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CONTENTS

The Mystery Ministry of Paul 93

By Russell H. Schaefer

Introduction (Prophecies that failed?) 93

Section One

(Various Gospels) 99

Section Two

1. The Roman World & Paul's Later

Letters 106

2. Paul Chained for Israel's Hope 107

3. Dating Paul's Later Letters

Philippians..... 108

2Timothy..... 109

1 Timothy 111

Titus 112

Ephesians & Colossians 114

Ephesians, Colossians, and Philemon 115

Section Three

The Mystery Epistles 118
Philippians and Romans, compared 118
"At Ephesus?" 121
The Interrelationship of Eph. & Col. 123

Section Four

Epistles of Completeness 129

His Workmanship

..... 129

In The Heavens, meaning and Usage 136

Origin of Evil (a parentheses) 154

The Panoply of God 157

(A continuation from page 153)

NOTES

One The Letter to Philemon 167

two "If ye continue in the faith" 168

Three "To fill up the sufferings of Christ" 169

Four "The reward of the inheritance 170

THE MYSTERY MINISTRY

OF PAUL

by Russell H. Schaefer

The Epistles of Ephesians and Colossians are entirely unique inasmuch as in them alone is revealed God's Secret Dispensation.

In these Epistles alone are found those entwining and varied facets of the Great Secret that makes for such profound distinctions between the present "secret" administrative purposes of God as over against that which had been hitherto revealed.

INTRODUCTION

Early in the nineteenth century there were large numbers of sincere believers who looked for the return of Christ at any moment. These ardent followers would have been incredulous had they been told that decades would elapse, that generation after generation of saintly people would die, that world-wide wars would come and go, that governments would be swept away by revolts and revolution, that anti-christ type of men and nations would appear, that disease and famine would run rampant, that innocent victims of aggression would number into the tens of millions, that paganism and formalism would devitalize the so-called Christian church ... and that in the face of all this the heavens had remained silent, and Christ had not yet returned.

Today there is a resurgence to the doctrine of the "imminent and immediate" return of Christ. These groups point to the vast tension areas throughout the world as the "signs" of His coming. Or to the "tongues" movements as the long awaited evidence that the "last days" of Joel's prophecy had finally arrived. Each generation tends to over-look that this same phenomena has been wide spread within this country, and at its varied peaks of excitation produced a kindred atmosphere of expectation, i.e., "The Coming of The Lord was near." How soon one forgets the dire predictions of

yesteryears that had so miserably failed in their fulfillments. If those erstwhile prognosticators had been living under the law of the O.T. they would have been put to death as false prophets. "The Late Planet Earth" although chronically ill, is still here, alive and kicking, and will be here long after those supposed prophetic books and authors are out-dated by some new frenzied headlines. There will always be those followers that sell their "houses and lands" in

anticipation of a special recompense at what their leaders had told them was to be the soon appearing of The King and Kingdom of God on earth. A television "prophet" urges his many audiences to obtain his "tribulation survival tape cassette" and to place it conspicuously for those "left behind" so that they can cope with the expected Divine judgments after the "faithful" had been secretly caught away.

If the long delay of Christ's personal return has caused wonder among present believers, think of the problems this doctrine must have presented to followers of Christ within the first century. The prophetic N.T. texts bearing upon the return of Christ give no intimation that thousands of years would elapse between the time the predictions were given and their fulfillment. The early Christians felt that the bloody history of the Caesars, during and closing the first century, was the enactment of the actual events that would surely culminate in the Second Coming. To these early believers emperor worship assumed awful proportions as each moment was fraught with life or death. To them it was Satan who stood upon the seashore and called forth the false Christ. The Caesars became the master of the sea, uniting in themselves the ten-fold sections of the empire, and proclaimed to the world the Divine omnipotence of the Caesars. They were all powerful, to worship or to die were the only alternatives. The worshippers were sealed with the sign of the emperor on brow and hand at all levels and stations in life. If the Caesars were pictured as having seven stars in their right hand, so the exiled Seer of the convict island of Patmos would show The True Son of Man, God's Imperator and High Priest, in the heavenly courts, clothed with the appropriate garments as befitting King of all Kings and Lord of all Lords. His face was like the sun, His eyes as flames of fire, and He holds in His right hand the sign of power, the seven stars. Each message of the book of Revelation follows the exact pattern of the edicts of the Caesars. Even the seven prizes given to the victors are the same: the banquet, the crown of life, the white stone, citizenship, white garments, the place of honor, and the

94

joint-seating on the throne. No wonder this "historical" application and interpretation of prophetic themes in The Word of God held sway over the hearts and minds of the "state" churches well into the eighteenth century. While the older "historical fulfillment" concept is not without merit (and is the position held by many denominations), still it is open to question because of what was not fulfilled. To give a few instances from the book of Hebrews:

1. The anticipated New Earth did not arrive.

Heb. 1:6; 2:5.

2. The Great Deliverance projected with the returning Christ did not come to pass. Heb. 1:14; 9:28.

3. The "... subjection of all things to Christ" did not materialize. Heb. 2:8.

4. The "Sabbath-rest" for the people of the Covenant was never entered into. Heb. 4:9-11.

5. The "Golden Age" with it's powers foreshadowed in the Book of Acts, was never instituted. Heb. 6:5.

6. The "New Covenant" made and instituted to take away Israel's and Judah's alienation and rebellion, failed to find receptive faith. Heb. 8:7-13; 10:16.

7. The "Good things" that were to attend Christ's high priestly office for Israel were never enjoyed by that people. Heb. 9:11; 10:1.

8. The "Coming One" that was to come "in a little while" has tarried a long time. Heb. 10:37.

9. The "shaking of heaven and earth" to remove the dross of temporal things has been awaited in vain by each succeeding generation. Heb. 12:25-27.

10. The "Unshakable Kingdom" looked for by Abraham and Israel, is not here yet. Heb. 12:28.

95

11. The "City of God" has not yet come out of the heavens to a new earth. Heb. 13:14.

12. We see "not yet" His enemies made His footstool.

Heb, 10:13.

The historical fulfillment concept of prophecy failed just on the threshold of attaining some of the great goals of prophecy; i.e., the return of Christ to the earth, the judgment of the nations, the establishing of the kingdom, the New Heavens and the New Earth. When the "Coming" did not materialize the historical school had no Scriptural explanation to offer so it gave to its followers a "pseudo-coming"; that Christ comes as The Holy Spirit, and this might be at

baptism, conversion, confirmation, communion, or church membership. The Kingdom of God on earth became the "church", with its parroting of temporal powers, and in its sad history it has used the sword to enforce its political decisions.

There is nothing within the framework of modern nations and world affairs that approached the exact preliminary fulfillment of prophecy as did the historical, even to the fleeing of the believers into the mountains (Matt. 24:16-22) to avoid being engulfed in the unparalleled destruction that befell Jerusalem in A.D. 70. Notice how the following texts seem to favor an early fulfillment of prophecy:

1. And whenever they may persecute you in this city, flee to the other, for verily I say to you, ye may not have completed the cities of Israel till The Son of Man may come.
Matt. 10:23.

2. For, The Son of Man is about to come in the glory of His Father, with His messengers, and then He will reward each, according to his work. Verily I say to you, there are certain of those standing here who shall not taste of death till they may see The Son of Man coming in His reign. Matt. 16:27, 28.

3. Verily I say to you, this generation may not pass away till all these may come to pass. Matt. 24:34.

96

These quotations from Young's *Literal Translation* reflect the Greek text better than the A.V. In the second set of texts cited some point to the scenes of the Mount of Transfiguration vision (Matt. 17:1-8) as the supposed fulfillment of this prophecy. But at the Mount there was "no coming" since Christ had not gone anywhere, there was no reigning, no kingdom and no rewards. Moses and Elijah are rather seen as conversing with Christ in respect to His coming death. The third quotation is tortured so as to make "generation" mean the Jewish race.

All the immediate apostles and disciples of Christ died without having seen the "soon" return of The Lord. A moderate delay may have been implied in these prophecies, however the long ages that have since passed has strained their credulity. Within his life-time and in full assurance Peter wrote, "... the end of all things is at hand" (1 Pet. 4:7). Likewise James, writing to the twelve tribes of Israel stated, "... the coming of The Lord draweth nigh" (James 5:8). Paul counted himself as among that company who would be, "... alive and remain

unto the coming of The Lord" (1 Thes. 4:15-17). In contra-distinction to this expected first century coming, some texts hint at more issues involved than a mere time-lag:

1. Lo, left desolate to you is your House; for I say to you, ye may not see Me henceforth till ye may say, Blessed is He who is coming in The Name of The Lord.

(Y.L.T. Matt. 23:39)

2. And He may send Jesus Christ who before hath been preached to you, Whom it behoveth Heaven, indeed, to receive till times of restitution of all things, of which God spake through the mouth of all His holy prophets from the age.

(Y.L.T. Acts 3:20, 21)

Prophetically, all earthly blessings from God were bound up with the hopes and promises of Abraham and Israel. The last Israel owned of God as a nation, was the Israel of the Book of Acts. Now, at this present time, they are as of a people "dead and buried" without hope and without life. The Israel of the Book of Acts could not neglect the "... so great Salvation" with impunity (Heb. 2:3), nor reject the blood of the proffered New Covenant, and do despite unto the Spirit of grace (Heb. 10:26-31) without reaping the dire

97

prophesied consequences. If Israel is to experience a "restitution" to a former golden age, as under Solomon, or to the kingdom prophesied in Isaiah or Daniel, then Israel must win the struggle over the flesh as did their fore-bearer of old, Jacob. Jacob, the "heel-catcher" was indeed well named. He was always "Jacobing" some one out of something, hence this "heel-catcher" was always "supplanting"; "over-reaching"; (See Gen. 25:26; 27:18-36; 32:28.) he almost learned too late that his real heritage was a spiritual one consisting in and out-flowing from his personal relationship with God. It is a lesson ill learned by the nations or individuals of the earth, Israel's House, that Temple of Peace and Prayer for all people, was leveled to the earth in A.D. 70, and with it's passing, Israel ceased to be a "mediating" nation for the peoples of the earth. Fortunately, at this present time God is graciously dealing with individuals irrespective of their national, cultural, racial, or sexual status.

Over the years many believers have delved into the prophetic side of The Word of God and have rested their hopes upon the soon return of The Lord, only to be thwarted of their expectations when the fore-shadowing events vividly enacted

before them failed to culminate in the Second Coming. Some responded with a bold unbelief in the veracity of Scripture itself while others wistfully wondered if they had been believing a delusion. A few questioned the traditional church's ability as a competent exegete of Scripture, and felt that with a free spirit of inquiry into The Scriptures of Truth, that The Word of God might yield up treasures hitherto undreamed of that might more than answer the problems caused by the delay of Christ's returning.

1. Why indeed has God been judicatorily withholding His early prophesied judgments in the earth?
2. Aside from the inexorable law of sowing and reaping, is God's silence and absence of judgment an indication of indifference on His part, or, evidence of a gracious amnesty and clemency toward the whole human race?
3. Conceding that God's character and purposes are holy, unchangeable, and inviolable; still has some thing hither- to obscure been brought to the forefront in keeping with

98

God's redemptive will that would fully justify God's activity in stopping the prophesied and duly programmed events from taking place?*

4. Is the Secret-Mystery-Dispensation of God's on-going grace with it's many ramifications (as revealed in Ephesians and Colossians) one of the great Divine Blessed truths that would have to be reckoned with in any computation of God's program and will for this present time?
5. Has the grand purposes involved with the great secrets of Ephesians and Colossians been projected upon the stage of the present ages with the back-drop extending into the Heavenlies, and over-shooting the judgemental prophetic-clock, and in effect, stopping it?

