

# THE WORD OF TRUTH

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## A GRAVE DANGER

Instinctive knowledge or inherent knowledge is that which belongs *to* every man just because he is a part of the human race. Such knowledge cannot be taught. It is imparted by God. The knowledge of a Supreme Being is an example of this. It can be summed up in these words: Every man is born with the knowledge that above his own being and all other beings known *to* him there is one Being who is Supreme. A parent can emphasize this knowledge in the life of a child, he can affirm it and confirm it, but he cannot teach it. We call this Supreme Being *God*, and this name *comes to* us from the Bible, but the knowledge that there is such a Being does *not* come from the Word of *God*. The Bible assumes the existence of *God*, it emphasizes and builds upon this knowledge that is common *to* man, but it does *not* teach it *to* us. The knowledge of God is inherent and instinctive.

If a tiny babe should be cast upon an uninhabited island, and in *some* inexplicable way could grow *to* manhood never knowing another human being, it would grow up knowing that above his own being, and above all the beings of the field and forest, there is a Being who above all is Supreme. In times of need, in times of fear, and in times of satisfaction, he would feel impelled *to* look *to* this One in petition or appreciation.

As the knowledge of *God* asserts itself in a man it often comes into conflict with the ways and works of man. Matters of right and wrong in relationship *to God* are continually being revealed by the conscience, the experience, and the observation of men. And men have truth concerning right and wrong continually thrust upon them. This light is permanent, and it robs men of the excuse of ignorance. But since man wants to be independent, since he wants to be free to do as he pleases, since he wants to practice sin whenever it is pleasant to him or suits his purpose, he ever seeks to give up the knowledge of God. In doing so he does not stop to think of the grave danger he faces. A danger so real and so great that God through the Apostle Paul has given a most pertinent warning in regard to it.

The words and idioms of the English Bible are now well over 300 years old. Thus they often fail to speak as forcefully to the casual reader as they do to the careful student. However, this weakness has been remedied to a certain extent by some of the modern paraphrases of the New Testament. One of these is the treatment of **Romans 1:18-32** by J. B. Phillips. Let us read this in full from his "New Testament in Modern English." It reveals what happens when men give up God.

**Now the holy anger of God is disclosed from Heaven against the godlessness and evil of those men who render truth dumb and inoperative by their wickedness. It is not that they do not know the truth about God: indeed He has made it quite plain to them. For since the beginning of the world the invisible attributes of God, for example, His eternal power and divinity, have been plainly discernible through things which He has made and which are commonly seen and known, thus leaving these men without a rag of excuse. They knew all the time that there is a God, yet they refused to acknowledge him as such, or to thank Him for what He is or does. Thus they became fatuous in their argumentations, and plunged their silly minds still further into the dark. Behind a facade of "wisdom" they became just fools, fools who would exchange the glory of the immortal God for an imitation image of a mortal man, or of creatures that run or fly or crawl. They gave up God: and therefore God gave them up-to be the playthings of their own foul desires in dishonoring their own bodies.**

**These men deliberately forfeited the truth of God and accepted a lie, paying homage and giving service to the creature instead of the Creator, who is worthy to be worshipped for ever and ever, amen. God therefore handed them over to disgraceful passions. Their women exchanged the normal practices of sexual intercourse for something, which is abnormal and unnatural. Similarly the men, turning from natural intercourse with women, were swept into lustful passions for one another. Men with men performed these shameful horrors, receiving, of course, in their own personalities the consequences of sexual perversity.**

**Moreover, since they considered themselves too high and mighty to acknowledge God, he allowed them to become the slaves of their degenerate minds, and to perform unmentionable deeds. They became filled with wickedness, rottenness, greed and malice; their minds became steeped in envy, murder, quarrelsomeness, deceitfulness and spite. They became whisperers-behind-doors, stabbers-in-the-back, God-haters; they overflowed with insolent pride and boastfulness, and their minds teemed with diabolical invention. They scoffed at duty to parents; they mocked at learning, recognized no obligations of honor, lost all natural affection, and had no use for mercy. More than this - - being well aware of God's pronouncement that all who do these things deserve to die, they not only continued their own practices, but did not hesitate to give their thorough approval to others who did the same. Romans 1:18-32, J. B. Phillips Version.**

Many who read this will be inclined to feel that it is God's indictment of men who lived in times past. However, when the significance of the constant repetition of the aorist tense is understood, this passage will be seen to be an indictment of men who at any time may give up God. We are witnessing today the frightful results of such action. The blunt language of Dr. Phillips makes this plain. The final statement of this passage shows that men do not dare to be solitary in their sins, so they set out to get conformity to their wicked practices among others. This gives them a feeling of security in the fact that vices that are patently wrong are the common practice. Thus they not only practice wickedness, they give their thorough approval to all others who do the same.

**The End**

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# ***THE KINGDOM OF GOD***

(Continued from Vol. XVI, No.6)

The descriptive phrase, "the kingdom of God", has suffered many things at the hands of its interpreters. It is today grossly misunderstood. It has been taken and applied to many things in ways that are contrary to all that the Bible teaches. It is so commonly used in religious circles that there is a widespread illusion that its meaning is well understood. This is quite contrary to the facts in the case, since it is quite evident that the average Christian does not know what it means when he hears it or what ideas it conveys when he uses it. This Biblical phrase has become a part of the ritualistic language of Christendom. Men talk of "building the kingdom of God", failing to realize that only God can build His kingdom. Certain dispensationalists say that "the kingdom of God is Jewish", in woeful ignorance of the fact that if this were true it would be "the kingdom of the Jews" or "the kingdom of Israel", not "the kingdom of God." There are built-in safeguards in this phrase against all such errors, but, alas, they go unheeded.

Furthermore, there is in this phrase a definite safeguard against the common error of defining the word *kingdom* as signifying "a realm ruled over by a king." This definition will not fit into this phrase, and if used it will draw a veil over every occurrence of this phrase in the New Testament. It is wrong to take some modern usage of the word *kingdom*, a usage based on accommodation, and fasten it onto the Greek word *basileia*. Everyone who seeks to understand the Word of God needs to pause and ask himself the question, "How would *I* define the kingdom of God?"

My own answer to this is that I understand the Greek word *basileia* to mean **government** - although such synonymous terms as rule, sovereignty, jurisdiction, and reign may also be used to indicate certain shades of meaning expressed in this word. Therefore, in its basic, fundamental meaning **"the kingdom of God" is the government of God**. However, in the New Testament this term is repeatedly used to indicate a certain future condition of things, that is, divine government in a definite period of time. In that day the words, "government of the people, by the people, and for the people" will be used to refer only to a condition that is past. In the kingdom of God the government will be of God, by God, and for His own glory. As George E. Ladd rightly says: "The day is surely coming when God will take the reins of government into His hands and the kingdom of God will come on earth and His will be done even as it is in heaven" (The Blessed Hope, page 6).

## **Misappropriating God's Terms**

In medieval times it was customary to look upon organized religion, the visible ecclesiastical system, as the church, and then insist that the church was the kingdom of God, a present reality. This is a conception still held by some, but it is one that can never be equated with the truth revealed in the New Testament.

In the nineteenth century many Christians became deeply disturbed about the kind of a world they lived in and were anxious to make it a better one. In their desires they saw an ideal state of affairs among men toward which they felt "the church" should strive. They appropriated the Biblical term "the kingdom of God" to describe this ideal state of affairs, and proclaimed that it was the sacred duty of "the church" to bring the kingdom of God upon the earth. Thus they misappropriated this phrase to give credence to and to dignify their programs for social progress, employing it in a manner that was quite foreign to the use made of it in the New Testament. This error spread like a

brush fire. The use of this term in this manner was taken up and widely developed by leading theologians in Europe and America until the idea of the church bringing in the kingdom of God became the popular idea of the day.

Thus, at the turn of the century many were turning their attention to the social ills that plagued mankind. They felt that the principal task of organized religions was to rectify all that was wrong in the social order. "To create a civilization that is Christian in spirit and in passion throughout the entire earth", were the glowing words used to describe this goal by one inter-church movement. A new gospel called "the social gospel" became the vogue of the day. This "gospel" was concerned with the betterment of mankind. In almost every theological seminary it displaced that gospel which had always been concerned with the salvation of the individual.

