

THE WORD OF TRUTH

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LIFE

The student of God's Word who sets out to make an examination of the word LIFE will quickly discover that it has numerous applications and many shades of meaning. These must be recognized and studied one at a time if confusion is to be avoided. In this study consideration is given to one distinct use of this word. This is a figurative use in which this term is applied to a definite period of time and a certain condition of things which will yet prevail upon this earth.

In dealing with history we find it quite convenient to designate distinct periods of time by the outstanding characteristic that dominated them. Thus we say "during the Civil War" or "during the depression", or "during World War II." The same period may have several designations if more than one condition gave it its character.

In the divine record of past history and future prophecy certain definite and clearly marked periods stand out. Some of these are, in order:

1. **The Acts period.** This is an appropriate designation inasmuch as the book of Acts covers its entire history. It began with the resurrection of Christ and ended with the great change that took place when the salvation of God was sent to the nations, as announced by Paul at Acts 28: 28. It was not a long period, being only thirty-three years in length. This is not strange since Paul declared in an epistle written in this time: "For He will finish the work, and cut is short in righteousness: because a short work will the Lord make upon the earth." Rom. 9:28.

2. **The administration of grace.** Or, to be more specific, God's gracious administration. Eph. 3: 2. Called this because during this time God's method of dealing with all men is entirely gracious. It can also be called God's secret administration, since God's workings in it are secret and impossible to trace out. Eph. 3:8. This is the time in which we live, in which our lot is cast. It has continued for

1900 years; a long time indeed, 'but this is to be expected since during this time God is writing into the history of His long dealings with men a complete and absolute record of the grace that is inherent in His character. 'A record such as this cannot be written hurriedly. It takes a long time.

3. **The kingdom of God.** This is next in order. A definite period of time in earth's history is given this name since during this time God will be governing the earth and all people upon it. This too, will be a long period of time. This is what men are asking for when they pray "Thy kingdom come", even though very few seem to know what they mean by this request.

4. **The revolt against the kingdom.** This is a very definite period of time in Scripture. It will cover a period of seven years. Some call this period of time "the great tribulation" but that is only a part of it. It begins when God removes the restraints that He has imposed upon men under His government (2 Thess. 2:7). This is a winnowing process, and it leads to a time of testing "which shall come upon all the world to try them that dwell upon the earth" (Rev. 3:10). Many make the great tribulation to be a time of divine punishment instead of divine testing. This is a serious mistake as it confuses the tribulation with the indignation that follows it. See Psalm 11: 5-7. God's government will be equal to any revolt against it, and it will be quickly put down by the return of Jesus Christ to the earth.

5. **The parousia of Jesus Christ.** This is the proper and Scriptural designation for the period that is usually called the millennium. The word *parousia* means personal presence. In the prophecies concerning Jesus Christ the fact of a time of personal presence upon the earth is clearly set forth. And while it is true that only a certain kind of personal presence can be called a parousia, the earth will yet see and enjoy an actual parousia of Jesus Christ.

6. **The Little Season.** Called this because after Satan is bound for a thousand years he is loosed for a little season (Rev. 20:3).

7. **The new heaven and new earth.** Rev. 21. An entirely new condition of things. This is the ultimate goal toward which God is ever moving.

As suggested before some of these periods can be given other descriptive titles, depending upon the characteristic one wishes to emphasize. In fact, that period of *time* called the kingdom of God *is* also designated in Scripture by the *simple* and dynamic word "LIFE". To the rich young ruler our Lord said "**If you will enter into LIFE, keep the commandments**" (Matt. 19:17).

This young man asked about "eternal life", but the Lord in answering dealt with something more basic. Eternal life will be lived only by those who enter into that condition of things which *is* called LIFE.

It *is* not at all strange that a period of *time* should be called by the name of something that characterizes *it*. It seems strange only when we are not used to *it*. Each year we call one period of *time* "spring" because the plants are springing forth from the ground and the sap *is* springing up in the trees. Then when summer *is* over we call a period of *time* "fall" because the leaves are falling from the trees. These designations give us no trouble at all, but this *is* because we are quite familiar with them. They would probably sound strange, even foolish, if we were not well acquainted with them.

In spite of these facts some seem to think *it* incongruous that a period of time and condition of things upon this earth should be called LIFE. Let us face the facts.

In Matthew 7:14 our Lord declared:

Because straight is the gate and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto LIFE, and few there be that find it.

In Matt. 18:8 He warned:

It is better for thee to enter into LIFE halt or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into everlasting fire.

See also Matt. 18:9 and Mark 9:43, 45 for other references to entering into **LIFE**.

In John 3:36 men are warned that **"he that believeth not the Son shall not see LIFE."**

In John 5:29 we read of a "**resurrection of LIFE**." Since this *is* contrasted with a "resurrection of judgment" *it* seems evident that these two statements speak of situations or conditions into which men are raised. One situation *is* characterized by *life*, the other by judging.

As has already been pointed out, the word *life* has many shades of meaning. A glance at the dictionary will show that this is as true of the English word as it is of the Greek (*zoe*). In this study we are considering only one meaning and use of this word – its application to a period of time and condition of things that is yet to be upon this earth. This use of the word cannot be denied by showing that *life* cannot mean this in many passages of Scripture. One may as well argue that since *spring* means a natural fountain it cannot mean that time of the year when the plants shoot forth.

In Romans 5:17 Paul speaks of those who will "reign in life." To reign is to govern. This speaks of those who will serve God as part of the great theocracy in that time when conditions upon the earth can be described by the word **LIFE**.

Thus the use of this word in the passages cited shows that it is used figuratively to describe a condition of things into which men can enter, into which they can be raised, from which some will be excluded, and in which some will reign.

Those whose minds are set upon some ephemeral and imaginary heaven will hardly be interested in a study such as this. But let all be warned that this is an important truth in the Word of God. As the Psalmist said:

Come ye children, hearken unto me: I will teach you the fear of the Lord. What man is he that desireth life, and loveth many days, that he may see good? Psalm 34:12.

In answer let it be said that we desire life. To live in a world dominated by death is only existence. To live in a world dominated by life will be life indeed. We are thrilled with the prospect of living many days. These three score and ten years allotted to man are much too few to accomplish anything. We want to live in a time when the prospect of death never darkens the picture, when we will see with our own eyes all the goodness that God has said He will bring upon this earth. Furthermore, we will give due heed to God's final word as to what is required of us to obtain life in His name.

And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book: but these are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through His name. John 20:30, 31.

The fact that that period of time called the kingdom of God is also called "**LIFE**" adds greatly to our knowledge of the conditions that will prevail upon the earth when God governs. In fact a vast amount of truth about God's coming kingdom can be gained by faithfully considering the descriptive titles which are given to it.

It is called "**the regeneration**" in Matthew 19:28. This is because it is a new world, when all life upon the earth will be springing up again into new life and vigor, as described in Isaiah 35.

It is called "**the times of refreshing**" in Acts 3:19. This is more literally "times of coolness", when the earth will have respite from the hot winds of sin and death that has seared it for so long.

It is called "**the judgment**" in Psalm 1:5 and Matt. 12:42, since it is a time when God's judgments will be in the earth (Isa. 26:9).