SECTION ONE

Various Gospels

The word "Gospel" means "Glad-tidings." Paul uses this word sixty-two times out of its seventy-seven occurrences in the N.T. In today's parlance it has come to mean the message of God's salvation to the unreached. This restricted meaning is not inherent in the N.T. The context of the usage must determine both the

substance and the ones to whom it is addressed. An illustration of this is the gospel announced in Matt. 4:23. It had a King and a Kingdom for its subject, it was exclusively Jewish (Matt. 10:5-7), and The Lord had told his disciples not to tell any one that He was the "looked-for One, Jesus The Messiah" (Matt. 16:20; Mk. 8:29); in respect to His death (Lk. 18:32, 33) His apostles did not understand it, and it's meaning was hid from them (Lk. 18:24). At the time this gospel was operative Christ had not died, no redemptive blood had been shed, and the apostles were forbidden to go to those of the nations. All this would make havoc of what is considered "Evangelism" today. The terms of Matthew 10 are restrictive as to program, people, place, and financial policy.

Notice Paul's usages in the following:

*Humanly speaking, of course.

99

1. "ACCORDING TO THE SCRIPTURES."

For I delivered unto you (among the first things) what also I received: How that Christ died for our sins according to The Scriptures, And that He was buried. And that He hath been raised on the third day, according to The Scriptures.

1 Cor. 15:3, 4. Rotherham.

Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, a called apostle, separated unto the glad-message of God which He promised beforehand through His prophets in Holy Scriptures.

Rom. 1:1, 2. Rotherham.

Of course, these were The Scriptures of the O.T., including the first three Gospels. That Christ died in our behalf is indeed the Glad-tidings of Salvation. This Gospel was not exclusive to Paul, it was not hidden either from the ages, or in mystic Scriptures. (See Gen. 3:15; Isa. 52:13-53:1-12; Psa. 22).

2. "HIDDEN IN PROPHETIC SCRIPTURES"

Hushed during the past ages

Now to Him Who is able to establish you in accord with my evangel. And the proclamation of Christ Jesus in accord with the revelation of a hushed (fr. *Sigao*,

to keep close, to say "hush", to hold one's peace, not an absolute or muzzled silence) in times *eonian*, yet now manifested, through prophetic Scriptures as well, according to The *Eonian* God, being made known to all nations, for the obedience of faith...

Rom. 16:25, 26. C. V.

The above *Concordant Version* quotation reflects the N.T.

100

Greek text very well. The "Postscript" theory advanced in an effort to bind this "hushed" secret to the "Mystery" of the Ephesian and Colossian Letters is not needed; it causes confusion, and does not honor the principle of interpretation, i.e., one does not bring a later truth into an earlier context.

This "Gospel" has to do with God's reconciliation of the world. There is no longer a barrier between God and the people of the earth. Rom. 5:10 states how God removed the barrier caused by the sin of man:

For, if being enemies

We were reconciled unto God

through the death of His Son...

Rotherham text.

This act of Divine Grace-amnesty is beautifully set forth in A. S. Way's translation of Rom. 5:15-18 where God's grace is depicted as far reaching, aye, over-reaching the sin of Adam's race:

**This First Man of the Old Life prefigures the destined
First Man of the New Life: (vs. 14).**

each gave a gift to humanity- - -

**the former (The First Adam), the death-fraught
transgression,**

The Latter (The Last Adam) the free gift of Life.

But note, that transgression and this free gift are in inverse proportion. Through that one man's trespass the myriads of humanity died, I grant you: yet the disproportion is as nothing to the measureless overflowings to the myriads of humanity of the fountain of the grace of God, and His bounty conveyed by the grace embodied in This One Man, Jesus The Christ. No, the bounty (grace) now bestowed is not commensurate with the mischief that came from that one man's sin. On that one man's sin followed a sentence that meant humanity's condemnation: but here, on all its countless sins follows a Free Gift of God that means humanity's acquittal.

101

The great issues of the judicial silence of God have their answer in this great Gospel of God's reconciling grace to all humanity. It is so well expressed in 2 Cor. 5:18, 19:

The all things moreover are of God.

Who hath reconciled us to Himself through Christ,

And hath given us the reconciling ministry:

How that God was in Christ Reconciling a world unto Himself,

NOT RECKONING UNTO THEIR OFFENSES,

And hath put in us the reconciling discourse.

Rotherham.

All this is an act of God in pure grace in which man has no part except to let it act upon him by faith, and to rejoice in it. God's way to win our affection is to pour out His love and grace first in measureless abundance as shown in His devising a perfect redemption in the work of a Perfect Redeemer on which grounds He was henceforth free to proffer His love to all without any liens upon His justice caused by human sin or demerit. Being "all of grace," human merit would not cause it to be limited to a few select individuals, nor would the enormity of one's sins cause it to be withheld. Not only would sin "not be

reckoned unto them" but more positively it would not be a factor at all in restraining God's love to mankind. This is so vividly set out in 2 Cor. 5:20, 21:

In behalf of Christ therefore are we ambassadors.

As if God were beseeching through us:

We entreat, in behalf of Christ,

Be reconciled (let yourself be) unto God!

Him Who knew not sin

In our behalf He made to be sin,

That we might become

God's righteousness

In Him.

This reconciliation procures for all not merely an acquittal caused by the non-imputation of sin, but much more, that God in Christ's humanity Submitted the representative Man of the whole

102

race to death so that in Him the race expiates its sin. The full ground work for life in Christ and being made the righteousness of God in Him has been laid. Grace now reigns, and will continue to reign beyond the extent, effect, and duration of sin. In the words of the bard:

On Him Almighty judgment fell

That must needs sink a world to hell.

He bore it for a sinful race, and

Thus became their hiding Place.

In this Gospel Grace is to have the last word. The very down-fall of the First Adam prefigured another and Last Adam to undo the work of the first. This was the way this gospel was "hushed"! Our first parents thought The Redeemer

would come immediately as seen by their remarks regarding their children. If God could show grace to the people of Nineveh in spite of the displeasure of Jonah could He not do so to the whole world undeserving as it is?

This gospel of the world-wide reconciliation of God was not shared by the other apostles. It was a distinctly Pauline Gospel. It was not blazoned abroad, it was "hushed" during the past ages, with its full revelation, certain O.T. passages took on new luster and meaning.

3. HIDDEN FROM PROPHETIC SCRIPTURES

Hidden from the ages, hidden past generations, HID IN GOD.

And for me, that even to me may be granted utterance, in opening of my mouth, with boldness to make known The MYSTERY of the Good news, for the sake of which I grow old in my chains, that I may speak freely in it, as indeed I must speak.

Eph. 6:19, 20. Roddy

This wonderful glad-tidings, with the "Untraceable Riches of The Christ" as its substance, is now being addressed to believers

103

every where, and without distinctions of any kind. The O.T. would be searched in vain for any trace of it, nor would it be found in any N.T. writings except Ephesians and Colossians. It is singularly and distinctly Pauline:

Unto me

The less than least of all saints

Was given this favour (grace)

Unto the nations to announce the glad-

message of the UNTRACEABLE

RICHERS OF THE CHRIST.

Eph. 3:8 Rotherham

This opening up of all the spiritual wealth of Christ in the heavenlies to every believer made Paul realize how beggarly was the messenger to carry the burden of so great a grace entailing so rich a treasure-horde, the fullness of God in Christ to be summed-up in the believer.

This "UNTRACEABLE RICHES OF CHRIST" is aptly spoken of by Way in his translation as, "... the treasure no human search could have found," then he adds:

... that I should uplift a light whereby all

may see what it means,

this stewardship* of the SECRET

which has been from all time

HIDDEN AWAY IN THE MIND OF GOD. . .

Eph. 3:9a.

During all the past ages this household of The Secret has been "hid in God" until He revealed it through Paul. A secret so well hidden could not have been prophesied. It could not have been pre-figured in Israel's Acts 2 church or been the subject of Joel's sign-gift prophecies. Christendom has nothing in common with this secret household under the headship of Christ alone, and in Whom

***A. V. translates this "fellowship", fr. *koinonia*, rather than *oikonomia*, lit. house-rule, i.e., a household of God and how it is governed. The manuscript authority is on the side of "*oikonomia*." This family would be ruled by pure grace and all would be equal.**

104

all are equal. From all nations, of all nations, all races, all cultures, this would indeed be a "new humanity" (Eph. 2:15) in which all distinctions had been obliterated.

To re-emphasize the secret nature of this present dispensation, Paul adds to the information given in the Ephesian Letter that this was also "hidden from generations." Not only is this stated in the following texts, but also that this secret

COMPLETES The Word of God. This last startling information should be a great comfort to all of us who have pondered how, through whom and when the Word of God was completed. Thankfully, it is through an inspired Apostle, not through an uninspired church council meeting many centuries later. This statement of Paul's also means that all other N.T. Scriptures were written prior to the penning of the Ephesian-Colossian Epistles. No other Scripture reaches the heights of these "Mystery" Epistles. The many "pseudo-scriptures" put forth by pitiful individuals can only be compared to offal (like all man-made righteousness) in contrast to the beauty and grandeur of this final revelation of God's purposes and grace toward those "in Christ Jesus." J. N. Darby's translation of Col. 1:25, 26 reads almost like we were reading these truths for the first time:

... of which I became a minister,

according to the dispensation of God,

which is given me toward you,

TO COMPLETE THE WORD OF GOD,

The MYSTERY which has been HIDDEN

FROM AGES AND GENERATIONS,

but has now (just now) been made manifest

To His saints. . .

The "grace" character of this dispensation is set forth in Eph. 3:1-3a:

For this cause, I Paul, the prisoner of

Christ Jesus, for you, the nations,

If, indeed, ye did hear of the dispensation

of the grace of God given to me

in regard to you.

That by revelation He made known to me

The SECRET. . . *Y.L.T.*

Way, in his translation of Eph. 1:9, 10 touches the meaning that underscores this mystery:

For He revealed to us the secret of His will.

According to that His determination

Which He had formed within Himself

To carry out the dispensation that waited but the

fullness of the time.

For His purpose was to re-unite* all things

Under Christ as their Head --

Things in the heavens, things on the earth -- All, all made one in Him.

Christ is to be in All The Complemental parts, all are to bear His likeness and to share His life. He is to be the "Summation" of the whole. God's goal is Christ and the triumph of grace! No won-der then that the Apostle would pen the words of Col. 1:27:

... the RICHES of the GLORY of this MYSTERY

among the nations --

Which is, CHRIST IN YOU, the HOPE of the

GLORY. *Y.L.T.*

The indwelling Christ via His Spirit is both the seal and the earnest of the glory since His Spirit seals us into Christ on the one hand and gives us His life on the other. What a Glad-tiding this message is! To review it briefly:

DISPENSATION OF THE SECRET

Dispensation, translation of the Greek word, *Oikonomia*, made up of *Oikos*, "house-hold" or "family", and *Nomos*, "law, rule or how it is governed."

Where? Until it was revealed it was "hidden in God".

***Gr. *Anakephalaioomai*, from *Ana*, "up" and the verbal form of *kephale*, "head", hence to "head up", to "sum up under one head", Christ, The Head, will reflect and be reflected in all the parts.**

106

Prophetic Scriptures? It was "untraceable"

Past Ages? "hidden from them ..."

Past generations? "hidden from them ..."

It's designation? "A secret."

It's essential character? "Grace." "Ruled by grace."

To whom addressed? "Saints and faithful in Christ Jesus."

