

THE WORD OF TRUTH

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THE KINGDOM EON

The importance of possessing accurate, exact and complete truth concerning the millennial kingdom cannot be overemphasized. We hear much, and rightly so, of kingdom truth and of the gospel of the kingdom, we make comparisons and contrasts and insist upon the distinction that exists between church truth and kingdom truth. The greater part of the Bible, at least fifty of the sixty-six books are related to God's purposes concerning the kingdom. Even though we may not be the kingdom people, and even though the kingdom is not our hope, yet, we must possess exact and accurate knowledge concerning it if we are to understand and appreciate the Word of God. He who falls short of such knowledge concerning the kingdom body of truth also falls short of being an approved workman. The fatal mixing of church and kingdom truths has come from a lack of exact knowledge concerning both. We must not only know, but we must be moved and molded by the exact and accurate words of revelation. In this series of articles it is our desire to offer a key which if the student will use, he will find that he will make great and rapid strides in the accurate truth of the kingdom, and he will also find that hundreds of difficult and obscure passages will become simple and understandable.

A Period of Time

One of the simplest, yet one of the most important facts to remember concerning the kingdom is that it is a period of time. In the Old Testament, and in the greater part of the New Testament it is an indefinite period, for it is not until the book of Revelation is reached that we discover that the kingdom period of time is exactly one thousand years in duration (**Archiver: Sellers not yet come to understand the Premillennial Kingdom of God**). It is from this fact that the kingdom gets its popular name of the Millennium. The word *millennium* is not found in the Scriptures. There are those who strongly object to its use and they make much of the fact that the word is not found in the Word of God. However, the word *millennium* is not misleading, therefore, it is an apt title. The word comes from the Latin *mille*, which means thousand and *annus*, which means year. The word may not be found in the Scriptures, but the truth expressed by it is certainly there. See Rev. 20:2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7.

The student who examines carefully all that the Scriptures reveal concerning the kingdom will in due time discover that he is lacking English words to express the exact truths that he finds in the Hebrew and Greek of the Bible. If he tries to teach the truth to others he will struggle in vain because of the lack of familiar words to express the truth that he has found in the Word of God. At no point will he feel more handicapped than when he tries to set forth the truth related to the Hebrew word *olam* and the Greek word *aion*; words that occur repeatedly in connection with kingdom truth. *Olam*, in the *King James Version*, is usually translated ever, everlasting, evermore, perpetual or old. *Aion* is usually translated world or ever, while the adjective *aionios* is usually translated eternal or everlasting.

When we read of "the everlasting hills" in Genesis 42:26 we at once feel the need of some word that expresses more exactly the truth of the Hebrew word *olam*. Again we read the words of God to Abraham when he said:

**"For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it and to thy seed forever."
Gen. 13:15.**

As this passage stands it expressly declares that God gave the land that Abraham viewed to him and to his descendants for ever. Biblical history confirms the fact that they were given the land that they possessed it for many years, but they were dispossessed. We know that Abraham's seed do not possess the land today, and that they have not possessed it for more than two thousand years. Furthermore, we know that when the land is given to them under this promise they possess it for one thousand years, after which, this land with the rest of the earth passes away to make way for the new earth. Therefore, it is evident that the words *for ever* do not express, in this case, the true meaning of the word *olam*. This causes us to desire to discover a word that does express the truth.

If this were the only instance, little attention would need to be paid to it, but since the word *olam* appears over four hundred times, and most of these occurrences are related to the kingdom, the necessity of discovering its true meaning cannot be ignored.

In the New Testament we find the word *aion* (which is identical with *olam*) used over and over again in connection with kingdom truth. This word is usually translated *ever* or *world*, while the adjective (*aionios*) is usually translated *eternal*. We read of "the end of the *aion*" in Matt. 24:3, "this present evil *aion*" in Gal. 1:4, "the *aion* to come" in Mark

10:30. In reading of these things we naturally long for a word that will readily express these great truths.

Most expositors are agreed that *aion* and *olam* can and do mean a *period of time*, however, most of them refuse to go all the way with this admission. When they state this, they are stating the truth, but they refuse to follow this truth out to all its conclusions and accept all its consequences. When it is followed out it throws light on so many obscure and difficult passages that the student will praise God for having given him this key to so much truth.

In the passages to which we have referred it is evident that *aion* and *olam* mean a certain period, therefore a period of time. In fact the words "period of time" could be used as a translation. Thus, we could say that God gave the land to Abraham for a certain period of time. Since that period has not yet arrived, his seed do not now possess the land. Also, we can speak of the end of a period of time, the present evil period of time, the period of time to come. But these expressions are awkward, and there is no need in this case to translate the word *aion* (or *olam*) with a phrase, for there are at least three good words in English that mean a period of time, and we should have no trouble in selecting one of them to express the truth. They are the words *age*, *era* and *eon*. Reference to the dictionary will demonstrate that all these words speak of a period of time. Let us examine them and see which is the best suited for our purpose.

The word *age* seems to be the very word, for it simplifies matters greatly to say that God gave the land to Abraham's seed for the age, also to speak of the end of the age, the present evil age, or the age to come. Many translators and expositors have used the word *age* to express the divine meaning of *aion* and *Olam*. We find no fault with this for the word *age* means a period of time. But while the word *age* is a good translation of *aion* yet it proves unsatisfactory for it has no adjective that is cognate with it. The same is true of the word *era*. We can express singular and plural with these words but we cannot express the adjective form. We never say *ageian* or *eraian*, for there are no such words.

To make this plain, consider the following: The word *millennium* is a noun and it can be singular or plural, that is, millennium or millenniums. We also have an adjective which is related to these words so we can bring the whole family together- millennium, millenniums or millennial. We cannot do this with the word *age* or *era* for they have no adjective. To illustrate this - we speak of that glorious period yet to come upon the earth as the millennium. Therefore when we desire to speak of the King of that period we can say "the millennial king," or in speaking of the earth as "the millennial earth".

The Greek- speaking Hebrew would call that glorious period the *aion*; and speak of the *aionios* temple, meaning the temple in that *aion*; the *aionios* King, meaning the King of that *aion*; the *aionos* God, meaning the God that *aion*; and *aionios* life, meaning the life enjoyed in that *aion*.

