here. (For the use of this imagery elsewhere in Judaism, cf. *T. Reub.* 3.8; *T. Gad* 6.2; *T. Dan* 2.4; *T. Levi* 14.4; Josephus, *Ant.* 9.4.3; 1QS 3.3.)

ἀπηλλοτριωμένοι τῆς ζωῆς τοῦ θεοῦ, “separated from the life of God.” The flawed perception of reality that has been described accompanies a broken relation to the source of that reality, God. On ἀπηλλοτριοῦν, see *Comment* on 2:12 and note the use of the term in Col 1:21, where it also describes alienation from God. “The life of God is that life which answers to the nature of God and which he communicates to his children” (Westcott, 66). “Separated from the life of God” is, of course, equivalent to the earlier description of the readers’ former condition as “dead” (2:1, 5) and “without God” (2:12). Loss of light can now be seen to amount to the same thing as loss of life (cf. also John 1:4; 8:12).

The reason for the Gentiles’ estrangement from the life of God is now indicated. It is διὰ τὴν ἄγνοιαν τὴν οὖσαν ἐν αὐτοῖς, “because of the ignorance that is in them.” This ignorance does not provide an excuse for the broken relationship with God. In the tradition of Jewish apologetic of which it is a part (cf. Wis 13:1, 8, 9; *T. Gad* 5.7), Gentile ignorance is viewed as culpable, and

elsewhere in Jewish thought ignorance is linked with sin (cf. Sir 23:3; 28:7, 8). This is certainly also the perspective of the more extended and profound analysis of Rom 1:18–23, where knowledge of God becomes futility and folly and therefore, in effect, ignorance, because of a failure to honor God as God. Here in Ephesians, the Gentiles' responsibility for their own ignorance comes out more explicitly in the following characterizations, but is perhaps hinted at in the formulation "the ignorance that is in them." The ignorance cannot be blamed on other factors; it has its roots within them (cf. also Barth, 501; pace Caird, 79, who takes the meaning as "prevailing among them"). Elsewhere in the NT 1 Pet 1:14 describes the pre-Christian lives of its recipients in terms of "the passions of your former ignorance" (cf. also Acts 17:30).

διὰ τὴν πώρωσιν τῆς καρδίας αὐτῶν, "because of the hardening of their hearts." This prepositional phrase now makes clear that the Gentiles' ignorance is culpable. At the center of their thinking, feeling, and volition, they have hardened themselves to God and to the knowledge of him that was available to them. The connection with the immediately preceding statement is more likely than that with the participial clause about separation because of the preceding τὴν οὖσαν ἐν αὐτοῖς, "that is in them," instead of the simple αὐτῶν, "their" (cf. also Meyer, 240). πώρωσις (or the verb πωροῦν) is found in connection with the heart elsewhere in the NT in Mark 3:5; 6:52; 8:17; John 12:40 (cf. also Rom 11:7, 25; 2 Cor 3:14), and is most frequently used of Jewish response to the gospel. Here it is seen to be a concept equally applicable in a more general sense to Gentiles. The notion of hardening is, of course, employed frequently in the OT and Judaism, e.g., Exod 4:21; 7:3; 9:12; Ps 95:8; Isa 6:10; 63:17; *T. Levi* 13.7, 1QS 1.6; 2.14, 26; 3.3; 5.4; CD 2.17, 18; 3.5, 11; 8.8. Its focus is on a progressive insensitivity and obtuseness in relation to God. J. A. Robinson, in an extended note (264–74), attempts to argue for the meaning of blindness rather than hardening, but in the various uses of the term it is difficult to exclude the note of willful obstinacy from its connotations.

The portrayal of the Gentiles' lifestyle concludes by stressing the moral bankruptcy that accompanies their lack of true insight. The relative pronoun οἵτινες, "being those indeed who ...," may well have the function of emphasizing a characteristic quality which confirms a preceding statement (cf. BAGD 587). The idea of insensitivity or callousness involved in "the hardening of their hearts" is continued in the use of the perfect participle ἀπηλγηκότες, lit "having ceased to feel pain" and therefore in this context "their moral sensitivity having become dulled." This is the only use of this verb in the NT (cf. Thucydides 2.61; Polybius 1.35.5; 9.40.4). In this depiction, the lack of moral feeling and discernment on the part of the Gentiles means an inability to exercise any restraint in their plunge into degrading activities. Their part in actively pursuing and seeking out evil is brought out in both εἰς ἐργασίαν, "for the practice, pursuit," and ἑαυτοὺς παρέδωκαν, "they have given themselves over." Whereas Rom 1:24–32 emphasizes God's continued involvement in humanity's turning away from him with its threefold "God gave them over," in accord with the needs of paraenesis this verse stresses the moral responsibility of the Gentiles. The evil that characterizes their conduct is not some dark fate that has overtaken them without their consent. This evil is typified through the use of three terms that occur frequently in catalogues of vices. ἀσέλγεια, "debauchery, licentiousness," occurs in Mark 7:22; Rom 13:13; 1 Pet 4:3; *Herm. Vis.* 2.2.2; 3.7.2, and with ἀκαθαρσία, "impurity," in 2 Cor 12:21, Gal 5:19. It is also used in polemic against false teachers in 2 Pet 2:2, 7; Jude 4. The term encompasses generally riotous and excessive living, but frequently has unrestrained sexual behaviour in view. As in Rom 1:24–32, the abuse of sexuality is highlighted in illustrating the degradation resulting from failure to acknowledge the Creator. For the use of the term in Jewish literature, cf. Wis 14:26; 3 Macc 2:26; *T. Jud.* 23.1; Josephus, *Ant.* 4.6.12 § 151; 8.10.2 § 252; 8.13.1 § 318; 20.5.3 § 112; Philo, *De Vit.*

Mos. 1.305. ἀκαθαρσία, “impurity, immorality,” features again in 5:3 (cf. also *Wis* 2:16; 3 *Macc* 2:17; *T. Levi* 15.1; *T. Jud.* 14.5; 1QS 4.9–11; *Rom* 1:24; 2 *Cor* 12:21; *Gal* 5:19; 1 *Thess* 2:3; 4:7; *Col* 3:5). Sexual immorality may well be primarily in view, but again the reference is not limited to this; ἀκαθαρσίας πάσης, “all kinds of impurity,” are included. πλεονεξία, “covetousness,” the vice which Dio Chrysostom, *Or.* 67.6, 8, calls both the greatest cause of evils and the greatest evil, concludes v 19. It is mentioned frequently in the OT and in Jewish literature (cf., e.g., *Ps* 119:36; *Jer* 22:17; *Ezek* 22:27; *Hab* 2:9; 2 *Macc* 4:50; 1QS 4.10, 11; Philo, *De Spec. Leg.* 4.5; *De Vit. Mos.* 2.186) and appears also in NT and early Christian lists (cf. *Mark* 7:22; 1 *Cor* 5:10, 11; *Rom* 1:29; *Col* 3:5; 2 *Pet* 2:3; *Did.* 5.1; 1 *Clem* 35.5; *Barn.* 20.1; *Herm. Man.* 6.2, 5; 8.5). Later in Ephesians, the term is again associated with ἀκαθαρσία (5:3; cf. also 5:5) and is related to idolatry (cf. 5:5; *Col* 3:5, and see *Comment* on 5:5). Its use here suggests that Gentiles out of proper relationship to God live in excess but can never be satisfied. Their insatiable greed makes them oblivious of the needs of others and of the consequences for others.

20, 21 ὑμεῖς δὲ οὐχ οὕτως ἐμάθετε τὸν Χριστόν, “But that is not the way you learned Christ.” The contrast to the readers’ previous Gentile lifestyle begins forcefully—ὑμεῖς δὲ οὐχ ..., lit. “but you not...” Yet the immediate contrast that follows is made not through an equivalent depiction of Christian conduct but through a reminder of the readers’ instruction in that conduct. The first formulation of the reminder in terms of learning Christ (μανθάνειν with a personal object) is without parallel. Significantly, it is *Col* 2:6, 7, where παρελάβετε τὸν Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν means “you received the tradition about Christ Jesus,” that provides the closest approximation. In both passages Christ stands for the tradition about him and is brought into direct relation with Christian conduct, and in both passages these notions are associated with being taught (pace Wegenast, *Das Verständnis der Tradition*, 131–32, who sees no notion of instruction in tradition in these passages). Learning Christ is, in fact, being on the receiving end of the process that in *Acts* 5:42 can be spoken of as teaching Christ. Elsewhere, μανθάνειν is used for learning the gospel tradition—in *Col* 1:6, 7 in connection with ἀκούειν, “to hear,” and ἀλήθεια, “truth,” two terms also used here in vv 20, 21; in *Phil* 4:9 in connection with παραλαμβάνειν and ἀκούειν; and in *Rom* 16:17 and 2 *Tim* 3:14. Just as a Jew learned Torah, so now a Christian can be said to learn Christ. But the personal object in the latter case does make a difference. Since Christians believed that Christ was a living person whose presence was mediated by the proclamation and teaching about him, learning Christ involved not only learning about, but also being shaped by, the risen Christ who was the source of a new way of life as well as of a new relationship with God.

εἰ γε αὐτὸν ἠκούσατε καὶ ἐν αὐτῷ ἐδιδάχθητε, “assuming that you have heard of him and were taught in him.” The introductory εἰ γε implies confident assumption (see the discussion of the similar use in 3:2), while the concepts of hearing of Christ and being taught in him further explain the learning Christ of the previous verse. Being taught in him, i.e., about him, is, as we have seen, the other side of learning about him and involves receiving instruction in the gospel tradition (cf. also Larsson, *Christus*, 224–25). In regard to hearing of Christ, in the Greek text the pronoun for Christ is in the accusative with ἀκούειν, “to hear.” With ἀκούειν, the person whose words one hears stands in the genitive, the person about whom one hears stands in the accusative (cf. BDF §173). So to hear about Christ is to be on the receiving end of the proclamation about Christ (cf. 1 *Cor* 1:23; 2 *Cor* 1:19; *Gal* 1:16; *Phil* 1:15; *Col* 1:28). The reference is primarily to the readers’ initial reception of this message (cf. 1:13, “having heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation”; also *Rom* 10:14; 15:21; *Col* 1:6, 23). Earlier there has been emphasis on the apostolic tradition and its transmission by evangelists, pastors, and teachers (cf. 2:20; 3:5; 4:11). Now, in a context where in particular the ethical aspects of the tradition are in view, “hearing” draws attention

primarily to the first stage of its transmission, while “being taught” highlights the further stage of catechesis.

