

THE WORD OF TRUTH

OTIS Q. SELLERS, Editor JULY-AUGUST, 1941

Vol. V, No.4

Table of Contents

- * Studies in Ephesians
- * The Kingdom Eon
- * Concordance to EONIAN
- * The Editor to His Friends

STUDIES IN EPHESIANS

Introduction

The correct approach to any epistle in the New Testament must be through the Word of God. This is especially true of those epistles that contain the name of a city in the salutation, when the same city is spoken of in other places in the Scriptures. Here is an epistle which is commonly called *Ephesians*. It was directed to certain people in Ephesus, a great metropolis in which most of the residents were devoted to the worship of Diana. In this city there were many Jews, maintaining the worship of the true God, living in the expectation of the Messiah promised in their sacred Scriptures. These were banded together in a synagogue, and this separated them entirely from the idol worship that prevailed round about them.

It is evident that the situation which existed in Ephesus before Paul's first visit was one of a great idol worshipping population, banded together around a great temple and an image of Diana, and a small minority of God-fearing Jews banded together in the synagogue by their worship of the true God. Any man arriving in Ephesus, seeking to find where the people of God assembled would have found them in the synagogue. If the Lord Jesus had visited Ephesus during His earthly ministry, He undoubtedly would have gone direct to the synagogue in order to be among the people of God. The synagogue was the assembly of God in Ephesus. Furthermore, in harmony with the scriptural use of the

term *church*, the synagogue was the Church of God in Ephesus. If Israel in the wilderness was "the church in the wilderness" (and it was according to Acts 7:38), then the little band of Israelites in Ephesus was the Church of God in Ephesus.

This very important truth is difficult of apprehension due to the prejudices that exist in most minds in regard to the word *church*. The term "Church of God" is not a new term found on Iv after the death of Christ. Its exact equivalent appears in the Old-Testament, even though it does not appear in our English Bibles. The "congregation of God" spoken of in Nehemiah 13:1 is identical with the term "Church of God" found in the New Testament. The Hebrew word for congregation is *qahal*, and the Greek word translated *church* is *ecclesia*. That these words are identical in meaning is conclusively proven by the Spirit's usage of them in Psalm 22 :22 and Hebrews 2 :12.

When Paul first arrived in Ephesus all that was of God was centered in the synagogue. There God was worshipped; there His people gathered; there His Word was read. Upon his arrival Paul went direct to the synagogue and reasoned with the Jews (Acts 18 :19). In doing this he was following his usual custom (Acts 17 :1-3), so we are safe in concluding that he reasoned with them out of the Scriptures, clearly explaining and demonstrating that it was necessary for the Messiah to suffer and rise again from the dead. Having shown this to the people who were hoping for and in the Messiah, he then declared that the one named Jesus whom he preached unto them was the Messiah.

His initial efforts in Ephesus did not create any antagonism. When the time for his departure came, they desired that he would remain longer with them, but he refused to do so. Bidding them farewell, he departed leaving with them his promise to return if it should prove to be the will of God (Acts 18:20-21).

Superficial conceptions of the ministry of Paul would lead us to believe that "he was laboring to establish a branch of the Christian church in every city he visited." This was not the case, and it is proved by the fact that no separate assembly was established in Ephesus. He preached the rejected Jesus as the Messiah in the Ephesus synagogue. If the synagogue believed on Him it would continue as the Church of God in Ephesus. If it failed to do so, then the few who did believe would be formed into a separate assembly by God's apostle and this would constitute them as the Church of God.

Apollos at Ephesus

After Paul's departure, a certain Alexandrian Jew came to Ephesus. He was a scholarly man, able in the Scriptures, instructed in the way of the Lord and fervent in spirit. He spoke and taught accurately concerning Jesus (see the Greek), but his knowledge of Him was limited to the message of John the Baptist. Being a man of God, he went among the people in Ephesus and spoke boldly in the synagogue. When Aquila and Priscilla heard him, they took him and expounded the way of God unto him more accurately. It is evident that he made some disciples in Ephesus before he had learned the fullness of truth from Aquila and Priscilla.

When Paul returned to Ephesus he found some of these disciples. Their own confession was that they had been baptized "unto John's baptism." Paul showed them that they had taken one good step, but they had not followed the full advice of John. He had told his

followers that they should believe on Him who came after, that is, on Christ Jesus. When they heard this they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. They were about twelve in number, but nothing was done to form them into an assembly.

After this, Paul went into the synagogue and spoke boldly there for three months. His message covered the whole realm of known truth at that time. When certain ones became obstinate and refused to believe, he took the disciples (learners), separated them from the synagogue, and began to teach daily in the school of one Tyrannus. This was the act of a man with God-given authority, God's own apostle, and this separation marked the end of the synagogue as the assembly of God. God's people now assembled in the school of one Tyrannus. He who would cast his lot with the people of God had to leave the synagogue and go with them to the school of Tyrannus, where God's apostle was teaching daily.

Paul's ministry continued in Ephesus for two years, and in that time all Jews and Greeks in the province of Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus. The message was attested to by special miracles that God worked by the hands of Paul, resulting in a mighty growth of the Word of God in Ephesus. But the fact that Paul persuaded so many created a great uproar, inspired by those whose living was earned by the sale of images of Diana. After the tumult had subsided, Paul departed for Macedonia, leaving behind a great multitude of believers who constituted the Church of God in Ephesus.