To sum up, we would say that in order to express the truth that is set forth by the Hebrew *olam* and the Greek *aion*, we must find a word in English which is a noun designating a period of time, and which has an adjective that is cognate with it. The words are available, they have good dictionary standing, and they come from the very Greek words that they represent. The words are EON (singular), EONS (plural) and the adjective EONIAN. **This is not translation, it is transliteration**, for the Greek words are

carried over and Englished so that they sound natural to our ear. We will use these words again and again in setting forth the truth of the Kingdom.

If any of our readers think that all this is wasted time, we desire to say that we have little respect for those who have learned many new words so that they can discuss intelligently the present war, yet shrink back in fear from learning a few new words so that they can understand better the things of God. If the world can learn to use and understand the word *blitzkreig* in a few months, then God's people should not hesitate to learn words that are not new if they help to express and to understand better the things of God.

More Than One Eon

One of the phenomena of the Word of God is that it speaks of eon, eons, eon of the eon, eon of the eons, and eons of the eons. If these have no meaning, then there is no such thing as verbal inspiration. It is our duty to labor with these until we enter into the meaning. If it seems too deep, never fear, the Spirit searches out the deep things of God and He will lead the way if we desire to follow. They are too deep for us, but not too deep for the Spirit.

It is evident that the Word of God reveals a number of eons. The Scriptures speak of the present evil eon, and this signifies that there was a past evil eon. It speaks of the eon to come (Mark 10:30) also of eons to come. We have been saved so that in the eons to come God might show the exceeding riches of His grace. (Eph.2:7).

The word of God divides all time, past and future, into eons. It is not our present purpose to outline the eons, but we do desire to say that the present evil eon (Gal. 1:4) probably began with the flood.. The word *probably* is used here as the matter is still open to revision if any have found further light than this in the Word of God. The present evil eon will continue right through the great tribulation and will close when the kingdom eon begins. The kingdom eon continues for one thousand years, after which comes the eon of the new heavens and the new earth. The chief characteristic of the present eon is evil, the chief characteristic of the kingdom eon will be righteousness, and the chief characteristic of the new heaven and the new earth will be perfection.

The Bible is the history of the eons. The opening words of the Bible speak of the beginning of the eons, and the final words reveal the glory of the last great eon. God's revelation is confined to the eons for the greater part. There are several references to things that took place before the beginning of the eons, but we hold that not one line of Scripture goes beyond the eon of the new heavens and the new earth.

The Hebrew recognized more than one eon, but there was one eon in which all his interest and hope centered. This was the eon of Israel's glory and blessing, therefore Israel's eon. Therefore when he spoke of "the eon" he did not need to explain. Everyone knew that he meant Israel's eon, the kingdom eon. It is just as men today know what book we mean when we say "the Book". The Hebrew used the term "the eon" and it was well established just what he meant.

With these thoughts before us we are ready to begin our examination of those Scriptures that reveal the truth of the kingdom eon. As our study progresses the student will discover that we are learning more than kingdom truth, for we will be learning the truth of the eons

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SHALL WE GO ON

The Lord Jesus charged that the lawyers had taken away the key of knowledge. They did not enter in themselves and those who were entering in they hindered. The key to knowledge then was the Word of God and that is the key of knowledge now. There is no gift of knowledge today, therefore, the only way the Word of God can be appropriated is by earnest and honest study. Christendom has developed hundreds of ways of handling and using the Bible, but none of these can be dignified by the name of study. They use parts for texts; they print parts on wall mottoes; they print promises on slips of paper, roll them up and place them in a box and then draw them out to see what they get.

In many circles true study is frowned upon if not condemned. It has been suggested that there is danger in knowing the Bible. When one begins to learn he is informed that a little learning is a dangerous thing, therefore the safe course is to remain in total ignorance. Ministers inform their people that they will hand them down what they are to believe, and the people prefer to have it that way.

If we admit that it is the will of God that we should grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, then we should settle upon the course that is essential if we grow in knowledge; and we should be willing to do' everything that will cause us to grow in grace and knowledge, and be willing to remove every obstacle that stands in the road of such growth.

There is nothing in the Word of God that is not in some way, however remote, related to the Lord Jesus. The Scriptures testify of Him, and if we would grow in the knowledge of Him we must not hesitate to grow in knowledge in every subject that is dealt with in the Word of God.

If Christians would obey the command to examine themselves, honesty would force most of them to admit that they really know nothing of the Word of God that is in any way beyond what they learned in childhood. Up to a certain age a child learns naturally, that is, they learn without effort just from observation and hearing. This process ceases early in life and from that time they learn only by effort and diligence. The greater the subject the more effort required to learn it.

The knowledge of most Christians is limited to the things gained in childhood, They know that there is a God, that He is in heaven, that He made the world, that Jesus Christ is His Son and that He died upon the Cross. These things, known to every child that spends a few months in a Sunday School, are about the total knowledge possessed by many professing Christians who have been Christians for many years. The most amazing thing about them is their smug assurance that they are in complete possession of the full truth of God even though their knowledge does not go beyond the things learned in childhood and known by the men of the world.

Let us enforce this by supposing the following conversation between one whom we will call A and another called B.

A. I understand that you are a Christian.

B. That is right, I am a Christian.

A. I suppose then that you are a member of some Church.

B. Yes, I am.

A. I judge, then, that as a Christian and a church member that you have well established and definite beliefs on most subjects dealt with in the Bible.

B. Yes, I do.

A. I suppose that you have formed certain convictions in regard to God and Christ, creation, the fall and salvation.

B. Yes, my beliefs on these are well fixed.

A. I judge, too, that you have definite convictions concerning such things as death, resurrection and future punishment.

B. I do, I believe that at death the saved go into the presence of the Lord and the lost go to be punished. I believe in eternal conscious punishment and I believe in the resurrection of the body.

A. Are you a student of the Word of God?

B. Well, I would hesitate to say that I am a student. I am a busy man, you know, and I must leave most of that to my pastor.