In the "social gospel" the idea of "the church" bringing justice, righteousness, equity, and peace upon the earth was given the paramount place. And the phrase commonly used to describe this goal was "bringing the kingdom of God upon the earth." Building the kingdom of God, extending the kingdom of God, and advancing the kingdom of God were the popular phrases of this time. They were used every time a new church was organized, a church building was dedicated, a mission field opened up, a church school was founded or enlarged, a minister was ordained, or someone was baptized. All these were looked upon as being facets of building, extending, advancing, or increasing the kingdom of God. In fact, the "social gospel" opened up the flood-gates and released a flood of errors, and these errors were usually related to the idea of "the church" building the kingdom of God upon the earth.

There is a demonstrable law related to the use of words which is parallel to Gresham's law in regard to money - which simply stated is that bad money drives out the good. This law in regard to words is that the improper and false usage of a term will drive the proper and true use out of circulation. And this is what happened to the true meaning of the term "the kingdom of God." A meaning established by 74 occurrences of this phrase in the New Testament was debased by a false identification and by deliberate misappropriation. The true Scriptural meaning and usage was almost driven from the minds of men and the term itself came into disrepute. In the great revival of Bible study that came in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, those who participated hesitated to use this term.

Reactions to this mass of error were bound to come, and they took place in the great resurgence of Bible study that took place in the last quarter of the nineteenth and the first quarter of the twentieth century. In this resurgence the "social gospel" was assailed and contradicted with many infallible proofs from the Word of God. It was demonstrated to be a perversion of the gospel of Christ and foreign to the facts of God's revealed truth. And the great dispensational - premillennial movement came to the forefront to lead and to challenge in respect to a new and honest approach to the prophetic truth of God's Word.

History demonstrates that most reactions go too far. This was true of the reaction against that great mass of erroneous teaching, which had usurped and falsely used the Biblical term "the kingdom of God." The idea seemed to be - stay away from the kingdom of God, let it alone. No attempt was made to rescue it from the clutches of those who had misappropriated it to characterize their programs. Truth concerning it was sorely neglected, especially by the dispensational premillennialists. They determined to center their entire attention on "the signs of the times", the rapture, the tribulation, and the second coming. And since the great prominence of the kingdom of God in Scripture could not be ignored, they gave it an insipid and generalized definition, which

robbed it of all value so far as an expression of truth is concerned. It was defined as being the sovereignty of God, which is moral and universal, including all moral intelligences willingly subject to the will of God, whether angels, or the saints of past and future dispensations. It was said to have existed from the beginning and will know no end, that it is over all and embraces all. This in essence is the definition given in both the Scofield Reference Bible and The Companion Bible.

This is what is known as a "Mother Hubbard definition", named after the famous dress of yesteryears. It covered everything and revealed nothing. The real weakness of the above definition is that it will not *fit* into, neither will it shed any light upon anyone of the 74 occurrences of the phrase "the kingdom of God" in the New Testament. For example, was the above what the Lord Jesus was dealing with when He "came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, the time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand"? Not in the least! I hesitate to be critical of both Dr. Scofield and Dr. Bullinger. However, if all their published writings are examined it becomes quite plain that the assiduous study of the kingdom of God was simply not their cup of tea.

In my opinion the greatest weakness of the dispensational premillennialists has been their failure to include in their system of interpretation any sound and worth-while teaching in regard to the kingdom of God. Their reaction against all "kingdom now" and "kingdom is here" teaching, also against the idea of an immediate and forced bringing in of the kingdom by education, legislation, democratization, and culturalization of the peoples of the earth, has been so strong that it has led to an almost complete failure to lay hold *of* the Biblical truth concerning the kingdom of God. All truth concerning the kingdom is under some suspicion. Let any dispensationalist take up the study of this subject and he will probably receive numerous critical communications urging him "to stay away from the kingdom." Let him attempt to set forth the truth concerning this and he will be accused of "preaching the kingdom", a thing to be carefully avoided according to the thinking of many dispensationalists. The writer knows this from his own experience.

There are many people to whom the idea is shocking that most things in the Bible are exceedingly simple. To these the divine Word must never be plain, it must always be mysterious. Therefore, when it is said that "kingdom" means "government", we can expect that it will be rejected with the curt dismissal, "Too simple!" They are somewhat like Naaman whom Elijah told to go and wash in Jordan seven times if he desired to be cleansed from his leprosy. The great commander-in-chief of the Syrian armies thought this was far too simple a solution to his complex problem. It was good that his servants straightened him out on this or he would have continued as a leper till the day of his death.

The word *government* says everything that is found in the Greek word *basileia*. It is a more solid word since it has not gone through all the changes that have happened to the word *kingdom*} a word which in fact has ended up not meaning much more than a country whose ceremonial chief-of-state is designated by the title of King.

Some insist that the ideas of *royal* and *royalty* are inherent in the word *basileia*, and that these ideas are not expressed in the word *government*. This does not impress me in the least since the words *royal* and *royalty* have no fixed meaning. We use them in reference to persons or things that are associated with a king, either as a person or as a monarch, such as the *royal* family, the *royal* residences, or a *royal* visit, and we also use it of things of superlative excellence, such as a *royal* welcome. But it would be of no value to say, "the royal government of God" rather than simply "the government of God." This would simply add a superfluous word to the phrase. It requires no such help.

In Israel, when Saul was anointed to be the nation's first king, there were no elements of royalty related to it. He was one of the common people of Israel, *yet* he became king, the sovereign of Israel. When he failed and David was made king in his place, there were no elements of royalty in the picture. However, once he became king, he automatically became kingly or royal, that is, a royal person. It serves only to muddy the water of truth when we seek to inject the ideas of royalty into the word *basi/eia*.

In theological writings, two main interpretations of the kingdom of God will be found: the eschatological interpretation and the non-eschatological interpretation. These interpretations are in respect to the questions: Is the kingdom of God present or future? Is it the present reign of God in the hearts of submissive men, or is it a future reign of Jesus Christ over the earth? The eschatological position is that it is future. The non-eschatological position is that it is a present spiritual reality.

This writer takes a position with that great number of careful and believing students of the Word who have come to the fixed conclusion that the kingdom of God is a future condition of things, a future reality that will exist upon this earth after a miraculous intervention by God. Many have written eloquently to this end, and what they have said is worthy of careful consideration.

**Samuel J. Andrews** has said: " All prophecy, as we have abundantly seen, pointed forward to the universal kingdom of Jehovah, administered by the promised Son of David. For this the world is to wait, in it all nature will be blessed: it is the consummation of prophetic hope. All His prior actings in redemption are to prepare the way for this, its last stage. . . . Thus there is during the Kingdom period a well ordered system of government, embracing the whole earth, administered by Christ through those whom He appoints; a system adapted to meet the needs of all its inhabitants in all their varied conditions and degrees of intellectual and spiritual development. Now is first seen the full power of the Divine institutions of the family and state, when filled by His Spirit, to produce the purest and noblest fruits in individual life. Now is, also, seen the full development of national life, the solution of all social and political questions, and the true unity of nations. All that men have ever imagined of human progress in science and art will fall far short of those who will study God's works, not from personal ambition or vanity, but out of love of Him, delighting in every new discovery of His wisdom and goodness, and using all knowledge for the blessing of their fellow-men. " (*God's Revelations of Himself to Men*, pages 318,323,324).

This is an excellent statement in respect to the eschatological position, the belief that the kingdom of God is a future divine condition of things upon this earth. I utter a fervent "Amen" to every word quoted above, and declare that when this is a reality I want to be a part of it. In fact, I expect to be a part of it, and would be perpetually happy if it should be the will of God that I should be among those "who will study God's works, not from personal ambition or vanity, but out of love for Him."

Along these same lines Alva J. McClain has said in his book *The Greatness of the Kingdom* (Zondervan, 1959): "There is a current and popular idea that the coming of the kingdom of God to earth is a process, long and gradual; at times so imperceptible that skeptics may be able to dispute seriously whether there be such a thing as the reign of God. Such a notion has no foundation in the writings of the Old Testament prophets (Page 174). In the day of the coming Kingdom, it will not be necessary to write endless volumes on Christian "evidences" and "apologetics." Debates on the existence of God will become absurd and obsolete, suited only to be classed with arguments over the existence of sunlight.