Paul and the Ephesian Elders

About two years later Paul, on his way to Jerusalem, came to Miletus. From there he sent to Ephesus and called for the elders of the Church. This simple statement demonstrates that there was a "church" in Ephesus and that it had a band of men in it who were designated as the elders. The importance of these men, and the importance of their office is seen in Paul's words to them recorded in **Acts 20 :28**.

"Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost has made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which He hath purchased with His own blood."

We must not forget at any time how the Church of God in Ephesus came into existence, and how these men came to be elders in that Church. The common conception seems to be that a band of men led by Paul decided to organize a church, and had elected these elders. Such a conception does not even remotely approach the truth. This Church had been formed by God's representative in Ephesus, the Apostle Paul. He had every right to do this, and so it became the Church of God.

Many people have the idea that these elders were merely the older men of the assembly whose wisdom and experience permitted them to act as overseers. It may be true that they were men of mature years, but the greater truth is that they had been made overseers or supervisors of the Church of God by the Holy Spirit. They did not get their offices by the vote of the people.

They did not govern by the consent of those governed. Their position was by the Holy Spirit, their authority was divine, and it could not be ignored. This explains why Paul sent for them. God's apostle would not ignore the Spirit's elders in the Ephesian church.

The changes that occurred as the result of Paul's labors in Ephesus force us to alter somewhat our conception of the situation there. The great temple of Diana and the idol worship still existed. It embraced all who knew not God. The synagogue still existed, and it embraced all who had once known God but had rejected His Son. It was no longer the assembly of God, for it had been severed from Him by unbelief. A new thing existed there which was in the fullest meaning of the term the Church of God in Ephesus. It was not just a gathering of believers, for it was the Church of God, with overseers appointed by the Holy Spirit.

Some years after Paul had sent for the Ephesian elders, he wrote the epistle which is before us for consideration. In this epistle he ignores the elders altogether, and, so far as the Ephesian epistle is concerned, there is no hint or suggestion that a Church ever existed there.

This is the main reason why so many hold that this epistle was not sent to Ephesus. It is insisted that Paul would not have ignored these Spirit-appointed elders after his own recognition of their God-given position and authority. Furthermore, it is insisted that he would not have ignored altogether the Church of God which he had been responsible for establishing. These arguments seem conclusive, and they have resulted in almost universal acceptance of the theory that this epistle was never sent to Ephesus.

However, the moment one enters into the truth that a great dispensational change took place at Acts 28 :28, the omission of all references to the Church of God and to the elders gives testimony to the far reaching character of that change. Paul would never have been guilty of ignoring the Church and the elders if these had possessed the same place that they did when he sent for the Ephesian elders to come to him on the isle of Miletus. The ignoring of these in the Ephesian epistle does not prove that the epistle was not sent to Ephesus, but it does establish the fact that a major change had taken place.

The Church of God of the Acts period had its purpose in connection with a very definite work that God was doing at that time. When the Apostle Paul announced that "the salvation of God had been sent to the Gentiles" (Acts 28 :28), the work that God was doing during the Acts period came to an end. The Church of God lost its place of privilege, and God added no one to it after that time. This is clearly seen in the fact that there is no assembly anywhere on earth today that can truly be called the Church of God.

At Acts 28 :28 God began to do a new thing, in connection with a unique purpose, which is centered in a new out-calling clearly designated and distinguished as the Church which is His body. This is the reason why Paul ignored altogether the Church of God and the elders in Ephesus. They had no relationship to the program that Paul was revealing in the Ephesian epistle.

The work and message of God after Acts 28 :28 was unique. He was saving men by grace, calling them in grace, making them members of a new thing in connection with His purpose for the super-heavens.

The declaration of this new and unique work that God was doing had reached Ephesus. It was God's final revelation, and because it deferred their hope and postponed the fulfillment of the promises, it was an unattractive and unpleasant message to them. Nevertheless it was God's message to them and it had to be accepted or rejected. It was not a message that the Church of God could accept and bind upon its members, as it was

an individual matter. Those individuals who accepted it were accounted by God as being "faithful in Christ Jesus." Those who did not believe it were accounted as being unfaithful in Christ Jesus. Those who believed it automatically severed themselves from the Church of God. They became members of the Church which is His body, but they were never formed by God into any assembly or Church upon earth.

The Church which is His body has never had any counterpart on earth. It is entirely celestial in its nature and destiny. Its members stand as individuals upon the earth. Those who made up its members in Ephesus were addressed by Paul as "the saints which are in Ephesus, the ones being in and believing in Christ Jesus." God gave them no elders, and they did not try to elect any. God did not form them into an assembly, and they did not try to form one. They were unique in calling and character, and they did not destroy this by trying to imitate the Church of God.

The one who has not learned the great truth that under God's present administration each believer is a complete unit, has not learned the true character of the members of the Church which is His body.

In the Church of God all believers were members one of another, while under God's present administration those who make up the Church which is His body are members of the Head. In regard to this we must be emphatic. We are members of no one and no thing save the Head. We are united in the Head, but not members one of another. We are related to the Head, dependent upon the Head and responsible to the Head. This is what is meant by the Headship of Christ to the Church which is His body. .