A. Just how much have you studied the Bible?

B. Well, as a child I read it through once to get a prize, and since professing faith in Christ I have read some parts, but I find it very difficult to understand. I hope some day to find time to make a more definite study.

A. In view of the fact that you frankly admit you have never studied the Bible, will you tell me just where you got the truth that forms your beliefs? .

B. From the Bible, of course.

A. But you have never studied the Bible.

B. Well, other men have studied it, and I have accepted the results of their studies.

A. Would you believe just the same concerning Biblical subjects if you had done your own studying?

B. Just what do you mean?

A. Take for example your beliefs on death and future punishment. Are you able to say that you would still believe concerning these subjects just as you do now, if you were to make a careful study and examination of all that the Bible reveals concerning these things?

B. No, I would not, for to say that I would still believe the same would be to claim that I could learn nothing by studying the Word of God.

A. Then, to tell the truth, what you call your beliefs are really only your opinions.

B. I guess you are right. I am convinced that I need to become a personal student of the Word of God.

This conversation is not entirely imaginary as it is based upon an actual experience. We are amazed to find some who are confident that they are in possession of the full truth concerning man's nature and man's destiny, yet they have never studied it and do not believe that it should be studied. Their letters reveal strong opinions with proof texts for support, but they do not reveal anything that would cause us to think that they know anymore about man's nature and destiny than does the man of the world who never opens a Bible.

We believe that one of the greatest obstacles that stands in the way of growth in knowledge is the idea held by most Christians that they have entered the truth concerning man's destiny without ever studying the subject. They admit their ignorance of the Bible, but claim full knowledge of one of its greatest subjects. They claim to possess the truth apart from knowing the Word, which is truth.

I am able to say that next to recognizing the need for right division of the Word, the greatest factor in making the Word of God an open book was entering into the Biblical answer to the questions of man's nature and man's destiny. The great blessing it has been in my own life and experience has made me anxious to lead others into the study.

If the believer will refer to the encyclopedia he can discover just where and how such valuable things as radium, platinum and diamonds are obtained. But he cannot find there just how or where truth is obtained. Every professing Christian should ask themselves just how and where truth is obtained. It will greatly simplify things when this is settled once and for all.

We hold that truth is obtained from the Word of God, and that it becomes our possession through study that is directed by the Holy Spirit. We are sure every reader will agree with this. Therefore, having answered this we should take up the things one by one that we believe to be the truth and ask ourselves if these have been obtained by the process by which truth is secured. If not, then how can we say that these are the truths of God. And we must remember that having an opinion and a passage of Scripture that seems to support it does not signify that we have obtained these things by the process by which truth is found.

Our friends must realize their own responsibility in the work of gaining and entering into the truth. We do not ask anyone to quickly throw overboard without the slightest exercise of heart and conscience things, which they have long held and believed to be the truth. We never let go of a thing that we have long believed until patient investigation had led us to see our error. We cannot give up the old and accept the new without a deep mental and spiritual struggle. Neither do we ask others to do it. Ten or twenty years will not be too much time to spend in forming definite Scriptural convictions concerning man's nature and man's destiny.

We have seen a number of people abandon their long held belief in eternal conscious torment and jump all the way over to universal reconciliation in one great leap. Now when they try to tell us of their great faith in the ultimate reconciliation of all men, angels and devils, and quote their carefully selected passages to prove it, we know that they never gave the time or underwent the exercise of heart and mind that is essential to grapple with the profound truth of man's destiny. They have leaped from one error to another.

In this free country we are not required to have a definite belief on any subject. Therefore, it is sufficient for the man of God to simply say that he is studying the subject, or, that his investigations are not yet complete, when asked about his beliefs on certain subjects. We can leap from one opinion to another, but we cannot leap from an opinion to the truth of God. We must not expect to pick up the truth of God as quickly as we picked up our opinions.

We well realize that great fear, and sometimes anger, is excited in the minds of many good people by the reinvestigation of any doctrine that has been generally accepted and believed. This must be borne with, but it cannot stop our search for the truth. When unaccustomed light is presented to unprepared eyes it is often blinding before it becomes helpful. If they see at all, they see men as trees walking. Time alone will cause them to see the truth in its true form. Our answer to the question that forms the title of this article is that we must and shall go on by His grace. The whole subject of man's nature and destiny must be reinvestigated. It will not be hindered by the convenient but uncharitable cries of heresy. Neither shall it be stopped by fear of all the imaginary perils that lurk upon the way. God has spoken and it is the duty of every Christian to discover what He has said. "With Moses of old we would say:

"What man is there that is fearful and fainthearted? Let him go and return unto his house, lest his brethren's heart faint as well as his heart." Deu. 20:8.

THE END

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THE UNFOLDING OF THE SECRET

(Continued from Vol. IV, No. 2)

At this point in our studies we consider the unfolding of the secret in the Colossian and Ephesian epistles. Those who desire the greatest possible benefit from these studies will do well to go back and read again the six previous articles that have appeared on this subject. This will provide a definite connection between what has already been said, and that which shall be set forth in connection with these two epistles.

No full understanding of the seven last epistles of Paul will ever be possible until due consideration is given to the character of the period in which they were written. The best understanding of this period can be gained by full recognition of the fact that it was, in the truest sense of the term, a *transition period*. It is the real transition period of Bible history. There was never a period like it before, and, since the future is regulated by prophecy, there will never be another like it.

We have often insisted upon the need of recognizing the peculiar character of the Acts period. Only by so doing can we ever understand the epistles written during that time. We now insist just as strongly upon the necessity of recognizing the peculiar character of the opening years of God's present administration, the administration of the secret. This is absolutely essential to any accurate understanding of the seven last epistles of Paul.

This transition period began with Paul's pronouncement in Acts 28:28, "the salvation of God is sent to the Gentiles," and it ended with the revelation of truth set forth in 2 Timothy. Most chronologies would show this period to have covered six or seven years, but we know of nothing in the Word or out of the Word upon which any dates can be established. Some teachers have felt that this transitional period began with Acts 28:28 and that it ended with the destruction of Jerusalem. This theory makes it to begin with something that is recorded in the Word, and makes it to end with an event that is not recorded in the Word of God. If this theory be true, then the truth can be known only by those who know history. It appears to be much safer to begin this period with Paul's declaration at Acts 28:28 and end it with his final word at 2 Tim. 4:22.