Eschatological systems, which define the Kingdom of God wholly in terms of the invisible will need to be revised. For the supernatural evidences of the existence of God, and of His Christ, and of His Kingdom, will be open to all men (Page 176). These great moral principles of the mediatorial government will be enforced by *sanctions of supernatural power*. The answer of God to all people and kings who venture to set themselves against the beneficent rule of the coming Kingdom is a solemn commission to His anointed King: "Thou art my son . . . Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen (nations) *for* thine inheritance. . . . Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potters vessel" (Ps. 2:7-9). No longer will the wicked oppressor of the poor be able to utter his cynical judgment: "God hath *forgotten*; he hideth his face; he will never see it" (Psa. 10:9-11). No longer will the righteous be troubled about the ways of God in a world where things seem to be upside down (Ps. 73:2-16). The question as to whether or not we live in a "moral universe" will no longer be a subject *for* philosophic debate. For in the coming Kingdom the judgments of God will be immediate and tangible to all men (Zech. 14:17-19; Isa. 66:24). The long period of God's judicial silence, which men have perversely construed as an evidence of moral indifference instead of long-suffering mercy on the part of God, will come to an end (Psa. 50:21). And with the judgments of a holy God once more manifest in the earth, "the inhabitants *of* the world will learn righteousness" (Isa. 26:9). (Pages 208,209).

A note also from the writings of George E. Ladd is pertinent here: "The kingdom of God is therefore primarily a soteriological concept. It is God acting in power and exercising his sovereignty *for* the defeat of Satan and the restoration of human society to its rightful place of willing subservience to the will of God. It is not the sovereignty of God as such; God is always and everywhere the sovereign God. It is the sovereignty of God in action to frustrate every enemy, which would oppose God's will (1 Cor. 15:25). It is not the reign of God as such; *for* God is ultimately reigning as the eternal King. It is the action of the sovereign God of heaven by which his reign is restored in power to those areas *of* his creation which he has permitted in rebellion to move outside the actual acknowledgment of his rule. The kingdom of God then is God's reign, the activity *of* God's sovereign and kingly authority. German has a better word *for* it than English: *Gottesherrschaft*. The central meaning is not realm, but authority." (*Crucial Questions About the Kingdom of God*, page 83.)

Quotations such as these could be multiplied, since many writers have declared themselves along these lines. Great indeed is the number of Bible students who see the kingdom *of* God as being the future reign of God over the earth. They hold that the manifest kingdom of God upon the earth will be the result of a "cataclysmic irruption of God into history", as Ladd states it. They reject the idea that the kingdom of God will come through the efforts of men, and teach that it will be inaugurated by a supernatural act of God. Among those who have held and taught the "future kingdom" view we can list such names as Darby, Kelly, Anderson, Bullinger, Gray, Gaebelien, Torrey, Pierson, Tregelles, Scofield, Chafer, Riley, Haldeman, Ironside and a host of others. Present day exponents of a future reign of Jesus Christ over the earth include such names as Ladd, McClain, Walvoord, Culbertson, Pentecost, and many more.

In the writings of those mentioned above there are two errors constantly found which I am convinced vitiate and stultify the Bible revelation of the kingdom of God.

The first error, seen especially in the writings of George E. Ladd, is that the kingdom of God is both present and future, that there is something now that can be called the kingdom of God, and a future glorious reign of Christ over the earth that is also called the kingdom of God. As Ladd puts the question: "Can it involve both a millennial reign of Christ on earth in the future and a present spiritual reign of Christ in the hearts of His people?" His answer is that it involves both.

It is apparent that this position involves the sorting of every statement concerning the kingdom of God in the New Testament into two groups - those that apply to the kingdom, which is now and those that apply to the kingdom which is future. This is an impossible task that can lead to frustration and disappointment.

Few are as definite as Ladd in regard to the "kingdom now" idea. However, it is evident that all who say that the kingdom of God "existed from the beginning and will know no end" are holding to some extent the "kingdom now" position.

I am not in agreement with this, for I do not believe that anyone can point to anything upon earth today and say, "That is God's government, that is the kingdom of God." That which is called the "present spiritual reign of Christ in the hearts of His people", whatever this may be, is not what the Bible is dealing with when it speaks of the kingdom of God.

It is quite true that in the time of our Lord's earthly ministry and in the 33 years of the Acts period there were definite things one could point to and, calling a part by the name of the whole, could say, "That is a manifestation of divine sovereignty, that is God's government" For example, when the Lord Jesus Christ cast out devils by the Spirit of God, it was a foretaste of the kingdom of God. This is the declaration of Christ in Matt. 12:28, a truth that is lost to us by the weak rendering in the King James Version. However, we must never allow ourselves to think that these few mercy drops are the full flood of the kingdom of God.

There are innumerable things today of which we can say, "That is God's providence", and many more of which we can say, "That is God's grace", but there is nothing we can point to and say, "That is God's government."

The words *grace* and *government* represent the polarity of God's character, as set forth in the living and written Word. He is "the God of every grace", (1 Pet. 5:10) and He is "the judge of all the earth" (Gen. 18:25). God's present method of dealing with mankind is entirely gracious. If He cannot act in grace, He will not act at all. His present purpose is to write into the history of His dealings with man a complete record of the grace that is inherent in His character. He will allow nothing to enter in to be a blot on the record He is writing. All vengeance, all justice, all government must wait until God completes His great display of grace. It is a denial of His present grace to say that He is also acting in government. It would be well if He were. This is His word concerning this:

**For when Thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness.**

**Isa. 26:9.**

At the present time we are shut up to His grace, and we should bow our wills and say, "His grace is sufficient."

However, the error of saying that in certain aspects "the kingdom of God is now" is not the most serious one. The error, which has led to more confusion of thought than any other is..

## **THE GREAT BLUNDER**

..which has been repeated and perpetuated by almost every expositor who has dealt with the future kingdom of God. This is an error made by all whose names have previously been cited. It is the idea that the future kingdom of God begins with the personal return of Jesus Christ to the earth. This position of course equates the kingdom of God with the millennium of Revelation 20. This is the error that is behind almost every problem of prophetic interpretation.

I want it to be known here that I take second place to no man in believing in the actual, personal return of Jesus Christ to the earth and in His personal presence (parousia) for a thousand years. This has been an article of faith with me for 46 years, and an equal number of years of Bible study have served to deepen this conviction. However, I do not believe that this is imminent or that it is next in order on the divine calendar of future events. Neither do I believe that the personal presence of Jesus Christ upon the earth is essential to God governing it and men upon it. I believe in a coming dispensation of divine government, brought about by Jesus Christ acting from His place of power at the right hand of God.

This coming dispensation, this period of time, and this condition of things, is called in the Bible "the kingdom of God." It is preadvent; that is, it is before the second coming of Christ. It is pre-parousia; that is, it precedes the long time of His personal presence. It is pre-millennial; it comes before the thousand-year reign of Christ.

My ministry for twenty years have proclaimed and emphasized such a period of divine government. Some of my reasons for believing as I do will now be given. I believe in the pre-advent kingdom of God upon this earth because of the Biblical truth declared concerning

### **Jesus Christ at God's Right Hand.**

The reader of the Bible will come upon this truth seven times - - once in the Old Testament and six times in the New.

**The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool. Psalm 110:1.**

This identical truth is repeated in Matt. 22:44; Mark 12:36; Luke 20:42,43; Acts 2:34, 35; and Heb. 1:13. The same truth is found in Heb. 10:12, 13 stated in a different manner. A statement repeated as many times as this one cannot be unimportant, yet it is constantly glossed over by all who begin the coming kingdom of God with the return of Jesus Christ to the earth. We could not be told more emphatically that Jesus Christ is now seated at the right hand of God and will remain there until His enemies are made His footstool.