καθὼς ἐστὶν ἀλήθεια ἐν τῷ Ἰησοῦ, “as the truth is in Jesus.” Because of the anarthrous ἀλήθεια, the use of the name Jesus, and questions about the relation of καθὼς to what precedes, scholars have made heavy weather of the syntax and interpretation of this clause (cf., e.g., the spirited correspondence about it between Westcott and Hort, reproduced in the former’s commentary [70–71], where Hort felt forced to propose an emendation; the article by I. de la Potterie in *AnBib* 18 [1963] 45–67, which provides discussion of some of the issues; and Barth, 505, 533–36, who resorts to taking καθὼς as an introductory formula for a citation which begins, “Truth in Jesus!” and includes vv 22–24, apparently ignoring the dependence of these verses on Colossians). The translation given above—“as the truth is in Jesus”—appears to be the most straightforward and to make the most sense (cf. also AV, RSV). Other major translations sense rightly that the gist of the clause is about the content of Christian truth being summed up in Jesus. But from the translations which make the truth the direct object of “were taught” and drop “in him” from the previous clause (cf. NEB, “were ... taught the truth as it is in Jesus”; JB, “were taught what the truth is in Jesus”; GNB, “were taught the truth that is in Jesus”), the reader would never suppose that the original contained the adverb καθὼς. The objection that is often raised against our translation, however, is that since ἀλήθεια is without an article it cannot be the subject of the clause but has to be the predicate (cf. de la Potterie, *AnBib* 18 [1963] 48; Gnllka, 228 n. 3; Caird, 80). Certainly, one of the major reasons for ἀλήθεια being anarthrous here could be that it forms the predicate, but if so a subject needs to be supplied. The only real options for this clause would be “as he is truth in Jesus,” referring back to the “him,” i.e., Christ, of the preceding clause, or the more general “as there is truth in Jesus.” The meaning “as Christ is truth in Jesus,” despite its support from de la Potterie (*AnBib* 18 [1963] 48) and possibly Schlier (216) is barely intelligible, even on what we shall see is their unlikely assumption that this is a polemical statement against a Gnostic Christology. It is made more unlikely still when de la Potterie has to introduce a comma after “truth” to achieve his proposed meaning of “in the way that Christ is truth, namely in Jesus.” The meaning of “as there is truth in Jesus” (cf. Westcott, 67, 70) is clear; the problem with it is that it seems to be too indefinite an assertion to have been intended here, “a strange understatement,” as Hort puts it (Westcott, 71).

Given the unconvincing nature of these alternatives, it becomes necessary to look again at the issue of the anarthrous ἀλήθεια and to ask whether any explanations of it other than as a predicate are possible. It then becomes clear that the objection to our translation has been stated too strongly. ἀλήθεια, like other nouns, can be used anarthrously in the Pauline corpus for a number of different reasons—as a predicate (2 Cor 7:14c), with a verb of speaking (Eph 4:25; Rom 9:1; 2 Cor 12:6; 1 Tim 2:7b), after a preposition (Eph 5:9; 6:14; Rom 2:2; 2 Cor 7:14; Col 1:6; 1 Tim 2:7c), in genitive constructions (Rom 15:8; 1 Cor 5:8; 2 Cor 6:7; 11:10; 2 Thess 2:13; 1 Tim 2:4; 2 Tim 2:25; 3:7; Titus 1:1), with adverbial force (Phil 1:18), and, apparently, simply because it is an abstract noun (Gal 5:7). It is this last usage which is most instructive for discussion of the syntax of Eph 4:21. Paul frequently omits the article with abstract nouns such as “sin” or “grace” (cf. BDF §258), and the writer of Ephesians can, for example, alternate between the anarthrous and the arthrous use of χάρις in 2:5, 8. There is, therefore, no decisive grammatical reason why ἀλήθεια in Eph 4:21 should not be seen as an instance of this sort of usage and be treated as the subject of the clause (cf. also Moule, *Idiom-Book*, 111–12, who concludes that “in such instances it is hard to avoid the impression that usage [i.e., of the article] is arbitrary” and finds no objection to construing ἀλήθεια in Eph 4:21 as though it had been ἡ ἀλήθεια).

Similarly, too much should not be made of the use of the name Jesus. It is likely to be a stylistic variation and should not immediately be assumed to have major theological significance. To hold such a view is to swim against the stream of recent scholarship. It is usually asserted that since this is the only instance of the name Jesus by itself in Ephesians, the writer's change to this appellation must not only be deliberate but also theologically significant. There are two views of what this significance is. The first has been mentioned already. It argues that the clause is aimed at Gnostic teaching that made a sharp divide between the heavenly Christ and the earthly Jesus (cf. Schlier, 217; de la Potterie, *AnBib* 18 [1963] 53; Gnllka. 228). That some such Christological point needed to be made in some contexts in the first century is possible (cf. 1 John 2:22; 4:3), but whether the teaching it would be aimed at is best described as Gnostic is another matter. It is also another matter whether such a polemical point is likely in a letter which nowhere else appears to combat Gnosticism, in a context where the emphasis is not Christological but paraenetic, and where there is no indication that Gentile attraction to the immorality described in vv 17–19 is because of some mistaken Christology. It is also in a form so cryptic as to make one wonder whether the original readers would have caught its force. The second view also argues that the change to the name Jesus is to draw attention to the earthly Jesus rather than the risen Christ, but that the point being made is that the truth of the tradition, and particularly its ethical aspects, is not just determined by the idea of Christ but has its roots in the life and death of the historical Jesus or contains teaching from the historical Jesus (cf. Larsson, *Christus*, 226 n. 2; Ernst, 363; Mitton, 163; Schnackenburg, 203; Mussner, 136). (Caird, 80, has his own version of a reference to the historical Jesus, arguing that the writer's point is that the teaching about putting off the old person and putting on the new first took place literally in the death and resurrection of Jesus—"just as was literally true in the case of Jesus." But Caird's interpretation requires far too much eisegesis, and the syntax will simply not support it.) If there were to be any significance at all to the variation in name, then this latter view would be preferable, although some versions of it are in danger of reading back too much of the modern debate about the historical Jesus. But although this is the only occasion on which the simple name Jesus appears by itself in Ephesians (but cf. "Lord Jesus" in 1:15), it must be doubted whether the variation is in fact capable of bearing this weight. In Paul the simple name Jesus appears in 1 Thess 1:10; 4:14; Gal 6:17; 1 Cor 12:3; 2 Cor 4:5, 10, 11, 14; 11:4; Rom 3:26, 8:11, Phil 2:10. In some of these texts it is clear that Paul is drawing on a traditional formulation, but despite various scholarly assertions to the contrary (e.g., Schlier, 217 n. 3; de la Potterie, *AnBib* 18 [1963] 53), in the others and particularly in 2 Cor 4 there is no clearcut theological reason for the shift between Christ and Jesus. Nor for that matter is there any special significance in the shift between either of these and Christ Jesus or Jesus Christ. The best explanation for the variation in Paul as well as here in Eph 4:20, 21 is stylistic (cf. also Bruce, *Epistles*, 357: "it is difficult to discern any distinction in emphasis between 'in Christ' and 'in Jesus' "). Having described the tradition in which the readers were taught in terms of Christ (vv 20, 21a), the writer can now also talk of that same tradition as summed up in Jesus (v 21b). In other words, to learn the gospel tradition is to be taught in Christ or to be taught the truth in Jesus.

Probably more significant than the use of the name Jesus is the introduction of the concept of truth in this context. As has been noted, ἀλήθεια occurred earlier in connection with ἀκούειν in 1:13, "having heard the word of truth," where this word of truth was immediately explained as "the gospel of your salvation" (cf. also Col 1:5, 6), and "truth" has this same force in Paul in Gal 2:5, 14; 5:7; 2 Thess 2:10, 12, 13. Truth as the content of the gospel and of the apostolic tradition through which that gospel is transmitted becomes the main focus of ἀλήθεια as that term is used in the Pastorals (cf. 1 Tim 2:4, 7; 3:15; 4:3; 6:5; 2 Tim 2:15, 18, 25; 3:7, 8; 4:4; Titus 1:1, 14).

From the surrounding context in Eph 4:17–24, it becomes clear that the truth of the gospel tradition that can be summed up in Jesus, according to v 21, controls the whole of believers' lives and includes the ethical implications of the gospel as they had been developed in the Church's catechesis. (See *Comment* on 4:15 about believers proclaiming this truth instead of being taken in by those who propagate error, and on the notion of truth here compare also E. Hoskyns and F. N. Davey, *The Riddle of the New Testament* [London: Faber and Faber, 1931] 26–31; R. Bultmann, “ἀλήθεια,” *TDNT* 1 [1964] 238–47; Murphy-O'Connor, “Truth: Paul and Qumran,” 179–230; A. C. Thiselton, “Truth,” *NIDNTT* 3 [1978] 874–901.)

It remains to note that καθώς in this clause functions syntactically to qualify the preceding clause and to indicate a comparison. It suggests, therefore, that the truth of the gospel tradition, as summed up in Jesus, was the norm in accord with which the readers had heard of Christ and been taught in him (cf. also NIV, “in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus”). In terms of the writer's train of thought, this clause contrasts with the οὐχ οὕτως, lit. “not thus,” of v 20. He asserts that his readers had not been instructed in the Christian tradition falsely according to the Gentile pattern of life he has depicted in vv 17–19 but had been instructed according to the proper content of that tradition, that is, the truth in Jesus.

22 ἀποθέσθαι ὑμᾶς κατὰ τὴν προτέραν ἀναστροφὴν τὸν παλαιὸν ἄνθρωπον τὸν φθειρόμενον κατὰ τὰς ἐπιθυμίας τῆς ἀπάτης, “that, as regards your former way of life, you should put off the old person who is being corrupted because of the desires which come from deceit.” The writer is dependent on Col 3:8–10 for his paraenetic material here in vv 22–24 (see *Form/Structure/Setting*), but among the differences from that passage is the syntax. ἀποθέσθαι, “to put off” is the first of the three infinitives of vv 22–24. Before any comment can be made on the content of the verses, a decision about the place of these infinitives in the syntax must be made. There are four main options. (a) The infinitives can simply be taken as imperatives. The infinitive can occasionally function as an imperative in the NT (e.g., Rom 12:15; Phil 3:16), and D. Daube has argued that a variety of imperatival forms, including participles and infinitives, is typical of Hebrew ethical codes (“Participle and Imperative in 1 Peter,” in E. G. Selwyn, *The First Epistle of St. Peter* [London: Macmillan, 1946] esp. 480–81). The infinitive as imperative is also a common feature of Pseudo-Phocylides. What makes such a grammatical feature less likely here, however, is that v 22 contains not a simple infinitive but an infinitive plus an accusative—ὑμᾶς, “you” (cf. also BDF §389). (b) The accusative and infinitive could be part of a final clause, indicating purpose and dependent on ἐδιδάχθητε, “you were taught.” The readers were taught in order that they might put off the old person and put on the new. (c) Another possibility is that the accusative and infinitive form part of a consecutive or result clause. The readers were taught with the result that they have, in fact, put off the old person, are being renewed, and have put on the new (cf. J. Murray, *Principles of Conduct* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1957] 214–19). (d) The fourth main option is that the infinitive accompanied by the accusative is exegetical, explaining the content of the teaching mentioned in v 21 (cf. also J. A. Robinson, 190; Moule, *Idiom-Book*, 127, 139; Houlden, 318; Caird, 80; Bruce, *Epistles*, 358 n. 127). Any of the last three options is possible, but one would have thought that if the writer had wanted to make clear that the teaching had already resulted in a definitive putting on and off in the past, he would have done so by using ὥστε, “so that.” As it is, the fact that the καθώς clause, “as the truth is in Jesus,” already qualifies and defines “you were taught,” makes it most likely that the infinitives are to be taken as a further explanation of the content of the teaching. Some make the infinitives directly dependent on the καθώς clause (cf. Meyer, 244–46; Gnllka, 229). This would make very little difference to the sense, but it is less natural syntactically than relating them to the major verb “were taught.” Because of their context

in what is a piece of paraenesis, these infinitives do take on some imperatival force (cf. also Schnackenburg, 203).