It is called "**the last day**" in John 6:39,40,44,54 and 11:24. The word *eschatos* is a flexible word and can mean last, subsequent, concluding, or resultant, depending upon its context. In the context of these five occurrences I am convinced it means subsequent, inasmuch as God's day will surely follow the world's long night.

It is called "**the resurrection**" in Matt. 22:28-30, as this is a time when the resurrection from the dead will regularly take place. Under God's government there will probably need to be resurrection records just as there are birth records today. Resurrection notices will take place of death notices. The strangest and most exciting characteristic of the kingdom of God is that righteous men who have long been dead will be restored to life by resurrection.

This is the hardest truth of all for men to believe in regard to the kingdom of God. Many are like those who listened to Paul. They give ear until we mention the resurrection of the dead (Acts 17:32) and then their faith in the word of God and the ability of God begins to falter. This is because they do not believe in resurrection *per se*, that is, resurrection by itself, or resurrection extrinsically. To many, resurrection must be an adjunct of something else like the second coming of Christ. But resurrection by itself, solely for the sake of righteous men being restored by God to life upon this earth, they are unable to believe. To all such we say with Paul: "Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead." Acts 26:8.

And, as has already been demonstrated, the period of time when God governs the earth is called **LIFE**. This is due to the fact that it is characterized by life rather than by death. This helps us to understand more fully the conditions that will exist and under which men will live in the kingdom of God.

The reign of death (Rom. 5:17) began when Adam sinned. The prohibition concerning the tree of knowledge contained this declaration:

Thou shalt not eat of it for in the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die. Gen. 2:17.

The words "surely die" in this passage are two forms of the same Hebrew word and should read "**dying thou shalt die.**" Thus Adam was warned that the very day he violated God's prohibition the process of death would begin to work in him and that this process would continue until it ended in death.

In **Romans 5:12** we are told that "**by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed up on all men.**" We will miss the truth here if we think of death as meaning only its consummation, that is, the act of dying. It is death that is transmitted from generation to generation, not sin. We are born dying but we are not born sinners. Sin with us is something that must be committed. The death that works in us responds to and vibrates in harmony with the sin that is in the world. Death begins to work in us the moment we are born, and it continues to work until it is complete in the final act which we call death.

A great step forward in God's truth will have been taken when we come to the understanding that sin entered into this world, that sin is in the world, and that we are not just "born into the world" (John 16:21) but we are also "born in sin." This must not be stretched to mean that we are "born sinners." A man born in France is not automatically born a Frenchman. And the fact that we are "born in sin" does not make us sinners. We become sinners because of something which we do. Sin is something which must be constantly resisted, for one never knows how much damage it may do if it is embraced. The way sin has worked in the lives of some men is too terrible to relate. Sin does not belong in this world, but it is here and it creates tremendous problems. These problems are beyond solution, as history has demonstrated.

When sin came into the world it brought death as its companion. We need to realize that death is not only in the world, it works in every man that is in it. It is death working in us that is responsible

for every disease, sickness, and malady which in some measure touches every member of the human race. Some are so naive as to believe that all such things are due to a lack of vitamins and minerals and that death working in us can practically be eliminated by the intake of such things. In spite of all their claims death works on in them and will do so until it consummates itself. There is much we can do that will speed up the process of death that works in us. There is nothing we can do that will slow it down. We know it has an accelerator, but we doubt if it has any brakes. "The day of our years are threescore years and ten," we are told by the Psalmist. This is an utterly marvelous prediction, inasmuch as scientists by means of their computers now tell us that the average life of a man is 69.7 years.

We live in a time when death reigns, when its influence is felt by every man, when it dominates the earthly scene. Every doctor, physician, surgeon and specialist; every hospital, infirmary, clinic and sanitarium; every cemetery, undertaker, mausoleum and morgue; every drug company, druggist and pharmacy with their myriads of useful and useless remedies; every insurance company with their life, health, and accident insurance; all these are related to the fact that death is in this world and that it works in every man. In fact the biggest business in the world today comes under the general heading of remedies for bodily ills. Not one of the things mentioned above would be needed if death did not work in every man. These things are important and necessary in this world. Not one of them will be of any value or have any place in the world to come. That world is to be dominated and controlled by LIFE, not by death. And that world could be here before this day is done. When God speaks from heaven it will come.

Sin Taken Away

There are two statements in the New Testament which when set together proclaim a glorious truth.

By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin. Rom. 5:12

Behold the lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world John 1:29.

In 1 John 4:14 the writer declares:

And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world.

The one thing the world needs to be saved from is sin. It cannot be saved by dealing with the sins of men. There is something back of all human sin that needs to be eliminated. Jesus Christ is presented to us as the One who will take away the sin of the world, and is declared to be the Savior of the world.

To "send" is to commission with authority for the performance of a task. It includes the idea of directing that the work shall be done. Our Lord is fulfilling His commission. He is now saving the world. This is why we still have the world as a place in which to live. If the world should be destroyed as a suitable habitation for mankind, as it was at one time (2 Pet. 3:6), then failure to fulfill His commission could be charged to Jesus Christ. However, in order to complete His mission He must yet rescue, deliver and make the world safe from that sin and death which the first man brought into it.

This seemingly impossible task is one that Jesus Christ will accomplish. He is the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world. The moment sin is gone, then death will go too. These two work together, and once sin, the cause, is removed, death, the effect, will disappear.

It needs to be pointed out here that we are dealing with what theologians call 'Adamic sin and Adamic death. What has been said above does not mean that there will not be personal sin, sickness, and death in the kingdom of God. The words of Jeremiah, "every one shall die for his own iniquity" are sufficient to show that personal iniquity may raise its ugly head and that swift and sure personal

death will be its punishment. But once Adamic sin is removed no man by his own sin can bring the companion principles of sin and death back into the world. Never again can there be a "federal head" like Adam that can bring sin and death upon his descendants. Sin under God's government will be dealt with and stopped at the point where it starts.

Life for the World

It is good to know that Christ will remove death from the world and with it all the ills that flow out of it. But it is more glorious to know that He complements this by giving life to the world.

For the bread of God is He which cometh down from heaven and giveth LIFE unto the world. John 6:33.

I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever; and the bread that I will give him is My flesh, which I will give for the LIFE of the world. John 6:51.

The prophets of old foresaw the time when disease and death would give way to health and life.

And the inhabitant shall not say, I am sick: the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity. Isa. 33:24.

The meek shall eat and be satisfied: they shall praise the Lord that seek Him: your heart shall live forever. Psalm 22 :26.

In the New Testament record the miracles performed in connection with the proclamation of the kingdom of God were for the purpose of showing men what they could expect under God's government. Christ not only heralded the kingdom of God, He showed the glad tidings (Luke 8:1). In Matthew 4:23 we find:

And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people.

No sickness was beyond *His* power, no disease too great for *Him* to heal. When He sent out the twelve disciples to herald the kingdom He gave them authority against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of *sickness* and all manner of disease. When they were commissioned He said to them:

And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand. Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give. Matt. 10:7, 8.

When the people followed the Lord Jesus *into* the desert beyond Bethsaida we are told, He "received them, and spake unto them of the kingdom of God, and healed all them that had need of *healing*." Luke 9:11.

On one occasion *it is* said that the Lord "healed all that were *sick*" (Matt. 8:16), after which we are told that *it* was done:

That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sickness. Matt. 8:17.