Which household? The "household of God." Adopted in Christ Jesus and bearing The Father's Name.

Toward what goal? Christ to be the summation of the whole. Through whom revealed? The Apostle Paul.

The Ephesian-Colossian Letters? Their truths are given to

climax, fill full or complete The Revealed Will and

Purposes of God.

There are a multitude of truths within these Epistles not delved into in this brief presentation, many will be elaborated upon later.

SECTION TWO

1. The Roman World and Paul's Later Letters

The Emperor Tiberius was smothered by Macro, Chief of the Imperial Guard, in A.D. 37, or about Acts 9. Caligula, the mad successor to the throne, was slain by two officers of his guard in A.D. 40-41. The rule of Claudius ended with his wife poisoning him in A.D. 54-55, or approximately Acts 15. Agrippina thus paved the way for her son Nero to be proclaimed Master of the World at a mere seventeen years of age. Five years later Nero caused both his wife, Octavia, and his mother to be slain. Nero was the reigning Emperor to whom Paul made his citizenship appeal, Acts 25:11, A.D. 60 - 61. In July of A.D. 64 a large portion of the city of Rome was set aflame, during this conflagration Nero ascended the stage in his country palace and declaimed a song on the burning of Troy. Later, he had coins minted to honor this occasion. In reality, he wanted to clear out the old city for a "House of God" that he started to construct. The populace held Nero responsible for the devastation, but he adroitly shifted the blame to the Christians. The Christians' refusal of Emperor worship, as well as their disdain of the "gods" facilitated Nero's "Death to the Christians" edict, and made it easy to become an on-going Imperial policy. This "A.D. 64 Imperial edict" would be after the close of the Book of Acts since no Christian, Roman citizen or not, would have dared to rent an apartment as Paul did in Acts

107

28:30. Nero was assisted in killing himself in A.D. 68 but the carnage of the Christians he began continued until the Imperial Edict was lifted by the Emperor Galerius in A.D. 311. The Jews began their war of liberation from Rome in A.D. 66. Nero appointed the General Vespasian to crush the Jewish revolt. If he succeeded he was to be pardoned for affronting Nero. With Titus, his son, and his seasoned Tenth Legion, he crushed the rebellion except in the city of Jerusalem. Late in A.D. 69 Titus mounted the final assault on Jerusalem. With Nero dead Galba reigned for eight months before being assassinated. Vespasian was proclaimed "Caesar" on July 1st; the Syrian Legions endorsed the decision on July 3rd. In Sept. A.D.70 Titus entered the inner confines of Jerusalem. Late in October his father led the triumph parade of captured Jews and other enemies of the Empire through the streets of Rome. These pitiful wrecks of humanity were confined in the "Tullianum" dungeon of Rome awaiting such "triumphs". Afterwards, they were either publicly executed, used up in the arenas, or enslaved for the mines. All captives taken in war, or declared to be "Enemies of the World" were designated as "Captives or Prisoners of the Spear". Christians would fall under this latter edict of Nero because of their resistance to Emperor worship. Had Paul indeed been the Egyptian leader of the Assassins, Acts 21:38, he would have been designated a "Captive of the Spear", as it was, he was freed.

It was likely some such arrest that accounts for Paul using this term of himself and others in Romans 16:7.

2. Paul, Chained For Israel's Hope

It is a mistake to speak of Paul's Prison Ministry only in terms of The Mystery as revealed in Ephesians and Colossians. Paul was a prisoner when he was held stocks in the inner prison at Philippi, in the Fort Antonia in Jerusalem, at Caesarea in Herod's Praetorium, in Rome -- chained to a soldier likely attached to the barracks of the Imperial Guard. All this before the revelation of The Mystery.

Paul speaks in reference to his chains, and like Israel's prophets of old, uses them as his badge of ministry to Israel:

Acts 28:20 For this cause therefore have I called for you to see and to speak with you; for

108

on account of the Hope of Israel this chain have I about me!

26:6, 7 And now for the Hope of the Promise unto

& 22 our Fathers being brought to pass by God am

I standing to be judged, unto which Hope our Twelve-tribed Nation with intensity night and

day rendering divine service, is hoping to

attain: concerning which Hope I am being accused by Jews, O King!

So then, having met with the help that is from God, until this day do I stand witnessing to both small and great, nothing else saying

than those things which both the prophets

and Moses did say should certainly come to pass. Rotherham's text

The universality of Israel's Hope is mentioned in Acts 26:23; Isa. 42:5; 49:6; 56:3-7; & 9:6,7. That which was predicated of Israel was that double portion of blessing given to The First-born. As The Firstborn among the nations it would be

her duty and right to bring the blessings that she enjoyed to all the nations of the earth. If Israel was "alienated" from her heritage, strangers to the Covenants of Promise and cut off from The Messiah in unbelief, then too were the nations cut off and alienated but in a more tragic sense -- unless another and different sphere of blessing were opened up to them distinct from the Hope of Israel, and apart from the ministry of Israel. The Kingdom of God of the O.T., the Gospels, and "Acts" is prophetically bound up with the people and prophecies of Israel. The blessings of the Nations is only in degree, not kind. In the Kingdom, of course,

Like ourselves, Israel boasted of her privilege, and in pride forgot her responsibilities. So like their forefathers' they handed over to prison the Apostle Paul, and sought to slay him on every side. As a last resort Paul used his right of citizenship and appealed to Rome for redress. Israelites were Paul's accusers during "Acts"; after "Acts", the Emperor was the accuser, " ... death to Christians."

The great doctrines of the Ephesian-Colossian Letters would

109

conclusively invalidate such statements as found in Acts 26:6, 7, 22 & 28:20. Statements such as these as well as those in the 9th, 10th & 11th chapters of Romans only have meaning if the Hope of Israel had not been set aside. They have no application now since another hope has been revealed.

3. Internal and External Evidence

in dating Paul's Later Letters

1. Philippians

Nero's edict of "Death to the Christians" occurred in A.D. 64. Note the following texts from Philippians:

Phil. 1:12-15 Howbeit I am minded brethren that ye should be getting to know that the things which relate unto myself rather unto an advancement of the glad message have fallen out, So that my bonds have become manifest in Christ in the whole Praetorium, and unto all the rest, and so that most of the brethren in The Lord, assured by my bonds, are becoming more abundantly bold to be fearlessly speaking The Word of God: Some indeed by reason of envy and strife, some however by reason of good will are proclaiming The Christ:

Wherever Paul was chained as he penned this letter, it was becoming obvious to all that his chains were for the cause of Christ. Although in chains, his position seemed to work favorably to the advancement of the glad-tidings. On the one hand this response engendered jealousy in the Imperial Household, but encouraged boldness amongst believers. Paul saw this as a possibly providential way of deliverance:

For I know that this shall turn unto me for salvation (deliverance) (Phil.1:19^a).

110

In spite of this momentary popularity of this message in the very center of Roman power, Paul's life might still be forfeit:

Phi1.2:17^a Nay! if I am even to be poured out as a drink-offering upon the sacrifice and public ministry of your faith.

The temper of the times could easily swing away from Paul. The Philippian Letter closes with a strange salutation. This would have been totally impossible after Nero's edict since no believer's salutation from Caesar's Household would have been feasible after the issuance of the Imperial Edict. Note:

All the saints salute you, but especially they who are of Caesar's Household (Phil. 4:22).

The above also reminds one of the closing words of the Book of Acts:

... with all freedom of speech without hindrance.

The favorable reception afforded Paul's message in Rome may have resulted in Paul being released as tradition teaches -- with a subsequent journey to Spain. See longer note on Philippians, page 118.

2. II Timothy

The dating of 2 Timothy in respect to Paul's imprisonment, Nero's Edict, and the Book of Acts, is difficult. From 2 Timothy it is evident that certain changes were taking place. Wuest's translation shows the gathering storm:

During my self defense at the preliminary trial, not even one person appeared in court, taking his stand at my side as a friend of mine, but all let me down. May it not be put to their account ... and I was drawn to His side out of the Lion's mouth (4:16, 17b).

So, the Letter seems to mark the preliminary part of the first

111

trial, and in contrast to the optimistic note of Philippians, there is a sense of brooding loneliness and despair. Wuest again captures this pathos in translating 2 Timothy 4:6:

For my life's blood is already being poured out as a libation, and the time of my departure is already present.

Also, a course of ministry is finished with 2 Timothy:

**I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I
have kept the Faith (4:7).**

Paul had strained, agonized, and contested for The Truth of God as revealed to him up to this time. He had finished the course laid out for him, and was resting at its goal. He had guarded well the faith that had been committed to his trust. See Gr. text of 2 Tim. 1:12.

The book itself speaks of a visit to Troas, Corinth, and Miletus (4:13, 20) that doesn't fit into Paul's earlier journeys, these might indicate a release from prison and a subsequent re-arrest.

The substance of the doctrines taught in 2 Timothy are in tune more with Romans, Galatians, the Corinthian and Thessalonian Letters rather than The Mystery of Ephesians and Colossians. The addition of the words, "... of the Gentiles" (1:11), are lacking in all the critical Greek texts. The "Last Days" of chapter three sound suspiciously like the "Last Days" of 2 Peter 3:3, and Jude 18, a covering term embracing the events associated with the first and Second advent of Christ. Why some should associate the "Last Days" of 2 Timothy with the Mystery when the meaning of the term has already been settled in Scripture ...? The traditional meaning follows the adjuration of 2 Timothy 4:1 both as to intent and meaning, and this within prophetic times as the text indicates:

**I adjure thee before God, and Christ Jesus -
Who is about to be judging living and dead,
Both as to His Forthshining and His Kingdom.**

The above text no doubt is speaking of the judging and

testing of 2 Timothy 1:18; 2:12; & 4:8. These events are also mentioned in Phil. 1:6, 10, & 2:16. The "laying on of hands" and Paul's exhortation to Timothy to "fan the flame" of the charismatic gift given to him (2 Tim. 1:6) is in keeping with the bestowal of this type of gift in Acts 8:18 & 19:6, gifts belonging to a by-gone Acts program having nothing in common with the temporary "gift of men" (Eph.4:11) to the Body of Christ for the "adjustment of the Saints" (Eph.4:12),

away from the Pentecostal Hope of the Acts period, and to The Great Mystery truths of the Ephesian - Colossian Letters.

The message of which Paul was made a minister, 2 Tim. 1:11-14, might only seem to be the same truths as The Mystery of the Ephesian & Colossian Letters if the texts are given but a cursory reading. However, the texts in 2 Timothy compare more favorably with 1 Peter:

2 Timothy 1:9-11 Compare 1 Peter 1:18-21

Who has saved us, and has Knowing that ye have been
called us with a holy calling, not redeemed, not by corruptible
according to our works, but silver or gold, from your vain
according to His own purpose conversation handed down and grace, which was
given to from fathers, but by precious us in Christ Jesus before ages blood, as of
a lamb without
of time, but has been made manifest, (the blood) of Christ,
fest now by the appearing of our foreknown indeed before the
Savior Jesus Christ, Who has foundation of the world, but annulled death, and
brought to Who has been manifested at light life and incorruptibility the end
times for your sakes,
by the glad tidings; to which who by Him do believe on
I have been appointed a herald God, Who has raised Him
and apostle and teacher of from among the dead, and
nations. given Him glory, that your faith and hope should be in God

(J. N. Darby's Translation)

While the "purpose and grace" of this calling was "before the ages" still nothing is said about it being "hidden", nor was it made manifest after the close of The Book of Acts, but by its very terms, it

was made manifest by the FIRST ADVENT of Christ, see verse 10.