It may be well to note here that the human body makes an excellent example of the Church of God, and it is so used by the Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 12. There were many members, but no equality. But the human body will not illustrate the Church which is His body, because in it every member is equal. However, it is possible to use certain features of the human body to illustrate the present out-calling. Take for example the two hands, and let them stand for two members of the Church which is His body. The hands are equal, even though by training one becomes more efficient than the other. The two hands are united in the head. This gives unity, coordination and relationship. One hand does not direct the other. The head directs both. The left hand does not need to be subservient to the right hand in order to produce cooperation and coordination. This comes from the head. One hand is not responsible for the other. They are both responsible to the head.

Even so it is in the Church which is His body. One member is the peer of every other member, but by diligence and training one member may become more useful than another. Our relationship to the Head gives us unity. This is the Spirit's unity and man cannot improve upon it. We are related to, dependent upon and responsible to the Head. This is true Christian individualism. Those who walk in the light of it will produce the true character of the members of the Church which is His body.

Ephesians 1 :1-2

Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Jesus Christ. Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ. *King James Versian.*

Paul an apostle of Christ Jesus through the will of, God, to the saints, the ones being in Ephesus and believing in Christ Jesus. Grace be to you and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ. *Resultant .Version.*

Paul. This name stands for the greatest human character in the Word of God. No one else can in any way be compared to him. He has no counterpart in all the Bible, He is the strangest and most mysterious character presented on its pages. He is almost unknown to us as few details of his life are given. Every time a personal detail of his life is mentioned, it will be found to be related in some way to the revelation of truth. Great events of his life and great truths in regard to his person are often revealed in three or four words, and then only because they bear directly upon the message he was proclaiming.

The character of Jesus Christ is explained by the fact that He was God, but we are without any such explanation of the character of Paul. He was a man, yet unique among all men in the Word of God.

The statements that Paul was "one born out of due time," that he was the chief of sinners, and that he was a pattern believer (1 Tim. 1 :15-16) are sufficient to demonstrate the unique character of this man. Yet if we turn to his own declarations in 2 Corinthians 11 :23-30 we are amazed at the record. Take, for example, his statement, "thrice I was shipwrecked." There are no records of this anywhere in the Word of God. The one recorded in Acts happened after 2 Corinthians was written.

An apostle. It is important that this word (apostle) should make the correct impression upon our minds each time we find it in the Scripture. It is not the title of an office. It is the description of a work. It is primarily an adjective. Paul did not do certain things because he was an apostle. He was an apostle because he did certain things. The word means "sent forth," and the Jews gave this name to those who came from Rome on a mission bearing letters from the rulers. Anyone commissioned by God to perform a certain task became an apostle. They remained apostles until the work was done. This ended their apostleship. No man was an apostle for life. When Paul finished one task his apostleship came to an end, when he was given another work, his apostleship began again. When Christ was commissioned by God to Israel, He became God's apostle to Israel (Heb. 3 :1).

Of Christ Jesus. In the name *Jesus Christ*, the word *Jesus* is emphatic by its position, the word *Christ* is subsidiary and explanatory. In the Gospels it means Jesus the Messiah. In the Epistles it means Jesus who humbled Himself but is now exalted and glorified as Christ. The name *Christ Jesus* denotes the now exalted one. Who once humbled Himself (See *Companion Bible*, Appendix 98). This brings us to understand that Paul was commissioned by the exalted One, who once humbled Himself.

By the will of God. This does not mean that Paul had done the will of God by becoming an apostle. It tells us that God willed it, therefore, it had to be. Nothing was left to Paul's will in this matter.

To the saints. So many traditions and misconceptions surround this word that one hesitates to deal with it. It is the term given to anyone whom God has separated to Himself. It speaks of a unique relationship to God based upon God's choice. If man chose God, he would not be a saint. If God chooses man, he becomes a saint. Abraham, a righteous man, was a saint because God made choice of him. Lot, a righteous man, was not a saint because God never chose him.

Since God made choice of Abraham and his seed after him, the Jews in Ephesus were saints. Some of these believed in Jesus Christ and became saints in Jesus Christ. Some went on to believe God's final revelation of the Headship of Christ and became saints who were in and faithful to the Lord Jesus Christ. These are the ones to whom this epistle is addressed.

The ones being in Ephesus. This would take in everyone in Ephesus whom God had separated unto Himself. But there is a limiting phrase that follows which would exclude all in the synagogues, and also many members of the Church of God.

And believing in Christ Jesus. Those in the Church of God who had rejected Paul's final message could not come in under this classification. These words make Ephesians a specific epistle addressed to one group of saints who can qualify as *believing* or *faithful* in Christ Jesus. They are not addressed as a Church, for they are not a Church. They are not spoken to through certain officers, for they have no officers. They are individuals, and are treated as such throughout the entire epistle.