The readers had been taught that becoming believers involves a radical break with the past, the putting off of the old person. The imagery of putting off the old person and putting on the new is that of decisive change. Its meaning can be compared to that of the Synoptic language of repenting because of the coming of the kingdom (e.g., Mark 1:15). ἀποτίθεσθαι is employed in relation to a variety of sins in Rom 13:12; Col 3:8; Eph 4:25; Heb 12:1; Jas 1:21; and 1 Pet 2:1. But here it is not just particular vices that are to be put off but the whole old person who was leading a life dominated by sin.

The background for the “putting off” can be treated together with that for the “putting on” language. The connection of this imagery with the notion of the old or new person can then also be explored. Behind the language and concepts of this passage lies Col 3:8–10 (Ephesians, however, has replaced the ἀπεκδύεσθαι of 3:9 with the ἀποτίθεσθαι of 3:8), and behind that lies a cluster of passages in the undisputed Paulines. “Putting off” is, as we have seen found in Rom 13:12 where it is in close juxtaposition with “putting on the Lord Jesus Christ” in Rom 13:14. “Putting on” is again employed in an exhortation in 1 Thess 5:8, while in Gal 3:27 to have put on Christ is equated with to have been baptized into Christ. Nowhere in the undisputed Paulines is this clothing imagery linked with the notion of the old or new person. In fact, the only occurrence of that notion is in Rom 6:6 where it is said that the believer’s old person was crucified with Christ. It is frequently asserted that the language of putting off the old person and putting on the new derives from the practice of the removal of clothing before entering the water in baptism and the subsequent reclothing in a new garment (e.g., W. A. Meeks, *The First Urban Christians* [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983] 155). This may have been the case, but the evidence is by no means decisive. Obviously, the clothing imagery cannot be confined to a baptismal context. In the OT there is the idea of being clothed with salvation (2 Chr 6:41) or with moral qualities (e.g., righteousness in Job 29:14; Ps 132:9). The picture of putting off vices is widespread in Greek writers (e.g., Demosthenes) 8.46; Lucian, *Dial. Mort.* 10.8, 9; *Ep. Arist.* 122; Plutarch, *Cor.* 19.4) as is that of putting on virtues (e.g., Philo, *De Conf. Ling.* 31; *Corpus Hermeticum* 13:8, 9). In addition, in the mystery religions the initiate can be described as becoming clothed with the powers of the cosmos and the divine life (cf. Apuleius, *Metamorph.* 11.24) But there is no exact parallel to the language of putting off the old person and putting on the new, which is first found in Colossians (cf. the discussion in Jervell, *Imago Dei*, 240–48). P. W. van der Horst (“Observations on a Pauline Expression,” *NTS* 19 [1972–73] 181–87) has drawn attention to what is probably the closest linguistic usage in a fragment of Antigonos of Corystus about Pyrrho of Elis, preserved in Eusebius, *Praep. Evang.* 14.18.26, and Diogenes Laertius 9.66. Pyrrho, under attack from a dog, adopts normal patterns of behavior and seeks refuge, but this is inconsistent with his present philosophical convictions, and when he is mocked about this, he claims χαλεπόν ἐστὶν τὸν ἄνθρωπον ἐκδύναι, “it is difficult to put off the person.” Although this tradition can be dated early enough, it is not easy to imagine that it had any decisive influence on the formulation found in Colossians, which appears instead to have been a combining of two images that had earlier functioned independently for Paul. Since both had had clear baptismal associations (cf. Gal 3:27; Rom 6:6), it could well be that it was the actual practice of baptism that was the catalyst in this new usage. But since our evidence that early Christian baptismal practice included derobbing and then robing in a new garment afterward can be dated no earlier than the second century C.E., it is probably safer to say that this imagery is entirely appropriate to what we know of later baptismal rites. If, as is argued by J. Z. Smith (“The Garments of Shame,” *HR* 5 [1965] 217–38) *Gos. Thom.*

37 contains an allusion to Christian baptismal practice, then this would be the earliest evidence, possibly from the first half of the second century C.E. Of other relevant material, *Gos. Phil.* 101 is dated between the second half of the second century and the second half of the third, Hippolytus' *Apostolic Tradition* reflects Roman practice at the end of the second century, and Cyril of Jerusalem's *Mystagogical Catechesis* II, which contains a reference to the practice, is dated c. 350 C.E., while the Syriac *Acts of John* in which the rite it found goes back only to the end of the fourth or beginning of the fifth century C.E. (cf. A. F. J. Klijn, "An Ancient Syriac Baptismal Liturgy in the Syriac Acts of John," in *XAPIΣ KAI ΣΟΦΙΑ*, FS K. H. Rengstorf, ed. U. Luck [Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1964] 216–28).

The change of clothing imagery signifies an exchange of identities, and the concepts of the old and the new persons reinforce this. These old and new persons are not simply Adam and Christ as representatives of the old and new orders (pace Barth, 539), nor more specifically Adam in the inner person and Christ in the inner person (pace Jervell, *Imago Dei*, 240–48). They are individuals, as those individuals are identified either with the old or with the new order of existence. The old person is the person living under the dominion of the present evil age and its powers, and this previous identity has to be dealt with decisively. If, as we have argued, the epexegetic infinitive has some hortatory force here, then there is a slight shift of emphasis between Ephesians and earlier references to the old person. Whereas both Rom 6:6 and Col 3:9 (cf. O'Brien, *Colossians*, 188–89) assert that the definitive break with the old person has been made in the past, Ephesians extends the tension between the indicative and the imperative to the notion of putting off the old person. Putting off the old person has already taken place through baptism, which transferred believers to the new order. This injunction is not an exhortation to believers to repeat that event but to continue to live out its significance by giving up on that old person that they no longer are. They are new people who must become in practice what God has already made them, and that involves the resolve to put off the old way of life as it attempts to impinge. This is made clear by the qualifying phrase which precedes the mention of the old person—"as regards your former way of life." The use of ἀναστροφή, "way of life," recalls the use of the cognate verb in the earlier depiction of the Gentile readers' past in 2:3. It should now be plain to them that learning Christ means giving up that Gentile past and its practices.

It makes no sense to continue with that former way of life, since it has no future. As opposed to the new person, who is in a process of renewal, the old person is in a process of moral corruption (cf. also the use of the noun φθορά in Rom 8:21; Gal 6:8), a rottenness and decay which will end in the final destruction of death (cf. also 1 Cor 3:17b; 2 Pet 2:12). The old way of life has already been described as one of death in 2:1, 5. 2 Pet 1:4 links the corruption in the world with ἐπιθυμία, "desire." The same link is found here in v 22 as the old person is depicted as being corrupted because of the desires which come from deceit. Again, there is a reminiscence of the earlier portrayal of the Gentile past in 2:3, where it is the desires of the flesh that characterize the old life (for ἐπιθυμία with negative force cf. also Col 3:5; Rom 1:24; 6:12; 7:7, 8; 13:14; Gal 5:16, 24; 1 Thess 4:5). ἀπάτη, "deceit," is found elsewhere in the Pauline corpus only in 2 Thess 2:10, where it stands in opposition to the truth, and in Col 2:8, where as part of the false philosophy ensnaring some. It can also be seen as in contrast to the gospel as the word of truth (cf. 1:5; for other uses cf. Mark 4:19; Matt 13:22; Heb 3:13; 2 Pet 2:13; 2 Clem 6.4; Herm. Man. 8.5; 11.12; Herm. Sim. 6.2.1; 6.3.3; 6.4.4; while in *Cebes Tablet* 23–24 deceit dominates the catalogue of vices, and in 1QS 4.2–26 it plays a significant role in the discussion of the two spirits). A false perspective on reality generates a confusion of desires which can never be satisfied because they have lost touch

with what is true. Such desires serve the power of deceit, and so are themselves ultimately illusory and contribute to the ruin of the old person.

23 ἀνανεοῦσθαι δὲ τῷ πνεύματι τοῦ νοῦς ὑμῶν, “that you should be renewed as regards the spirit of your mind.” By making the notion of renewal an independent element in the discussion in contrast to its function in Col 3:10, the writer highlights the aspect of continue challenge for the believer and in this regard brings the thought more into line with the exhortation of Rom 12:2, “Be transformed by the renewal of your mind.” Elsewhere, ἀνακαινοῦσθαι or its cognate noun is employed for the process of renewal—in Col 3:10 (of the new person), in 2 Cor 4:16 (of the inner person), and in Rom 12:2 (of the mind). Here, ἀνανεοῦσθαι is used for renewal and καινός for the new person. Abbott (138) and Schnackenburg (204) argue for a deliberate distinction whereby the new person is καινός, qualitatively different and requiring the divine initiative to create, while the process of renewal employs a cognate of νέος, involving rejuvenation and encompassing human activity. But R. A. Harrisville (“The Concept of Newness in the New Testament,” *JBL* 74 [1955] 69–79) shows the synonymity of these words for newness, both of which can have either qualitative or temporal connotations; thus the variation here is merely stylistic (cf. also Bruce, *Epistles*, 358 n. 126).