The message spoken of in 2 Timothy has to do with "life and immortality" as being "In Christ". This is what was brought to light by Christ's resurrection from among the dead. Peter stresses that redemption was also foreknown and manifest when that precious blood was shed and Christ was raised from the dead. Both 2 Timothy 1:9-11 & I Peter 1:18-21 have a pre-world dating.

In respect to the messages of I Peter and 2 Timothy it Should hardly need stating that "Life In Christ" is an absolute and primary prerequisite of a vital relationship with God. Life in Christ is a foundational truth and must of necessity coincide with the precious blood of Christ. This truth is assumed in the Ephesian-Colossian Letters. Nor, would they be possible without this premise, since the only life that God accepts is one that has been co-mingled with that of Christ's. It is basic to The Mystery to have one's life "hid with Christ in God" (Col. 3:3), and "Christ, the Life of us (Col. 3:4), epitomizes and reveals Christ as an illustration of what the full measure will be of what we will be to God. And Christ is the full; depiction of all that God will be to us. This is a quality of life that will be in constant fulfillment long after earth's ages have run their little day. The truth that life and incorruptibility are only found in Christ has been obscured by the teaching that man by his inherent nature is naturally immortal. Scripture teaches that only Christ has immortality, I Tim.1:16. Immortality or incorruptibility has to do with resurrection, as I Cor. 15:53 testifies. If it is some thing to be "put on" then man does not have it naturally. Life in Christ is a life that has Christ for its center and periphery, as well as partaking of Christ's very life vitality by the creative activity of God's Spirit in us.

3. 1 Timothy

I Timothy and Titus present no internal evidence that they are in any way letters written from prison. Nor is there any external evidence suggesting that Paul was a prisoner when he addressed them to Timothy and Titus respectively. The text of I Timothy 1:3 is hopelessly confusing since no record exists as to when Paul on a journey to Macedonia ordered Timothy to abide in Ephesus. The contrary is the case as Acts 19:22 states:

So he sent into Macedonia two of them that

114

ministered unto him, Timotheus and Erastus, but he himself stayed in Asia for a season.

Paul had two stays in Ephesus. Acts 18:19 records a brief stopover while Acts 19:31 tells of three years being spent there. If the letter of I Timothy is sent to correct a situation at Ephesus, then the letter is inexplicable and Paul's lengthy ministry at Ephesus is incomprehensible. In reading a multitude of authorities on the Greek text of I Timothy 1:3 one is struck by the confusion caused by the ambiguity of the text itself. As Kenneth Wuest states, "The construction is left dangling in the air." To solve the dilemma may be impossible at this late date. Possibly another factor enters into this question, and it might have a bearing upon the Titus Epistle as well. Earlier in this study it was suggested that Paul had been released from the restraints upon him after the close of Acts. The closing words of Acts certainly rounds out Paul's Acts ministry but it also implies that a change took place after the two years ministry in his hired house. If this change had been the death of Paul, Luke would have mentioned it. A release of Paul after the close of Acts is an alternative to his death, an alternative that is traditional and based upon the writings of the so-called early church fathers. Of either conjecture the evidence is on the side of a release. A release explains the difficulties involved with both letters of Timothy and Titus. Clement of Rome wrote:

Paul won the noble renown which was the reward of his faith, having taught righteousness unto the whole world, and having reached the furthest bound of the West.

This probably means Spain, as he hoped to do, Rom. 15:24, 28. The Muratorian fragment (A.D. 170) mentions the "departure of Paul from the city to Spain." Eusebius (HE, 11 22:2) states that at the end of the two years of imprisonment, the Apostle went forth again upon the ministry of preaching, and on a second visit to the city (Rome) ended his career by martyrdom under Nero. While this only raises the degree of probability of Paul's release and re-arrest, the alternative offers no evidence whatever. These very epistles might well be the history of those post-Acts years of ministry. The scanty nature of the evidence cannot be used against it since nearly the entire labors of the twelve apostles are not recorded at all, and

even during the Acts ministry of Paul whole years are passed over without mention. The only reasonable objection would be that it is difficult to account for the rapid apostasy apparent between the first and second letters of Timothy. If the pressure was from the political climate of the Empire in which no time was allowed for spiritual maturity, then this would help account for it.

The wonderful Gospel by which Paul was saved, and with which he was entrusted for others, is given a worthy prominence in these letters. No mention is made of The Great Mystery of the Ephesian-Colossian Letters.

4. Titus

The Epistle of Titus, like I Timothy, is difficult to place if one rejects a post-Acts release of Paul. It is not written from prison. Paul had left Titus on Crete (Titus 1:5) to set things in order there. The only recorded visit of Paul to Crete was when he was enroute to Rome, Acts 27:7-12. It is unlikely that this is the trip spoken of in this letter. Paul was looking forward to meeting Titus in Nicopolis, Titus 3:12. Whether this was the city by that name in Cilicia, or Thrace, or Epirus is unknown but likely it was that in Epirus. As in 2 Timothy, "life" before the ages, promised and made manifest, is the hope expressed in Titus 1:2, & 3:

In hope of life, age-abiding; which God Who
cannot lie, promised before age-during times,
But hath manifested in its fitting seasons,
even His Word in the proclamation with which
entrusted am I, by injunction of our Saviour God.,

Unless one knows when The Scriptural ages had their beginning, the meaning of the phrase, "before age-times" will re-main obscure. The hope of life promised before age-times might well correspond with the "Book of Life" mentioned in Phil.4:3. The book of life dates from the foundation of the *cosmos*, to which this Titus dating of life may refer. Notice how the book of Revelation uses the term:

116

Rev. 17:8 Rev. 13:8

... whose names were not ... Whose names are not written in the Book of Life not written in the from the foundation of the Book of Life of The of the world ...
Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

Rev. 21:27 fulfills the Book of Life in Abraham's City. This city also figures in the hope of the Galatian Letter, 4:25-31, and the Hebrew Epistle, Heb. 11:10. Are the terms, "Before the Ages be-gan" and "From the Foundation of the World",

different in meaning? It is possible that the ages refer to man and the *cosmos* to a system in which he would find himself.

Titus and I Timothy have much to say about the appointing of elders bishops, and deacons. These words have long ago lost their original simple meaning. An elder was simply an older person. A deacon was a servant. A bishop was one who had over-sight. There were no bishop rings or robes. The order set forth in Titus and I Timothy was that of the Jewish synagogue, including the place of marriage for bishops, the role of the family, and women in general. The qualifications for elders (Gr. *presbuteros*) is given in the Titus and Timothy epistles; the duties of over-seeing (*episkopeo*) in Titus, I Timothy, and I Peter. Elders are frequently mentioned in the book of Revelation. No "elder; "bishop", or "priest" is spoken of in the Ephesian-Colossian Letters. If the Body of Christ is fully observing the Unity of Ephesians 4; giving place to Christ's Perfect Headship, what place is there for elders and bishops? Who now has the authority of heaven, as the Apostles had in the book of Acts, to lay hands on another to call them to this office and duty? Denominational bonds are no proof that The Christ of the Heavens is sanctioning any organizations today. Nor because some claim to be apostles, prophets, pastors, elders, priests, and bishops -- does this make them so.

5. Ephesians & Colossians

Paul spoke of his Lord as his Captor. Even while the

116

dreaded Nero forged his bonds Paul saw himself as by another captive taken. The Christ had captured his heart so long ago.

Ephesians 3:1 Ephesians 4:1

For this cause, I Paul, I exhort you therefore, I the Prisoner of Christ Jesus the Prisoner in The Lord, in behalf of you the nations: to walk in a manner worthy of the calling wherewith ye were called.

Not only did Paul thus justify God but saw his circumstances as a part of God's out-going grace -- Oh, to know The One whose resources are infinite and whose love is fathomless so that our spiritual lives may thrive in spite of circumstances.

In Ephesians 6:19, 20 Paul requests prayer for himself. But he asks for no freedom from the "coupling-chain" that bound him. Instead he asks for boldness and that his lips be not stilled, but that he might make known The Mystery as he

ought. He did not seek proof of God's favor by being delivered from the tyrant as we would want to do, nor seek to be prospered in material comforts. So the greatest of all apostles was left in chains, but bequeathing to us these sacred Letters that breathe the breath of a life molded into the likeness of Christ under the most trying circumstances.

This imprisonment was the occasion used of God to reveal to Paul, and through him to us of the nations, the most sublime truths ever given to man. The Apostle's thoughts are lifted beyond the barriers of time and place -- ranging into the heavenlies, always exalting in The Person and Glory of The Lord Jesus, always assenting to the purposes of God. In these lofty Letters whole concepts are compressed into a word, the whole of redemption into a phrase. He paints the glory and consummation of God's love and grace with bold strokes and sees no less a triumph than that we all shall be in the likeness of the stature of The Fullness of Christ. He sees all of Israel's religion, all its types, symbols and shadows as being fulfilled in Christ; and in Him done away. He sees Christ as The First-born of all creation and as First-born, the promise that all creation will be redeemed and blest. Paul sees Christ as The Architect and Pattern from whence all comes and to which all

117

moves, and in Him the glory of what yet shall be. In some wonderful way Paul in calling himself the Prisoner of Christ Jesus felt that he was a captive for God's own purposes, referring to the chains in terms of the glad-tiding of the Mystery (Eph. 6:19, 20). This great truth is bound up in Paul's sufferings just as is the Body of Christ, Col. 1:24 and Paul truly rejoiced in his sufferings if it meant the advancement of this great truth. His immediate success was measured by his loneliness, not fellowship or popularity. He looked into the future and saw it as an occasion for God to keep on manifesting the graciousness of His character in lavishly showing forth the excelling riches of His grace:

Eph. 2:7 This did He, to show forth, in the

ages now imminent, the transcendent

wealth of His free grace, in loving

kindness to us who are united to

Christ Jesus. A. S. Way's *Trans.*

It is so typical that Paul should bow his knees in prayer and praise to such a Father, praying that all should get to know in an experimental way, as he had, the knowledge excelling multidimensional love of Christ (Eph. 3:14-19). This same love had filled his own heart and flooded the cell in which he was imprisoned. With a heart so surfeited he had confidence in God's love and grace being a vital factor in the on-coming ages. This is the type of maturity that is a direct result of our resting in full confidence in God's unchanging faithfulness, and from being "jointly-bound" with Christ our Head (Col. 2:19, Gr. *sundesmos*).

6. The Joint Epistles of Ephesians, Colossians, and Philemon

This is an enlargement of the afore-going. In each of these letters Paul is a Prisoner. How graciously Paul associates his chains with His Lord:

Eph. 3:1 For this cause I Paul, the Prisoner of Christ Jesus, in behalf of you the nations.

4:1 I exhort you, therefore, I the Prisoner in The Lord.

Col. 4:3b ... to speak the Mystery of Christ, for the sake of which also I am in bonds.

118

Philemon 1^a Paul, the Prisoner of Christ Jesus...

9 Yet for love's sake, I rather exhort,

being such a one as Paul, the aged, now

also even a Prisoner of Christ Jesus.

In the Ephesian-Colossian passages above, the ministry of this "Prisoner of Christ Jesus" has to do with The Great Secret or Mystery addressed to believers from all nations. The Letter of Philemon was a personal letter from Paul to Philemon, carried by Paul's messenger Tychicus, as he also carried the Ephesian Copy, the Colossian Copy, and of course the Letter to Philemon (See Eph. 6:21; Col. 4:7-9). To give shelter to a run-a-way slave was a major crime., and to carry any correspondence such as in the case of Onesimus would be a capital offense. To add "smuggling of slaves" to this action would compound the crime. All this makes the Letter of Philemon the more remarkable.