Many students of the Word have attempted to make the entire period covered by the book of Acts a transitional period, but it is no more transitional than any other well defined period that may be selected from the call of Abraham to Acts 28:28. The real transitional period of the Bible is that short period between the setting aside of Israel at Acts 28:28 and that point at the close of 2 Timothy where the Church which is His body is left to stand alone upon the naked Word of God. In that period God is closing out one work and beginning a new work. While the old work is being closed out and the new work is being established we discover many things revealed in the seven last epistles of Paul that do not abide for they are related to the transition. Some of these things which were of transitory nature may have been related to the closing out of the former work, as were the elders and deacons referred to in 1 Timothy, Titus and Philippians; or they may have been related to the bringing in and establishing of the new work, as were the gifted apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers spoken of in Ephesians 4:11. Let us remember that a scaffolding is required in erecting a building, also in taking it down, but

the scaffolding does not remain when the purpose is complete. Even so it is with the closing out of the old work and the bringing of the new work in the transition period that began at Acts 28:28.

If the reader will refer again to the chart, illustrating these studies, which was furnished with the second article in this series, he will see that we have set forth 1 *Timothy*, Titus and Philippians as having been written to the members of the Church of God after Acts 28:28. The final word given to this group is found in the Philippian epistle. There Paul set forth the truth that God was temporarily discontinuing the good work that he began on the day of Pentecost. In view of this Paul set forth God's desire for them by relating his own experiences and purposes. He urged them to stand as a unit in imitating him. If they did this they would have been turning their backs upon their highly prized position as members of the Church of God and setting their faces toward obtaining a new position, which Paul describes as a prize. This prize was a position in the "high calling," even the Church, which is His body.

It will also be noted on the chart that we have placed Colossians, Ephesians and 2 Timothy together as having been written to the members of the Church, which is His body. This is true. Yet, we must recognize the distinctive character and purpose of each of these three epistles. This is especially true of Colossians. We now examine, ever keeping in mind that the unfolding or revelation of the secret is a progressive revelation.

The Colossian Epistle

Teaching from the Colossian epistle is a very simple matter. In fact, we do not hesitate to say that it is the easiest book *from* which to teach of all sixty-six in the Bible. Every clause from the introduction to the conclusion is thought provoking and pregnant with suggestions of truth. The teacher of this epistle can leap from one mountain peak to another, and from these high points wax eloquent about the beauty as it unfolds before the eyes. But such teachers use Colossians only as a book of texts in which every passage becomes the starting point of a message. They are teaching *from* the epistle, but they are not teaching **the** epistle. Between every two mountain peaks there are difficult valleys which must be carefully explored and mapped before we can ever enter into the message of this epistle. These valleys are as much a part of the book as are the peaks. Therefore, when the book is considered as a whole, Colossians is the most difficult and obscure of all of Paul's epistles - very easy to teach *from*, but extremely difficult to teach.

Our present task is not to write an exposition of Colossians, for our purpose is to suggest a method of treatment, which will cause the message of this book to unfold for those who would study it in detail. From what we have already set forth in these studies, let us see if we can, as far as possible, reconstruct the situation that existed when the Colossian epistle was written.

At Acts 28:28 there were two distinct groups of believers, Jews, which believed and Gentiles, which believed. These had been called as such by God, and they were required by Him to remain in these callings and to walk as they were called (1 Cor. 17:17-24). These two groups remained in existence after Acts 28:28 although God never added any

to their ranks after that time. After Acts 28:28 God began to save men and call them in the Church, which is His body. Therefore, when Colossians was written we find the following God-created classes in existence:

1. The Circumcision saints-Jews that believed.
2. The Uncircumcision saints-Gentiles that believed.
3. The Out-calling (church) which is His body.

At that time, the Church, which is His body was being formed out of two distinct classes.

(1) Those saved after Acts 28:28 and called as members of the Church, which is His body.

(2) Those who had been saved before Acts 28:28 and called by God as members of the Church of God, but who had been transferred by God in response to their faith in believing and accepting the conditions of His latest and final revelation-the secret.

We must not fail to recognize that the Circumcision and Uncircumcision saints lived in a time when the Word of God was not yet full and every fresh revelation demanded their wholehearted acceptance and faith. It is evident that if they did believe all the Word that had been given up *to* a certain time, and then failed to believe the revelation that completed the Word of God, they were unbelieving or unfaithful *to* that extent. The truth of the secret completed the Word of God, and it was the final revelation that God's saints were ever required *to* accept as an addition *to* the Word of God. If they failed *to* do it, *to* that extent they were unfaithful. This truth is illuminated by the salutation of Colossians.

1:1-2. A number of expositors have noticed that two classes are addressed in this epistle, the saints and the faithful brethren. They have deduced from this that all saints may not be faithful. This is true it IS true today and it was true then, only it was a far *more* serious matter then than it can ever be today, for in that day it vitally concerned an attitude toward a truth that God desired *to* make known *to* His saints. A word for word literal translation of the Greek in **Colossians 2:2** would be as follows:

"To the in Colosse saints and believing brothers in Christ"

All that is needed *to* make this good English is *to* transfer the words "in Colosse" *to* the end of the sentence. When this is done it becomes crystal clear that two classes were being lovingly and tenderly saluted in the opening words of this epistle. *No* word of rebuke' intended, but it was up *to* them to classify themselves as just saints or as saints who were believing brethren.

Therefore Colossians is a general epistle, for the salutation is broad enough *to* take in (1) the Circumcision and Uncircumcision saints who have *not* yet attained the high calling, (2) those who have attained it, (3) also those who were saved and called in it. The members of the first group are addressed as saints, and they are in the exact position that Paul was in Philippians 3. They have rejected the truth of the high calling, but they have not yet attained *to* it. The second and third groups are called "believing brothers", and they are in the same position Paul was when he wrote Colossians and Ephesians they are members of the out-calling which is His body.

There is *no* other salutation that compares with this in all of Paul's epistles. And since these salutations are part of the God breathed word, their full significance must be allowed.