In Scripture, anything that is under the foot can be called a footstool. To be under the foot is to be in subjection; that is, under the power, control and government of another, being in a state of obedience or submissiveness. This is in accord with the great promise of God:

**Say unto God, How terrible art thou in thy works! though the greatness of thy power shall thine enemies submit themselves unto thee. All the earth shall worship thee, and shall sing unto thee; they shall sing to thy name. Psalm 66: 3, 4.**

There is nothing in past history that fulfills these words. They stand as an unfulfilled prophecy until, as Delitzsch writes: "To this it will come when absolute omnipotence for and through the exalted Christ shows its effectiveness."

In Isaiah we find "footstool" in close proximity with the word "throne" and this helps us to understand both of these terms.

**Thus said the Lord, The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool. Isa. 66:1.**

Both of these words are used figuratively. Literally a *throne* would be an ornate chair intended to be occupied by kings for ceremonial purposes. In Scripture it usually means a seat or center of government, often meaning the sovereign power itself. Thus David declares:

**The Lord hath prepared His throne in the heavens; and His kingdom ruleth over all. Psal. 103 :19.**

This tells us the location of His seat of government and the extent of His sovereignty. This seat of government is not going to move from heaven and relocate in Jerusalem when God establishes His government in the earth. When God in Christ takes to Himself His great power and reigns over the earth, the seat of government will be in heaven. Jesus Christ will remain in the seat of government until all His enemies are subject to Him. Thus "throne" stands for the seat of government and footstool stands for that which is subject, the earth.

The terms "His footstool" and "under His feet" are identical in meaning. In **1 Cor. 15:25** we learn of the process by which all enemies are put under His feet. It is one of government.

**For He must reign, till He hath put all enemies under His feet.**

To "reign" (Greek, *basileuo*) means to exercise sovereign power or authority. Thus it is by a process of divine government that all enemies are put under His feet. In view of these facts, logic demands the following conclusions:

1. Jesus Christ is now seated at God's right hand. Heb. 10:12.
2. He is to remain there until His enemies become His footstool. Heb. 10:13.
3. He must reign (or, govern) until He hath put all enemies under His feet, that is, until they become His footstool. I Cor. 15:25.
4. There is at present no exercise of divine authority that is working toward a subjection of all enemies. Today we are impelled to cry out with the Psalmist: "**Arise, O God, plead thine own cause: remember how the foolish man reproacheth thee daily. Forget not the voice of thine enemies: the tumult of those that rise up against thee increaseth continually**" (Psalm 74:22, 23).

5. Since Christ remains at God's right hand until His enemies are made His footstool, and since He must reign until they are under His feet, the exercise of divine power that overcomes and conquers all enemies cannot begin with the second coming of Jesus Christ.

6. Therefore, Biblical truth dictates that there must be a period of divine government before the second advent, before the parousia, before the millennium.

Another reason for believing that the kingdom of God, that is, God's government of the nations upon the earth as promised in Psalm 67:4, is to precede the second advent of Jesus Christ is because of the explicit Biblical testimony of things that will take place

### **Before the Day of the Lord Begins.**

In Scripture we find a revelation of four great days, which are long periods of time characterized by certain dominant influences. These are **the day of man, the day of Christ, the day of the Lord, and the day of God.**

The **day of man**, referred to by Paul in the Greek of 1 Cor. 4:3 is the time in which we live, a time when man is having his unhindered day. Man's day reaches its highest peak in this dispensation of God's grace.

Next will be the **day of Christ**, a long period of time when Christ will have His unhindered day with this earth, with the nations, and especially with Israel. This is also called the day of the eon (2 Peter 3:18) and the kingdom of God.

The day of Christ is followed by the **day of the Lord**. Most Bible expositors agree that this period includes the seventieth week of Israel's seventy weeks as set forth by Daniel, the return of Christ to the earth, the thousand years of His personal presence, the little season, and the time of the great white throne. It ends with the creation of a new heaven and new earth and gives way to the **day of God**.

There are two great events that belong to the day of Christ which, therefore, precede the day of the Lord. Of these events it is explicitly declared that they take place before the day of the Lord comes. The first of these is the appearance and ministry of Elijah to Israel.

**Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord: And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse. Mal. 4:5, 6.**

If we accept this truth at its face value, then the only belief that is possible is that there will be a period of beneficent and benevolent divine activity in behalf of Israel before the second coming of Christ. A man will be sent from God named Elijah. This can be none other than Elijah the prophet, since he is so designated. He will accomplish a work of such far-reaching spiritual importance that when the Lord comes there will be no need to smite the earth with a curse.

Our Lord enlarged and explained this great truth when He said to His disciples, **Elias (Elijah) truly shall first come, and restore all things."** Matt. 17:11. He will act as God's great director, restoring the truth of the divine boundaries of the land that God promised to Abraham; restoring the tribes of Israel and restoring the Israelite to his proper tribe; restoring the Aaronic family and the priesthood; restoring the ancient ritual, and restoring every word and letter of Hebrew Scripture to its original purity.

It should be noted here that Elijah does not bring in the kingdom of God, not even to Israel. He does a work under God's government in behalf of Israel which Christ summed up under the words "restore all things." Since all this is to be before the day of the Lord, it must be before His return to the earth. This is the next work of God in behalf of Israel. Israel has long been ravaged, the next thing for Israel is to be restored. She has long been scattered, the next thing for her is to be regathered. She has been punished, the next thing for her is to be blessed.

This prophecy of Malachi of that which must happen before the day of the Lord is limited to Israel. In a prophecy from Joel we find a promise that is universal in its scope. This prophecy was repeated by Peter in his message given at Pentecost, and we will look at it there. This passage contains two definite time elements that enclose the promises made in it.

**And it shall come to pass IN THE LAST DAYS, saith God, I will pour out of My spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: And on My servants and on My handmaidens I will pour out in those days of My Spirit; and they shall prophesy: And I will show wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke: The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come.**  
**Acts 2:17-20.**

As suggested before, all these things take place "in the last days" and "before the great and notable day of the Lord come." This is an important passage which has long embarrassed the dispensational-premillennialists, as they see the next event in the prophetic calendar to be the **day of the Lord**. They have no room in their system of prophetic interpretation for events such as these that must come to pass before that day comes.

This passage is worthy of painstaking study. The KJV translation is acceptable. However, in a *translation* one language is turned into another, while in a *paraphrase* we have a very free translation, the purpose of which is to present the meaning of the passage as it is understood by the one doing the paraphrase. In this spirit, I would like to present a paraphrase of this passage.

**And it shall come to pass in the resultant days, those days spoken of by Joel (2:28) and Isaiah (2:2-4), declares God, that I will pour out a measured portion of My Spirit upon all flesh. In these same days your representative men and your representative women shall as commissioned by Him speak forth the word of God by divine inspiration. In this same time your young men shall see divinely granted pictures of what God wants accomplished and your elder men shall receive communications from God even while they sleep. Furthermore, in those days I will pour forth measured portions of My Spirit upon those who slave for Me, and by divine inspiration they shall speak forth My word as they are commissioned to do so, telling forth the divine counsels. And I will display marvels in the sky above, and significant things on the earth beneath. Among these will be blood, a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and uncleanness as I promised through Zechariah (13:1).**

Also there will be fire, even as in the days of Moses (Deut. 4:36) and in the days of Israel when My presence was made known by that which was a pillar of fire by night and a column of smoke by day, even these will be seen again as promised by Isaiah (4:5). Yes the light of God by day and by night will be so great that by comparison the sun shall seem dark and the moon shall be as blood, even as the sun was to Paul on the Damascus road (Acts 6:13). All this shall come to pass before that great and manifest day of Jehovah comes.

This is my understanding of this passage. It tells us of great divine activity, beneficent and benevolent in its character, and universal in its scope, except where limited by definite statements. This is the kingdom of God. This is the day of Christ. It will precede the day of the Lord.

(To Be Continued, Vol. XVII, No. 2 )

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## WHAT IS AN EON

(Continued from Vol. XVI, No. 6)

It needs to be stated again that there is no English word that is the exact equivalent of the Greek word *aion*. In fact, it does not even have a near equivalent. If it did we could take this word, use it as a translation, then work into it all the ideas that are contained in the Greek word. Thus the only thing left to do is to English or Anglicize the words *aion* and *aionios* and use *eon* for the noun and *eonian* for the adjective.