Grace be to you and peace. God's attitude toward the world today is one of grace. We should diligently strive to let this be known to all men. Under all circumstances man can depend upon it that God will manifest toward him a love and favor which he does not deserve. His saints are enjoying transcendent grace. God is not at war with us, He is not going to declare war against us, therefore, we can enjoy peace from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 1:3

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ. *King James Version.*

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the super-heavens in Christ. *Resultant Version.*

Divine wisdom has compressed the whole message of this epistle into this introductory statement. The two great themes are "every spiritual blessing" and "in the super-heavens." All else in the epistle can be referred back to these two things.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. This title transcends all others in the Word of God. It centers Paul's message in God at the very beginning.. Man is only the recipient of all the marvelous work that Paul ascribes to God.

Who hath blessed us. This statement, simple as it seems, sets the character of the entire epistle. Our future hope is spoken of as a present or even as a past reality. It puts the language of faith into our mouths. Faith assumes the thing that is expected and acts as if it were literally true. We have not yet entered into a single one of these blessings. But, since God has spoken, we can live in the present enjoyment of them as if they were actually ours.

With every spiritual blessing. This is an important statement. It can best be understood by contrasting it with the blessings God promised to Israel. We read of these in **Deuteronomy 8: 7 – 10**

"For the Lord thy God bringeth thee into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths that spring out of valleys and hills; a land of wheat, and barley, and vines, and fig trees, and pomegranates; a land of olive oil, and honey; ,a land wherein thou shalt eat bread without scarceness, thou shalt not lack anything in it; a land whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills thou mayest dig brass.

"When thou hast eaten and art full, then thou shalt bless the Lord thy God for the good land which He hath given thee."

If they obeyed these words, they probably prayed after this fashion:

Blessed be the God of our Father Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, Who hath blessed us with every physical blessing on the earth in Abraham.

Such words of praise stand in direct contrast to the words of Paul recorded in Ephesians 1 :3.

In the super-heavens. This phrase is a literal translation of the Greek *en tois epouraniois*. The prefix *super* denotes, in reference to place, that which is above, over or on. There are twenty occurrences of *epouranios* in the New Testament. Only five of these occurrences use the peculiar construction *en tois epouraniois*. These five are all in Ephesians.

The creation of the heavens and the earth as recorded in Genesis 1:1 was not without witnesses. When the work was done a band of beings, called sons of God shouted for joy as they witnessed the glory of the finished work. Genesis 1:1 sets forth the realm of creation but does not speak of the realm of the Creator and those who were associated with Him. However, when we come to **Deuteronomy 10 :14** three realms are set forth.

"Behold, the heaven and the heaven of heavens is the Lord's thy God, the earth also, with all that therein is."

This passage gives us the realms that were created in the beginning, and it adds a third realm of which there is no record of its creation given to man. This does not mean that it is an "uncreated realm." There is no record given of the creation of spirit beings, but this does not mean that they were uncreated.

Solomon knew of this realm and spoke of it in his prayer and dedication.

**"But will God indeed dwell on the earth? behold, the heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain thee; how much less this house that I have builded?"
1 Kings 8:27.**

The priests and Levites in Nehemiah's day were familiar with the truth of three realms and referred to them in their praise of Jehovah.

**"Thou, even thou, art Lord alone; thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth, and all things that are therein, the seas, and all that is therein."
Neh. 9 :6.**

David knew that the heaven was not God's highest realm, and he witnesses to this many times.

"O Lord our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth! Who has set thy glory above the heavens." Psalm 8:1.

"Let them praise the name of the Lord; for His name alone is excellent; His glory is above the earth and heaven." Psalm 148:13.

Our only reason for believing that there is a heaven is because it is clearly set forth as a habitable realm in the Word of God. This is easy for many to believe, inasmuch as it is also supported by tradition. Those who need no crutch of tradition will just as readily believe in a realm that is above heaven as they do in heaven. Both are clearly revealed in the Word of God.

The realm that is above heaven, called the heaven of heavens in the Old Testament is the sphere where Paul locates our blessings. We have no expectation in the earth, and none in the heavens. Our hope is centered in that realm which is far above all. The full recognition of this distinct sphere of blessing will keep us from confusing our own high calling with other callings.

In Christ. We base our blessings upon His present superheavenly exaltation, not upon His future manifestation upon the earth. He will come again in power and glory, but our blessings are not related to His second coming. That is the hope of the world, but we are associated with Him in a realm that is above and beyond this world system.

Ephesians 1:4

According as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love. *King James Version.*

According as He has chosen us in Him before the overthrow of the world, we to be holy and blameless in His sight in love. *Resultant Version.*

According as. Our blessings in the super-heavens are in harmony (complete accord) with a choice that was made before the overthrow of the world.

He has chosen us in Him. This is the second occurrence of the plural pronoun *us*, and we need to note it carefully. It appears first in the previous verse where it stands for Paul and all to whom he was speaking. Actually it stands for the Church which is His body, as it makes no distinctions. We will make no mistake if we understand it to mean in verse three, "blessed the Church which is His body with every spiritual blessing," and in verse four, "according as He hath chosen the Church which is His body in Christ."

What is said in both of these verses was true of everyone of them individually, and each one could apply it to himself as a personal message, but it was true only because they were members of the Church which is His body.

In the passage before us we have God making a choice before the overthrow of the world, and this choice is related to the superheavens. There are two views in regard to the meaning of this.