The renewal is to take place “in the spirit of your mind.” The double expression τῷ πνεύματι τοῦ νοῦς ὑμῶν has generated much discussion. The majority of recent commentators (cf. Schlier, 220; Gnilka, 230; Houlden, 319; Halter, *Taufe*, 254–55; Ernst, 365; Schnackenburg, 204; Mussner, 137) opt for a reference to the divine Spirit on the grounds that nowhere else in Ephesians does πνεῦμα refer to the human spirit, and elsewhere in the letter it is the Spirit who controls believers (cf. 1:17; 3:16; 4:3; 5:18; 6:18). Also in Titus 3:5 the Holy Spirit is the explicit agent of renewal. Houlden (319) even translates the verse “Be renewed by the Spirit in your mind.” But this is not what the Greek text says. It speaks about the spirit *of* your mind. Since this is so, we must agree that “it is improbable that God’s Spirit would be described as ‘of your mind’ ” (Mitton, 165). The Spirit can be said to be “of Christ” or “of God,” but nowhere else is the divine Spirit depicted as belonging to a human being or to part of a human being. In Ephesians’ characteristic style of pleonastic accumulation of synonyms, both spirit and mind are employed to designate a person’s innermost being (cf. also Meyer, 249; Abbott, 137; J. A. Robinson, 191; Westcott, 68; Barth, 508; Mitton, 165; Bratcher and Nida, *Handbook*, 114–15; RSV; NEB). In this way, the reference is similar to that of 3:16 to the inner person. In Philo “the person within the person” is identified with the νοῦς (cf. *De Congress. quaer. erud. grat.* 97). So the new person is not yet totally new. The present tense of this infinitive underlines the continuous nature of the renewal that is still required, and the passive voice suggests that this takes place as believers allow themselves to be renewed. **In line with Paul’s thought, the present focus for renewal is not the body but the inner person, the mind, although as the next verse makes clear, this has consequences for external actions. The idea here is functionally equivalent to that of Col 3:10, which speaks of “being renewed in knowledge.” There is to be a constant development of believers’ perception which will result, in practice, in their ability to choose the good.**

24 καὶ ἐνδύσασθαι τὸν καινὸν ἄνθρωπον τὸν κατὰ θεὸν κτισθέντα ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ καὶ ὁσιότητι τῆς ἀληθείας, “and that you should put on the new person who is created in God’s likeness in the righteousness and holiness which come from the truth.” For this writer, the notion of “the new person” has both corporate and individual connotations. The corporate aspect of the new humanity has been seen in 2:15, where the one new person replaces the two separate entities of Jews and Gentiles. But this new humanity also comes to expression individually. Just as the old person is the person under the dominion of this present age, so the new person is the person under the

dominion of the new creation and its life. On the basis of what God has accomplished in Christ, this new identity must be appropriated—“put on”—in such a way that its ethical dimensions become apparent. The notion of the new creation is explicit in the description of the new person as “created in God’s likeness.” τὸν κατὰ θεὸν κτισθέντα, lit. “created like God,” is Ephesians’ version of Col 3:10, κατ’ εἰκόνα τοῦ κτίσαντος αὐτόν, “according to the image of the one who created it,” with its allusion to the language of Gen 1:26. The reference in Ephesians also shares these connotations of the motif of the new Adam in whom the image of God is restored, but as the following phrase, which is an addition to Colossians, shows, its focus is more on the new creation as involving a life which is patterned after God’s (cf. also 5:1), an existence in conformity to the divine will. The goal of conduct could be formulated as living κατὰ θεόν in Josephus, *Ant.* 4.6.10, 143 (cf. also *Sentences of Sextus* 201, 216, 399; Wild, “‘Be Imitators’ ”135). The believer is already in principle, and is becoming in practice, part of God’s new creation (cf. 2:10, 15; cf. also 2 Cor 5:17; Gal 6:15). Here, the language reflects a perspective in which there is a combination of God’s gracious initiative and human responsibility, as it is made clear that the new person is created by God but must be put on by the believer.

The new humanity has been created by God to be like him “in the righteousness and holiness which come from the truth.” This latter phrase in the Greek text immediately follows the adjectival participle κτισθέντα, “created,” and this makes it highly likely that the writer intended the virtues he mentions to be thought of primarily as God’s creation (cf. also Schnackenburg, 205). The thought recalls his earlier formulation in 2:10, where believers are said to be “created for good works which God prepared beforehand.” At the same time, as we have already seen, the mention of the virtues here in 4:24 is in an overall paraenetical context, in which it is made clear that believers must appropriate the new humanity and its ethical qualities. The choice of righteousness and holiness as the ethical qualities that are specified underlines the point that the new humanity has been recreated to be like God, because both are characteristics of God in LXX Ps 144:17 and Deut 32:4 (cf. also Rev 16:5). As the new creation in God’s likeness, believers are to be righteous as he is righteous and holy as he is holy. ὁσιότης, “holiness,” occurs elsewhere in the NT only in Luke 1:75 where it is again in conjunction with δικαιοσύνη, “righteousness.” The latter term denotes in Ephesians not God’s putting humanity in a right relationship with himself nor that right relationship itself, the characteristic Pauline usages, but an ethical virtue (cf. also 5:9; 6:14). Schlier (221–22) opts for the distinction already found in Plato, *Gorgias* 507B, and Philo, *De Abr.* 208, whereby righteousness is doing right in relation to humanity, while holiness is being right in relation to God. Such a distinction is an overdrawn one for NT usage where each term has both moral and religious connotations. It is probably best to see the two terms used together as “a summary of human virtue” (cf. Abbott, 139), as in Wis 9:3 and Luke 1:75 (cf. also the use of the cognate adverbs in 1 Thess 2:10 and adjectives in Titus 1:8). Further support is lent to this interpretation by the fact that most frequently in Plato (*Apology* 35D; *Crito* 54B; *Theatetus* 172B, 176B) and in Philo (*De Sacr.* 57; *De Spec. Leg.* 1.304; 2.180; *De Virt.* 50) both the adjectival and nominal forms of the two terms are employed together to denote virtuous living in general. It is also significant that in Plato’s *Theatetus* 176B and its citation in Philo, *De Fug.* 63, this paired expression explains what it means to become like God. Here too in Ephesians, the new humanity displays these qualities that belong to God, because it has been recreated to be like God (cf. Wild, “‘Be Imitators,’ ”134–35).

The evil desires which characterized the old person sprang from deceit (v 22). Now, by contrast, the virtues which characterize the new person can be said to come from the truth. This truth is ultimately divine reality which has been disclosed in the gospel and the apostolic tradition

(cf. 1:13; 4:21). By its very nature it gives rise to such virtues as righteousness and holiness. In the Qumran literature, truth is frequently contrasted with deceit or falsehood (e.g., 1QS 5.10; 1QH 1.26, 27, 30), and in 1QS 4.2–26 this contrast forms part of the discussion of the two spirits and their two ways, as it does in *T. Jud.* 20.1–3 (cf. also *T. Jud.* 14.1). Also in the Qumran material, the lives of the “sons of truth” can be said to be characterized by ways of righteousness of truth (1QS 4.2; cf. also Murphy-O’Connor, “Truth: Paul and Qumran,” 208–10). Here in 4:24, the portrait of the new person as created in God’s likeness in the righteousness and holiness which come from the truth functions as a challenge to the readers to enter into and to live out that which through their baptism they already know themselves to be. In this way, it is made clear to them that God has not accomplished some instant or total transformation but has made it possible for them to participate in the truth and thereby produce those ethical qualities appropriate to being like God.

Explanation

This passage, as a piece of direct exhortation about both what is inappropriate and what is appropriate to the believer’s calling, continues the address to the readers begun in 4:1–3. God’s calling of these particular readers has taken them out of their previous situation as Gentiles, with all the negative connotations the writer has attached to that identification, into a new creation in which ethnic differences are no longer the significant factor, into a body which transcends the Jew-Gentile divide (cf. chap. 2). Now they must walk worthily of such a calling by no longer living as they did before the call took effect, by no longer living as Gentiles. The positive side of the writer’s exhortation to appropriate conduct appeals to the tradition of teaching the readers have received, and particularly those aspects of the tradition that have ethical implications. This concern has been prepared for in the preceding passage, not only through the notion of living worthily of the calling but also through the importance attached to those ministers whose task is to pass on the apostolic tradition and thereby enable the Church to grow into maturity.

The form the exhortation takes, with its denunciation of the readers’ former way of life, which is at the same time a denunciation of the present way of life of outsiders to the Church, and its continue contrasts between such conduct and that which should characterize those who have been taught the Christian tradition, has certain parallels with both Jewish and Hellenistic ethical material. The content of the exhortation owes something to early Christian baptismal catechesis, but more immediately is dependent on Col 3:5–11. Whereas in Colossians the ethical appeal supported the contrast between heavenly and earthly life and the comparison with the readers’ former lifestyle was secondary (cf. 3:7, 8), in Ephesians it is the latter contrast which gives the writer’s adaptation of the material its distinctive shape and force.

So he begins in vv 17–19 with the strong insistence that his readers are not to fall back into the patterns of thinking and resultant behavior which characterize the surrounding Gentile world. In line with traditional Jewish apologetic, he draws a drastic contrast between such thinking and living and that which God intended. What Gentile Christians should have left behind is an existence in which intellectual perception is totally distorted and, having lost its grip on reality, has become permeated by folly and futility. In such a state, in which the addressees’ surrounding society still finds itself, people’s thinking has become darkened so that they are blind to the true purpose of life and incapable of apprehending truth. Their relationship to the source of life, God himself, has become broken. This is on account of their culpable ignorance, their hardening of themselves to the sense of God available to them. Accompanying this lack of basic insight is a moral bankruptcy, since dullness of ethical sensitivity has in turn led to general debauchery and

unrestrained sexual behaviour, to the active pursuit of all kinds of immorality, and to an insatiable greed which disregards the welfare of others.

The transition from this general denunciation of Gentile conduct to what is expected of Christian believers comes in vv 20, 21, as the readers are told in a striking turn of phrase that all this type of behavior certainly has nothing to do with how they “learned Christ.” Between them and their former Gentile lifestyle stands the teaching which can be summed up in Christ, the instruction in the tradition through which the risen Christ shapes the character and lives of believers. The writer is assured that they have not been instructed falsely in such a way as would reproduce the Gentile pattern of life but according to the truth in Jesus, the norm which should call forth the desired quality of life. Three fundamental aspects of that life are set out in vv 22–24. First, it involves stripping off the rotting garment of the old humanity. The old person is in a process of decay which will lead to final ruin, a process brought about through the evil desires generated by deceit, by an ultimately illusory view of life. Believers must live out the significance of what has already taken place through baptism and abandon the old person that they no longer are. Second, since they are not yet completely new, they must allow themselves to be continually renewed in the inner person, particularly in the mind. Third, this restoration to right thinking will result in right conduct, because the readers are to put on the fresh clean clothing of the new humanity with its just and holy living. The new identity, already achieved for believers, has to be appropriated so that its distinctive ethical qualities will become evident. The new person is created to be like God, and this likeness is exhibited in the righteousness and holiness that epitomize a life in a right relationship to God and humanity and also recall characteristics of this God himself. The existence of the new person is ultimately related to the truth of the gospel and of the apostolic tradition, a moral truth able to give rise to the virtues of righteousness and holiness in those who receive it.

Naturally, because of both the form and content of the passage as an ethical exhortation, believers and their lives are the focus of the writer’s attention. In both their previous and their present state it is their relationship to God that is emphasized—separated from the life of God in the former case and created in God’s likeness in the latter. In the writer’s discussion of the existence of the new person, divine initiative and human responsibility go hand in hand. The decisive transference from the old humanity to the new has already been accomplished by God’s action, but believers must appropriate this for themselves by abandoning the old person, taking on the new and its activities, and allowing themselves to be renewed. A Christological element is not absent from this section, since it is through Christ or, more precisely, through the catechetical tradition which can be summed up in Christ or in Jesus that the pattern of life of the new creation is passed on.