In the Colossi an epistle Paul deals very tenderly with those saints who have not yet believed and acted upon God's final revelation. His attitude is one of great concern and he does not at that time consider their inability *to* receive it as being equal *to* rejection of it. His attitude is that he soon expects them *to* lay hold of it, so he writes *to* help them, for he desires to present them complete in Christ Jesus. In this epistle we have a clear example of the *readjustment* ministry, which we will expound *more* fully in connection with Ephesians.

At no time, in Colossians, does Paul ever place those whom he addresses in the new out-calling, neither does he ever call them members of the Church which is His body as he does so positively in Ephesians. When the epistle deals with God or Christ it is definite and positive, when it deals with the individual it is indefinite.

But, someone may insist, the salutation of Ephesians is practically the same as Colossians. This is not true, for the salutation of Ephesians is unique, and its unique character clearly demonstrates the force of the Colossian salutation. A word for word literal translation of **Ephesians 1:1** would be: **"To the saints, the ones being in Ephesus and believing in Christ."**

If any object to the words "in Ephesus" they can eliminate them and then it will read, "To the saints, the ones being in and believing in Christ" This is stronger, however, we are convinced that the words "in Ephesus" belong there so we do not eliminate them.

When these two salutations are compared they reveal that Colossians is a general epistle having a message for every saint in that transition period, but written to them with the understanding that they are desirous of going on to the high calling. The epistle is full of the very highest truth, but this truth is never enforced as being true of all to whom this epistle was addressed. It may have been true of them, or it may not have been true.

Ephesians is a specific epistle, addressed to one group of saints in the transition period. The truth revealed in Ephesians is enforced as being true of everyone to whom it is addressed. For example, see Ephesians 5:30. .

1:3-8. Paul's heart abounded with thanksgiving and prayer for them when he heard of their faith in the Lord Jesus and their love for all the saints. Their faith in Christ and their love for the saints was the result of their intense expectation in regard to their hope in the heavens. This was the exact truth. Paul was referring to their walk from the day of their salvation. A believer's hope should always be manifested in his walk. The heavenly hope of these saints had been manifested in intense faith and love. Paul used this as a starting point to reveal a super-heavenly hope and with it a superheavenly walk. This passage does not express our hope. Our hope is centered far above all that is of the heavens. The statement here is related to the truth, which they had heard before, and upon which they had faithfully acted.

1:9-14. Paul's prayer was related to their needs in view of the new truth that God had revealed. He prayed that they should be filled with the realization of His will Think what it would mean today if we should be suddenly filled with the complete realization of

God's will for us. Paul desired that this realization should be in all wisdom and spiritual understanding, that they walk worthily of the Lord, being fruitful in every good work, growing in the realization God. He puts great stress upon what they have in Christ and this leads to a statement concerning the person and work of Christ.

1:15-19. Christ was the visible representation of the invisible God, He was of 'earlier birth than anything that is created. In Him were created the all things that are in the heavens and on the earth, the visible and the invisible, thrones, dominions, sovereignties or powers - all were created and exist through and for Him. He is before all, and the all things have their cohesion in Him. And beyond all this is His greatest glory, He is the Head of the Body, the Church.

1:20-23. In connection with this passage we must say that our earnest desire for many capable teachers is that they cease reading into this portion their doctrine of universal reconciliation, and quit using it as a buttress for that teaching. We are charged with refusing to believe God because we refuse to believe that their conceptions are taught in this passage. We refuse their judgment of us, and we have no fear of the taunts of those who charge us with unbelief because we refuse to see their viewpoint. This passage does not deal with the universe.

In this passage verse 23 suggests a danger, so we also find a warning. The danger was that some of the saints, discouraged because of the new and exceedingly high goal set before them, might attempt to retreat all the way back to Judaism or heathenism. Whether they go on to the high calling or not, they must continue in the faith grounded and settled.

1:24. The sufferings of Christ made possible the saving and calling of the Church, which is His body. Someone else had to suffer to make it known, and Paul chose to do so.

1:25-26. To Paul had been granted the stewardship of completing the Word of God. The truth that completes it is the secret. It is the truth that God would make known to His saints.

1:27-29. The central truth of the secret is Christ among the Gentiles. This was not true before Acts 28:28. It is true now. The day will yet come when this will be reversed and the work of Christ will again center in Israel and flow out to the Gentiles. Prophecy will be searched in vain for a single hint that the salvation of God and the Christ of God would be centered among the Gentiles as it has been for almost two thousand years. This was a secret hid in God, and it was a very bitter truth for the Circumcision believers to accept.

2:1-3. Paul spoke of a tremendous struggle that he was undergoing in their behalf, He desired that their hearts should be consoled, that they shall be united in love and enjoy all the riches of the assurance of understanding until at last they come into the full and accurate knowledge of the secret of the God and Father of Christ. In Christ are stored all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

2:4-7. These words were spoken lest they should be led astray by persuasive words. Paul told them that though he was absent from them in body, *yet* in spirit he was with them and he delighted in their order and the steadfastness of their faith in Christ.

2:8-15. He warned them against those who would spoil them with philosophies and idle fancies, in harmony with human traditions and the world's crude notions but not in

harmony with Christ. This statement leads to another glorious outburst concerning the person and work of Christ.

In Christ the very fullness of God's nature resides, and we are complete in Him. He is the Head of every sovereignty and authority. In Him we have been circumcised in a unique circumcision not made with hands. In Him we have a unique baptism and a unique resurrection. None *of* these are literal, for they are all in Him.

2:16-19. Their conformity to the latest revelation *of* God was bound to bring the most severe censure from those who did not know the truth. This is still true today. Those who do not know the truth *of* the secret censure us because we do not walk in accord with their ignorant conceptions. Paul warned them not to permit any man to sit in judgment upon them as to eating, drinking, *or* in regard to new moons, festivals or sabbaths. They were urged to let no one defraud them of their prize by leading them into some mock humility, or by the worship of angels, or by following some vision that they claim they have seen. Those who indulge in such things do not highly regard the Head. Any attempt to improve *our* position before God by such means is a denial of our completeness in Him.