1. Some take the view that God knowing that a certain individual was to be born and live, made choice of that individual personally before the overthrow of the world. This choice determined that that individual would become a member of the Church which is His body and be blessed in the super-heavens. If this be true, then the destiny of that individual was settled long before he was born and, being based on God's choice, nothing could ever come in to alter it.

2. Others take the view that before the overthrow of the world God made choice of an out-calling, even the Church which is His body to be blessed with every spiritual blessing in the superheavens.

These two views can be emphasized by asking whether this passage teaches that God chose the Church which is His body to fulfill a certain purpose, or if it teaches that God chose certain individuals to form the Body.

Some will insist that the only way in which the Church which is His body could be chosen is by choice of the individual members. This is an error. A man may chose to build a house upon a certain site, but that does not involve the choice of materials. The choice of materials may be delayed until needed for the work of construction.

From our viewpoint it seems that the members make the Body, but from God's viewpoint the Body makes the members. It has often been said that a church is no better than its members. This is true of men's churches, but it is not true of the Church which is His body. We get our character from the Body, but we give no character to it. We are exhorted to walk worthy of our calling, but our walk can add no worthiness to that calling. In view of this it seems that the choice spoken of in Ephesians 1:4 is related to the Church which is His body.

It remains true that our salvation is the result of God's choice of us. It is entirely His work. This is taught in many places, but it is not the teaching of this passage.

Before the overthrow of the world. When in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth He established a system which is called the world. Unless we exercise discernment we can easily introduce confusion here through the misuse of this word. The word *world* is often used as denoting the globe. Men speak of a "map of the world," and by this they mean the land and seas. This is really a misuse of the word. We often say "heaven and earth" for these two go well together, but we never say "heaven and world," for these do not fit. The heaven and earth together in the system which revolves around them make up the world.

The heavens and earth as originally created made up the original world or system. But that system was deluged by water and was destroyed (2 Peter 3 :5-6). The heavens and earth that are now make up the present world or system. These will some day be judged and the system that revolves around them will perish. Peter sets forth clearly the world that was, the world that is now, and the world that shall be. The original creation was overthrown or disrupted. This was caused by the sin of certain super-heavenly beings and is connected by the cataclysm of Genesis I :2. Before this disruption took place God made choice of the Church which is His body to fill the super-heavens.

We to be holy and blameless in His sight. This expresses God's purpose for us. We are to be separate and without offense in His sight. If we find cause for rejoicing in this glorious prospect, we should earnestly desire and strive to walk in accord with our position. Our walk should manifest our separation, it should be without offense.

Ephesians 1:5

Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will. *King James Version.*

Having designated us beforehand for sonship through Christ Jesus for Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will. *Resultant Version.*

In love having designated us beforehand. The last two words of verse four belong to verse five. It was in love that He marked us out beforehand.

The words *election* and *predestination* are theological terms which come to us endowed with certain meanings from which they can never be separated. They are of no value whatsoever to the student of Scripture, and the use of them will serve as a barrier in the quest for truth. All such passages as, "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God" should read "Chosen according to the foreknowledge of God." If this were done in every case the "doctrine of election" would no longer be superimposed upon the Word of God. This is also true of the word *predestination*. All those worried about election and predestination should cease to worry, cast these two words upon the rubbish heap of theological discards, then take up the study of God's choice of certain ones in regard to certain purposes, and His marking out beforehand certain ones for certain special blessings.

For sonship through Christ Jesus. God, in love, marked us out beforehand for the place of a son. At the time Paul wrote this, sonship was a recognized social institution, and it was never confounded with birth. Many sons could be born to a man, but only one could attain the sonship. As a rule this was the eldest, but not always so. If a man had no sons, he chose another to be his heir. At times slaves were chosen for this high honor. We have been designated for the place of sons through Christ Jesus.

According to the good pleasure of His will. His work for us was not burdensome to Him. It was not something forced out of Him. It was in accord with the delight of His will. He found joy in doing it.

Ephesians 1:6

To the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the Beloved. *King James Version.*

Unto the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He graced us in the Beloved. *Resultant Version.*

In this passage we find compressed the whole truth in regard to the purpose of our salvation and calling. The word *glory* means *esteem*. The esteem in which we hold a person is the glory we give to them. God has chosen us in order to use us as the object of His grace so that that grace can be understood and evaluated. His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus will demonstrate the exceeding riches of His grace in the coming eons.

Ephesians 1:7

In Whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of His grace. *King James Version.*

In Whom we have deliverance through His blood, the forgiveness of offenses according to the riches of His grace. *Resultant Version.*

In Whom we have deliverance. The Greek word here translated deliverance signifies not only the payment of the ransom, but the subsequent actual emancipation of the prisoner. The word appears ten times in the New Testament. Paul uses it nine times in his epistles, which makes it peculiarly his word. It is stronger than the word *redemption*.

Through His blood. This is the power that effected our deliverance. He died two thousand years ago, but His blood never loses its power. Millions have drawn upon it, but its potency is not diminished.

The forgiveness of offenses. The word *sins* does not fit here. *Transgression* comes short of expressing the truth. A word is required which will express the fact that something was done which wounded the heart of God and caused it to ache because of the acts of His creatures.