There are a number of other significant aspects of the thought of this passage. Outsiders to the Gentile Christian membership of the Church are designated Gentiles, which reinforces the impression already gained from earlier in the letter, and particularly from 2:11–22, that the writer himself is a Jewish Christian. This Jewish Christian is impressed by the way in which thinking leads to doing in both negative and positive contexts, by the power of ignorance of God in producing moral corruption, and by the power of a mind renewed in the truth in generating virtue. He also places great importance on the role of Christian tradition and of instruction in that tradition in effecting appropriate Christian conduct. Clearest of all is his conviction that being a Christian means having undergone a radical change—from the old person to the new, from futility of mind to renewal of mind, from the service of deceit to the service of truth, from a process of corruption to one of renewal, from a life of unrestrained passions to one of righteousness and holiness. This

stress on the change of identity from the old to the new person is in line with Colossians and with earlier Pauline thought but may well introduce a variation. Here only is the tension between indicative and imperative extended to the terminology of the old and new persons, so that believers can be exhorted to put off the old person that they no longer are and to put on the new person that they already are.

Obviously, hortatory material is intended to effect a particular pattern of life in those to whom it is addressed. Here, the denunciation of Gentile lifestyle, the appeal to Christian catechetical tradition, and the antithetical formulations which characterize the passage are all meant to reinforce the new identity of believers, which is foundational to their new lifestyle, and to guard against their becoming conformed to the ethos of the surrounding society. The use of traditional material means that instruction about the distinctive ethical implications of the new identity can take place by way of reminder of what the readers should already know. This passage lays the essential groundwork on which the more detailed and specific ethical exhortations that follow in the next section, 4:25–5:2, depend. Only from these will it become clear how far and in what ways the conduct advocated by this writer really is new and distinctive in relation to ethical attitudes and behavior in the surrounding society.¹⁴

17–24. *Admonition, that knowing how great the blessings of which they have been made partakers, they should fashion their lives accordingly, putting off that belongs to their old life, and putting on the new man.*

17. τοῦτο οὖν λέγω καὶ μαρτύρομαι ἐν Κυρίῳ. Resumes from νν. 1–3. As Theodoret observes: πάλιν ἀνέλαβε τῆς παραινέσεως τὸ προοίμιον. οὖν, as often, has simply this resumptive force, and does not indicate any inference from what precedes; for the exhortation begun νν. 1–3 was interrupted, and the ἀξίως περιπατεῖν of ver. 1 is repeated in the negative form in ver. 17. The τοῦτο looks forward.

μαρτύρομαι, “I protest, conjure” = διαμαρτύρομαι. Polyb. p. 1403, συνδραμόντων τῶν ἐγχωρίων καὶ μαρτυρομένων τοὺς ἄνδρας ἐπανάγειν ἐπὶ τὴν ἀρχήν. Thucydides, viii. 53, μαρτυρομένων καὶ ἐπιθιαζόντων μὴ κατάγειν. The notion of exhortation and precept is involved in this and λέγω by the nature of the following context, μηκέτι περιπ., as in the passage of Thucydides, so that there is no ellipsis of δεῖν.

ἐν Κυρίῳ. Not either “*per Dominum*” or “calling the Lord to witness.” μάρτυρα τὸν Κύριον καλῶ, Chrys., Theodoret, etc. Some expositors have defended this on the ground that N.T. writers, following the Hebrew idiom, wrote ὁμόσαι ἔν τινι; but it by no means follows that ἔν τινι without ὁμόσαι could be used in this sense any more than κατὰ Διός could be used without ὁμόσαι instead of πρὸς Διός.

¹⁴ Lincoln, A. T. (1990). *Ephesians* (Vol. 42, pp. 276–291). Dallas: Word, Incorporated.

Ellicott says: “As usual, defining the element or sphere in which the declaration is made”; and so Eadie and Alford. This is not explanation. Meyer is a little clearer: “Paul does not speak in his own individuality, but Christ is the element in which his thought and will move.” εἶναι ἐν τινι is a classical phrase expressing complete dependence on a person. Soph. *Oed. Col.* 247, ἐν ὑμῖν ὡς Θεῷ κείμεθα: *Oed. Tyr.* 314, ἐν σοὶ γὰρ ἐσμεν: Eurip. *Alc.* 277, ἐν σοὶ δ’ ἐσμεν καὶ ζῆν καὶ μῆ. Compare Acts 17:28, ἐν αὐτῷ ζῶμεν καὶ κινούμεθα καὶ ἐσμεν. In the N.T., indeed, the expression acquires a new significance from the idea of fellowship and union with Christ and with God. Whatever the believer does, is done with a sense of dependence on Him and union with Him. For example, “speaking the truth” “marrying” (1 Cor. 7:39).

Here, where an apostolic precept is concerned, it is implied that the apostle speaks with authority. But the expression would hardly have been suitable had he not been addressing those who, like himself, had fellowship with the Lord. This interpretation is so far from being “*jejune*,” that it implies a personal and spiritual relation which is put out of sight by the impersonal figure of an “element.”

μηκέτι ὑμᾶς περιπατεῖν καθὼς καὶ τὰ ἔθνη περιπατεῖ. For the infinitive present compare the passages above cited from Thucyd. and Polyb. Also Acts 21:2, λέγων μὴ περιτέμνειν: 21:4, ἔλεγον μὴ ἀναβαίνειν, where the imperative would be used in *oratio directa*. Demosth. xxvii. 7, λέγω πάντα ἐξιέναι. Aesch. *Agam.* 898, λέγω κατ’ ἄνδρα, μὴ Θεόν, σέβειν ἐμέ.

Text. Rec. adds **λοιπά** before **ἔθνη**, with $\mathcal{N}^4$ D^{bc} K L, Syr., Chrys., etc. The word is wanting in $\mathcal{N}$ A B D* G, Vulg., Boh.

The **λοιπά** is more likely to have been added in error than omitted. Assuming that it is not genuine, this is an instance of St. Paul’s habitual regard for the feelings of his readers. It suggests that they are no longer to be classed with the ἔθνη. They were ἔθνη only ἐν σαρκί, but were members of the true commonwealth of Israel.

ἐν ματαιότητι τοῦ νοῦς αὐτῶν. Although in the O.T. idols are frequently called μάταια (compare Acts 14:15), the substantive is not to be limited to idolatry, to which there is no special reference here. It is the falseness and emptiness of their thoughts that are in question (cf. Rom. 1:21, ἐματαιώθησαν ἐν τοῖς διαλογισμοῖς αὐτῶν). Nor, again, are we, with Grotius, to suppose any special reference to the philosophers, merely because in 1 Cor. 3:20 it is said of the διαλογισμοὶ τῶν σοφῶν that they are μάταιοι. Rather, it refers to the whole moral and intellectual character of heathenism; their powers were wasted without fruit. As Photius (quoted by Harless) remarks: οὐ τὰ τῆς ἀληθείας φρονούντες καὶ πιστεύοντες καὶ ἀπο δεχόμενοι ἀλλ’ ἅπερ ἂν ὁ νοῦς αὐτῶν μάτην ἀναπλάσῃ καὶ λογίσηται. νοῦς includes both the intellectual and the practical side of reason, except where there is some ground for giving prominence to one or the other in particular. Here we have both sides, ἐσκοτωμένοι referring to the intellectual, ἀπηλλοτριωμένοι to the practical.

18. ἐσκοτωμένοι τῇ δινοίᾳ ὄντες, ἀπηλλοτριωμένοι τῆς ζωῆς τοῦ Θεοῦ.

ἐσκοτωμένοι is the form in $\mathcal{N}$ A B, while D G K L P have ἐσκοτισμένοι. The former appears to be the more classical.

ὄντες is better joined with the preceding than with the following. If ὄντες ἀπηλλ. be taken together, this would have to be regarded as assigning the ground of **ἐσκοτ.** But the darkness was not the effect of the alienation, which, on the contrary, was the result of the ἄγνοια. The position of ὄντες is not against this, since ἐσκοτ. τῇ δ. express a single notion. Meyer illustrates from Herod. i. 35, οὐ καθαρὸς χεῖρας ἑών, and Xen. *Ages.* xi. 10, πραότατος φίλοις ὢν. The two participles thus

stand in an emphatic position at the beginning, and this emphasis is lost by joining ὄντες with the following. The change of gender from ἔθνη to ἐσκοτωμένοι ὄντες corresponds to a change from the class to the person.

ἐσκοτωμένοι is opposed to πεφωτισμένοι (1:18). We have the same expression Rom. 1:21, ἐσκοτίσθη ἡ ἀσύνετος αὐτῶν καρδία, and a remarkable parallel in Josephus, τὴν διάνοιαν ἐπεσκοτισμένους, *Ant.* ix. 4. 3. Διάνοια strictly means the understanding, but is not so limited in the N.T. Compare Col. 1:21, ἐχθροὺς τῇ διανοίᾳ; 2 Pet. 3:1, διεγείρω ... τὴν εἰλικρινῇ διάνοιαν. Here, however, the connexion decides for the meaning “understanding.” On ἀπηλλ. cf. 2:12.

τῆς ζωῆς τοῦ Θεοῦ. Explained by Theodoret as = τῆς ἐν ἀρετῇ ζωῆς, *i.e.* as = the life approved by God, or “godly life.” But ζωή in N.T. does not mean “course of life,” βίος, but true life as opposed to θάνατος. In Gal. 5:25 we have it expressly distinguished from “course of conduct”; εἰ ζῶμεν πνεύματι, πνεύματι καὶ στοιχῶμεν. Moreover, ἀπηλλοτριωμένοι implies separation from something real. Erasmus’ explanation of the genitive as one of apposition, “*vera vita qui est Deus*,” is untenable. The analogy of ἡ εἰρήνη τοῦ Θεοῦ, Phil. 4:7; αὔξησις τοῦ Θεοῦ, Col. 2:19, suggests that the words mean “the life which proceeds from God”; “*tota vita spiritualis quae in hoc seculo per fidem et justitiam inchoatur et in futura beatitudine perficitur, quae tota peculiariter vita Dei est, quatenus a Deo per gratiam datur*,” Estius. But something deeper than this is surely intended by the genitive, which naturally conveys the idea of a character or quality. It is the life “*qua Deus vivit in suis*,” Beza (who, however, wrongly adds to this “*quamque praecipit et approbat*”). Somewhat similarly Bengel: “*Vita spiritualis accenditur in credentibus ex ipsa Dei vita*.” Harless, indeed, argues that the life of regeneration is not here referred to, since what is in question is not the opposition of the heathen to Christianity, but to God; so that ζωὴ τ. Θεοῦ is to be compared to John 1:3, where the λόγος is said to be (from the beginning) the ζωὴ and φῶς of the world, and thus there was an original fellowship of man with God. So in part many expositors, regarding the perfect participles as indicating “*gentes ante defectionem suam a fide patrum, imo potius ante lapsum Adami, fuisse participes lucis et vitae*,” Bengel. But St. Paul is here speaking of the contemporary heathen in contrast to those who had become Christians (ver. 17); and it is hard to think that if he meant to refer to this original divine life in man, he would not have expressed himself more fully and precisely. The idea is one which he nowhere states explicitly, and it is by no means involved of necessity in the tense of the participles, which is sufficiently explained as expressing a state. Indeed, the aorist ἀπηλλοτριωθέντες would more suitably suggest the idea of a time when they were not so; cf. 1 Pet. 2:10, οἱ οὐκ ἠλεημένοι νῦν δὲ ἐλεηθέντες. And how can we think the Gentiles as at a prehistoric time τῇ διανοίᾳ not ἐσκοτωμένοι?