The witness of the word of God *is* that the moment the kingdom of God in its fullness moves in, sin must move out. When God assumes world-wide sovereignty, *sin* can no longer have any dominion over anyone. When Jesus Christ takes to Himself His great power and begins His government, the reign of *sin* must end. When life comes *into* the world then death must go out. There can be no coexistence between these two.

The kingdom of God will begin with many concomitant events. One of these will be the removal of that sin and death that came in through Adam, and with this the complete breaking of any authority they have held over man. If, in the kingdom of God, any man is sick or if and man dies it will be because he sinned, not because Adam sinned.

The kingdom of God begins with a gift of health for every man upon the earth. For the first time since the sin of Adam men will know what it really means to feel good, to enjoy perfect health, to be free from any trace of death working *in* them. Even after these benefits are given, some will be cut off from them. We need to ever remember that God is going to judge (determine what is right and declare what is right) the living and the dead at His appearing (providential intervention), even His kingdom (2 Tim. 4:1).

The world and the human race have never yet received the marvelous benefits which were purchased for it in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The drops of blessing have fallen around men and upon men for 1900 years, but the showers of blessing are yet to come.

All who read these words will know something about what it is like to live in a world that is dominated by sin and death. We try to shield ourselves from the depths of such knowledge, yet we know that "the dark places of the earth are full of the habitations of cruelty" (Psa. 74:20). No mind can conceive the vast amount of human suffering, sickness, disease and death that occurs on any given day.

None of us know what it will be like to live in a world in which righteousness and life dominate the scene. We try to imagine it, but it eludes us. There is nothing in our experience upon which our thoughts can build. However, we do have God's Word that this is to be, and we believe His promises as to the future and upon them we rely.

This could come today, but we have no guarantee of it. However, we have been told to live "looking for that blessed expectation, even the providential intervention of the glory of the great God, even our Savior Jesus Christ" (Titus 2:13). This we will do. But even if God delays and death should overtake us we have the guarantee that because of our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be raised from the dead to live and see all His wonderful works in that time and under those conditions which are called '**LIFE**.' If God sees fit to intervene before death completes its work in us, then we can say with the Psalmist:

I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the Lord. Psalm 118:17.

The End.

THE INTERPRETATION OF EPHESIANS

EPHESIANS 1:2

Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ. KJV.

Grace be to you, even peace, from God our Father, even the Lord Jesus Christ. TRV.

When these two versions are compared a definite difference will be detected. This may lead some to protest that the Resultant Version makes the "grace" spoken of here to be peace, and that it makes "God our Father" to be "the Lord Jesus Christ." This is right, and it is so translated here because it conforms to well established laws of Greek usage in the New Testament. The principle which is followed here will recur again and again in the interpretation of this epistle, so it seems wise to set it forth and establish it at this point in our studies.

The Greek word, which in the KJV is translated "and" and here in the TRV is translated "even", is the word *kai*. That *kai* means *and* all will agree, but the careful student of the usage of Greek words will recognize at once that *kai* is used in ways wherein it is not possible to use the word *and* to express the truth being declared.

In English *and* is a simple word, a particle which expresses the general relation of connection or addition. We use *and* when we want to connect two things or to add something. This is also the general usage of the Greek word *kai*, but New Testament usage reveals it to be a more complex word with greater flexibility than our word *and*. For example, in 108 occurrences of this word it is translated "**even**" since the word *and* would utterly fail to give the meaning of the writer.

In numerous passages in the New Testament it is evident that the word *kai* is used between two nouns or noun equivalents in order to emphasize identity between the two. In other words, *kai* is used to establish apposition. Apposition is the placing of one noun or its equivalent beside another so that it explains and defines.

Thus it is that we say, "John F. Kennedy, President of the United States." Since there are numerous men by the name of John F. Kennedy in the United States (two are listed in Los Angeles phone directory) the use of the appositional clause, President of the United States, could under certain circumstances be of the utmost importance. However, in English it would be impossible for us to use the word *and* in establishing or emphasizing the identity between these two. If we said "John F. Kennedy, and the President of the United States," it would remove all identity between the two and show that the John F. Kennedy spoken of is not the President.

But what we cannot do with *our* word *and* the Greeks could do with their word *kai*. They used the word *kai* to emphasize identity, to establish apposition. This was a favorite literary device of the Apostle Paul, as the following passages will show. In these *kai* is translated "even", and rightly so.

That ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, EVEN the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Rom. 15:6.

Then cometh the end, when He shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, EVEN the Father. I Cor. 15 :24.

Blessed be God, EVEN the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. 2 Cor. 1:3.

Before God, EVEN our Father. 1 Thess. 3:13.

And God, EVEN our Father. 2 Thess. 2:16.

In these passages if *kai* is translated "and" instead of "even" it would add another being and result in the inference that God is not the Father. These examples are plain. They provide positive proof that the Greeks used the word *kai* to emphasize identity, to add an appositional word or phrase to define the one to which it is added.

The Apostle Paul made much use of this literary device in order to put certain statements beyond misunderstanding. However in his epistles there are many occurrences of *kai* which have been translated "and", and as a result something is added which Paul never intended. Much truth will be uncovered when this is recognized, as these few examples will show.

But to us there is but one God, the Father, out of whom are all these, and we for Him, EVEN one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom are all these and we through Him. I Cor. 8:6 TRV.

This version which is true to the Greek identifies the channel with one source.

I charge you therefore before God, EVEN the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the living and the dead at His providential intervention (*epiphaneia*) EVEN His kingdom. 2 Tim. 4:1 TRV.

Thus he does not charge Timothy before two but before One. No man can serve two masters. God is defined here as being the Lord Jesus Christ, a truth that many will deny, but one that Thomas readily confessed (John 20:28). And the *epiphaneia* is defined as being His kingdom. God will not judge twice.

Looking for that blessed expectation, EVEN the providential intervention (*epiphaneia*) of the glory of the great God, EVEN our Savior, Jesus Christ. Titus 2:13 TRV.

The "blessed expectation" is the "providential intervention." The great God is our Savior.

These are a few examples that show what a difference is made when *kai* is translated "even" in places where the truth shows that this is what it means. The student will find many more. We will return to our examination of Ephesians 1: 2.

GRACE - This is the first of twelve occurrences of this word in Ephesians. The Greek word is *charis*, one that deserves detailed study. Much that is good has been written on this word. Most expositors are in agreement as to its meaning, even though they differ as to its applications. To avoid repetition, an effort will be made to point out some things which may be new to many students.

In James 4:6 a quotation will be found from the Old Testament which identifies the Greek word *charis* with the Hebrew word *chen*. Thus by the law of divine interchange these words are established as exact equivalents. The word *chen* comes from a primitive root *chanan*, and from *chen* an adverb is derived, *chinnam*. Complete lists of all occurrences of these words will be found on pages 445, 446, and 447 of the *Englishman's Hebrew Concordance*. Thus with the Hebrew verb, noun, and adverb before us it is possible to form a deep conviction as to the meaning of this word, a conviction based upon divine usage in all Scripture.