According to the riches of His grace. In Acts 2 :38, Peter told the men of Israel to repent and be baptized for the forgiveness (aphesis) of sins. Their forgiveness was dependent upon and in accord with their repentance and baptism. Paul states here that the forgiveness (aphesis) of our offenses is according to the riches of God's grace. These two ways of forgiveness are different and demand that we make a right division of the word of truth. One way is by works, the other is by grace. The two will not mix.

Ephesians 1:8

Wherein He hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence. *King James Version.*

Which He lavished upon us in all wisdom and prudence. *Resultant Version.*

The grace of God takes the most undeserving and heaps upon them everything that they do not deserve. It blesses them with every spiritual blessing, none of which we ever earned. It justifies the ungodly without a cause. It is literally lavished upon us.

Many people have believed that the doctrines of grace lead to sin. They feel that the threat of judgment must be held over man every moment, or man will habitually walk in sin. They feel that any display of grace would be both unwise and imprudent.

From the human viewpoint, based upon experience, this seems to be true. But God declares that in lavishing grace upon the undeserving He has acted in all wisdom and prudence. God makes no mistakes in being gracious. Let us ever be strong in His grace.

Ephesians 1:9

Having made known unto us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He hath purposed in Himself. *King James Version.*

Making known unto us the secret of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Him. *Resultant Version.*

According to every Old Testament prophecy and every statement in the four gospels, the events recorded in the book of Acts should have been followed by the time of Jacob's troubles or the great tribulation. It was spoken of as being imminent by Christ (Matt. 24), by Peter (1 Peter 4 :7), by James (Jas. 5 :8) and by Paul (1 Cor. 7). Yet, it never came. Many attempts have been made to explain away these direct statements of the imminency of the tribulation, the second coming of Christ and the Kingdom. As they stand in the Word, they would seem to indicate that the Word was broken.

But God's will concerning Israel and the ultimate blessing of the world through that nation has not failed. He has made known a secret in connection with His will. The failure of Israel permitted the postponement of all His purposes concerning the seed of

Abraham. The present time not prophesied, neither had it been revealed to any man, but it was ever in the will and purpose of God. His purposes in regard to the earth and the heavens were revealed. His purposes in regard to the super-heavens were kept secret until made known to Paul.

Ephesians 1: 10

That in the dispensation of the fullness of times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in the heavens and which are on earth; even in Him. *King James Version.*

To an administration that fills up the times to head up the all things in the Christ, which are in the heavens as well as on the earth. *Resultant Version.*

To an administration. This passage reaffirms God's ultimate goal for the heavens and the earth. The revelation and working out of His purpose in connection with the super-heavens does not alter in any manner His purposes for the heavens and the earth.

That fills up the times. The word *pleroma* signifies that which is put in to fill up. There will yet be an administration that will fill up time. It is not the Kingdom eon for there is an eon beyond that. It is the eon of the new heavens and the new earth.

To head up the all things in the Christ. The chief characteristic of the original creation was unity. The heavens and the earth were a unit, so much so that those who lived on the earth also lived in the heavens. At the present time the chief characteristic of this world is division. The heavens are now far removed from the earth. In the new heavens and new earth unity will be restored by heading up in the Christ the all things in the heavens and on the earth.

Ephesians 1:11

In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will. *King James Version.*

In whom we have been given as an allotment also, being designated beforehand according to the purpose of Him who worketh the all things after the counsel of His will. *Resultant Version.*

The words *we* and *also* introduce a new thought in this epistle. They show that certain ones designated by *we* were given to Christ as an allotment as well as others. These others are designated by *you* in the thirteenth verse. The real distinction here is between those Jews and Gentiles who had believed prior to Acts 28 :28 and had gone on to believe the truth of the Secret, and those Gentiles who had believed the truth after Acts 28 :28.

The Old Testament set forth the blessings and destiny of Israel. Their hope centered in the kingdom of the heavens. The Gentile believers of the Acts period became partakers of the hope of Israel and were blessed with faithful Abraham. Not a line of Scripture written before Acts 28 :28 can be produced to show that Paul had any different or higher hope than that of Abraham as revealed in Hebrews 11. When God's final message was declared, those in the Church of God of the Acts period who received it found that their blessings and destiny were suddenly changed. They were given as a special allotment to Christ in connection with a new realm of blessing. God had every right to make this alteration, and He needed not to consult anyone affected by it. It was all done in accord with the purposes of Him who works the all things after the counsel of His own will.

Ephesians 1 :12

That we should be to the praise of His glory, who first trusted in Christ. *King James Version.*

That we should be for the praise of His glory who have before hoped in Christ. *Resultant Version.*

The Greek of this verse sounds very strange when turned into English. It sets forth a group that believed before the great change occasioned by the divine pronouncement of Acts 28 :28. By going on to believe God's latest and greatest revelation they allotted to Christ and became one with those who are saved for the praise of the glory of His grace.

Ephesians 1 :13

In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise. *King James Version.*

In whom you also, when hearing the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, in whom believing also, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise. *Resultant Version.*

In whom you also. It is easy to identify those to whom Paul is speaking here. Ephesians 2 :11 gives a full description. They were Gentiles, they were called

Uncircumcision by the Circumcision, they were without Christ, they were aliens from the citizenship of Israel, they were strangers to the promise covenants, they had no hope and were without God in the world.