2:20-23. Paul called for a walk in harmony with the truth of their identification with Christ. If they had died with Christ from the elements of the world, why as though they were a part of the world are they still subject to decrees, wherein some man ordains that they are not to be touching, tasting *or* handling. Such rules give an appearance of wisdom in self-imposed worship, but they are not of any value in combating the flesh.

3:1-4. The first word of this passage is important. It is the interrogative particle *if*. By its use Paul assumes the question to be answered in the affirmative if the conditions have been met. The next word *of* great importance is the word *risen*. It IS rough and ready reckoning if we make this to refer to the literal resurrection of Christ from the dead. The Greek word, which is here translated risen {*sunegeiro*, a compound of *sun* and *egeiro*} can mean to advance in position *or* rank or to go on to greater honors. When the Captain is made a General he has *risen* in rank and honor. In the New Testament it is used many times where it can have no connection with being raised from the dead. See Matt. 11:11, 12:11, 24:11, 24:24, Luke 7:16, John 7:52, Acts 13:22.

In Hebrews 4:14, we read that Christ as the great high priest passed into the heavens. In Ephesians 4:8 we read of Christ ascending on high. The superficial student would probably say at once that "the heavens" and "on high" are one and the same, but those who honor the verbal inspiration of God's Word will not decide this too hastily. We who have learned from the Word that there is a sphere that is higher than the heavens are prone to believe that when Christ ascended from the earth He went into the heavens where He was seated on the rights of God as the King and Priest after the order of Melchisedec. Then, at that point marked by Paul's declaration in Acts 28:28 he ascended on high where He was seated on the right of God as Head of the Church which is His body. By the word *if* Paul puts them to the test. They had known Christ and been identified with Him as Savior, Priest, Messiah and King. Have they advanced with Him and are they now identified with Him in His position as Head? If so, then let them walk accordingly and seek those blessings that are above, where Christ is seated on the right of God. Their affections are to be on things above, not on things of the earth.

The promise that the meek shall inherit the earth would certainly set a man's affections on the things of the earth. The hope of ruling over even one city would link a man's hope with the things of the earth. In the Colossi an epistle we are instructed to set our affections on things above. We are to reckon it as if we were already dead, but to realize that we have another life that is hid with Christ in God. We have the positive guarantee that when Christ who is our life shall be manifested we shall be manifested with Him in glory.

3:5-25. The balance of the chapter deals with the walk of those who are the members of the one Body.

4:1-18. In this portion we would call the student's attention to those who are of the circumcision mentioned in 4:11, also to the prayer of Epaphras in 4:12 that the Colossians should stand perfect and complete in all the will of God. Important, too, is the warning to Archippus to take heed to the ministry that he had accepted from the Lord. May Paul's warning to him serve as a warning to every one of us.

(Continued, Vol. IV, No. 4)

NOTES ON I CORINTHIANS

(Continued from Vol. IV, No. 2)

13:11. Paul gives here an illustration that is so simple he does not need to apply it. They cannot miss the point. When Paul was a child, he talked as a child, he had a child's disposition, and he reasoned like a child. When he became a man he put from himself childish things and ways. We would bring this passage to a multitude of people who have been saved many years, but they are still thinking and acting just like they did the first year they were saved. It is not right for one who has been saved twenty years to have the spiritual age of two. They know they are saved, but they do not care to know anything beyond this. They know that knowledge brings responsibility, and they dread responsibility. It is impossible for us to find fellowship with such as these.

13:12-13. Even today we see everything as in a mirror and it puzzles us. Things seem turned around and out of place. The Word of God is complete, but our knowledge is imperfect. The time will come when we shall know even as we are known. Some day faith will be turned into sight and hope will be realized. Love only will abide. God is love.

Chapter 14

This chapter is the great Biblical treatise on the subject of tongues. Of the numerous subjects dealt with in 1 Corinthians, the resurrection holds first place and the gift of tongues holds second place so far as space given to them is concerned. A favorite argument among traditionalists for the so-called Lord's Supper is that Paul would not have

taken up the matter if its observance was to cease in a few years. If such men were consistent they would be contending for a gift of tongues today with the same argument, but error is never consistent.

The greater part of difficulties in connection with the gift of tongues will disappear the moment we recognize that a *tongue* is a *language*, such as the French tongue or the English tongue. The language of one's native land is called the mother tongue. Recognition of this simple fact will cause all passages that deal with tongues to give forth a new light. It will also help if we recognize that there is no such thing in the Bible as an unknown tongue. The only hint of an unknown tongue in the Bible is simply a reference to a language that the hearer did not understand. The *King James Version* translator placed the word *unknown* before the word tongue in five places in this chapter, and this has given rise to an idea prevalent among Pentecostal sects that a man can utter some mysterious jargon that no man on earth can understand, and that this jargon is God speaking through him in tongues. Another man will claim to give interpretation of this jargon, and they call this the gift of interpretation of tongues. We do not hesitate to condemn all such displays as being sheer delusions and completely foreign to anything set forth in the Word of God.

The exact nature of the gift of tongues is clearly set forth by the faithful record given by Luke of the events that occurred on the day of Pentecost. On that memorable day there were dwelling in Jerusalem devout Jews who were out of every nation under heaven. These men were amazed when they heard every man among the disciples speaking in their own languages. In their amazement they asked, "Are not all these speakers Galilaeans? How then do we hear every man speaking in the language wherein we were born?" They enumerated the fourteen nationalities that were present and said, "We hear these men speaking in our own languages about the wonderful works of God." This was the divine gift of tongues or languages, and it has never been duplicated since the close of the Acts period.