It will be found that both *chen* and *charis* refer to favors conferred freely, without any cause whatsoever so far as the recipient is concerned, with no expectation of return, and finding its only motive in the free-heartedness of the giver. The Hebrew adverb is usually translated "without a cause" or "for naught." The grace of God is His love and favor shown to men which finds its whole cause in Himself. Since none can be deserving of the least of His benefits, God's grace is always favor shown to the undeserving.

EVEN PEACE - Grace can be many things, but the grace he has in mind here is peace from God. The Greek word for peace is *eirene*, a noun from which we get the name Irene. The verb is *eiro* which means to join. Things perfectly joined together are at peace. Peace is a perfect union, not a good feeling. This holds true even if good feelings come from it. There should be peace no matter how we feel. Hamlet cried, "The times are out of joint. O cursed spite that I was ever born to set them right." A man is "out of joint" with God until he is linked up with Him by means of the One who is our peace (Eph. 2:14). This salutation is not an ordinary greeting. Paul knows the importance of a proper union if this message he is about to write flows unhindered into their lives.

EVEN THE LORD JESUS CHRIST - There cannot be two sources of peace, as the *King James Version* might suggest. Source and channel must be held together here as being one, even though they are not entirely the same.

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. KJV.

Exalted be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who exalts us in every spiritual exaltation among the most exalted in Christ: TRV.

The passage quoted above is not a complete sentence in the Greek. It is the opening words of a long sentence, possibly the longest sentence of connected discourse to be found in all literature. This sentence runs from verse 3 to verse 14. Since every sentence must have a subject and a predicate, it is essential here that we discover the subject of this long sentence.

It seems that it needs to be mentioned that the subject of a sentence is the word or word group denoting that of which anything is affirmed or predicated. If the subject is ignored then all that is said about it becomes meaningless. In dealing with Scripture men often ignore the subjects so that they can take the predicates and run wild with them, applying the things that are said to any subject their desires or fancies may dictate.

This fallacy is manifest in most commentaries on Ephesians. Something called "the church" is made to be the subject of everything said in it. This is done in spite of the fact that the word *ekklesia* is found only three times in the first four chapters, and in each of these occurrences it is not the subject of the sentence in which it is found.

In Ephesians 1: 22 Christ is the subject, not the *ekklesia*. In 3: 10 the subject is "the administration of the grace of God" as declared in verse 2 and restated in 8 and 9. In 3:21 the subject is Christ Jesus and the affirmations made there concern Him. And even in Eph. 5:23-32 where the word *ekklesia* is found six times it cannot be said that it is the subject of this portion. Let men say what they will, "the church" is not the subject of Paul's revelation set forth in Ephesians. Ephesians deals with many matters, but it does not deal with *ekklesia* at any time as a main subject.

However, we are concerned at present with the subject of the long sentence that runs from verses 3 through 14. In this sentence, *ekklesia* is not found. But there is an idea that is repeated four times by means of three related words and one synonymous word. This idea has to be the subject of all that follows.

The reader has probably already noticed this in the corrected translation given above. Exalted be God, exalted are we by God, exalted are we by God in every spiritual exaltation, exalted are we among the most exalted ones. This sets forth the subject of every affirmation that follows. We will examine each step in detail.

EXALTED. This is the Greek word *eulogetos*, derived from the verb *eulogeo*, made up of *lego* (to speak) and *eu* (good), thus, to speak well of. Three words of this family appear in this passage: *eulogetos*, *eulogeo*, *eulogia*. Our word *eulogize* comes from these.

In my own studies of Ephesians the time came long ago when I realized that I could never fully appreciate the great truths declared here, nor could I teach them to others, as long as I retained "blessed" as a translation of the Greek word *eulogetos*. The constant ritualistic and liturgical use of the English words *bless*, *blessed*, and *blessing* has destroyed the value of these words so far as being symbols that can be used to express the ideas that God intended to convey here.

In seeking for a better word to express the Greek here I have made use of the word *acclaim*, and while this was most helpful I found that as my understanding advanced it fell short of expressing all the truth declared. The word *acclaim* can be used only of "speaking good", not of "doing good." Since *eulogeo* is a word that is used both of good words and good deeds, the word *acclaim* left something to be desired. Turning to the word *exalt* and making use of its various forms, I found that it met every need. When we exalt God, we praise Him, we speak well of Him. When He exalts us, it is not only that He speaks well of us but He does us good. Our exaltation is in word, His is in word and deed.

Thus it is that after long study I have come to the conclusion that *blessed* is meaningless in this passage, it says nothing. *Acclaimed* is much better but that it falls somewhat short, and that *exalted* is an exact counterpart of the word *eulogetos*, giving us a more flexible term that will fit every need.

BE GOD - In the Greek of this passage there *is* no copula between "exalted" and "God" to show their relationship. This is not strange in Greek as the verbs of being are often left out and must be supplied by the translator. Whether it should read "Exalted *is* the God" or "Exalted *be* the God" is not an easy matter to settle. My studies pull me toward both ideas with a slight degree of leaning toward the imperative "be". This would make it to mean, "Let the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ be exalted." This is an exhortation to all believers in the Lord Jesus Christ.

WHO EXALTS US - The aorist tense of *eulogeo* here denotes an act that happened at one point in time, the effects of which continue in the present. This could also read "the One exalting us." The word "us", the first of many important plural pronouns refers to Paul and the ones to whom this letter was addressed, "the ones being and believing in Christ Jesus." If you qualify under this description, it is addressed to you.

IN EVERY SPIRITUAL EXALTATION. The word spiritual (*pneumatikos*) is applicable only to such things of which God is the author, that come to man without any intervening process or agency, and for which He is entirely responsible. For example, the water that flowed to Israel from the rock is called "spiritual drink" and the manna is called "spiritual meat." These were as actual, as literal, as material as any substance can be; nevertheless, they were spiritual. These things came direct from God, and were produced by an intangible, invisible force, God's Spirit.

Much confusion in regard to Ephesians has been created by the labored attempts of many to make the word spiritual to be the opposite of material and physical. This in in harmony with the Platonic theory but it is foreign to the Word of God. Numerous expositors have forcefully spoken against this error but it persists. Alford, Vincent, and Psalmonds all agree that the word "spiritual" here describes these blessings, not as being spiritual as contrasted to physical, but as being produced and given to us by the Holy Spirit. Alford says, "*Pneumatikos* in the New Testament always implies the working of the Holy Spirit, never bearing merely our modern inaccurate sense of spiritual as opposed to bodily."

The question we now face is: "What is a spiritual exaltation?" If we are being exalted in every spiritual exaltation we need to know what this is.

In the divine economy there are and will be many elevations. When Christ was upon earth the twelve were elevated to a special place of service and granted privileges which could not be claimed by other disciples. Out of the twelve disciples three were elevated to a place of privilege and intimacy that the nine others could not claim. Thus Matthew and Thomas could not say that they had been elevated to every height that had been granted to Peter, James, and John. Since there is no higher elevation in God's economy than to stand as a son of God, we who now believe can say we have been exalted in every spiritual exaltation.