Paul, Prisoner of Nero, was growing old in his chains:

Eph.6:20 On behalf of which (The Mystery)

I am growing old in my chains.

The Greek word translated, "ambassador" in the A.V., "*presbeuo*" means "one advanced in years". This and not "ambassador" was the first meaning, and ambassador, the secondary. This is the same thought that Paul expresses to Philemon, and is used as a grounds of his appeal as he begs for the life of Onesimus:

Philemon 9 ... Being such a one as Paul, the aged ...

Of this same Onesimus Paul writes so beautifully:

Philemon 10 I exhort thee concerning my own child

whom I have begotten (gave birth to) in my bonds, Onesimus!

Paul links his bonds and the grace of God together as he closes the great Colossian Letter:

119

Col. 4:18 Keep ever in mind my chains,

Grace be with you!

If God was so disposed as to leave this favored Apostle in chains, albeit strengthened in the inner man, then all of us can rest also in the fact that God will continue to be gracious to the world, and to His own, He will not treat one above another, nor with acts of judgment, miracles and signs show partiality in order that grace might have its reign in the world. Once this pattern is broken then indeed pure grace has abdicated.

In both the Colossian and Philemon Letter an unusual word is used for "prisoner".

Sunaichmalotos

***sun* = together, joint, equal.**

Derived *aichme* = a spear

from: *haliskomai* = to be taken

Translation: "To be taken as a joint-captive of the spear".

This word occurs in Romans 16:7, but from the context of this chapter and from the 15th chapter it is quite clear that Paul was not in chains as he wrote the Roman Epistle. So the reference in Romans must have a reference to a past experience and from which he was cleared. It is also clear that Paul was a Prisoner when he wrote or caused to be written the Ephesian, Colossian and Philemon Letters.

Colossians 4:10 Philemon 23

Aristarchus, my fellow- There salute thee

captive of the Spear, Epaphras, my fellow-

saluteth you. captive of the Spear

in Christ Jesus.

If this term is taken in its literal sense, then an insight is given to us of the political tempter of the times in which these Letters were written. It is most generally assumed that these letters of Paul were written in A.D. 64 to 68. It is to be remembered that these are the first written notices of The Great Mystery and its attending

120

truths. If a time-lap was involved from their initial announcement to their full effectiveness, then they would in time reach beyond A.D. 70 as their operative date. While dates are difficult to fix, still this grand program of God's grace is a part of our historical heritage, it was done or initiated during the reign of Nero. Of his fame much has been written, due to his very infamy. Scripture throws light on history, but without history there would be no Scripture. What follows is to be pondered, even it is not conclusive.

The tolerance with which Rome first regarded the Christians had given place to ruthless hostility under Nero's Imperial Edict issued in A.D. 64 after the fire of Rome. This was followed by another edict that Christians were to be considered,

"Enemies of the world". As such it is unlikely that one such as Paul, a ringleader of the sect, should escape while others were to be seized, examined by torture, and if they but owned The Name of The Lord Jesus, were to be put to death. As official "enemies of the state" they would be "Prisoners of the Spear", and once certified as true enemies, have no further rights of appeal. Normally, he would be "led in triumph" in some Imperial parade of captives, made sport of in the arena, then slain.

Is Paul giving to us the final verdict in his case? He is now Paul the Aged, and a Captive of the Spear. Also, Timothy is no longer distant from Paul, as in 2 Timothy, but is with him, and in the Colossian and Philemon Letters his name graces the salutation. Mark had come with Timothy as requested, 2 Tim. 4:11, cp. Col. 4:10 & Philemon 24. Luke was there, and Demas had returned from his wanderings (Col. 4:14). Now Paul could truly send these Letters and say:

.. according to the dispensation of God, which is given

me toward you, TO COMPLETE THE WORD OF
GOD. Col. 1:25.

SECTION THREE

1. The Mystery Epistles

Most authors associate the Philippian Letter with the Mystery Epistles of Ephesians and Colossians. Also, because many of the truths of the Philippian Letter are empathetic to The Mystery,

121

a late or corresponding date is assigned to it. Some authors, such as J.B. Lightfoot, place the Philippian Letter closer to the Book of Romans. The merit of this may be judged from the following excerpts from his book on Philipians, pages 43 & 44:

PHILIPPIANS. ROMANS .

(1) i. 3, 4, 7, 8. I thank my i. 8 — 11. First I thank God in every mention of you at my God through Jesus all times in every request of mine Christ for you all ... *for*

... as ye all are partakers with *God is my witness* ... how me in grace ((τ η s χ α ρ ι τ ο s): *for* incessantly I make men-

God is my witness, how I long for tion of you at all times in you all in the bowels of Christ my prayers making re- Jesus. quest ... for I long to see you, that I may impart

some spiritual grace (χ α ρ ι σ μ α) to you.

(2) i. 10. That ye may approve ii. 18. Thou approvest the the things that are excellent. Things that are excellent.

(3) ii. 8, 9, 10, 11. He became xiv. 9, 11. For hereunto obedient unto death ... where- Christ died and lived (i.e.

fore God also highly exalted rose again), that He may Him ... that in the name of be Lord both of the dead

Jesus every knee may bow of and of the living ... For it knee may bow of things in heaven is written, I live, saith The en and things on earth and Lord: for in me every and things under the earth, knee shall bow and every and every tongue may confess tongue shall confess unto that Jesus Christ is Lord, &c. God (Isa. xiv. 23, 24). (4) ii 2 — 4. That ye may have xii, 16 — 19. Having the the same mind, having the same mind towards one same love, united in soul, having one another; not minding one mind: (Do) nothing in high things ... Be not wise, factiousness or vainglory, in your own conceits (φ ρ ο - ν ι μ ο ι π α ρ ε α υ τ ο ι s) ... having peace with all men: not avenging your own selves

but in humility holding one 10. In honor holding one

another Superior to yourselves. another in preference.

122

PHILIPPIANS ROMANS

(5) iii. 3. For we are the circum- ii. 28. For the (circumcision, cision) manifest in the

flesh is not circumcision ... but circumcision of the heart.

who serve (λ α τ ρ ε υ ο ν τ ε s) by i. 9. God Whom I serve (λ α τ -

The Spirit of God (θ ε ο υ ν . 1. ρ ε υ ω) in my spirit*

θεω), Spirit of God and boast v.11. Boasting in God in Christ Jesus... through our Lord Jesus Christ.

4. 5- If any other thinketh xi. 1. For I also am an to trust in the flesh, I more Israelite of the seed of Abraham ... of the race of Israel, the tribe of Benjamin.

(6) iii. 9. Not having my x. 3. Ignorant of the right- own righteousness which is of righteousness of God, and seeking law, but that which is through to establish their own (right-law, but that which is through the righteousness of Christ).

faith of Christ, the righteousness of God in faith... ix. 31, 32. Pursuing a law of righteousness ...not of faith, but as of works.

10, ii. Being made conform- vi. 5. For if we have been able (συμμορφιζομεν ος) un- planted (συμφυτοι

to His death, if by any means γεγοναμεν) in the likeness of may of attain unto the resurrection- His death, then shall we be resurrected from the dead: also of His resurrection. 21. That it may become conformable viii. 29 death, He foreordained (συμμορφον) to them conformable (συμ- the body of His glory. μορφους) to the image of His Son.

(7) iii.19 Whose end is destruction. vi. 21 For the end of those things is death

*The idea of the spiritual λατρεία appears again in Rom. xii. 1, τηνλογικην λατρειαν υμω, where this moral service of the Gospel is tacitly contrasted with the ritual service of the law as the living sacrifice to the dead victim. Compare also James i. 27 θρησκευει ακαθρακα ιαμιατος κ.τ.λ See the notes on Phil. ii. 3.

PHILIPPIANS ROMANS

whose God is their belly. xvi. 18 They serve not our Lord Christ but their own belly.

(8) iv. 18 Having received xii, 1 To present your bodies from Epaphroditus the a living sacrifice, holy, well-

(gifts) from you, an odour pleasing to God. of a sweet savour, a sacrifice acceptable, well pleasing to God.

Some verbal coincidences besides might be pointed out, on which however no stress can be laid*.

The Philippian Letter intimates a crisis in Paul's life and ministry - as if some thing was approaching an end. Looking at the critical text of Phil. 1:22 & 23 Paul is stating that he was not making his preference known concerning the future should his labors still continue on, but he was being pressed out of the two previous choices into a third. A similar ambiguity is suggested in Phil.3:12 & 13a:

* I have observed the following words and expressions common to these two epistles only, though occurring elsewhere in the New Testament; ἀποκαραδοκία, Rom. viii. 19, Phil. i. 20; ἀχρῖτου νύ νυ Rom. viii. 22, Phil. i. 5; ἐξέρθειαι Rom. viii. 29, Phil. iii. 21; προσδεχέσθαι Κυρίω Rom. xvi. 2, Phil. ii. 29; besides one or two which occur in the parallels quoted in the text. Compare also Rom.

xiv. 14 οἰδακαίπεπεισμαί, with Phil. i. 25 τοῦτοπεποιθὸς οἰδα .. The following are found in St. Paul in these two epistles only, though not occurring elsewhere in the New Testament; ἀκεραῖος, Rom. xvi. 19, Phil. ii, 15 (comp. Matt. x. 16); ἐπιζητεῖν Rom. xi, 7, Phil. iv. 17

(common elsewhere); λειτούργος Rom. xiii. 6, xv. 16, Phil ii. 25 (comp. Heb. i. 7, viii. 2); οκνηρός, Rom. xii. 11, Phil. iii. 1 (comp. Mat. xxv. 26); υπερεχθεῖν, Rom. xiii. 1, Phil. ii.3, iii. 8, iv. 7 (comp. 1 Pet. ii. 13); ομοιωμα, Rom. i. 23, v. 14, vi. 5, viii. 3, Phil. ii. 7 (comp. Rev. ix. 7); and perhaps μενοῦν γε, Rom. ix. 20, x. 18, Phil. iii. 8 (comp. Luke xi. 28).

124

Phil. 3:12 Not that I have already received,

Or have already reached perfection,

But I am pressing on –

if I may even lay hold of that for

which I have also been laid hold

of by Christ Jesus:

3:13a Brethren! I, as to myself, reckon

that I have not yet laid hold;

Paul wrote as if he was unsure of what God might yet have in store for him. If it was The Mystery, then Philippians would take its place at the threshold of the Ephesian-Colossian writing. Philippians could well be a pivotal letter since Philippians goes beyond the "Jew first" of Romans, but it still falls short of announcing the Mystery.

The Philippiian 3:1-9 passages present the Great Renunciation by Paul of his former great national heritage. This is in contradistinction to Romans 9:1-5 and 11:1-5, i.e., where Israel is still having an active role in God's program, even though it was a negative role. Paul then reminded his readers that he is a Jew, and that what God had done for him personally was what He could yet do (at that time) for the whole nation. At this present time not one of the privileges listed in Romans as showing Israel's preferential place in God's program is operative. Nor is there a "sample-remnant" of spiritual Israelites in existence today. The Jew of today is not the "Israel of God", or a "Son-heir", or "The Adoption", or a "Priestly Nation". They are not functioning under either the Old or New Covenants. The "Middle wall of Partition" as epitomized in the perfect flesh of their Messiah -- testifying as it did to their distinction from other nations, was "broken Down" when His flesh was crucified. In His "slaying" the enmity was also slain. See Gr. text of Eph. 2:14-16. It followed that the "Law of Commandments in decrees", Eph. 2:15, and the "Handwriting in Ordinances", Col. 2:14, (that was so much a part of Israel's life) were all wiped out; canceled by nailing it to a tree, Col. 2:14; Eph. 2:16. This was the ancient method of showing that a "bond" was fulfilled and canceled.