διὰ τὴν ἄγνοιαν τὴν οὖσαν ἐν αὐτοῖς διὰ τὴν πώρωσιν τῆς καρδίας αὐτῶν. The cause of their alienation from the Divine life is their ignorance, and this again results from their hardness of heart. Most expositors regard διὰ ... διὰ as co-ordinate, some connecting both clauses with ἀπηλλ. only (Origen, Alford, Eadie, Ellicott), others with both participles (Bengel, Harless, Olsh. De Wette). Bengel, followed by Olsh. and De Wette, refers διὰ τὴν ἄγν. to ἐσκ. and διὰ τὴν π. to ἀπηλλ. But this is rather too artificial for a letter. Nor does it yield a satisfactory sense; for ἄγνοια is not the cause of the darkness, but its effect. De Wette evades this by saying that ἄγνοια refers to speculative knowledge, ἐσκοτ. to practical. But there is no sufficient ground for this. The substantive ἄγνοια does not elsewhere occur in St. Paul’s Epistles (it is in his speech, Acts 17:30, “the times of this ignorance”; and in 1 Pet. 1:14, besides Acts 3:17); but the verb is of frequent occurrence, and always of ignorance only, not of the absence of a higher faculty of knowledge. Such ignorance was not inaccessible to light, as is shown by the instances of the converted Gentiles; but so far as it was due to the hardness of their hearts, it was culpable. It is only by the

subordination of the latter clause to the former that the use of τὴν οὖσαν ἐν αὐτοῖς instead of the simple αὐτῶν finds a satisfactory explanation. Compare Rom. 1:18–32. Ellicott, following Harless, explains these words as pointing out the *indwelling deep-seated* nature of the ἄγνοια, and forming a sort of parallelism to τῆς καρδίας αὐτῶν, and so, as Harless adds, opposed to mere external occasions. But there is nothing, of this in the context, nor in the words οὖσαν ἐν αὐτοῖς. The ignorance must be in them; and, unless we take the connexion as above (with Meyer), the words express nothing more than αὐτῶν.

πώρωσις is “hardness,” not “blindness,” as most of the ancient versions interpret. Indeed, it is so explained also by Suidas and Hesychius, as if derived from an adjective πωρός, “blind”; which seems, however, to be only an invention of the grammarians (perhaps from confusion with πηρός, with which it is often confounded by copyists). It is really derived (through πωρόω) from πῶρος, which originally meant “*tufa*,” and then “*callus*,” a callosity or hardening of the skin. (It is also used by medical writers of the “*callus*” formed at the end of fractured bones, and of “chalkstones” in the joints.) Hence, from the insensibility of the parts covered with hard skin, the verb means to make dull or insensible. It is thus correctly explained by Theodoret, πώρωσιν τὴν ἐσχάτην ἀναλγησίαν λέγει· καὶ γὰρ αἱ τῷ σώματι ἐγγινόμεναι πωρώσεις οὐδεμίαν αἴσθησιν ἔχουσι. Cicero frequently uses “*callum*” in a similar figurative sense, *e.g.* “*ipse labor quasi callum quoddam obducit dolori*,” *Tusc. Disp.* ii. 15.

19. οἴτινες, “*quippe qui*,” “being persons who.” ἀπηλγηκότες, “being past feeling,” a word appropriate to the figure in πώρωσις; it properly means to give over feeling pain, and is used by Thucydides with an accusative of the thing, ἀπαλγοῦντες τὰ ἴδια, ii. 61; hence it comes to mean “to be without feeling.” The AV. “past feeling” expresses the sense very accurately. Polybius, however, has the expression ἀπαλγοῦντες ταῖς ἐλπίσι, and, indeed, elsewhere uses the verb in the sense “giving up,” as Hesychius interprets, μηκέτι θέλοντες πονεῖν. This may be “giving up in despair,” as in i. 58 of the Romans and Carthaginians, κάμνοντες ἤδη τοῖς πόνοις διὰ τὴν συνέχειαν τῶν κινδύνων, εἰς τέλος ἀπήλγουν. Hence some commentators have adopted “desperantes” here, which is the rendering of the Vulgate. Bengel cites from Cicero (*Epp. ad famil.* ii. 16) what looks like a paraphrase of the word: “*diuturna desperatione serum obduruisset animum ad dolorem novum*.” “Dolor, says Bengel, “*urget ad medicinam: dolore autem amisso, non modo spes sed etiam studium et cogitatio rerum bonarum amittitur, ut homo sit excors, effrons, exspes*.” Theophylact gives a similar interpretation: κατερῥαθυμηκότες, καὶ μὴ θέλοντες καμεῖν πρὸς τὴν εὕρεσιν τοῦ καλοῦ, καὶ ἀναλγήτως διατεθέντες. The reading of D G is ἀπηλπικότες (ἀφ- G); but evidence for the textual reading is predominant, and, moreover, ἀπηλπικότες would give a very poor sense. Jerome appears to regard “desperantes” of the old Latin as an incorrect rendering of ἀπηλπικότες, for which he suggests “*indolentes sive indolorios*.” But he did not alter the text of the translation. Probably the other versions which express the same meaning had not a different reading; and, on the other hand, the reading of D G may have arisen either from the influence of the versions or as a gloss.

ἐαυτούς. What is ascribed in Rom. 1:24 to God is ascribed here to themselves, in accordance with the hortatory purpose of the present passage, so as to fix attention on the part which they themselves had in the result.

ἀσελγής and ἀσελγεια were used by earlier writers (Plato, Isaeus, Dem.) in the sense of “insolent, insolence, outrageous”; Later writers apply them in the sense “*lasciviousness*.” The substantive has that meaning in 2 Cor. 12:21; Gal. 5:19; 2 Pet. 2:7, 18; Rom. 13:13. In Mark 7:22; Jude 4; 1 Pet. 4:3; 2 Pet. 2:2, the meaning is less clearly defined. In the LXX it occurs only Wisd. 14:22 and 2 Macc. 2:26. The derivation is probably from σέλγω, a form of θέλω.

εἰς ἐργασίαν ἀκαθαρσίας πάσης πάσης. ἐργασία suggests the idea that they made a business of ἀκαθαρσία. So Chrysostom: οὐ παραπесόντες, φησίν, ἡμαρτον, ἀλλ' εἰργάζοντο αὐτὰ τὰ δεινά, καὶ μελέτη τῷ πράγματι ἐκέχρητο. It is not, however, to be understood of literal trading in impurity, which could not be asserted with such generality of the Gentiles. Compare Luke 12:58, ἐν τῇ ὁδῷ δὸς ἐργασίαν, "give diligence": see note *ad loc.*

ἐν πλεονεξία. πλεονεξία originally meant (like πλεονέκτης, πλεονεκτεῖν) only advantage over another, for example, superiority in battle, hence it passed to the idea of unfair advantage, and then to that of the desire to take unfair advantage, "*covetousness*." The verb occurs five times in 2 Cor. in the sense "take advantage of." The substantive πλεονέκτης is found (besides Eph. 5:5) in 1 Cor. 5:10, 11, 6:16. **πλεονεξία** occurs in all ten times in N.T. In Luke 12:15 it is clearly "*covetousness*," and so in 2 Cor. 9:5; 1 Thess. 2:5. But all three words are so frequently associated with words relating to sins of the flesh, that many expositors, ancient and modern, have assigned to them some such special signification. Thus πλεονέκτης, 1 Cor. 5:10, 11; πλεονεξία, Col. 3:5, πορνείαν, ἀκαθαρσίαν, πάθος, ἐπιθυμίαν κακὴν, καὶ τὴν πλεονεξίαν, ἥτις ἐστὶν εἰδωλολατρεία: besides the present passage and Eph. 5:3, πᾶσα ἀκαθαρσία ἢ πλεονεξία, cf. also v. 5. In 2 Pet. 2:14, καρδίαν γεγυμνασμένην πλεονεξίας ἔχοντες, "*covetousness*" does not suit the connexion as well as some more general term. But the most striking passage is 1 Thess. 4:6, τὸ μὴ ὑπερβαίνειν καὶ πλεονεκτεῖν ἐν τῷ πράγματι τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ, where the verb is undoubtedly applied to adultery, viewed as an injustice to one's neighbour. And this suggests that possibly in Mark 7:21, where the right order is κλοπαί, φόνοι, μοιχεῖαι, πλεονεξίαι, there is a similar idea. In Rom. 1:29 also, something grosser than covetousness seems to be intended. In Polycarp, *Phil.* vi., which exists only in the Latin, "*avaritia*" undoubtedly represents the original πλεονεξία. Polycarp is lamenting the sin of Valens, and says: "*moneo itaque vos ut abstineatis ab avaritia, et sitis casti et veraces*," and a little after: "*is quis non abstinuerit se ab avaritia, ab idololatria coinquinabitur; et tanquam inter gentes judicabitur*." In the present passage Theodoret says the word is used for ἀμετρία: "Πᾶσαν ἁμαρτίαν τολμῶσι, ὑπὲρ κόρον τῷ διεφθαρμένῳ καταχρώμενοι βίῳ πλεονεξίαν γὰρ τὴν ἀμετρίαν ἐκάλεσε." The association with idolatry in Eph. 5:5 and Col. 3:5 favours the same view. Hammond on Rom. 1:29 has a learned note in support of this signification of πλεονεξία, which, however, he pushes too far. Of course it is not alleged that the word of itself had this special sense, but that it was with some degree of euphemism so applied, and in such a connexion as the present would be so understood.

It is alleged, on the other side, that covetousness and impurity are named together as the two leading sins of the Gentile world; that they even proceed from the same source; that covetousness especially is idolatry, as being the worship of Mammon.

Covetousness was not a peculiarly Gentile sin. The Pharisees were covetous (φιλάργυροι). Our Lord warns His own disciples against πλεονεξία, in the sense of covetousness, in Luke 12:15 above referred to. And the form of the warning there shows that covetousness and impurity were not on the same level in respect of grossness. This may also be inferred from St. Paul's ὁ κλέπτων μηκέτι κλεπτέτω. Can we conceive him saying ὁ μοιχεύων μηκέτι μοιχευέτω?