Everyone of these statements were true of the unbelieving Gentiles, but some of them were not true of the believing Gentiles of the Acts period. In Ephesians 1:11 Paul is speaking to the Gentiles who passed right out of their past condition into membership into the Church which is His body. These were never in the Church of God. They had not

been believers prior to the revelation of the secret. They are the result of the work God began to do among the Gentiles the moment the Jewish channel was set aside. They had heard the word of truth, they had believed and they had been sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise.

Ephesians 1: 14

Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession , unto the praise of His glory. *King James Version.*

Which is the earnest of our allotment, until the deliverance of the purchased possession for the praise of His glory. *Resultant Version.*

The words *seal* and *earnest* are terms of commerce. They speak of a finished transaction. The real evidence of their possession of the Spirit was their ability to appreciate the truth of God. Very few are like them in this day. In Christendom the truth has become the least important among- all the things of God.

Ephesians 1: 15

Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints. *King James Version.*

Therefore, I also, after I heard of the faith that is related to you in the Lord Jesus, and that for all the saints. *Resultant Version.*

This passage has suffered greatly in translation. Even the manuscripts are marred by the attempts of men to improve on it. The word *faith* here refers to a body of truth. It was the new faith just revealed, and it was definitely related to those in Ephesus to whom this epistle is addressed. Paul makes a clear distinction here between that body of truth which is related to the Church which is His body, and that which was related to all saints.

Ephesians 1 :16

Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers. *King James Version.*

Cease not giving thanks in your behalf, making mention in my prayers. *Resultant Version.*

It is evident that in Ephesus there was a band of saints saved and called by God in a special salvation and calling. There was a special faith (body of truth) that related to them which was not applicable to all others. This contrast, so plainly manifest by the two groups of believers in Ephesus, causes Paul to pour out his heart in thanksgiving and prayer. It is a prayer for those believers who were faithful in Christ Jesus.

Ephesians 1 :17

That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him. *King James Version.*

That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father most glorious may give unto you a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of it. *Resultant Version.*

It must be remembered that this prayer is related to that special body of truth spoken of in the previous verse, a body of truth which belongs in a peculiar way to the Church which is His body.

He prays that they shall have a wise spirit and a revealing spirit. These are essential if the truth of the secret is to be discerned. Human wisdom is not equal to it.

Ephesians 1 :18

The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints. *King James Version.*

The eyes of your heart having been enlightened, that you may know what is the hope of its calling, and what is the glorious riches of its allotment to the saints. *Resultant Version.*

In this passage Paul is glorifying a body of truth. Related to this truth is a unique hope, This truth allots to the saints the realm that is above the heavens.

Ephesians 1 :19

And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power. *King James Version.*

And what is the surpassing greatness of its mighty power to us who believe, in accord with the operation of His mighty power. *Resultant Version*

It seems impossible in this day to get the people to realize the power of the truth. Paul speaks here of the surpassing greatness of the power of that special truth which God gave to him, and which he calls the secret. Their belief in the truth had accomplished marvelous things for them. That truth revealed some hidden glories of Christ.

Ephesians 1 : 20 21

Which he wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come. *King James Version.*

Which He operated in Christ when He raised Him from among the dead and seated Him in His own right in the super-heavens far above all sovereignty and authority and power and lordship and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the coming one. *Resultant Version.*

The power of God's truth is in accord with the working of His mighty power which operated in Christ when it took Him from the depths of shame and carried Him to a place that is in the superheavens, There He is seated in His own right.

Ephesians 1 :22-23

And hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the head over all to the Church, which is His body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all. *King James Version.*

And has put all things in subjection beneath His feet. And gave Him to be head over all to the Church which is His body, the fullness of Him who the all things in all fills. *Resultant Version.*

Christ is the Head of every man (1 Cor. 11:3), and He is to be Head over the all things in heaven and earth (Eph. 1 :10). He is the Head of the Church which is His body (Col. 1 :18). There is no cause for confusing these distinct offices. The passage before us does not seem to refer to His Headship of the Church which is His body. It appears to set forth the truth that He will exercise His Headship through the Body. He is our Head, but we are to be identified with Him as Head of all things in the heavens and earth.

(Continued, Vol. V, No. 5)

THE KINGDOM EON

(Continued from Vol. V, No.3)

In previous articles under this title sufficient suggestions have been offered to make it possible for the student to understand the character of the Greek words *aion* and *aionios*. In the passages which remain to be treated the barest possible notes will be given unless the passage is such that extended treatment seems to be required.

1 Peter 1 :23. This occurrence of *aion* is omitted in all critical texts, also in the *Revised Version*. The verse should read "by the word of God living and permanent."

1 Peter 1 :25. The word which was preached to Israel in the gospel will abide for the eon.

1 Peter 4 :11. This is the plural in both occurrences. It ascribes dominion to Jesus Christ for the eons of the eons.

1 Peter 5 :10. Their brief seasons of suffering were only the prelude to eonian glory.

1 Peter 5 :11. Glory and dominion are ascribed to Jesus Christ for the eons of the eons.

2 Peter 1 :11. Peter is presenting the human side of redemption, and urges them to make their calling and choice sure. By this an abundant entrance would be given them into the eonian kingdom of Jesus Christ.