AMONG THE MOST EXALTED IN CHRIST. We now consider the Greek phrase *en tois epouraniois* which in the King James Version is translated "in heavenly *places*." The word *places* is in italics, showing that it is not in the Greek text, and that it has been supplied by the translator in an attempt to fill out something that seems to be lacking in the Greek. In this Greek phrase, *en* is a preposition which means *in*, but when used with a plural, as it is here, it signifies *among*; *tois* is the definite article, dative plural in form, but not possible to tell its gender; *epouraniois* is an adjective, formed of the word *ouranios* which means "heavenly", and a prefix *epi* which means above. Since an adjective describes and qualifies, when one is used it has to describe or qualify something. If the noun is not there, then it must be supplied from the context. The translators here supplied *places* but it is evident that this was plucked out of, the air since there is nothing in the context that even remotely suggests places.

This problem has been recognized by many and they have attempted to solve it by rendering it "in the heavenlies", but this helps not at all since no one can tell us what a "heavenly" is. We only compound the confusion when we make a plural out of it. The word "heavenly" as the name of a thing is completely meaningless. Those who use it do not try to tell us what it means when they use it as a noun.

In English there are good examples of adjectives that are used as nouns, and an examination of one of these will reveal the difficulty we face if we try to make a noun out of heavenly.

The word *quarter* is a noun, the name of one-fourth of anything. From this we get the adjective *quarterly* which can be applied to anything that recurs in quarters such as quarterly payments, quarterly meetings, or quarterly returns. But this word *quarterly* is also a noun and is used to describe periodicals that are published once a quarter or four times a year. And this noun can also be plural, *quarterlies*.

Thus while *quarterly* can be and is used as a noun, both singular and plural, the word "heavenly" cannot be, since there is no such thing as a "heavenly." If any think otherwise, then let them tell us what a "heavenly" is or what "heavenlies" are. Words are supposed to be expressions of thought and symbols or ideas, but the word "heavenlies" is not the expression of any thought or the symbol of any idea. The phrase "in the heavenlies" is a meaningless cliché, used by some to suggest that they have knowledge which others do not possess. Furthermore, I am not impressed at all with the idea that there is some esoteric meaning in this phrase that can be understood only by the initiated.

Since both *eulogetos* and *ouranos* are used as descriptive titles of God (see Mark 14:61 and Luke 20:4) *it is* evident that these words have some relationship. The word *ouranos* can be used of anything that *is* over and above. The word *eulogetos* can be used of things exalted or elevated. These two words in this passage are used synonymously since they have the same essential meaning in this context. It would be good *if* we had two distinct English words that are so related, but since we do not, *exalted* is used for both words in order to express the Greek. When these two terms are used of God it is His exaltation or elevation that is emphasized. He is the One over and above all. He is the exalted One. He is the most High.

The prefix *epi* here is used before an adjective, not before a noun. In view of this it should be rendered *most* or *highly*. I have seen fit to translate *en tois epouraniois* as "among the most exalted", although, "among the highly exalted" would be equally acceptable. This supplies no noun, yet *it* makes good sense, and it accurately expresses the Greek. Furthermore, I believe that if this understanding of *epouranios* is followed out it will shed light on every passage in which it is found. A list will be provided with a few explanatory notes, and the student can trace this out.

Examination of Epouranios

Matt. 18:35 - "My most exalted Father." Most texts *omit* this passage, but it presents no problem.

John 3:12 - "how shall ye believe if I tell you of the most exalted things." Used in contrast here with *epigeios*, which *is* an adjective that literally means "most earthly." In this context it must be understood as a contrast between "most high" and "most low." "The heaven for height and the earth for depth" (Prov. 25:3) is a Scriptural principle that applies here. *Epigeios* can be used in a good sense, as it is here, or in a bad sense as in Jas. 3:15.

1 Cor. 15:40 - "There are highly exalted bodies." A body is an organized substance. Gold and platinum are examples of substances that are highly exalted. A contrast is made here with "bodies (or substances) most earthly," such as clay.

1 Cor. 15:40 - "the esteem (glory) of the highly exalted is one and the esteem of the most basic is another." Men can do with clay what they cannot do with gold. Paul is building up an illustration here.

1 Cor. 15:48 - "as is the most exalted."

1 Cor. 15:48 - "such are they also who are highly exalted."

1 Cor. 15:49 - "the image of the most exalted One."

Eph. 1:3 - "among the most exalted in Christ."

Eph. 1:20 - "set Him at His own right hand among the most exalted." He is among them yet above all of them.

Eph. 2:6 - "He seats us together among the most exalted in Christ."

Eph. 3: 10 - "to the sovereignties and authorities among the most exalted."
Eph. 6: 12 - "the spiritual forces of wickedness among the most exalted."
Phil. 2:10 - "every knee shall bow, of the most exalted."
2 Tim. 4: 18 - "unto His highly exalted kingdom."
Heb. 3: 1 - "partakers of a most exalted calling."
Heb. 6:4 - "tasted of the most exalted favor."
Heb. 8: 5 - "an example and shadow of the service of the most exalted."
Heb. 9:23 - "yet the most exalted things themselves by better sacrifices than these."
Heb. 11: 16 - "they are desiring a better, that is, a most exalted *country*."
Heb. 12:22 - "the most exalted Jerusalem."

The list above covers all occurrences. If the student will search them out, I believe he will share with me the conviction that *en tois epouraniois* means "among the most exalted."

To Be Continued

JOHN'S GOSPEL

THE TIME OF WRITING

The *Scofield Reference Bible* declares that "the date of John's Gospel falls between A.D. 85 and 90. Probably the latter." No reasons are given for this assertion. It is dogma to be accepted or rejected. Since there is evidence to the contrary, I do not accept it.

This late date for the writing of this book generally accepted by most interpreters, apparently without question, but the student is left to wonder in vain as to the proof of or reasons for this late date. Ask yourself the question: "Why do men say that John's Gospel was written in A.D. 90?" then see if you can find an answer. If you do, you will probably be somewhat surprised at the reasons given.

A.C Gaebelien in his commentary on John's Gospel says: "While the correct year in which the Gospel of John was written cannot be year 90 A.D." But he suggests nary a fact as to why this date is "quite evident."given, it seems quite evident that it was about the year 90 AD/

I do not wish to judge, nevertheless, I am convinced that those who say John's Gospel was written in AD. 90 are doing nothing more than repeating what they heard or read fom someone else. Weymouth says, "As regards the date, no more definite period can be indicated than that suggested by Harnack - between 80, A.D., and 110, A.D."

More than a century ago the German school of Biblical criticism placed the writing of this book at the middle of the second century (about 150 A.D.) and denied that John was the author. These higher critics have been completely answered by many capable apologists. These critics always sought to account for the Bible on purely natural grounds and any ideas of supernatural inspiration were anathema to them. Less ruthless critics have sought to temper the radical ideas of the German school, but their position concerning John is nothing more than a compromise.

Since the Gospel of John contains material and revelations that go far beyond those found in Matthew, Mark, and Luke, there are many critics who feel that this material comes from a body of traditions that grew up around the Lord after His death. Since it takes time for traditions to develop and be accepted, they set the date of John's Gospel as late as possible, consistent with the traditions about the life span of John.

Those who believe in the supernatural character of this book find no need for any such late date. We account for every word in it by divine inspiration, fully believing that John was led by God to record events, and to add comments and explanations which other writers were restrained *from* giving. Furthermore we find in this Gospel **one clear piece of evidence which shows it was written before the destruction of Jerusalem by the Roman General Titus in A.D. 70.**

This destruction was total and complete. The purpose was to create such a waste that the city would never again be inhabited. That which would not burn was leveled by other means. As Josephus says "it was so thoroughly laid even with the ground by those that dug it up to the foundation, that there was left nothing to make those that came thither believe it had ever been inhabited." In view of this the statement made in **John 5: 2** is of absorbing interest.