The "Great Renunciation" of Phil. 3:1-9 forms a logical stepping-stone to the later Mystery truths revealed in Ephesians and Colossians.

125

The "Out-resurrection, out from among the dead" that Paul was so uncertain of attaining, and the "Prize of the On-High Call of God" that drew him onward, Phil. 3:11 & 14, is more than realized in the further Mystery revelation that all

were jointly made alive, jointly raised, and jointly seated in the heavenlies, in Christ. Eph. 2:5, 6.

The place where Philippians was written is generally accepted as being in Rome. Some feel it to have been written in Caesarea before Paul's Roman imprisonment. If this latter was true then the epistle would not have been fraught with life or death issues since Paul could have exercised his rights as a Roman citizen and have obtained the protection of the Emperor.

The Writing of Ephesians, Colossians, and Philemon

The Ephesian, Colossian, and Philemon are closely related inasmuch as they were penned nearly at the same time, all were carried by Tychicus to cities in the Lycus valley, see Eph. 1:1; 6:21; Col. 1:2; 4:7, & 8. Paul appended the Philemon Letter to that of Colossians, Col. 4:9, in order to return Onesimus, a run-a-way slave, to his master, Philemon.* While all three letters are written from

* God's Household of believers, ruled by His grace, is seen operating in this Letter. How is a believer to act in respect to "Slavery?" The Letter is a plea for reconciliation between Master and Slave based upon the kinship each possesses in their mutual Life in Christ, in Whom all are equally "Son-Heirs". The Slave was to be received as though he was the Apostle Paul. Just as we are, "Accepted in The Beloved", Eph. 1:6. The "Joint-heirs, joint-body, and joint-partakers of the promise" (Eph. 3:6), is an equality that nullifies all human distinctions of class, race, social standing, color, nationality, education, language, or culture. Paul's plea is patterned after the redemption each of us has in Christ. Our debt is put to His account, and we are an "Onesimus", one who has run away from God, and have] been returned in the person and merit of His Son. Paul could have "commanded" and defined the issues. He could have suggested an out-] right revolt - and history records such a revolt with its blood-bath that found no survivors. Instead, he suggests a Christ-likeness that makes us find in others, a "brother beloved".

prison, the Philemon Letter makes no mention of The Mystery of Ephesians and Colossians. It is, however, one of the most beautiful letters ever written, full of grace and full of Christ.

Between Ephesians and Colossians there exists an unmistakable bond of doctrine, frequently expressed in almost identical words. It is entirely likely that Col. 4:16 is an appeal for an exchange of these two epistles.

The Ephesian Title

The title of the book, "To the Ephesians" and the words, "at (or in) Ephesus" appear in all the manuscripts since the fourth century. They do not appear in Ms. Alpha and B, nor Ms. 67, nor in the Laurentian Ms. (II or 12C). Origen (C 250) used a text in which these words are missing. Basil (C 370) stated that no text of his day had these words. Marcion (C 140) did not have the words, "... at Ephesus" in his text, and he spoke of the Epistle as the "Epistle to the Laodiceans". This would correspond with Paul's words in Col. 4:16. Nor did Tertullian (C 200) have the words "at Ephesus" in the text used by him.

The Epistle is not local in character, but is intended for general or wide circulation -- just as are the Galatian Letter (sent to the Province of Galatia), James and Peter (to the Twelve Tribes of the Dispersion, Revelation to the Seven Churches in Asia and the book of Hebrews to those of Judaic background. It is obvious that encyclical letters were the rule at that at that time – even the little Letter of Philemon was addressed to the church in that home.

The internal character of the Ephesian Letter is unusual; no personal references are made. Paul had been over two years in the City of Ephesus, Acts 19:10, 22, and a letter as long as this could hardly have been addressed to friends without some mention of their love and faithfulness. The Epistle suggests that Paul is speaking to the largest possible audience of believers and those predominantly unknown to him:

Eph. 1:15 Wherefore I also, after I heard of

your faith in The Lord Jesus...

Most likely a blank space was in the original letter where we now read the words, "... at Ephesus". Or, the original could have read, "... to the saints who are also faithful, in Christ Jesus." Whatever locality receiving this letter would understandably associate it with themselves just as we do when we read it. The inner content of this letter and that of Colossians would fit the non-local use of the word "Church" (Gr. *Ekklesia*). It is not used of a mere local assembly, but in a much higher sense, i.e., the out-called of believers from all nations forming the

Body of Christ. Such an out-calling is assumed as deriving its life from Christ, as being patterned after Christ (the stupendous life of Christ is continued in us, and His history is reproduced in us) and Christ being the sum-total of what the future will be for that Body as its rightful and only Head.

If Tychicus followed the normal routing of this letter he would have first gone to Ephesus as the capital of Proconsular Asia. At Ephesus copies would be made and sent out to other localities. The cities of Laodicea, Colosse, and Hierapolis (The City of Priests) were very close to Ephesus in the Lycus Valley.

Shonfield's *Authentic New Testament* has a charming way of captioning the Ephesian Letter:

TO THE COMMUNITIES OF ASIA

The Ephesian Copy

Earlier it was suggested that the Ephesian Letter was also the Epistle of the Laodiceans mentioned in Col. 4:16:

And when this Epistle is read among you, cause that it be read also in the Church of the Laodiceans; and that ye likewise read the Epistle from Laodicea.

In keeping with the lack of local color in the Ephesian Letter the same is also strongly suggested of the Colossians, Laodiceans, and others by Paul's statement in Col .2:1:

For! want you to perceive the stupendous struggle I am having for your sakes and for those in Laodicea, and as many as have not seen my face in flesh.

C.V.

128

This text and Col. 4:16 raises the question of trying to identify the Laodicean Letter. The following suggestions are put forward:

- 1. That there was at that time an existing Laodicean Letter.**

There is a 300 word Letter known by that name found in some Latin Bibles. It is placed after either Colossians or Hebrews. It is merely a collection of Pauline quotations, and cannot be the text spoken of in Col. 4:16. ,

2. A completely lost book. The Letter Paul wrote was to be read by several churches, this would involve duplication and circulation. A letter of this importance would hardly be lost. The constant interchange between these cities is readily seen by reading Col. 4:15.

3. The most simple explanation is that the Ephesian Letter is the same as the Laodicean "Copy". Marcion expressly called the Ephesian Sinaitic MSS omit the word "... at Ephesus". Origen's text merely read, "to the saints who are _____ being also faithful." Basil of Caesarea, states this was the common reading in the most ancient MSS. The blank in the MSS caused some problems that make interesting reading. Tertullian clearly testified of a blank left in the Ephesian Letter.

4. John Knox felt that the Philemon Letter was the Laodicean Letter. His grounds are unknown.

The Interrelationship of the Ephesian - Colossian Letters

The diversity of the two letters call for each to be a supplement of the other. The likeness of subject matter in both books is easily seen, as well as the fact that this same material is carried to divergent ends. Where different goals are reached for it is to be expected that these truths would be designedly intertwined. The repetitions are masterly set forth in different settings, each strengthening the different lines of revelation in respect to The Mystery until the composite whole is seen reaching back before the

founding of the cosmos, and reaching forward so that all of creation is re-affirmed in the New Humanity in Christ, thus made joint-sharers of that promise in Christ (Eph. 3:6).

Both books abound in similar expressions and phraseology as the following interesting texts demonstrate: Rotherham Text.

Ephesians Colossians

1:7 In Whom we have the redemption through His blood,

1:14 In Whom we have our the redemption, the remission of the remission of our offences ... our sins ...

1:17 That The God of our Lord 1:9 ... that ye may be filled

Jesus Christ, The Father of unto the personal knowledge

Glory, would give you a spirit of of His will in all spiritual wisdom and discernment. ...

Wisdom and understanding in gaining a personal knowledge of Him.

2:1 Unto you also, being dead 2:13 And as for you, who

by your offences and sins ... were dead by your offences and by the uncircumcision of your flesh

2:11 ... who are called Uncircumcision by the so-called Circumcision in flesh made by hand uncircumcision of your flesh...

2:13 ... who were dead by - your offences and by the

3:6-9 That they who are of the nations should be joint heirs, and a joint body, and joint partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through of the glad message, of which I was made a minister, according to the free-

1:25-27 Of which I have become minister -- according to administration of God which hath been given unto me to you-ward, to fill up (complete) The Word of God, the sacred secret, which had been hidden

gift of the favor (grace) of God
which was given to me accord-
ing to the energy of His power:
unto me, the less than least --

away from the ages and from
the generations, but now hath
been manifest unto His saints
unto whom God hath been

130

Ephesians Colossians

of all saints was given
this favor (grace), unto the
nations to announce the glad-
message of the Untraceable
Riches of The Christ, and to
bring to light, What is the
administration of the sacred
secret, which had been hidden
away from the ages in God,
Who did all things create.

pleased to make known what
is the wealth of this sacred
secret among the nations,
which is Christ in you, the
hope of glory.

4:15, 16 ... may in love grow
into Him in all things, Who is
The Head, Christ, out of Whom
all of the Body fitly framing
all the Body fitly framing itself

2:19 And not holding fast the
Head: from which all the
Body through means of its
joints and uniting bands,
receiving supply, and connec-

together, and connecting itself,
through means of every joint of
supply, by means of energizing
in the measure of each single
part, securing the growing of
the Body, unto an upbuilding of
itself in love.

4:22-24 That ye were to strip off
as regardeth the former behav-
ior, the old man who corrupteth
himself according to his deceit-
ful covetings, and were to be
getting young again in the spirit
of your mind, and were to put on
the man of new mold who after
God hath been created in His
truthful righteousness and loving
kindness.

5:15, 16 Be taking heed there-
fore exactly how ye are walking,
not as unwise, but as wise, buy-

ting itself together, groweth
with the growth of God.

3:9, 10 Be not guilty of
falsehood one to another:
having stript off the old man
together with his practices,
and having put on the new,
who is being molded afresh
unto personal knowledge,
after the image of Him that
hath created him.

4:5 In wisdom be walking
toward them who are without,
the opportunity buying out for

Ephesians, continued Colossians, continued

ing out for yourselves the opportunity because the days are evil.

5:19, 20 Speaking to yourselves with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs; singing and striking the strings with your heart unto The Lord; giving thanks always for all things, in The Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, Unto your God and Father.

and whatsoever ye may be doing in word or in work, all things do in The Name Of The Lord Jesus, giving thanks unto The Divine Father through Him.

In addition to the above Eph. 5:22-6:9 is to be compared with Col. 3:18-4:1. Eph. 6:18-20 compares with Col. 4:2-4. Eph. 6:21, 22 compares with Col. 4:7,8.

A large portion of the Ephesian Letter has to do with Christ in His various relationships as Head of the Church, His Body. This is also true of the Colossian

yourselves.

3:16, 17 Let The Word of Christ dwell within you in all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another, with Psalms, hymns, spiritual songs, with gratitude raising song with your hearts unto God:

Letter but the emphasis and center of attention is different in each letter although there are parallels or equivalents:

Ephesians Colossians

In the following verses Christ's In the following verses

Headship is OVER ALL THINGS Headship is OVER ALL and

in behalf of, for the benefit of, through all not merely in be-

the Church, His Body. Christ is half of the Body of Christ, but

here the Representative Head & that in order He HIMSELF

Pattern for His Body of Believers. might become pre-eminent in

ALL THINGS.