2 Peter 2 :17. The word *aion* is omitted here by all textual critics. "For ever" is not in the *Revised Version*.

2 Peter 3 :18. This should read, "To Him be glory even now, and for the day of the eon." This passage sets forth another *day* that must be added to the *days* of Scripture, such as "day of the Lord," "day of God" and others.

1 John 1 :2. Eonian life finds its personification in Christ. He will be the life giver in that coming eori.

1 John 2 :17. The promise here is that he who is doing the will of God will abide for the eon.

1 John 2:25. Jesus Christ promised eonian life.

1 John 3 :15. No murderer has eonian life abiding in him. See 1 Cor. 6:11.

1 John 5 :11. God has given us eonian life. Where is it? This life is in His Son. No one has it except in Him.

1 John 5 :13. The only way anyone can know that they have eonian life is to know that they have the Son.

1 John 5 :20. Jesus Christ is the true God and eonian life.

2 John 1 :2. The truth. . . which shall be with us for the eon.

Jude 1 :7. The destruction of Sodom is still apparent to everyone who visits its former site. There is no fire burning there, but the results of that fire are still visible. It will remain so throughout this present evil eon. The passage should read "suffering the justice of eonian fire."

Jude 1 :13. Jude's message is one of strong condemnation for those who deny the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ. For them has been reserved the gloom of darkness for an eon. This passage is difficult and obscure.

Jude 1 :21. Jude instructs them to live in anticipation of the mercy of Jesus Christ unto eonian life.

Jude 1 :25. The word aion occurs twice here. The passage ascribes glory, greatness, dominion and power to Jesus Christ before every eon, and now, and for all the eons.

Concordance to Eon

1 Peter 1 :23 - which liveth and abideth for *ever*
1 Peter 1 :25 - word of the Lord endureth for *ever*
1 Peter 4:11- praise and dominion for *ever* and *ever*
1 Peter 5: 11 - glory and dominion for *ever* and *ever*
2 Peter 2: 17 - of darkness is reserved for *ever*
2 Peter 3: 18 - be glory both now and for *ever*
1 John 2: 17 - the will of God abideth for *ever*
2 John 1:2 - shall be with us for *ever*
Jude 1: 13 - the blackness of darkness for *ever*
Jude 1: 25 - both now and *ever*

Concordance to Eonian

1 Peter 5 :10 - called us into His *eternal* glory
2 Peter 1: 11 - unto the *everlasting* kingdom of our Lord
1 John 1:2 - show unto you that *eternal* life
1 John 2 :25 - promised us, even *eternal* life
1 John 3: 15 - no murderer hath *eternal* life
1 John 5 :11- God hath given to us *eternal* life
1 John 5 :13 - know that ye have *eternal* life
1 John 5 :20 - the true God, and *eternal* life
Jude 1:7 - suffering the vengeance of *eternal* fire
Jude 1 :21- Lord Jesus Christ unto *eternal* life

(continued, Vol. VI, No. 1)

THE EDITOR TO HIS FRIENDS

****The situation that exists due to the war in Europe has made it almost impossible for me to supply the friends of the witness in Great Britain with the literature that they have desired. Some letters have failed to reach this country and some literature has been lost on the way there. For many months I have earnestly desired to have someone there to look after the interests of *The Word of Truth*. It brings real joy to be able to announce that this desire has been filled. Mr. F. W. Gardiner, a good friend of this witness, has graciously consented to represent me in all matters pertaining to this ministry. He will have a complete stock of all my writings on hand at all times, as far as possible to do so in these troublous times. All orders for books, gifts to the witness, and requests for the magazine should be sent to Mr. Gardiner. Gifts to this witness sent to Mr. Gardiner will be acknowledged first by him, and then in due time by me. The following prices will prevail on all literature ordered from him. Bound Volumes, 4s.6d. What is the Soul? 1s.5d. Sheol, Hades and Destruction, 1s.2d. The Rich Man and Lazarus 1s.2d. The Glory of the One Baptism, 10d. The Scriptural Position of the Lord's Supper, 3d. Do We Wrongly Divide the Word of Truth? 3d. The Body in 1 Corinthians 12, 3d. Let Us Now Go Even Unto Bethlehem, 4d. The Will of God, 5d... Nebuchadnezzar's Dream, 1d. Water Baptism and the Word of God, 1d. This Do in Remembrance, 1d. The Plan of Salvation, 2d. The Christian in Military Service, 2d. The four bound volumes may be had for 15s, or a complete set of all writings listed above may be had for 20s.

I am deeply appreciative of the kindness of Mr. Gardiner in undertaking this labor of love, especially so in view of the fact that his life is already an exceedingly busy one. Mr. Gardiner's name and address will appear at the bottom of the last page on all issues of the magazine.

****Friends of the witness in the Philadelphia area will please note that the Editor will speak there on Wednesday, August 20. The service will be held in the auditorium of the Reading Railway Y.M.C.A., Kensington and Lehigh Ave.

****Honorary agent of *The Word of Truth* in Great Britain is Mr. F. W. Gardiner, Anathoth, Pepper Lane, Early, Reading, Berks, England.