That covetousness and impurity proceed from the same source, and that "the fierce longing of the creature which has turned from God to fill itself with the lower things of sense" (Trench, *Syn.*, after Bengel), is psychologically false. Lust and impurity are excesses of a purely animal and bodily passion; covetousness is a secondary desire, seeking as an end in itself that which was originally desired only as a means.

The explanation of ver. 5 by the observation that the covetous serve Mammon, not God, is due to Theodoret, who derives it from Matt. 6:24. But that passage does not make it probable that the

covetous man would be called an idolator without some explanation added. St. Paul himself speaks of persons who serve, not the Lord Christ, but their own belly (Rom. 16:18), and of others “whose god is their belly”; yet he probably would not call them, without qualification, “idolators.” Indeed, other Greek commentators devised various explanations. Chrysostom, for instance, as one explanation, suggests that the covetous man treats his gold as sacred, because he does not touch it.

We may ask, further, why should covetousness be specified with impurity and filthy speaking as not to be even named? (Eph. 5:3). Impure words suggest impure thoughts, words about covetousness have no tendency to suggest covetous thoughts. It is said, indeed, that the ἡ there between ἀκαθαρσία πᾶσα and πλεονεξία implies that the two words cannot refer to sins of the same kind; but this argument seems to be answered by the immediately following μωρο λογία ἢ εὐτραπεία. In ver. 5, also, we have πόρνος ἢ ἀκάθαρτος ἢ πλεονέκτης. In the present passage we have, not καὶ πλ., but ἐν πλ. To take this as ἐν “covetousness,” or the like, after the strong words that have preceded, would be an incredible weakening of the charge.

20. ὑμεῖς δὲ οὐχ οὕτως ἐμάθετε τὸν χριστόν. “But ye, not so did ye learn Christ.” Beza, followed by Braune, places a stop after οὕτως, “But not so ye. Ye have learned Christ.” This, however, makes the second clause too abrupt. We should expect ὑμεῖς to be repeated, or ἀλλά inserted, as in Luke 22:26, ὑμεῖς δὲ οὐχ οὕτως· ἀλλ’ ὁ μείζων ἐν ὑμῖν, κ.τ.λ. Besides, the connexion with ver. 21 is impaired, “ye learned Christ” is first stated absolutely, and then with a qualification.

οὐχ οὕτως, a litotes; cf. Deut. 18:14. ἐμάθετε, “did learn,” viz. when they became Christians. This use of μανθάνω with an accus. of a person seems to be without parallel. The instance cited by Raphelius from Xenophon, ἵνα ἀλλήλους μάθοιεν ὅποσοι εἴησαν, is clearly not parallel, the object of the verb there being ὅποσοι, κ.τ.λ. Hence the ancients and many moderns have taken Χριστόν as = “*doctrinam Christi*,” which is feeble and unsupported. Others, as Rückert and Harless, understand ἐμάθετε as “learned to know,” viz. “what He is and what He desires.” But the key to the expression is supplied by the passages which speak of “preaching Christ,” Gal. 1:16; 1 Cor. 1:23; 2 Cor. 1:19; Phil. 1:15; indeed the following verse (21) speaks of “hearing Him.” As Christ was the content of the preaching, He might properly be said to be learned. So Phil. 3:10, τοῦ γινῶναι αὐτόν. Col. 2:6, παρελάβετε τὸν Χρ., is similar.

21. εἴγε, “*tum certe si*,” see on 3:2. Here also the conjunction is unfavourable to the view that St. Paul is addressing those whom he had himself instructed. αὐτόν with emphasis placed first, “if Him, indeed, ye heard.” ἐν αὐτῷ, not “by Him,” as AV., a construction not admissible with a personal author, nor “*illius nomine, quod ad illum attinet*” (Bengel). But as those who believe are said to be ἐν Χριστῷ, so here they are said to have been taught in Him, *i.e.* as in fellowship with Him. There is a progress, as Meyer observes, from the first announcement of the gospel (ἰκούσατε) to the further instruction which then as converts they would have received (ἐν αὐτῷ ἐδιδ.), both being included in ἐμάθετε τὸν Χριστόν. John 10:27 is not parallel, since ἀκούειν in the sense “hearken to” would take the genitive.

Καθὼς ἐστὶν ἀλήθεια ἐν τῷ Ἰησοῦ. The AV. “as the truth is in Jesus” is incompatible with the absence of the article, but admits of being understood in the true sense of the Greek, which is not the case with the form in which the words are so often quoted, “the truth as it is in Jesus,” which would be τὴν ἀλήθειαν καθὼς ἐστὶν, κ.τ.λ. Nor do the words mean, as Jerome interprets: “*quomodo est veritas in Jesu, sic erit in vobis qui didicistis Christum*,”—an interpretation which is followed by Estius and many others, and which makes Jesus be set forth as the pattern of truth, *i.e.* holiness. In addition to the difficulty of so understanding ἀλήθεια, this supposes ὑμᾶς to be emphatic, which its position forbids; the antithesis would also require that ἐν τῷ Ἰησοῦ should come after καθὼς. Moreover, any interpretation which makes ἀποθέσθαι depend on ἐδιδάχθητε is open to the

objection that in that case ὑμᾶς is superfluous. Ellicott, who adopts this construction, suggests that ὑμᾶς is introduced to mark their contrast, not only with other Gentiles, but with their own former state as implied in τὴν προτέραν ἀναστροφήν. But it is not clear how ὑμᾶς can mark such a contrast. Nor is ἐδιδ. suitable to ἀνανεοῦσθαι. It seems better to take ἀποθέσθαι ὑμᾶς as the subject of the clause, ἀλήθεια being understood in the sense “true teaching,” opposed to ἀπάτη. Compare the use of ἀλήθεια in John 3:21, “he that doeth the truth,” and here, ver. 24. The sense will then be, “as is right teaching in Jesus: that ye put off.” The change from Χριστόν to Ἰησοῦ is appropriate. Their introduction to Christianity or to the πολιτεία of Israel instructed them in the hope centred in the Messiah as a Redeemer. But when obedience to the practical teaching of a historical person is referred to, the historical name is used.

A very different view of the construction is taken by Credner, v. Soden, and Westcott and Hort mg., viz. that Χριστός is the subject of ἐστίν, in which case ἀλήθεια may be either nom. (Credner, Soden) or dative (WH. mg.). Soden remarks that considering the emphatic repetition of αὐτόν, ἐν αὐτῷ, which takes up τὸν Χρ. from the clause with οὕτως, the subject of this clause can only be Christ, viz. “as He is truth in Jesus,” so that the thought is that they must not only believe in a Christ, but recognise Him in Jesus; and if they are to live in truth in Christ, they must live in Jesus. The thought is parallel to Heb. 13:18. The dative ἀληθείᾳ, as in WH. mg., seems preferable, “have been taught in Him, as He is in truth, in Jesus.” On ἀληθείᾳ in this sense, comp. Phil. 1:18, εἴτε προφάσει εἴτε ἀληθείᾳ.

22. ἀποθέσθαι, a figure from putting off clothes = ἀπεκδυσάμενοι, Col. 3:9, as ἐνδύσασθαι from putting them on. The frequency of the figure in Greek writers puts out of the question any reference to change of dress in baptism (Grotius).

It is rightly rendered in the Vulg. “*deponere*,” not “*deposuisse*,” which would require the perfect inf. The aorist expresses the singleness of the act, whereas ἀνανεοῦσθαι expresses a continuing process. The infin. is not for the imperative (as in Phil. 3:16), which is inconsistent with ὑμᾶς.

κατὰ τὴν προτέραν ἀναστροφήν. “As concerns your former manner of life,” defining the particular respect in which the old man was to be put off ἀναστροφή in this sense belongs to later Greek. The word originally meant a turning back, thence dwelling in a place; hence Aeschylus uses it of a “haunt.” We find it in Polybius in the sense of “behaviour.” κατὰ τε τὴν λοιπὴν ἀναστροφήν καὶ τὰς πράξεις τεθνασμασμένος ὑπὲρ τὴν ἡλικίαν. (iv. 82. 1); so also Epict. i. 9. 5. In the Sept. it occurs only in the Apocrypha, Tobit 4:19; 2 Macc. 5:8; both times in this sense.

τὸν παλαιὸν ἄνθρωπον. The ἐγὼ σαρκικός of Rom. 7:14; ἐγὼ σὰρξ, *ib.* 18, opposed to ἄνθρωπος ὁ κατὰ Θεὸν κτισθείς. The adoption of the expression the old and the new ἄνθρωπος, indicates that the change affects, not some particulars only, but the whole personality or ἐγώ.

τὸν φθειρόμενον. “Which waxeth corrupt.” This supplies a motive for the putting off. The present tense indicates a process that is going on. Compare Rom. 8:21, “bondage of φθορά.” Meyer thinks the reference is to eternal destruction, the present expressing either the future vividly conceived as perfect, or rather what already exists in tendency, “*qui tendit ad exitium*,” Grot. His reason is that the moral corruption of the old man is already existing, not “becoming.” But though the corruption exists it is progressive. The tendency to perdition is expressed by St. Paul elsewhere by the term ἀπολλύμενον κατὰ τὰς ἐπιθυμίας τῆς ἀπάτης. Mark the contrast with ἀληθείας, ver. 24; τῆς ἀπάτης, not as in AV. a genitive of quality, but a subjective genitive, ἀπάτη being almost personified, not, indeed, by the article alone, but by the attributing to it of ἐπιθυμίας. It is the deceitful power of sin. Cf. ἀπάτη τῆς ἁμαρτίας, Heb. 3:13, and Rom. 7:11, ἡ ἁμαρτία ἐξαπάτησέ με. Hence the ἐπιθυμίας derive their power ἡ ἁμαρτία ... κατειργάσατο πᾶσαν ἐπιθυμίαν, *ib.* 8. It

is quite against N.T. usage to understand ἀπάτη here as “error.” Compare ἀπάτη τοῦ πλούτου, Matt. 13:22; ἀπ. ἀδικίας, 2 Thess. 2:10.

κατά, “in accordance with,” *i.e.* as their nature implies.

23. ἀνανεοῦσθαι. Passive, not middle, for the middle of this verb is always used transitively, in an active signification. Nor would it be Pauline to represent the renewal as springing from the man himself. Compare also ἀνακαινούμενον, Col. 3:10.

It may be questioned whether ἀνα- here implies restoration to a former state, as is generally assumed. In classical writers ἀνανεοῦσθαι means “to restore”; but then the object expresses the original state, etc., which is thus brought into force or existence again, ἀν. ὄρκους, φιλίαν, etc. That is not the sense here, or in Col. 3:10, of ἀνακαινούσθαι. Here the object is ὑμᾶς, and the meaning is, not that ye are to be brought out of a state of suspended existence, but that ye are to be changed so as to become νεοί. What ἀνα- implies, therefore, is simply change, and the meaning of the verb is to be illustrated by that of similar compounds of verbs derived from adjectives, where these adjectives would express the result of the action of the verbs. Such are: ἀνισώω, “to equalise”; ἀναπληρόω, “to fill”; ἀνακοινώω “to communicate”; ἀνιερόω, “to consecrate,” *i.e.* to make ἴσος, πλήρης, κοινός, Ἱερός.