This is not a new departure since it can be shown that certain translators of the New Testament (Nathaniel Scarlett, London, 1798) were using the word *eonian* as a transliteration of *aionios*. And it can also be shown that certain writers two centuries ago were using *aeon* and *aeonian* to render *aion* and *aionos*.

These things have already been said in these studies, but they are repeated here inasmuch as some think that I am urging the use of the word *flow* as a translation of *aion*. This is not the case. What I am advocating is that the idea of "flow" or something that is flowing is basic and inherent in this Greek word. Its multifarious uses cannot be understood until this fact is recognized.

Take for example the use of *aion* in the Papyrus, cited by Moulton and Milligan, where the athlete declares that he made an *aion* in the Olympics. It is plain that he means "a record", and one immediately wonders why a record would be called an *aoion*. The answer is simple. Records of this nature are flowing things, one goes beyond another, they move on from one to another, soon producing a long stream of records.

Consider also the Papyrus occurrence where one is led off from the *aion*. The context makes it plain that this one was being led off from life, that is, to be put to death. In other words he was separated from that great river of living men. This is what happens when a man dies. He is no longer a single drop in the great river of humanity.

The use of this word to describe length of life or old age becomes meaningful at once when the idea of "flowing" is seen in it. I was reminded of this recently when I inquired of a friend concerning the health of her aged mother. Her answer was, "Mother just goes on and on and on." The Greeks were able to use the word *aion* to express a thought such as this.

This word was used of the power of the Emperor as they conceived it as flowing from one Emperor to the next. And it was used of the Emperor himself in cries of "*Agoustoi kurioi eis ton aiona*", thus expressing the wish that he would flow on and on, living many years. They worshipped the Emperors.

Examples such as these could be multiplied, but there is no need to do so. The idea of something flowing is basic in all occurrences of this word, both in the Scripture and in secular writings.

Our present task is to examine every occurrence of the word *aion* in the New Testament. Again it needs to be said that for this to be of any value, the reader will need to have his Bible open to each passage referred to in this study.

### **Eon in The Acts**

Acts 3:21. The Greek here reads *ap aionos*, and it is gratuitously translated "since the world began." *Ap* is a shortened form of *apo*, which means "from", and the phrase should be translated "from *the* eon." All the writing prophets from Moses to Malachi were related to the divine outflow of truth that was pouring forth in many ways (Heb. 1:1). This is seen in the oft-repeated statement, "The word of the Lord came unto me saying." It was flowing from God to them and out from them to the people. These holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit (2 Peter 1:21). In fact the literal meaning of 2 Peter 1:21 is that the prophets were picked up and carried along by the divine stream of truth, and from this they spoke. They spoke "from the eon."

Acts 15:18. This also is *ap aionos*, and is rendered "from the beginning of the world." It is a translators interpolation since there is nothing in the Greek to support it. It should read "from *the* eon." There are textual difficulties in this passage, also major problems of translation and interpretation. This makes it difficult to arrive at the significance of *aion* here. However, since James is referring to Peter's address, which he sees to be in harmony with the words of Amos, it may be that he declares he has recognized a divine flow of truth to Peter and from Peter to those assembled on that day.

Rom. 1:25. Here we find the familiar phrase *eis taus aionas*, which the KJV weakly renders "for ever", but should read "in respect to the eons", in the sense of "because of the eons:" The larger phrase reads, "the Creator who is exalted (*eulogetos*) in respect to the eons." This tells us *why* He is worthy of the praise of our lips, and not how long. It also reveals the Creator as the absolute source of all blessings. Paul stood completely aloof from the political battles that raged in his day; nevertheless, it is evident in this passage that there is a reference to the common custom of venerating the Emperor and proclaiming him as the source of all the good that came to the empire. Yet nothing that was truly good ever flowed from these powerful men. Even the material prosperity they seemed to bring was based upon robbing some to enrich others. Let us never forget that "every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father" (Jas. 1:17). Let us exalt God because of the eons. Let us praise God from whom all blessings flow.

Rom. 9:5. In this passage *eis taus aionas* is translated "for ever", but should be read "in respect to the eons." The reference is to Israel, and the larger portion should read, "and out of whom is the Christ according to the flesh, who is over all, God, exalted in respect to the eons." Much controversy

has been carried on in regard to the meaning of this passage - whether it is a doxology to the Father or a description of Christ's deity. My understanding of the word *aion* here requires me to believe that these words are predicated of Christ, that they declare Him to be God. Christ is declared to be "over all" and one cannot be "over all" and not be God.

Rom. 11:36. Again we find *eis tous aionas* translated "for ever", but should read "in respect to the eons." The entire passage reads, "For out of Him, and through Him, and in respect to Him are all these: to Him be the glory in respect to the eons! Amen!"

Rom. 12:2. In this passage *aioni touto* is translated "this world" but should read "this eon." Paul entreats the Roman believers not to be configured to this eon. In Galatians he describes it as "the present evil eon." In this connection it will be well to remember Archbishop Trench's delineation of the present evil eon. "All that floating mass of thoughts, opinions, maxims, speculations, hopes, impulses, aims, aspirations, at any time current in the world, which it may be impossible to seize and accurately define, but which constitute a most real and effective power, being the moral, or immoral, atmosphere which at every moment of our lives we inhale, again inevitably to exhale, - all this is included in the *aion*."

Rom. 16:27. The Greek here is *eis tous aionas ton aionon*. It is translated "for ever", which stultifies it, to say the least. This is as bad as if *Basileus basileon kai Kurios kurion* in Rev. 19:16 should be translated "King and Lord" instead of "King of Kings and Lord of Lords." The phrase here should read "in respect to the eons of the eons." This is the first of 42 occurrences of the double plural form in the New Testament. The entire passage reads, "To the only wise God, through Christ Jesus, be glory in respect to the eons of the eons." Again it is to be noted that this passage tells us *why* God is to be glorified, not how long, as the KJV seems to indicate.

In the first study in this series (Vol. XVI, No.3) it was pointed out that the word *aion* is used in the New Testament in five settings: Singular, eon; plural, eons; double singular, eon of the eon; singular with plural, the eon of the eons; and the double plural, the eons of the eons. In the passage before us we have the double plural, a form, which is not easy to understand, and it may help if we take a human being as an illustration. But first this warning - the illustration is not the truth. It is a means of making the truth understandable.

In the human body the head is the source of all actions, and since it is an outflowing source it can be properly called an eon. From the head impulses flow out into the spinal cord which, since it is able to store impulses, becomes another outflowing source it can also be called an eon. In fact, *aion* is used of the spinal marrow in classical Greek. Thus if the head is one eon and the spinal cord another we can properly speak of the eon of the eon, for apart from the head the spine would never send forth another impulse. And since the spinal cord flows out into certain great nerves, we have then an eon of the eons, and since each of these great nerves flow out into numerous lesser nerves, we have the eons of the eons. In view of this there is little wonder that the Psalmist said: "I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvelous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well" (Psa. 139:14).

If we consider man and find cause to praise God for all the eons of the eons that make him the complex creature that he is, think how much more we will find reason for praising Him when He sets up that amazingly complex order which in the Bible is subsumed in the term "the kingdom of God,"

**And all men shall fear, and shall declare the work of God; for they shall wisely consider of His doing. The righteous shall be glad in the Lord, and shall trust in Him; and all the upright in heart shall glory. Psa. 64:9, 10.**

I Cor. 1:20. The Greek here (*out aionos*) is translated "of this world" but should be "of this eon." The *suzetetes* (disputers) spoken of here were men who made a supreme effort to become *expert* in philosophical learning as well as in dialectical skill. They were versed in the art of discussion. The eon here is of course the present evil eon. Again, Trench's definition of the present eon fits well here.

I Cor. 2:6, 7, 8. There are four occurrences of *aion* in these three passages. In the two occurrences in verse 6 and the one in verse 8 it reads *tou aionos toutou*, and in verse 7 it reads *pro ton aionon*. This portion should read: "Howbeit we speak wisdom among the mature, yet a wisdom not of this eon, neither of the chief men of this eon, the ones being brought to nought, but we are speaking the wisdom of God in a secret, which has been concealed, and which God did designate before the eons in respect to our glory, which not one of the chief men of this eon has known, for if they had known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory."