Now there IS at Jerusalem by the sheep market a pool, which is called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda, having five porches (porticos or colonnades).

The use of *is* in this passage shows that Jerusalem was yet standing, that it had not yet been leveled by the Romans, when John wrote these words.

It has been said that this is the "is" of vivid narrative, a literary device by which past events are declared in the present tense. But this cannot be since the ordinary tenses are resumed after this one use of the present. This is sufficient internal evidence to show that John was written before A.D. 70. It is my conviction that the first great move of God after Paul announced the administrative change set forth in Acts 28:28 was to commission and authorize John to write. That God's "good message" concerning His Son should be written was a matter of the utmost importance. It was imperative that it should be written if God is to fulfill His guarantee that "they will hear it." John was not commissioned *to go*, he was commissioned *to write*. He was the man sent (commissioned) from God to provide a written testimony so that all men through it might believe (John 1:6,7). This written testimony takes the place of official heralds with their inspired message. Once this book was complete, from that day forth all men were shut up to something written if they became believers in Jesus Christ. These words were written that men might believe (John 20:31) and they have not failed to accomplish the purpose for which God sent them forth.

If we herald God's Word today we must speak that which is written. If we desire to see men become believers, we had better herald the book written for this purpose.

The End.

A PRINCIPLE OF INTERPRETATION

THE LAW OF DIVINE INTERCHANGE

Those who interpret the Bible without being guided by clearly defined principles of interpretation will often end up making God's statements to mean whatever they desire them to mean. Many

interpreters seem to prefer to operate without laws, rules, or principles of any kind to hinder them. They want the Word to yield to them. They do not want to yield to the Word. Some men will adopt principles of interpretation then violate them when they get into a bind and the Word will not say what they think it should say. Honest principles of interpretation can be discovered, established, and adopted by all who love the truth and put it above all personal desires and preferences.

Many years ago I came upon the principle which I call the law of divine interchange. It was not a new principle, but I discovered it for myself and gave it a name. It is quite simple. Hebrew and Greek words that are used interchangeably by the Holy Spirit are identical in value and meaning.

For example in Psalm 16:10 the inspired writer declares: "**For thou wilt not leave my soul (*nephesh*) in hell (*sheol*)**", and in Acts 2:27 the writer says, "**Because thou wilt not leave my soul (*psuche*) in hell (*hades*)**."

Thus by the law of divine interchange we are able to take a firm and irrevocable position that *nephesh* and *psuche* are exact equivalents, and that *sheol* and *hades* are the same.

In view of this if one should make an exhaustive study of the 103 occurrences of the Greek word *psuche* (soul) in the New Testament, his studies would be partial, incomplete and could be very misleading. No claim could be made to a complete study until everyone of the 754 occurrences of the Hebrew word *nephesh* (soul) had been made.

The same is true of the word *hades*. All studies in this word must begin with the word *sheol* and carry right through to the final occurrence of *hades* in the New Testament. But most men seem to prefer to start with the English word *hell*, attach to it all the wild theories that men have ever devised, then insist that all who do not agree are denying the word of God. I refuse to be stampeded in this manner. I believe without question every grain of truth the Bible reveals concerning *sheol* and *hades*. I believe very little of what men teach about hell.

Apropos of this principle, Dr. E. W. Bullinger declared in his *Critical Lexicon*.

As *Hades* (a word of human origin) is used in the New Testament, as the equivalent for the Hebrew *Sheol* (a word of Divine origin) its meaning can be gathered, not from human imagination, but from its *Divine usage* in the Old Testament. If we know this we know all that can be known.

However, Dr. Bullinger did not consistently follow out the principle he so clearly enunciated here. In his treatment of *ekklesia* he did not point out that *quahal* and *ekklesia* are used interchangeably in Psalm 22:22 and Hebrews 2:12. If this principle can be applied so forcefully to *sheol* and *hades* then it should be used with the same force upon *quahal* and *ekklesia*. We should be able to paraphrase Dr. Bullinger's words as follows.

As *ekklesia* (a word of human origin) is used in the New Testament, as the equivalent for the Hebrew *quahal* (a word of divine origin) its meaning can be gathered, not from human imagination, but from its divine usage in the Old Testament. If we know this we know all that can be known.

Many there are who readily accept the complete identity of *sheol* and *hades*, but who rebel when it comes to accepting the complete identity of *quahal* and *ekklesia*. But if a thing is true, it is true all the time, if it applies in one place it should apply in another place, all circumstances being equal.

From time to time I will be calling attention to and making use of this principle of interpretation. My readers will now know what I mean when I refer to the law of divine interchange.

The End.

WHAT IS AN EON

THE PROBLEM STATED

Where there is no problem, there can be no desire for a solution. The one who has no questions is not interested in answers. To recognize and comprehend a problem is the first great step in the acquisition of truth.

I know nothing at all about the problems involved in launching a man into space; therefore, I cannot understand the steps that need to be taken. In view of my vast ignorance, any opinions given or suggestions made would be utter foolishness. Even so, such foolishness if couched in high-sounding words might impress many who are equally ignorant. Nevertheless, it would make me utterly ridiculous if spoken to the ears of a space scientist.

The one who never makes a penetrating study of the Bible will never be burdened by the enormous problems such study imposes. There are some who never open the book for this very reason. Thinking is hard work, the hardest work any man can do. The mind quickly rebels and seeks to be at ease. It must be driven to *it*. Most people solve their problems by the simple feat of putting them out of their mind.

Most of God's truth comes to us by answering the questions and solving the problems that Bible study imposes. Those who make an honest quest for the truth will be looking for questions and problems. Difficulties to them are nothing more than a locked door which when opened will reveal a corridor that leads to the truth.

It needs to be remembered that the man who does not have the right questions will never have the right answers. The wrong problem will never yield the right solution. Therefore in all Bible study these things must always be in our minds: "What is the question? What is the problem? What is the difficulty?"

The subject of this article is a simple question: "What is an eon?" If this question has never troubled the reader, he will not be interested in the answer. If it is not a problem with him, he will not seek the solution. But it is a real problem with many. It is a major problem with me. I am convinced that if this problem were solved it would begin a new day with our Bibles. It would open up avenues of truth down which men have not been able to walk before.

I do not claim to have the complete answer, but I am confident that I understand the problem. It has arisen out of my studies in the Word of God. It is not a problem that has been manufactured to fit some prearranged solution. I will do my best to set the problem forth in this study.

What Does "Ever" Mean

It hardly makes sense to say it, but it seems at times that there is more about "ever" in the Bible than any other subject. Both the Hebrew and Greek words usually translated "ever" are nouns. And since a noun is the name of a person, place, or thing, the Bible has much to say about this thing which the translators call "ever." Thus this forces upon us the question, What is this thing called "ever"?

Of course someone will immediately object that "ever" is an adverb, not a noun, and cannot be the name of a thing.

This is true, and the one who recognizes it has taken the first step toward understanding the problem involved in the word "eon." The difficulty is so compounded by the erroneous translations that have so long been imposed upon men that the faint-hearted will despair at ever setting matters right.