τῷ πνεύματι τοῦ νοῦς ὑμῶν. This is understood of the Holy Spirit by Oecumenius and Theophylact, followed by Fritzsche, Ellicott, and others (the genitive being thus possessive), the “(Divine) Spirit united with the human πνεῦμα, with which the νοῦς as subject is endued, and of which it is the *receptaculum*.” But this would be entirely without parallel. The Holy Spirit is never called τὸ πνεῦμα ὑμῶν or τοῦ νοῦς ὑμῶν, nor, indeed, does it seem possible that it should be so designated. The spirit of the νοῦς of a man must be the man’s spirit. πνεῦμα, in the sense of the Holy Spirit, is sometimes followed by a characterising genitive “of holiness,” “of adoption,” or, again, “of Christ,” “of God”; never “of us,” or “of you.” This interpretation is particularly out of place if ἀνανεοῦσθαι is taken as depending on ἐδιδάχθητε. Bengel’s interpretation is doubtless the correct one, “spiritus est intimum mentis,” the higher principle of life. In Rom. 7. we see νοῦς pronouncing approval of the law, but unable to resist the motions of sin, for it has no motive power. In ch. 8. we see the πνεῦμα inspired by God, and we have a description of the man who is ἀνανεούμενος τῷ πνεύματι τοῦ νοῦς αὐτοῦ. For the distinction between νοῦς and πνεῦμα compare, further, 1 Cor. 14:14, τὸ πνεῦμά μου προσεύχεται, ὁ δὲ νοῦς μου ἄκαρπός ἐστι. The expression here used is thus quite in harmony with St. Paul’s usage elsewhere. But in Rom. 12:2 the νοῦς is said to be renewed, μεταμορφοῦσθε τῇ ἀνακαινώσει τοῦ νοός.

24. καὶ ἐνδύσασθαι τὸν καινὸν ἄνθρωπον. Note the correctness of the tenses: ἀποθέσθαι and ἐνδύσασθαι aorists, because a single act is meant; ἀνανεοῦσθαι present, because a continuing process. So in the parallel Col. 3:9, 10, καινός differs from νέος in that the latter refers only to time, new, not long in existence, the former to quality also, as opposed to effeteness: cf. Heb. 8:13. The καινός ἄνθρ., like the καινὴ διαθήκη, is always καινός, but not always νέος.

κατὰ Θεόν. Compare Col. 3:10, τὸν νέον τὸν ἀνακαινούμενον εἰς ἐπίγνωσιν κατ’ εἰκόνα τοῦ κτίσαντος αὐτόν. From the parallel, Meyer and Ellicott conclude that κατὰ Θεόν = “*ad exemplum Dei*,” there being an allusion to Gen. 1:27. Meyer compares Gal. 4:28, κατὰ Ἰσαάκ. But in Col. it is just the word εἰκόνα that expresses the idea sought to be introduced here. That κατ’ εἰκόνα means “after the likeness of,” is no proof that κατά = “after the likeness of.” κατά in that phrase means “after the manner of,” and if so taken here it would imply that the parallelism was in the action of the verb, *i.e.* that God was κτισθεῖς. For a similar reason 1 Pet. 1:15 is not parallel, κατὰ τὸν καλέσαντα ὑμᾶς ἅγιον, καὶ αὐτοὶ ἅγιοι.

κατὰ Θεόν occurs 2 Cor. 7:9, 10, 11 = “in a godly manner,” and this suggests the true interpretation, viz. “according to the will of God.” It may be said that this is flat compared with the other view; but if so, that does not justify us in giving κατὰ an unexampled sense.

ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ καὶ ὁσιότητι τῆς ἀληθείας. The AV. “righteousness and true holiness” is doubly wrong; in connecting the genitive with the latter substantive only, and in resolving it adjectivally. The Bishops’ Bible was correct, “in righteousness and holiness of truth.” Yet Chrysostom understood the words as meaning true as opposed to false, δικ. and ὁς. The usual distinction between these substantives is that ὁσιότης has reference to God, δικαιοσύνη to men; so Plato, Philo, and other Greek writers distinctively state; but Plato tells us in one place that δικαιοσύνη was a general term including ὁσιότης; in fact, it meant righteousness or propriety of conduct in itself. In the N.T. the adjectives are combined in Tit. 1:8, the adverbs in 1 Thess. 2:10, and the substantives in Luke 1:75 and Clem. Rom. *Cor.* 48. In 1 Tim. 2:8, ἐπαίροντας ὁσίους χεῖρας χωρὶς ὀργῆς καὶ διαλογισμῶν, the added words do not define the ὁσιότης. The hands are ὅσιοι when not unfitted to be lifted up in prayer. Nor is the use of ὅσιος with ἀρχιερέυς, Heb. 7:26, at all peculiar. ὅσιος occurs thrice in the Acts in quotations from the O.T. which do not concern St. Paul’s usage. Here, as in Luke 1:75 and Wisd. 9:5, the words seem used in a way which had become familiar as a summary of human virtue. The suggestion that δικαιοσύνη is in contrast to πλεονεξία, and ὁσιότης to ἀκαθαρσία (Olsh., Alf., Ell.), has against it, not only the distance from ver. 19, and the ἐν there (not καί), but also the fact that these are not the proper opposites. The opposite of ἀκαθ. is not ὁσιότης but ἀγνότης; and δικαιοσύνη is very much more than the opposite of πλεονεξία in any sense of that word¹⁵

4:17–19. Greek writers often developed their moral exhortation by contrasting opposites, as Paul does here. Literature from this period demonstrates that most Jewish people would have described non-Jews in language similar to that which Paul uses (cf. also Lev 18:3, 24–30; 20:23–24; Deut 26:16–19). What is significant is that Paul refuses to call ethnically Gentile Christians “Gentiles” any longer; they may be ethnically Gentile, but they are to be *ethically* Jewish. Premarital sex, homosexual intercourse and idolatry were typically Gentile sins from which nearly all Jews abstained. By contrast, pagans were raised this way; many Greek boys were ushered into “manhood” by an older man’s molestation. “Walk” (KJV, NASB) means “behave”; see comment on Gal 5:16; “hardness of heart” is common in the Old Testament (e.g., Ex 4:21; Ps 95:8).

4:20–24. The “new self” (v. 24) is literally “the new person,” who is (literally) “created according to God,” which means according to his image or likeness. Paul probably alludes to the way God originally made Adam and Eve in his image, and says that the new person that a Christian has become is equipped with moral purity because he or she is made like God morally. Thus, he points out, one should live like it—as blamelessly as Adam and Eve did before they

¹⁵ Abbott, T. K. (1909). *A critical and exegetical commentary on the epistles to the Ephesians and to the Colossians* (pp. 127–139). New York: C. Scribner’s sons.

disobeyed. “Clothing” and “unclothing” provide a natural image, used in the Old Testament and Greek literature, for “putting on” and “putting off” or “removing” some kinds of behavior (Job 29:14; Ps 109:18; especially Is 61:3, 10; see comment on Rom 13:12), other attributes (2 Chron 6:41; Ps 93:1) and so forth.

Jewish wisdom writers and Greek philosophers could have agreed with Paul’s emphasis on “renewing the mind”; they understood that one’s attitudes and values affected one’s lifestyle. But Paul’s basis for renewal differs from theirs; he bases it on the new kind of life available in Christ, a kind of life that most Jewish people expected only in the world to come (after the resurrection of the dead).¹⁶

1. PRESENTATION OF THE OLD MAN (4:17–19)

a. *His nature* (4:17–18).

4:17–18. The Ephesian believers who were Gentiles (2:1–2, 11–12) were not to walk **as the Gentiles do**, or as implied, as they had once walked. Gentiles walked **in the futility of their thinking**. The word for “futility” (*mataiotēti*; cf. Rom. 1:21) suggests being void of useful aim or goal. (This noun is used only here and in Rom. 8:20 [of Creation] and 2 Peter 2:18 [of words]. The verb *mataioō* is used in Rom. 1:21, “their thinking became futile.”) Unbelieving Gentiles failed to attain the true purpose of the mind, namely, to receive God’s revelation which would guide them in their conduct. Since their minds could not receive God’s revelation, **their understanding was darkened** (Rom. 1:21; 2 Cor. 4:4), being **separated** (lit., “alienated”; cf. Eph. 2:12) **from the life of** (that comes from) **God**. Their alienation is **because of** their **ignorance** of God (cf. 1 Peter 1:14); and this is because of **the hardening of their hearts**, their being insensitive to God and His ways.

b. *His practice* (4:19).

4:19. Because of their lack of **sensitivity** these Gentiles gave **themselves over** (“abandoned themselves”; cf. Rom. 1:24, 26, 28) **to sensuality** (*aselgeia*, “licentiousness”; cf. Mark 7:22; Rom. 13:13; 2 Cor. 12:21; Gal. 5:19; 1 Peter 4:3; 2 Peter 2:2, 7, 18; Jude 4), a life without concern for personal standards or social sanctions. Their purpose (*eis*) was to practice **every kind of impurity, with a continual lust for more** (lit., “in greed”), indulging in self-gratification without regard for others. This is a horrible picture of sinful people’s selfish and perverted ways.

2. PRESENTATION OF THE NEW MAN (4:20–32)

a. *His position* (4:20–24).

¹⁶ Keener, C. S. (1993). *The IVP Bible background commentary: New Testament* (Eph 4:17–24). Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

4:20–24. In contrast (*de*) with the “old man” (vv. 17–19) believers **did not come to know** (lit., “learn”) **Christ that way**. Their minds are no longer darkened; their lives are no longer alienated from God; their hearts are no longer hardened and impure. Christ is the Subject (**you heard of Him**) and the Sphere (**you were taught in Him**) of a believer’s learning. This teaching and learning is **in accordance with the truth**, because He is the Truth (John 14:6). The content of this learning is twofold: (1) A believer has **put off the old self which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires** (cf. Eph. 4:17–19). Self-centered lusts are deceitful because they promise joy but fail to provide it. (2) He has **put on the new self** which has been **created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness**, which is based on truth (v. 24). This truth contrasts with the deceitfulness of lustful living (cf. vv. 14–15). Believers have been **made new in the attitude of their minds**; they are no longer futile in their thinking, darkened in their understanding, and ignorant (vv. 18–19). These are not commands, for the construction here (and in the parallel passage in Col. 3:9–10) is not imperative. They are facts that believers have learned, as is also seen in Romans 6:2–10 and 2 Corinthians 5:17. Believers are new people in Christ, and hence they can no longer live as Gentiles live, as the next exhortations state.¹⁷

¹⁷ Hoehner, H. W. (1985). Ephesians. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 636–637). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.