God's own revelation of truth, the Bible, is the one supreme body of wisdom in the universe. Paul spoke a wisdom that belongs to the coming eon. The wisdom, which God had marked out before the eons had become a blessed reality in the ministry of Paul and others so commissioned. Thus God glorified His apostles by giving them this wisdom in advance of that time when it will become public domain.

1 Cor. 3:18. The Greek *en to aioni touto* is here translated "in this world", but should read "in this eon." In verses 18 and 19 the words *aion* and *kosmos* are used in such manner that a vital similarity between "this eon" and "this world" is established. Trench treats these two words as synonymous. When we today speak of worldlywise or worldly-minded men, we are speaking of the same thing as Paul when he spoke of the eon-wise men in this passage.

1 Cor. 8:13. In this passage *eis ton aiona* is translated "while the world standeth", but it should read "in respect to the eon." The larger portion reads, "Therefore, if food is an occasion of stumbling unto my brother, I will under no circumstances be eating meat in respect to the eon." Due to the character of this passage this is probably an idiomatic use of *eis ton aiona*, a use which was readily understood by the Corinthians. The Hebrew word *olam* and the Greek word *aion* are both used in places where the idea of *influence* is definitely in the picture. This is in harmony with the basic meaning of these words, since the chief idea in *influence* is something that flows out that has an effect upon others. In this passage Paul is telling the Corinthians that if eating meat caused his brother to stumble, then he would eat no meat in view of the harmful influence this would have upon his brother.

1 Cor. 10:11. The Greek here is *ta tele ton aionon*. It is translated "the ends of the world", but should read "the ends of the eons." In the context of this passage Paul sets forth instances in Israel's history when God flowed out in their behalf. The results of these divine activities had now advanced to and arrived upon the Corinthians. They were participating in the result of past divine actions. There is always a divine result from every divine action even though it may be long delayed.

2 Cor. 4:4. In this important passage *aionos toutou* is translated "of this world", but should be "of this eon." Satan is here declared to be the god of the present evil eon. The whole flow of evil finds its source in him. His most malignant activity is that of blinding the minds of those who do not believe. To the unbeliever, Satan is nothing more than a joke.

2 Cor. 9:9. Here *eis ton aiona* is translated "for ever." It should read "in respect to the eon." God will yet sit in judgment upon the works of the believer. Whatever he determines to have been righteous will remain as righteousness in respect to the eon.

2 Cor. 11:31. This passage has the plural form, *eis taus aionas*. It is translated "for evermore", but should read "in respect to the eons." Over and above all the good that has ever flown out or that will flow out, the God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ stands supreme and absolute as the source. He is exalted in respect to the eons.

Gal. 1:4. In this passage *tou aianos* is translated "world", but should read "this eon." The larger portion reads: "Who gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us out of the present evil eon."

This passage alone is sufficient to tell us that *aion* cannot mean "an age" or "a long period of time", since we have not been delivered from this present age or time period. But we have been extricated from this present evil flow, a flow which is now at flood stage and which gives no evidence that it has yet reached its crest. Evil men and seducers still wax worse and worse, and they would, if they could, involve us in everyone of their nefarious schemes. Our deliverance from this present evil flow is a present reality. Our faith in the purpose of Christ's death makes it possible for us to stand upon Him as our rock while the entire wicked eon swirls at flood stage all around us. His word to Moses can be appropriated by us:

**And the Lord said, Behold, there is a place by Me, and thou shalt stand upon a rock. Exo. 33:21.**

We need to remember that there is more than one eon today. There is a constant flow of grace from the God of every grace. It is this flow of grace that makes it possible for us to be believers and to live and walk as believers in this present evil eon.

Gal. 1:5. Here *eis tous aionas ton aionan* is translated "for ever and ever." One cannot help but wonder what rules the King James' translators followed which caused them to take three occurrences of the word *aion* in one sentence (verses 4 and 5) and render it once "world" and twice "ever." This is the double plural and it should read "in respect to the eons of the eons." This verse is a doxology, a song of praise unto God, glorifying Him in respect to all that He has done, all that He will do, for all the occasions wherein He has poured forth Himself and will pour forth Himself for the benefit of man.

Eph. 1:21. In this passage *en to aioni touto* is translated "in this world" but should read "in this eon." All statements in this passage are made concerning Jesus Christ. He is the subject, and the predicates tell us things concerning Him. Here we are told that He has been seated at God's right hand, among the most exalted, over above every sovereignty, authority, power, and lordship, and every name that is named, not only in this eon, but also in that which is to come. The words *huperano pases* (far above all) are applicable only to Christ Jesus. He alone has this position in relation to sovereignties, etc.

Eph. 2:2. This is an important passage. In it *ton aiona* is translated "the course", but should read "the eon." However, this is a passage in which *aion* could be translated "flow", which would make

the larger portion to read "walked according to the flow of this world." Those who conform to the ever changing flow of this world are walking in harmony with eon of this world.

Eph. 2:7. This passage tells us much about our future service unto God. In it *en tois aiosin* is translated "in the ages" but should read "among the eons." The truth in this passage belongs to the one who is a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ in this the dispensation of the grace of God. It tells us that God "raises us together and seats us together among the most exalted in Christ Jesus, in order that among the coming eons, He should be displaying the transcendent riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus." In the great eon to come God in Christ will be flowing out in a very special way to certain elect men, and these will in turn be flowing out to others, whom in their turn will be flowing out to still others who are set underneath them. All this is in harmony with the promise of Christ recorded in **John 4:14**.

**Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall under no circumstances be thirsting in respect to the eon, but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up unto eonian life. (See also John 7:37, 38).**

Those who become channels when God sets up His great eon can also be called "eons." The ancient Greeks often applied the word *aion* to men and to angels. And while this may seem strange, it is only because it is unfamiliar. The present-day believer in Christ Jesus has every right to expect to be an eon in the life to come. Thus we will be "among the eons."

**(To Be Continued, Vol. XVII, No. 2)**

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## ***THE INTERPRETATION OF EPHESIANS***

### **EPHESIANS 1:15, 16**

**Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; KJV.**

**Therefore, I also, on hearing of this faith of yours in the Lord Jesus, and that in respect to all the saints, cease not in giving thanks for you making mention in my prayers, TRV.**

These words begin another long sentence, which according to my present understanding continues to Eph. 2:10 inclusive. If this is correct, then the sentence we now begin to examine is longer than the one we have just considered, 1:3 to 1:14. Thus this is the longest sentence in the Bible, a sentence of such nature that it proclaims the inspiration of the human instrument who wrote it. A false start in interpreting these opening words will foul up the entire stream that flows out of them. In view of this the Greek must be translated honestly and factually, without any additions or rewriting as is usually the case when this portion is dealt with.

**THEREFORE** - meaning "because of this", or "for this reason." The Greek reads *dia touto*.

**I ALSO** - Others beside Paul had heard of the unique faith of this new company of people. The saving work of God in relationship to sinners did not come to an end when Paul relinquished his commission and submitted to the truth that the salvation-bringing message of God had been

authorized (made freely available) to those of the nations. Many were being saved by the naked Word of God coming to them in all its pristine force and beauty. God is making good on His guarantee "they will hear it." The reports of what God was accomplishing are coming to the ears of many, of which Paul is one.

**ON HEARING** - These are not Paul's converts. He did not proclaim the salvation-bringing message to them. He knows of them only through the reports of others. There are those who point to Philemon 1:4, 5 where the same language is used and declare that Paul speaks of hearing of Philemon's "love and faith", yet Paul was personally acquainted with him - a fact that is unquestioned. However, what Paul had heard of Philemon was "his love and faith toward the Lord Jesus and in respect to all the saints, so that the fellowship of his faith was operating in the knowledge of every good thing in Christ Jesus." This speaks of the life of faith and the works of faith, not the initial faith in the gospel of God that had brought salvation to Philemon.