Eph. 1:19-23 And what the sur-
passing greatness of His power __

Col. 1:15, 16 Who is (an)
Image (Eikon) of The Unseen

132

Ephesians, continued Colossians, continued

unto us who believe, according
to the energy of the grasp of His
might which He energized in The
Christ when He raised Him from
among the dead, and seated Him
(as we are jointly-seated, Eph.
2: 6) at His right hand in the
heavenlies, over-above all prin-

God, Firstborn of all Cre-
ation. BECAUSE IN HIM
were created all things ... they
all through Him and for Him
have been created, and He is
before all, and they all in Him
hold together (vs. 17).
(As The IMAGE of God,

ciality, authority, and power,
and lordship, and every name us.

that is named, not only in this
age but also in the coming one,
and did put ALL THINGS in
subjection beneath His feet.

And gave Him (Christ) to be
Head OVER ALL THINGS
unto the Assembly. Which but

Indeed IS HIS BODY, The
FULNESS of Him Who the Body,
ALL THINGS IN ALL is
For Himself filling up.

order that He might become
in all things Himself preeminent,

The text of Eph. 1:23 has been subject to a great deal of research by many. Some have suggested that it be translated:

The Church which is His Body, the complement of Him Who is completed in all in every way.

Another suggestion is that it should read, "Him Who perfects or completes everything, who brings everything to its perfection.

The following texts draw a typical Colossian emphasis by deliberately pointing up the relationship between The Fullness of the Godhood as it pertains to Christ Himself, and that fullness the Body] of Christ has IN HIM:

Christ communicated God to
As The FIRSTBORN of
all creation He has the right
and duty to redeem (vs. 14), to
restore (vs. 13) and to bless all
that would follow, i.e., all cre-
ation, (vs. 16b). This is inclu-
sion of Rom. 8:22; Phil. 2:11
MUCH MORE.) 1:18.

And He is The Head of the
the Assembly, Who is
The Beginning (Chief), First-
born from among the dead in

Col. 2:9 Because in Him (Christ) resides ALL

THE FULNESS of The GODHEAD bodily, i.e., substantially.

2:10 And, ye are IN HIM filled full (complete) ...

Compare: 1:19 Because IN HIM was ALL THE FULLNESS well pleased to dwell!

The expression, "The Fullness" is without restriction or limit in any way, it means the attributes and totality of The Godhood.

The Ephesian emphasis on this same theme is seen in the following texts, notice the shift back to the Body of Christ ...

Eph. 4:10 He that descended He it is Who also ascended over-above-all The Heavens, THAT HE MIGHT FILL ALL THINGS!

4:13 Until we all advance--- into the Oneness of the Faith and, the personal knowledge of The Son of God, Into a Man of full-growth, Into the Measure Of the Stature Of The Fullness of The Christ.

4:15 ... may in love grow into Him in all things Who is The Head, Christ.

In the Ephesian Letter the Body of Christ and Christ Himself are a collective personality, The Head, Christ, being at once an integral quality of the Body, and being in Himself its substance. Each solidly merged into the other until in their Divine Oneness they are a prototype of what God has projected for all whether in the

Heavens, or upon the earth. Notice in the following verses how the Mystery ever reaches out to greater lengths, starting with the unfolding of His purposes first to the nations, without distinctions or exceptions, then those receiving and rejoicing in it are made the Body of Christ, and they in turn in their Oneness with Christ are to be The Divine pattern and prototype to other Princes and-Authorities in the Heavenlies. . .

To close this section, i.e., the interrelationship of Ephesians and Colossians, the parallels of thought, of words, and of phrases, are used to develop different lines

of argument, each supplementing the other. Davidson states that out of the 155 verses of the Ephesian Letter, 78 of these contain expressions found in the Colossian Letter. The following parallels were discovered by Kritik:

The Priority of Ephesians The Priority of Colossians

1. Eph. 1:4 Col. 1:22 1. Col. 1:1-2 Eph. 1:1-2
2. 1:6-7 1:13-14 2. 1:3-5, 9 1:15-18
3. 3:3, 5, 9 1:26; 2:2 3. 1:5 1:3,12, 13
4. 3:17-18 1:23; 2:2, 7 4. 1:25, 29 3:2, 74:16; 2:20
5. 4:16 2:19 5. 2:4-8 4:17-21
6. 4:22-24 3:9-10 6. 4:5 5:15, 16
7. 5:19 3:16 7. 4:6 4:29

Each of these remarkable parallels doubly bless us, for instance the last, #7 tells us how we are to be filled with the spirit (Eph. 5:18) i.e., speaking ... etc. The Colossian passage uses the same context but adds the words, "Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly, in all wisdom teaching ...admonishing, etc. grace-singing ..." so we are to be letting our spirits be filled with The Word of Christ and out of that abundance will come self-discipline, and the strings of our heart will be singing unto God. Each epistle is needful to the other.

It is the opinion of the author of this article that the Ephesian Letter was written first, and was intended to be a general letter to inform the "saints and faithful in Christ Jesus" of God's unfolding purposes in respect to the recently revealed Secret. This was the first step in bringing them up to date. Of course, it would have to be

revealed also to the other Apostles and Prophets (such as John, the seer of Revelation, Eph. 3:5) so that they could adjust their re-spective ministries to that of this great Secret. The Body of Christ, as the repository of this great Secret,

would be the instrument to convey it to "Principalities and Authorities in the Heavens" (Eph. 3:10).

The Colossian Letter would be the last official communication from God. The Philemon Letter would be enclosed

135

with the Colossian to protect the slave Onesimus, Col. 4:9, cp. Philemon 1:10. The words of Col. 1:25, 26 are sufficient for our affirmation of "Amen" that an inspired Apostle was given the Dispensational trusteeship of The Mystery and all that is implied in it, to COMPLETE The WORD of GOD.

Col. 1:25, 26^a Of which I have become minister According to the Administration of God which hath been given unto me to you-ward To FILL UP (COMPLETE) The Word of God, The sacred Secret ... etc.

The Epistles of Completeness

1. His Workmanship

(Section Four) -

Ephesians and Colossians could well be called, "The Epistles of Perfection." Or, "The Revelation of God's Primal Purpose." Eph. 3:11 in the A.V. uses a descriptive phrase, "The Eternal Purpose" that might well be used of the ultimate goal of The Mystery rather than the intermediary stage of the ages as intended in Eph. 3:11. Each epistle abounds in the word, "fullness" as it applies to God, to Christ, to the Body of Christ, to all things, and to the epochs that reach into the future when that which is on earth and in the heavens is summed up in Christ, its Head. So, these epistles could be called, "Epistles of Fullness."

These Epistles, in a distinct way, are addressed to the "Saints and Faithful in Christ Jesus." Former truths that are reiterated in these epistles are very selective, such as the implement of Christ's

death, His quickening, rising, seating, etc., this not only as a point in time but an embracement of all time (see Gr. text of I Pet. 1:19, 20). Also, what is not carried over from the former revelations is note-worthy, such as being Abraham's seed, or having Sarah as one's mother, Gal. 3:29; 4:31., or the new earth or the new Jerusalem, or even the coming of Christ. The truths that are revealed, or in some cases reiterated or enlarged upon, supersede all earlier truth that is in

distinction, variance, or contradiction to it. All former states of national or regional, or religious exclusiveness is done away, all are made into a new humanity in Christ. These epistles alone contain The Mystery or Secret with its many aspects

136

that delineate this great dispensational program from all that has been revealed before, and it reaches far beyond the prophetic kingdoms. The Body of Christ is thrust upon the perfections of Christ alone, in this maturity there is no room for the former elementary baptisms, observances, feasts, fasts, or exclusive covenant relationships. In other Scriptures the temporal purposes for the earth and its passing kingdoms were made known, only in these letters is God's unending transcendent goal revealed, i.e., that Christ is to fill all things (with Himself), and that all in the heavens and "earth will be "summed up together under one Head" in Him, Eph. 4:10; 1:10. The Divine imprint of the gracious living Christ is to be borne by all of God's creation. Not only is Christ the Beginning, Chief, but the Creative Original from whence God in Him will mold the whole. These letters also tell of the Body of Christ that is an ever growing family household, but also a living shrine of His Spirit, and of His worship, Eph. 2:18-22. The foundation of everything is Christ, and the super-structure's inter-locking stone (that holds all together) is also Christ.

Ephesians step by step presents first what God has done for the believer, nearly always in respect to Himself. Colossians does not go into this aspect of the believer's relationship as much as the other but the following observations may be helpful. It is premised on the truth that God has committed Himself to us in Christ in a wonderful and gracious way we in turn are committed by God to a "way of excellence" in Christ. Note the following :

1. P = Passive. In the passive we become the grammatical subjects of the statements, while God remains the true Agent; we are the objects of His action. He acts, and we are the ones acted upon.

2. MP = Middle Passive. The Greek middle tense is a reflexive, for Himself, or for ourselves. In the present and imperfect tenses there is no distinction between the middle (reflective) and the passive, in form. The context must decide which is meant. Eph. 5:18 affords an illustration of this, it could mean, "fill yourselves", or "let yourselves get filled", or "be getting (yourselves) filled in Spirit" in contrast to, "do not be getting yourselves drunk with wine." God is not reluctant to give beyond our asking. A friend has suggested that this

"wine" can include other "heady" things beyond table spirits and may be more dangerous such as the wine of the Old Covenant or New Covenant Ordinances. If we let God's Spirit operate in our lives then the barriers that once hindered (whether physical or spiritual) are done away.

3. AA = Active Accusatives. These are active verbs plus Accusatives, i.e., God acting and we being the object of His action. Eph. 1:3 illustrates this: "... Who blessed (C.V. "Who blesses") us ...".

4. MA = Middle plus Accusative. The middle voice, i.e., one acting for oneself, plus the one who is the object of such action. Eph. 1:4 "... He made choice of us before the founding of a world" would convey the middle voice if the words, "... for Himself" were added to the text, making it read, "... He made choice of us for Himself before the founding of a world ..." Hence, MA.

Ephesians:

1:3 AA Who blesses us ...

1:4 MA He made choice of us in Him (for Himself).

1:5 AA In love marking us out beforehand unto son- heirship for Himself.

1:6 AA His favor (grace) wherewith He favored (engraced) us in The Beloved One.

1:11 P We were taken as an inheritance. ..

1:13 P In Whom, also believing, (ye) were sealed...

1:17 A + Dative ... would give (and continue to give) you a spirit of wisdom ...

2:5 AA Gave us life together (jointly-quickened) with the Christ.

P ye are having been saved (by pure grace)

2:6 AA jointly raised us up, jointly seated us

2:8 P For by His favor (grace) have ye been saved

2:10 P His In fact we are-His workmanship (n. *poiema*: something-made; His achievement, Eng. "poem", God's artistry in making our inner person, Christ-like, of His quality.)

P Created in Christ Jesus (the good works mentioned in the text are those things prepared for us of

138

Ephesians, continued

God in Christ that are to be expressed in our walk or way of life).

2:13 P ... became near by The Blood of Christ (one cannot make one self near to God, it must be His doing).

2:20 P Having been built up on the foundation of the apostles, etc., (We are the passive recipients of God having placed us upon the only sure foundation, Christ, not on the unsure foundation of any man. The "corner-stone" has reference to the upper-structure's "locking-stone", i.e., that holds the whole together).

2:22 P In Whom (Christ) ye also are being builded together (co-built) ...into a habitation (a permanent dwelling place) of God in spirit.