We who have tried to learn another language realize just how difficult the task is. But by diligent study and practice it can be done. Very few ever learn to speak a second language as if it were their mother tongue. On the day of Pentecost, God gave the disciples the ability to speak in foreign languages as if these were their native tongue. Some time ago he attended a Pentecostal meeting, having been urged to go by a friend for the purpose of seeing with their own eyes that the gift of tongues is for today. In due time a man arose to his feet and after making a few strange grimaces he began to mutter some unintelligible sounds for about five minutes. A friend whispered that he was giving a message from God in tongues. After he sat down another man rose to interpret the tongues and was able to say in English in 10 minutes what had required five minutes to be said in tongues. The gist of the interpretation was that God is love and that He had given His Son to die for us. As we had known this and preached it for many years the message was a little disappointing. After the service we asked the friend, who had urged us to go, if it were possible for these so-called tongues to be faked. He admitted that they could be and spoke of another group whom he said put on faked demonstrations regularly as they did not possess the true gift. We told him that the one great fact that distinguished the Biblical gift of tongues from all present day manifestations was that it could not be faked. No man could claim to be speaking in Egyptian beyond that moment that an

Egyptian could be found to test his claims.

We are quite familiar with the repeated claims made by Pentecostalist Missionaries who have gone to Africa, India and China and report that they have spoken the language at once without either training or study. If we ask how they know they spoke the language the answer is that the natives apparently understood.

These sincere people, carried on by the flood of their emotions, and firmly believing that there is a gift of tongues for today, go out earnestly hoping that when they step off the boat they will speak the language at once. What a tragedy it would be if they should have to report back to those who sent them out that it did not work? They must make a try by all means. Therefore, they open their mouths and begin to make sounds, and the simple natives, who hold the white man in revered awe, listen intently. They shake their heads no or nod assent according to the facial expressions of the speaker. This has caused some well-meaning people to believe that they spoke the native tongue and were understood. With great rejoicing they rush a letter back home on the next boat reporting that they spoke the language at once without practice or study.

The word *tongues* appears fourteen times in the **fourteenth chapter of 1 Corinthians**. It is a complete treatment and discussion of the subject. We are now ready to examine its message.

14:1-5. They were to be zealous for the gifts, but this was to be so that they could prophesy. That is, so that they could speak forth in declaration of the truth, or for warning or for exhortation. If they spoke in a language that the hearers could not understand no man was helped. God would understand, but it was evident that God did not need to be edified.

If Paul had come to them speaking in a language that was not their tongue what profit would it have been to them. It seems that some men, just because they had the gift of other languages, used these strange languages when all the hearers were probably Greeks. This made a great display, but no one was instructed

14:7-9. Musical instruments must make a distinction in sounds or the tune they play would never be recognized. If the bugle gave indefinite sounds no one would prepare for the battle. Even so it was with their voices. If they failed to utter intelligible words, how would the hearers know what they were saying.

14:10-12. There are many kinds of sounds in the world and no creature is soundless. If we do not know the meaning of a particular language, we shall seem to the one who speaks it as a foreigner. Because of this they are admonished never to use a language unless the hearer understands it. A foreign language is just a babble of sounds to those who do not understand it. And even if it should be interpreted, what was the value of such a roundabout method of declaring the things of God.

14:13-17. Man can pray in any tongue for God understands all languages. The one who prays in his own tongue prays in mind as well as in spirit.

14:18-22. Paul excelled all others in the gift of tongues. Yet he would rather have spoken five words in his own tongue if by these few words he could help others, than to speak ten thousand words in an unknown tongue. Tongues were given as a sign for unbelievers, prophecy was given to help those believe.

14:23-29. There are many who see in this passage a divinely given order of service for assemblies of believers. To regulate the carnal desire of the Corinthians to speak in tongues Paul laid down rules to govern the exercise of these gifts. To keep one gifted man from excluding other men equally gifted he ordered that the speaking was to be done by two or three. To curb the women who were stepping out of their proper sphere, he gave a rule and quoted the law.

(Continued, Vol. IV, No. 5)

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

What do you do with such passages as Rev. 19:10 and Rev. 20:10 where it speaks of being tormented day and night for ever and ever?

I study the entire portion in which these passages appear so as not to interpret them apart from their context. I seek to discover to whom they refer so as not to apply them indiscriminately to all men. I study the word torment in the light of every occurrence of that word in the original so not to make it any weaker or stronger than the Spirit intended. Do you know of anything better to do with these passages?

* * * *

What significance do you see in Saul's name being changed to Paul?

How could I see any significance in something that never happened? It is adding to the Word of God to say that Saul's name was changed to Paul. The great Apostle to the Gentiles is called Saul both before and after his conversion. In Acts 13:9 we read, "Now Saul, who is also Paul." These words tell us that Saul and Paul were one and the same and there is no hint of any change of name. It seems that Saul also had the name of Paul from his childhood. The name Saul was probably used in all his Hebrew contacts, and the name Paul was used in Gentile contacts. Any attempt to begin a new dispensation with this change of name is to try to begin it with something that never occurred.

* * * *

I heard a radio preacher say that Israel was cast away somewhere between Acts 13 and Romans 11. This sounded very confusing to me and I would like your opinion of it.

If I had not happened to hear this identical statement I would feel that you had heard it wrong. This statement is characteristic of much that is spewed out today as Bible teaching. It is about as accurate as if a man would say that he lost his purse somewhere between Main Street and last Tuesday. Acts 13 is a fixed point, but the date of Romans 11 is no different than the date of Romans 1 and Romans 16. Furthermore, the opening statement of Romans 11 is that God has not cast away His people.

* * * *

I would like some help concerning the ten lost tribes of Israel.

The ten lost tribes are something that exists in the minds of men, but there is no such thing as ten lost tribes in the Word of God. The conception is that the ten tribes that went into captivity were lost and only Judah and Benjamin remained. In Luke 2:36 we read of one who was of the tribe of Asher. In Acts 26:7 Paul was familiar with the twelve tribes and knew what they were doing. James did not hesitate to write a letter to the twelve tribes, so they were not lost to him. These things were written about 700 years after the ten tribes were supposed to have been lost.

* * * *

Is there a contrast in John 1:17 between law and grace?

I do not believe that any contrast was intended. If so, we would have the law set in contrast with truth, and the law is just as much truth as any portion of the Word of God. The law was given through Moses, grace and truth came into being by Jesus Christ. The real contrast is between "given through" and "came into being".

* * * *

Would you quote Ecclesiastes 9:2 as a divine revelation?