**OF THIS FAITH OF YOURS** - The Greek here is *ten kath humas pistin*, which literally reads "the according to you belief" and means "the faith that accords with you." The word *kata* always suggests some standard of comparison. This word is found with the accusative twenty-four times in this epistle and is translated "according to" in fifteen of these. By use of it here Paul emphasizes the unique personal faith of those to whom this epistle is addressed. Their's was a faith that came solely *from* hearing the word and it came *upon* hearing the word. Paul's words here focuses upon the unique faith of those to whom he is writing. This is a new company of believers who have believed under a new administration of God. They are the result of the salvation-bringing message of God being authorized to the Gentiles (Acts 28:28). If we compare their faith with that of those spoken of in Rom. 15:18, 19 we will *see* the great difference. All hearers of the gospel before Acts 28:28 had the benefits of personal dealings with God-commissioned men who spoke a divinely-inspired message which was always confirmed by signs and wonders. This company to whom Paul is writing is different. God produced faith in them solely by means of His written word. Upon the hearing of this, they believed.

**IN THE LORD JESUS** - Their faith is not in some new revelation of truth. It is in the record that God has given of His Son. Even though Paul is revealing much new truth in this epistle, every blessing it reveals is attributed to them simply because they are believers in the Lord Jesus Christ.

**AND THAT IN RESPECT TO ALL SAINTS** - This is what the Greek says, and the interpretation must begin with this. The word "love" cannot be admitted here, even under the most liberal rules of textual criticism. It is usually inserted here as it is thought that no satisfactory understanding of Paul's statement can be reached without it. But this is a mistake. Paul here completes his comparison of the faith of those to whom he is writing and the faith of all other saints. He sees them as having a unique faith and honors them for it. They have believed "without seeing." The word has not been confirmed to them by signs and wonders. Nevertheless, they are believing, trusting, and hoping in Christ Jesus.

**CEASE NOT GIVING THANKS FOR YOU** - This thanksgiving on their behalf began when he heard of their faith in the Lord Jesus. It continued without interruption.

**MAKING MENTION IN MY PRAYERS** - His thanksgiving flowed on into intercession in their behalf. We will now see what he asked for them.

## EPHESIANS 1:17, 18

**That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: 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, KJV.**

**That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the realization of Him, the eyes of your heart having been enlightened, so that you perceive what is the expectation of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His portion among the saints, TRV.**

Here we have the inspired record of what Paul requested when he made intercession for them. It is not right to say that this is "a prayer", as so many do, since it is simply a statement of what he asked of God when he prayed for them. This is a passage where we need to give the Lord Jesus His proper place in it.

**THAT THE GOD OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST** - This great designation seems to set forth two, but in reality these two are one. The genitive here can be the genitive of apposition, and if so it would read "the God, that is to say, our Lord Jesus Christ"

**THE FATHER OF GLORY** - The God who is characterized by glory, who is the author and giver of glory. He offers to men that which if received causes them to be highly esteemed in His sight.

**MAY GIVE YOU A" SPIRIT OF WISDOM** - "A spirit of wisdom" would be the capacity to receive truths which are beyond the grasp of the human mind.

**AND REVELATION** - This is the capacity to uncover truth. The word is *apokalupsis*, which means an unveiling or uncovering.

**IN THE REALIZATION OF HIM** - The word translated "knowledge" here in the King James Version is not *gnosis* but *epignosis*, which means full knowledge, accurate knowledge. Thus God is revealed. In and expressed by His Son is the subject with which this spirit of wisdom and revelation deals.

**"THE EYES OF YOUR HEART HAVING BEEN ENLIGHTENED** - Most commentators feel that "the construction is quite difficult here, but this is because they are trying to make this something that Paul is requesting for those to whom this epistle is addressed. But this is not so. Paul's desire that God would give them a spirit of wisdom and revelation is predicted upon the fact that He has already given eyes to their hearts so that out of the darkness of immorality and idolatry they have found their way to Him. Their commitment to Christ was not one of blind emotion. These believers were divine miracles. Every believer is a divine miracle.

**SO THAT YOU PERCEIVE WHAT IS THE EXPECTATION OF HIS CALLING** - Paul is here declaring a fact - not a desire. God had given eyes to their hearts so that they could perceive what is the expectation of His calling. The Greek word for "calling" here is *klesis*, which comes from

the verb *kaleo*. It is usually said that this verb means to call," that is, to bid, to invite, or to summon, but that is only one-third of the truth. Out of 146 occurrences of this verb in the New Testament it cannot have any meaning such as this in at least 95 of these. In these it means to designate, to name, to appoint, to fix, or establish by authority. This may have grown out of the fact that the Sovereign summoned men to special duty, so that a call was equal to appointment. ,

The word *klesis* is found eleven times in the New Testament. It is a verbal noun, and as such it designates the result of the action - a *kaleo* results in a *klesis*. If *kaleo* always meant to 'bid' or to invite, then *klesis* would always mean a bidding or an inviting. But, as has already been shown, it cannot have any such meaning in two thirds of its occurrences in the New Testament, it does not seem logical that we should fasten the idea of inviting or bidding on the eleven occurrences of *klesis* in the Greek Scripture. In fact, it is not so used in any occurrence in the New Testament. In the passage before us it refers to the present position of Jesus Christ. Let us remember that the one who emptied Himself has been highly exalted and given a name which is above every name. This One is our Savior. He is the One in Whom we have placed our trust. Every present-day believer should know fully and enter into the enjoyment of the safety, the security, and the certainty that is his because of the present position of Jesus Christ our Lord. He is the Rock and we are founded On Him. As the present dispensation of God's grace passes through its last days, we will need to realize this more and more and rest all the more upon Him. He is our hope.

#### **AND WHAT THE RICHES OF THE GLORY OF HIS PORTION AMONG THE SAINTS -**

In order for this complex statement to say something meaningful to us we will need to find the meaning of some of the words used. The word "riches" is *ploutos*, which means an abundance of things, which are considered of value, an abundance of external possessions. Christ spoke of "the deceitfulness of riches" (Matt. 13:22). However, when this word is used with the genitive it indicates outflowing wealth of whatever is indicated. Thus it means wealth that enriches others, such as "the riches of His grace" in Eph. 1:7. This would mean "the outflowing wealth of His grace."

The word 'glory' is *doxa*, a word, which basically means *esteem*. It suggests renown, but it always implies a position where attention is fixed on the brilliancy of an achievement, which results in enthusiastic praise or honor. This is what we mean when we say, "To God be the glory."

The word "saints" is *hagios* and is a common designation of those who have been marked out or set apart in regard to some special service. This word is used of persons, places and things, always designating that which is hallowed by God.

The word translated "inheritance" in the KJV is *kleronomia* and means an allotment or a portion, and has in it the idea of the actual possession and enjoyment of a portion.

Thus we form the conclusion that Paul's desire for them is that they shall know and appreciate the glory of the outflowing wealth among the saints that comes out of the portion God has given to Christ. We partake of what God has allotted to Him.

We have now been told of His position and His portion and what these mean to us. Now we are to learn of His power.

#### **EPHESIANS 1:19, 20**

**And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, KJV.**

**And what the transcendent greatness of His power for us who are believing, in accord with the working of the might of His strength, which is wrought in the Christ, raising Him from among the dead, and seating Him in His right among the most exalted, TRV.**

**AND WHAT THE TRANSCENDENT GREATNESS OF HIS POWER** - The believer has three things going for him, three things operating in his behalf. In his favor are the present position of Christ, the portion that God has given Christ, and the power of God that belongs to Christ. We are not powerless. "God has not given us the spirit of fear, but of power" (2 Tim. 1:7). The believer in Jesus Christ *is* no mere happenstance. He is the product of the power of God working graciously to bring about this result. Paul declares here how they came to believe and how they continue to believe. It *is* only by drawing upon God's power that we can continue to believe.

**FOR US WHO ARE BELIEVING** - As believers in the Lord Jesus Christ we must be aware of the resources that are at our disposal.

**IN ACCORD WITH THE WORKING OF THE MIGHT OF HIS STRENGTH** - Paul provides a parallel so that we can better understand the workings of God's strength.