Some feel that this is akin to the great error of calling the original inhabitants of this continent "Indians"; an error that arose from the idea of Columbus that he had discovered India. Now we must live with this error, even though it becomes quite confusing at times when we try to speak of the inhabitants of that vast country in Southern Asia.

In like manner they feel that we must now live with the error of having translated a noun by an adverb, it being too late now to try to correct it. This I refuse to do. In this case God's truth is at stake; truth which I desire to know, to incorporate into my thinking and life, truth in which I desire to walk. The word "ever" in many passages is childish and absurd. It stultifies the truth that the Spirit of God is declaring.

The Greek word which is translated "ever" 71 times out of 128 occurrences is *aion*. The first two letters of this word are elements and probably should be pronounced separately - ahee-ohn. If any feel inclined to disagree with this, don't bother, as it is of no great importance. The pronunciation of this word is not the problem. There is an English transliteration of this word which is much easier to use and pronounce. This is the word *eon*, and throughout this study it will be used as the exact equivalent of the Greek word, except in those cases where for sake of accuracy the Greek word must be given.

As noted before the problem of finding the meaning of the Greek noun *aion* is greatly complicated by the fact that in the *King James Version* it has been translated as an adverb 83 times. One does not need to be a Greek scholar to realize that when a noun is repeatedly treated as if it were an adverb, something is seriously wrong. It shows a rewriting of God's message that is inexcusable and cannot be justified.

Those who like simple solutions to complex problems tell us that an *eon* is an *age*, pointing to the fact that it is translated "age" in **two** occurrences (Eph. 2:7 and Col. 1:26). To me this is nothing more than substituting one three letter word (eon) for another (age). This is of no help for it merely substitutes the problem of "What is an eon?" for "What is an age?"

There are many who are sure they have an answer to this. Confidently they assert: "An age is a long period of time"? By this bit of rough and ready reckoning they feel they have the meaning of the Greek word *aion* - it is simply a long period of time.

The *Concordant Version Lexicon* defines *aion* as being "the longest segment of time known in the Scriptures." The society responsible for this volume has made much of the word *eon*, but their efforts with this have been inadequate and misleading. They divide all time into five eons, but this is a mistake. An eon is not a period of time. This can be demonstrated by substituting the idea of "long period of time" into the passages where *aion* occurs. For example, in Galatians 1:4 Paul declares that Christ gave Himself for our sins that He might deliver us from this "present evil eon." It is an obvious fact that none of us have been delivered from this present evil period of time. We live out every day of our lives in it. Christ has delivered us from much that characterizes this present period of time, but not from the time period as such.

This word has long bothered translators. The *King James Version* shows this in thirteen different renderings of this word, ranging from "ever" to the circumlocution "beginning of the world." Weymouth attempted to translate *aion* consistently by "age" and the adjective *aionios* by "of the ages." Rotherham used "age" and "age abiding", but these renderings provide little help to the student.

I do not believe there are any English words that can be used to translate *aion* and its cognate adjective *aionios*. In a case like this the right thing to do is to transliterate these words, using the words *eon* and *eonian*, then allowing the student to find what these words mean by the use that is made of them. The *Concordant Version* has done this, and is to be commended for it. But it errs when it attempts to define these words.

There are those who insist that since an eon has a beginning and also an end it has to be a period of time. This is a shallow thinking indeed as it is based upon the following syllogism: All things that have beginnings and ends are periods of time. An eon has a beginning and end. Therefore an eon is a period of time.

The major premise of this is indefensible. A man has a beginning and an end. Is man a period of time? A fire has a beginning and end. Is a fire a period of time? Certainly not! Why then insist that an eon is a period of time since the Bible speaks of "the beginning of the eon" and "the end of the eon."

Since everything except God is linked up with time and is in some manner subject to it, it is easy to associate anything with time. Thus to say that a thing has nothing to do with time can be disputed if someone wants to make an issue of it. In spite of this, I do not hesitate to say that *eon* has nothing to do with time, either long, short, or endless time. It does exist or take place in a period of time, just as a *war* takes place in a time period. But even though we speak of "war times" this does not mean that *war* has anything to do with time.

However, a period of time might be properly referred to as an eon, even as one period of time each year is called winter. But if this is done, if a period of time is designated as an eon, it will be because it is characterized by an eon. This still leaves us with the perplexing question, "What is an eon?"

To fully appreciate the problem the student must recognize these facts. The word *aion* is used in the New Testament in the following ways:

SINGULAR: as in Matt. 13:39 which should read, "the harvest is the end of the eon."

PLURAL: as in Eph. 2:7 which should read, "that among the eons to come,"

DOUBLE SINGULAR: as in Heb. 1:8 which should read, "Thy throne, O God, is for the eon of the eon."

SINGULAR WITH PLURAL: as in Eph. 3:21 which should read "for all the generations of the eons of the eons."

DOUBLE PLURAL: as in Gal. 1: 5 which should read, "to whom be glory for the eons of the eons."

These are only a few of the multifarious uses made of the word *aion* in the New Testament. In order to understand them it is necessary that we have some idea that will fit all these occurrences and cause each one to reveal the truth that is being declared. This idea must come from the Word of God as there is nothing in human thought or experience that can be used.

In human thought and experience there is the idea symbolized by the word *forgiveness*. Thus when we come upon this word in Scripture we at least have some conception upon which we can build our ideas of God's forgiveness of us. But this is not true of the word *aion*. We come upon this word and there is nothing in human experience or knowledge that will help us to comprehend it. This

noun sets forth an idea that is in the mind of God, but it is not common to man. Our knowledge of the idea symbolized by this word must come from the usage made of it in the word of God. Since this usage is complex, the idea it sets forth must also be complex.

Consider this illustration. When we read about "King of kings" in the Bible it gives us no trouble. We have some knowledge of the idea symbolized by the word *king* and we can build upon this. This is also true of the "Lord of lords" and "holy of holies." In meeting with terms such as these we have ideas that can be immediately summoned to help in understanding them.

However, when we come upon the phrase "eon of eons", we have no ideas as to what an "eon" is and the meaning of this term is not at once apparent. The difficulty is still greater when we come upon "eons of the eons."

If one were asked to define "America" he would probably say that it is a name applied to two continents in the western hemisphere, one north and the other south. This would be a good basic definition that none could dispute. From this basic definition one could go on to deal with other meanings of this term. Then he would be able to deal with the adjective "American" which by usage has come to mean a citizen of the United States. The word "America" represents a vast complex of ideas that cannot be set forth in one word or in one simple definition.

Even so it is with the word *eon* and its cognate adjective *eonian*. These words set forth a vast complex of ideas that cannot possibly be encompassed in a single definition.

In the study of the word *eon* a great source of information is opened up when we recognize that this word is identical with the Hebrew word *olam*, a word occurring 430 times in the Old Testament. In five passages in the New Testament the God-inspired writers have used *aion* as the exact equivalent of *olam*, a fact that establishes complete identity between these two words. The complex idea set forth in one is the same idea set forth in the other.

It is my conviction that the next great advance in uncovering and recovering God's truth will be related to the words *eon* and *eonian*. If we come to a proper understanding of the ideas set forth in these words we will clarify hundreds of passages in the Word of God.