I most certainly would. Your question probably originated from a footnote in the *Scofield Reference Bible* wherein Dr. Scofield says, "No one would quote verse 2 as a divine revelation." With all respect to Dr. Scofield I must say that this is one place where the fundamentalist suddenly became a modernist. The translation of this passage is not what it should be, but God is not responsible for man's translations. The passage is dealing with death and states that it comes alike to all men, righteous and wicked, clean and unclean, religious and irreligious. Inasmuch as human observation and experience confirms this, there is no reason why we should not quote this passage as a divine revelation.

* * * *

Have you ever considered that in the Acts period that Israel is passing out while the Church of God is coming in?

This idea has been given full consideration. It makes the thirty- three years of the Acts period to be a transition period in which God was closing out His purpose in Israel and bringing in the Church of God. When the mind is saturated with the truth of the Old Testament the conception is wholly untenable, for Israel was the Church of God. It would simplify matters greatly if we would let the Word settle this and accept the revelation given in Romans 11 as a statement of what God was doing in the Acts period. Some of the branches had been broken off and some wild olive branches had been grafted in. It is impossible for us to understand this as meaning that the tree was passing out and the branches would take its place.

When a man 's spirit returns to God, what is its condition?

Exactly the same as it was before it came to man. Just as the dust is the same when it returns to the dust, so the spirit is the same when it returns to God who gave it.

FUTURE STUDIES

We have not yet put into print even a small portion of the truth that has been our pleasure to teach to our various classes. We do not try to present a well-rounded ministry in our pages as our periodical is expository in its nature and is published to present the fruits of our own studies in the Word of God.

There will be three more articles in the series on *The Unfolding of the Secret*. In this issue we begin a new series of studies under title of *The Kingdom Eon*. We consider this subject to be one of great importance. It will probably require five or six articles to complete it. In the next issue we plan an article on *Interpreting the Times*. This will be a single article and will show the folly of attempting to discover the significance of the stupendous events that are happening.

Our next major study will be a series of articles on *The Work and Ways of God*. This series will be the most important and far reaching that we have ever presented. In the course of these articles we will deal with subjects that will answer questions that are continually presented to us, such as: the fate of those who die in infancy, the fate of those who have never heard the gospel, the questions of election and predestination, God's sovereignty, and the general work that God is doing and has done for all men, the special work that God has done and is doing for some men. In dealing with these subjects we will feel free to ignore everything except the Word of God.

THE EDITOR TO HIS FRIENDS

***This is the third of the twenty-four page issues of *The Word of Truth*, and as this issue goes forth we find it necessary to inform our friends of our present situation. The warm months of July and August that are upon us, and past experiences tell us that during these two months the sale of literature becomes stagnant, and correspondence bearing gifts falls to the lowest possible ebb. The distracting character of world conditions has caused the month of June to be as bad as we normally expect July and August to be. It may be that the time will come when we can lay aside sufficient reserves during the other months to take up the slack caused by these lean months, but up to this time we have not been able to do it. Our present task is to pay for this issue and to send out another issue in August as we are behind schedule. If this is accomplished, our friends who stand behind us, will have to determine to overcome the lethargy that comes with the hot weather and send us a gift during the month of July. Please give this your prayerful consideration.

We regret that the publication of our pamphlet on *Sheol, Hades and Destruction* was delayed somewhat beyond the date that was announced for it to be ready. The delay was caused by our determination to rewrite and enlarge two sections of the manuscript. It came from the press on June 10 and all orders were placed in the mail at once. We desire to thank our friends for their patience, also for their advance orders as these were a real help in taking care of the cost of publication.

****We deeply appreciate hearing from our friends in England and Scotland, but they do not need to apologize for their present inability to send support for this witness. We realize the greatly increased financial burdens that have been placed upon them, also the governmental restrictions that have been placed upon sending money out of the country. While these conditions exist, our friends in the British Empire may order any literature that they desire and pay for it when it becomes convenient. The literature should be in your hands rather than in our storerooms.

****We are always desirous of increasing our list of regular readers, and we solicit the help of all our friends in doing this. Many of our most devoted readers today are those who sent in for the magazine, hardly knowing what it was, but hoping it would help them to a better understanding of the Word of God. After receiving the magazine over a period of months, they discovered that it did do this very thing and they have become loyal friends of the witness. This has caused us to feel that the best way to increase our regular readers is to send those, who may be interested, our magazine for a year or more. One sample copy does not make much of an impression as most articles are continued; four or five issues sent at one time seems to cause the recipient to delay reading them until a more convenient time arrives, which never seems to come.

In order to secure the names of prospective readers we are going to extend to all our readers the privilege of suggesting carefully selected names to whom the magazine will be sent for a year or more. After this, these names will be tested to see if they desire to continue to receive our publication. If we should send the magazine to 1000 names for one year and as a result secure 100 regular readers we will feel well repaid for the cost and effort.

In selecting such names of those who are believers in the Lord Jesus Christ and who manifest their faith in their daily life and walk. Remember that Christians who never read will not read. our magazine, **those who are not Bible students will not be interested in a publication that deals with Bible study.**

Before sending in the names of Christian workers (such as ministers, pastors and evangelists) it might be well to explain to them the character of our magazine and then ask them if they would like to read it for a year.

We cannot accept a name unless the reader sends in name, house number, street name, city and state. First class mail is given directory service, but third class mail is not. If address is not complete the post-office returns it at our expense.

****We would add a final word just before we go to press. It is the last of June and our records show that the past five weeks have been so barren that we have received only about fifteen per cent of our normal income for publishing this witness. We believe that we can place our finger on the cause of this. The stupendous nature of world events, the far reaching changes that have swiftly taken place, the amount and importance of the

news, the fear and feeling of insecurity that has gripped most people, has caused the simple witness to be overshadowed and practically forgotten. Our friends must gird up the loins of their minds and be sober in these days or they will awaken to discover that this present period of peril has sapped their spiritual lives, and the witnesses to the truth, that are dependent under God upon them have ceased to witness. With conditions as they are we should not have sent out the present issue, nevertheless, it goes forth in faith that it is needed more than ever before. Let us remember that the Light is not yet out, and while we have the light let us walk in it. Leave the future to God. Our strength will be according to the demand of the day.

End, Vol. IV, No. 3