**WHICH IS WROUGHT IN THE CHRIST, RAISING HIM FROM AMONG THE DEAD** - The transcendent power that is operating for us who are believing is the same power that worked in Christ when He was among the dead. It raised and exalted Him. It will raise and exalt us.

**AND SEATING HIM IN HIS RIGHT** - This is what the Greek says, and this should be believed, not rewritten, as many are inclined to do. When David was crowned king of Israel, he was seated in his right. He was given that which belonged to him by divine appointment. After being put to death by men, *Jesus* Christ was raised from among the dead and was seated in His right, that which belonged to Him by divine appointment.

**AMONG THE MOST EXALTED** - This is the second occurrence of the phrase *en tois epouraniois* which was examined in detail in 1:3.

### **EPHESIANS 1:21**

**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: KJV.**

**Up over every sovereignty and authority and power and lordship, even every name that is named, not only in this eon, but also in that to come, TRV.**

**UP OVER** - The word *huperano* can mean "up over" or "over above" but it cannot mean "far above." This word is found in Heb. 9:5 where it is used of the position of the cherubim in relationship to the mercy seat. Quite a bit of doctrine is being built upon this mistranslation, which in the end can only result in workmen who will need to be ashamed.

**EVERY** - the words that follow this are each in the singular number, with "every" expressed or understood: every sovereignty, every authority, every power, every lordship, every name. If these were plural we would need to say "all" We say "every automobile" but cannot say "all automobile", unless we are using it as an adjective, and then it must take a plural noun - as "all automobile mechanics."

**SOVEREIGNTY** - The Greek word is *arche*, which means a first one, a leader. *Out* of 58 occurrences in the N.T. it is translated "beginning" 40 times, "principality" 8, "corner" 2, "first" 2, and in six miscellaneous ways.

**AND AUTHORITY** - The Greek here is *exousia*, which literally means delegated authority.

**AND POWER** - The word here is *dunamis*, from which we get our word dynamite.

**AND LORDSHIP** - The word here is *kuriotes*, from *kurios* meaning Lord.

These words refer to the most exalted ones among the angelic hosts, yet Christ is rightfully seated over above all of them. When the kingdom of God is a reality upon the earth there will be men who can rightfully be designated by these descriptive titles. Yet Christ will be supreme over everyone of these.

**EVEN EVERY NAME THAT IS NAMED** - This phrase has a collective and summary force here which might be expressed by reading it as follows: "and, in a word, every name that is named."

**NOT ONLY IN THIS EON** - In any organizational chart depicting the divine order for this eon the name of Christ would have to be at the top, over and above all. He makes all the exalted ones what they are by flowing out to them, giving them of Himself. To Him belongs the preeminence.

**BUT ALSO IN THAT TO COME** - What else can this be but the kingdom of God. The coming eon is a new order, a system founded by God.

### **EPHESIANS 1:22, 23**

**And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all. KJV.**

**And subordinates all under His feet, and constitutes Him head over all, to the outcalled which is His body, the complement of the One filling all these in all ways; TRV.**

**AND SUBORDINATES ALL** - the word *hupotasso* is not easy to express in English. Most translators use "put under" or "subject" I have used "subordinate" in order to express the idea of setting in order underneath. The "all" here refers to the sovereignties, authorities, powers and lordships just mentioned. These are set in order underneath the Christ.

**UNDER HIS FEET** - This denotes subjection and makes the larger phrase to say they are set in order underneath Him and are subject to Him.

**AND CONSTITUTES HIM** - This word means "give", but has been translated "constitute" since this is what happens when one is given an office. We take an ordinary citizen, elect him to the office of governor, and thus we have constituted or created a Governor. We will meet up with this again in Eph. 4:11.

**HEAD OVER ALL** - The basis idea in the word "head" is that of an outflowing source which is above. This is what makes possible *its* manifold uses. Our commonest use *is* to denote the upper division of the human body. We also use it as the seat and source of **the** intellect and the understanding, of the place of leadership, of the source or beginning as of a stream. Jesus Christ ascended over and above all of the exalted ones and has been seated there so that He might be an outflowing source.

**TO THE OUTCALLED** - The Greek word *ekklesia* is formed from *ek* (out) and *kaleo* (to call). We have already seen in our examination of verse 18 that *kaleo* does not always mean to invite or bid, and that it more often means to position, to designate, to name. In Scripture the word *ekklesia* is used to denote one who has a position which is out of another. The position or power must be inherent in the one who gives it. For example, Jesus Christ is the Apostle (Heb. 3:1); therefore, when He appointed apostles, He gave them a position out of Himself. Thus the twelve became His out-positioned ones. This term can be used collectively to signify all who have official positions. The *ekklesia* of the New Testament is in no way related to the institutions commonly called "churches." If the word *ekklesia* means little or nothing, then we can all claim to be outcalled. But if this word has meaning, we had better make sure that we have authoritative positions out of Christ before we make such a claim. My only claim is that I am a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, a sinner saved by grace.

**WHICH IS HIS BODY** - The basic meaning of the English word *body* is organized substance. Out of this basic meaning comes many uses and other derived meanings. If wool is taken and organized into cloth then we speak of the body of that cloth. If oil and pigments are taken and organized into paint then we can speak of the body of that paint. The word *body* has some twenty different meanings in English, all of which come out of its basic meaning of organized substance. The material used and the method of organization determines what the body will be. If a hundred qualified men (senators) are taken and organized then the result will be that body known as the United States Senate.

In speaking to the outcalled of God in Corinth, Paul declared, "Now you are Christ's body." God had given everyone of them a position out of Jesus Christ - some were apostles, some were prophets, others were teachers, powers, healers, helpers, pilots and speakers of languages. These men partook of the very substance of Christ, as He was all of these before them. When organized or merged together by the Holy Spirit they became the organized substance, or simply, the body of Christ. He is the source over all to the outcalled (collectively), which is His body.

**THE COMPLEMENT** - The outcalled are necessary to Jesus Christ in order to accomplish a certain purpose, even as the crew is essential to an ocean liner if it ever sails the seas. The Greek word *pleroma* was used of the officers and men who made up the personnel of a ship.

**OF THE ONE** - That is, Jesus Christ.

**FILLING ALL THESE** - It is the outcalled who are filled. The Greek is *ta panta*. See notes on 1:10.

**IN ALL WAYS;** - That is, in all ways that are essential to their being and service. We will lack nothing that is vital to the position we will fill and the services we will perform. The semicolon at the end of this verse is not a mistake. The chapter break comes in the middle of a sentence.

**(To Be Continued, Vol. XVII, No. 2)**

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## ***THE EDITOR TO HIS FRIENDS***

\*\*\*\*It is my feeling that when Jesus Christ assumes sovereignty over the earth and the kingdom of God becomes a reality, one of the first directives that will come from heaven is that all men should slow down and take it easier. Of course this is only my feeling in regard to this, and it may not be so. However, I am sure that the word will come for all to "Be still, and know that I am God" (Psa. 46:10). This will be good, inasmuch as the hectic pace at which most men must go today is not conducive to spiritual growth and development. "Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while," were the words of the Lord Jesus to His disciples, "for there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat" (Mark 6:31). Mrs. Sellers and I were thankful that we had an opportunity to drop everything for three weeks when on December 23 we boarded the plane for the Hawaiian Islands. We traveled with and were the guests of Frank and Edna Arvidson, their daughter, Fay, and their son, Fred. It was a pleasant time of renewing and refreshment, causing us to say with the Psalmist: "The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places" (16:6).

\*\*\*\*It has been a year since we sent out an issue of THE WORD OF TRUTH, a fact that has disturbed many of our friends, who wonder why no magazine has come to them. We can assure them that they have missed no issues and their names have not been removed from our lists. Much of the Editor's time during the past several years has been spent on subjects and manuscripts that do not fit in very well as articles for the magazine. These, we hope, will be published as pamphlets. There are so many demands made on the Editor's time that as a rule he is forced to do that which cries out the loudest for attention.

\*\*\*\*In looking back over the past year we can say it has been very good for us. The usual Spring Conference Tour was made in the seven week period between March 17 and May 3. and the Fall Conference Tour in the eleven weeks between August 24 and November 9. We are now planning for the Spring Tour of 1966.

**End Vol. XVII, No. 1**