I have set forth the problem. In another study I will *point* out some truths that may lead to a *solution*.

To Be Continued.

NATIONS AND PEOPLE

We must always feel indebted to anyone who brings forth an idea that will help to clarify statements which are made *in* the Word of God. No man can ever do anything better for the student of God's Word than he who gives him facts that help make many passages understandable. However, now and then an idea *is* set forth which when *it is* tried out sheds no light, and serves only to create greater confusion. Such ideas are often put forth because they seem to clear up a problem *in* a certain passage. But this *is* of no value if the idea fouls up the truth *in* many other places.

I am receiving correspondence *in* which the writers are *insisting* that the Hebrew word *goi* and the Greek word *ethnos* do not mean "nation." It *is* said that these words mean "people", and should be so translated. Not much reason *is* given for this except that *it* is hard to understand what certain passages mean when they speak of nations. However, I am sure this difficulty *is* created by the fact

that very few indeed have ever made an exhaustive study of the place of nations, past, present, and future, *in* the Word of God.

I have made this study, and am sure that I know how much truth we will lose and what problems we will face if we try to render *goi* and *ethnos* by "people" instead of "nation."

The Hebrew word *goi* is translated as follows: nation 173, heathen 142, *Gentile* 30, people 11, and another 1. I believe this word should be faithfully and honestly translated "nation" *in* everyone of these occurrences, as has been done *in* some versions. If *in* any occurrence the context shows *it* means those who are not of Israel, it should still be translated "nation" and not "Gentile." To say that *goi* means those who are not of Israel is a matter for the interpreter, not for the translator.

The Hebrew word *am* is translated people 1855 *times*, nation 17, folk 2, and men 1. This *is* a very *consistent* translation of a major Hebrew word, and examination of the passages *in* which *it is* found will convince the student that "people" is what *it* means. In view of these facts if anyone insists that *goi* means people he should stand ready to say what he is going to do with the 1875 occurrences of the Hebrew word *am*.

By the law of divine interchange, established by nineteen quotations of Old Testament passages in the New Testament, whatever *goi* means is what *ethnos* means. The Greek word *ethnos* is found 164 times in the New Testament and is translated *Gentile* 93, nation 64, heathen 5, and people 2 times. It is my conviction that the use of the word "Gentile" as a translation of, *ethnos* is an attempt of the translators to glorify their own kind at the expense of Israel. This word means "nation" and should be so translated in every occurrence. The word "Gentile" has no place in the Word of God. Its use in many places excludes the nation of Israel when God certainly intended that the nation of Israel should be included. See for example Matt. 12:21, Rom. 15:12, Acts 28:28, Eph. 3:6.

The Greek word *laos* occurs 164 times in the New Testament and is translated "people" in every occurrence - one of the most consistent renderings of any major word in the *King James Version*. An examination of these occurrences will convince the student that it is translated right, and that people is what it means. Therefore, if the word *ethnos* is made to mean people, what then does *laos* mean?

A full study of the Hebrew word *goi* will show that basically this word means *body*, not in the sense that we use the word *body* to describe the physical and material aspect of man, but in the sense of organized substance, that is, a corporate body. This is the word that the Hebrews used to set forth organized people. Men of one kind who are not organized are considered as people, but when organized they are considered nations. A nation is a corporate body of people, no matter how it is organized, even if it is organized around the will and word of one man. When people are united politically, they become a nation.

There is no merit whatsoever in the objection that the word *nation* has political significance. It most certainly does, and if it did not it would not be a good translation of both *goi* and *ethnos*. People cannot be organized into corporate and independent bodies without it having political connotations. Moses, in speaking to God concerning Israel said: "Consider that this nation (*goi*) is Thy people (*am*)." Exo.33:15.

A nation can be destroyed but the people who formed it may remain. There can be no nation apart from people, but there can be people who are not nations.

There are more than 100 nations on the earth today. There may be more or even less tomorrow. Nevertheless, the nations that exist at the moment Christ makes His request are the nations He will be given when He asks for the nations as His portion. See Psalm 2:8. What He will do with them

once they are His is a matter that must be left to His judgment.

The End.

PASSIVE GRACE

It has long been my conviction that God can be actively gracious or passively gracious. I insist that ever since the salvation of God was sent to the nations (Acts 28:28), every act of God toward men has been one of grace. He has been actively gracious or passively gracious, but if He cannot act in grace then He does not act at all.

The idea of God being passively gracious has been ridiculed by certain teachers, but their ridicule has demonstrated that their arguments are emotional and not logical. It may appeal to the emotions to shout that "grace is always active, it cannot be passive", but the logical mind will know that the Bible sets forth many examples of passive grace.

When men spit in the face of Jesus Christ and buffeted Him, He did nothing about it. He could have done something about it but He did nothing. If He had dealt with these men in justice, if He had given them what they deserved, He would have called for fire from heaven and turned them into ashes. But He did not deal with them in justice. They did not receive from Him what they deserved. He showed them favor they did not deserve. He ignored their frightful sin. Thus, He was passively gracious to them.

Peter refers to this in His first letter saying:

Who when He was reviled, reviled not again; when He suffered, HE threatened not; but committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously. 1 Peter 2:23.

This statement by Peter does not stand alone. It was set forth as an example of a course he urged upon those to whom he wrote. In 1 Peter 2:18 he declares that if a slave manifest a spirit of submission toward an owner who mistreats him that "this is grace." The word "thankworthy" in this passage is *charis*, which means grace. Thus truth is repeated in 1 Peter 2: 20 when he says that if one doing good is suffering for it, if he takes it patiently, that this is grace with God. The word "acceptable" in this passage is also *charis*, and should be translated "grace."

It is from these acts of passive grace upon the part of men that Peter goes on to show the great example of passive grace as shown by Christ.

To sum up - God declares that it is grace if a man suffers wrongly and then endures it patiently. Since he does nothing about the wrong that is done to him, this is passive grace. Let men cease to say there is no such thing. We have a prime example in the passive grace which Christ showed to His enemies.

The End.

THE EDITOR TO HIS FRIENDS

****Quite a bit of time has passed since you received the last issue of THE WORD OF TRUTH, one year to be exact. However, in that time all readers have received copies of the pamphlets on "Christian Individualism" and "The Concluding Days," and by means of these contact has been maintained with our readers. For two months last summer my time was given to a personal project not related to my ministry. I did not complete this as it was dropped in order to finish the pamphlet on "Christian Individualism," and to make the Fall Conference Tour. After my return I set myself to the task of intensive study of certain major subjects. I have written much, but it will be some time before it is ready to print. I am now planning the Spring Conference Tour. This will dominate my time from March 20 to May 7.

****I feel impelled at this time to express appreciation to those friends who understand the nature of my ministry and stand behind me with their material help. These friends make no demands for results or success. All they ask is that I continue to do my work of progressive and perpetual Bible study and share with them the results. This, I am determined to do.

****The reception given to the pamphlet on "Christian Individualism" was most gratifying. Many letters of appreciation have been received. It produced many new readers of THE WORD OF TRUTH due to the widespread distribution given it by our friends.

****This issue is thirty-two pages instead of the usual twenty-four. Postage rates have increased, and will probably go still higher. Please remember the material needs of this ministry.

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