3:5 P As it hath been just-now revealed to the holy apostles. . . (whether the early 12 apostles, or late eight apostles, or the kingdom prophets, such as John in the book of Revelation, or prophets such as Agabus (Acts 21:10), all would have to hear the Mystery by whatever means God chose in order that no contradictory message would continue to be promulgated. Paul received it and made it known to the people of the nations. The Christological aspects of The Mystery are stressed in the Colossian Letter.)

3:10 P ... that He might cause to be known through the church

3:16 P In order that He may give unto you-according to His glorious riches- with power to be strength-

ened, through His Spirit in the inner man. (God must strengthen the inner man ere Christ can dwell completely at home in our hearts, and God does this, and will continue to do so, even un-asked.)

3:19 P ... that ye may be filled to all The fullness of God. (God's glorious riches in Christ is a treasure to be mined, and God will be satisfied with no less than His Own Fullness indwelling and engulfing the

139

believer, even beyond the asking or thinking)

4:1 P ... the calling wherewith ye were called;

4:4 P ... called in one hope of your calling; (Both of these are passives, we were acted upon, we were the recipients. The "callings of God" are within Himself and He does not alter the recipients when these calls are in pure grace.)

4:30 P Wherewith ye have been sealed ... (The Spirit, has indeed sealed us in Christ, Eph. 1:13, He is God Matrix, i.e., that surrounding substance within which our new life originates, develops, and is contained. He is The Mold, the binding substance, He is The Sum of which we are the components.)

Colossians:

1:12 AA Giving thanks unto the Father Who hath made you sufficient for your share in the inheritance of the saints in the light. (Our allotment has been made sure and secure by God acting in our behalf in providing a perfect Saviour, and a perfect redemption. We are to give thanks for Him, not to make it more secure. The "sufficiency" is not a proper subject for petition since we are "Complete in Him",

1:26 P The sacred Secret which had been hidden away from the ages and from the generations, but now hath been made manifest unto His saints. (In all the ancient secrets the initiated had to do some thing, had to meet certain qualifications, but it is not so with this great secret! Our pride of station would exclude some one, or set up certain criteria and this becomes the most vicious legalism of all.

It is The Father's great secret for His own in Christ.) ... being knit together in love even unto all the riches of full assurance of their understanding, unto a personal knowledge of the sacred secret of God,-Christ. (To be strengthened in order to love, Eph. 3: 16,17, is here balanced by God joining the Body of Christ together in love,

140

Colossians, continued

taking away all prior divisions, in order to prepare it for the treasures to be found in Christ alone. If we can accept the fact that The Father has joined us together we would not be making unions of our own.)

2:7 MP ... having been rooted (in Him), with the present result that you are firmly anchored, and constantly being built up in Him (The "rooting" is of the *rhizo* variety, a mutual root-system. The passive voice in Eph. 3:17 of being rooted in love, and here "in Christ" is that act of God of joining us to Christ, gives us a firm foundation for growth. We cannot of ourselves create the bond that causes us to be in Christ. The perfect participle of "rooted" expresses an abiding result, whereas "built up" speaks of continuous action, being constantly being built up. Being built up in Christ truly expresses the sphere of our life.

2:10 P And you are in Him, having been completely filled full (with the present result that you are in a state of fullness). Not, "Ye are made full in Him", but more accurately, "Ye ... are in Him, made full." Being In Him, we are complete. Not one thing is lacking. In Him is found all that God wants us to be, or have, or all that we are to be given. In Him we are complete, not in ordinances, not in religion, not in ourselves. He is our salvation, redemption, righteousness, peace, our life, our all.

One cannot add to completeness, especially God's.

2:11 P In Whom (Christ) ye have also been circumcised (cut off, i.e., put to death) with a circumcision not done by hand, in the despoiling of the body of the flesh, in the circumcision of The Christ. (Circumcision prefigured a cutting off of the flesh, a putting it to death as being in itself unable to produce a spiritual life acceptable to God. In The Scriptural use of circumcision each part of the body, including the heart, was to be circumcised, i.e.,

Colossians, continued

bear upon it the mark of death via the Victim that died ... in the "cutting off" of our Saviour in His death we were released as victims of our flesh and instead of having only its sins to contend with, and its weakness, a new life is created and imparted when God placed us in The Christ. While we are still in this old body of flesh it will gravitate away from God but the life of Christ draws us Godward.)

2:12 P Having been (jointly) entombed with Him in the placing into, in which placing into also you were (Jointly) raised with Him through your faith in the effectual working energy of The God Who raised Him out from among the dead. (Wuest translates "baptism" as a "placing into". On page 72 of his studies in in the vocabulary of the Gr. N. T. he states, "The word (baptism) refers to the introduction or placing of a person or thing into a new environment or into union with some- thing else so as to alter its condition or its relationship to its previous environment or condition." Only God's energy and operation can so entomb us jointly with Christ, only God can place us so that we are jointly-raised with Him, when He was raised. The flesh is the vehicle of sin, that instrument used of sin to effect estrangement and alienation from God. As such and left to its own resources it is too weak to produce a relationship

and an offence-free life before God. God, in grace, places us in Christ, and joins us to Christ with a wonderful solidarity so that in His death of which we are a part, all that might offend or keep apart from God is forever removed. Sin no longer is a factor keeping me from God or God from me.

A satisfactory death took place in baptism, which I had a vital part., I died in Christ's death, Not in water, not in symbolism. I was entombed jointly with Him so that the grave has

142

Colossians, continued

lost its prey since I now possess a joint-life in and with Him in being jointly-raised with Him.)

2:13 AA He co-quickened you with Him, graciously forgiving all your offences. (We have been forever Identified with the life of Christ beyond the grave. God has given, and will continue to give of that Christ-life. It is that life so fully imparted to us that gives us full freedom of access to the Father. With only the cause within Himself God has dealt with our sins out of His pure grace, not according to merit or demerit on our part. Our placement "in Christ" truly "engraces us in the Beloved." In advance, so many years ago, He took care of all offences by graciously grace-wise forgiving them. There never is any distance on His part, He is forever satisfied with the perfections of Christ's redemption, and that perfect life of Christ He sees in us.)

2:19 MP And not holding fast the Head: from which all the body through means of its Joints and uniting bands receiving supply and connecting itself together,

groweth with the growth of God. (The total Headship of Christ alone in respect to the Body of Christ is an almost unknown truth. The headship of church, pastor, leader organization, occult, even angels, or parents that have died, or some other medium, or thing — all would rob Christ of His Headship. To whatever degree we share the Headship of Christ with some one or thing, to that degree we are not growing up into Christ in all things. To deny that a Headship is to substitute something else, even religion, and hence the growth that is of God is impaired. To own His Headship is to own His Lordship, and affirms to all that in Him we are complete.)

3:1 P If therefore ye have been raised (Jointly-raised) together with the Christ, the things on high be seeking, where The Christ is, on The Right Hand of God sitting. (God has co-mingled Christ's life

143

Colossians, continued

and position with ours, our interest should be gathered about Him, and where our life finds its full expression, even reclining in the presence of God. It is not to be on the things of the earth (3:2), not its kingdoms, its power or its glory. If our pivotal point in life is right, our motives and service will please Him.)

3:4 P As soon as the Christ shall be made manifest— Our LIFE— then ye also together with Him shall be made manifest in glory. (God is going to make the Body of Christ manifest or visible when Christ no longer is hidden from our view. Christ is Our LIFE, and God will cause us to see all His glory, and in seeing that we will understand what He has in store for us because it will be a mutual manifestation, a life-force in perfect kinship with His own)

3:15 P ... unto which (the peace of Christ) ye were called in one body. and be thankful. The "calling" here is an unusual passive, it reflects back upon the peace of Christ mentioned and to the formation designation, and vocation of the One Body. While a few texts use, "The peace of God" instead of the peace of Christ, the latter has the best manuscripts in its favor. Eph. 2:13-17 would bear this out:

But just now in Christ Jesus –

ye who at one time were afar off

were made nigh

In The Blood of The Christ;

He in fact is our PEACE —

Who made both ONE

And the enclosing middle-wall took down and the enmity in His flesh-the law of commandments in decrees - bringing to nought,-

144

Colossians, continued

That the two He might create in Himself into ONE NEW MAN (New humanity) of new mold,

Making PEACE

And might fully (more than) reconcile them both in ONE BODY through means of of the cross, -

slaying the enmity thereby

... Of PEACE unto you, the far off

and PEACE unto them that are nigh

In The Mystery a new dimension is revealed as to the effects or ramifications of the death of Christ. In Romans 5:1 it was the means of cessation of conflict between man and God. In the Hebrews Epistle it was the means whereby the New Covenant was ratified with a remnant-sample of believing Israelites, not to abolish Israel's legal structure as a nation but to secure it. In the texts quoted the new dimension reveals the whole abolishment of what pertains to Israel and in its place creating a New Humanity.

What is this "peace"? The Hebrew word

"shalom" better reflects the meaning intended rather than the English or Greek. One of the meanings of "shalom" meant the decrees of law or debt were canceled, and this was shown by nailing them to the stake of abrogation in a public place. "Shalom" also implies wholeness, fullness, finished, made perfect, or made complete. It is to this wholeness or completeness that we are called to. There are no old or new covenant walls

Colossians, continued

up now to separate a covenant from a non- covenant people, there are no grafts for what was formerly Israel's Olive Tree -- nor is the Tree now standing. The wall of Israel's Theocratic Laws that made her distinct and separate from all other people has been done away. The racial and ethnological distinctions are done away in the

New Humanity in Christ. Even the racial distinction hitherto existing between the Jew and the nations cannot be valid now since except for religion no one can prove or disprove that they are or are not Jews, no racial records exist since the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. Sammy Davis's claim to be a Jew is as valid as any for his genealogy may have as many surprises in it as may yours or mine. While many mistakenly speak of the Israelis as God's Covenant People and the Israeli-State as though it were the prophecied gathering together of His People, one should note in Matthew 24:31 that the gathering together of the Israel of God is done by Angels, they alone would seem to know who they are; but none of this is operative now. The symbolic, the shadow, the type, the ritual, the partial, the infantile, the physical or materialistic, the priestly or mediumistic -- all have given way for this new wholeness, this peace of completeness. No wonder we are to offer up the eucharist of praise "... be ye thankful". This is the state to which we are called in ONE BODY, i.e. , that He Who completes everything, that He Who is the ultimate WHOLENESS or PEACE within which the purposes of God are accomplished, that we are called as a partaker of this. It should therefore be no great thing to let His perfect peace (wholeness) rule in these otherwise strife-torn hearts. There are no walls about Him, no barriers of race, laws, legalism, or of place. There is ONE BODY in which all are equal and

Colossians, continued

indivisible, and of which Christ is The inseparable Head.)

There are many more facets to God's Workmanship in fashioning the Body of Christ -- both individually and collectively. Enough has been said in the foregoing to help us glimpse the greatness of His grace and the vastness of the concept that is held before us. Each word of both these Epistles breath the very love of God in Christ and that for the most noble goals.

THE EPISTLES OF COMPLETENESS

2. IN THE HEAVENLIES

The A.V. uses an expression, "IN HEAVENLY PLACES" five times in the Ephesian Letter, once translating it, "in high places".

The phrase, "... in the heavenlies" (places omitted in the Gr. text) is found in this form only in the Ephesian Letter. The adjective "heavenly" is found elsewhere, such as Heavenly Father, heavenly things, heavenly beings (Phil. 1:10), & etc.

The first occurrence is in Ephesians 1:3, and it is assumed all usages of this phrase will generally be in keeping with whatever concept one holds as to the meaning of this unique phrase. The transliteration given below is only for purposes of identification, some later alternate suggestions may be more meaningful, or even draw new associations for the phrase as found in the A.V.

Eph. 1:3 EN TOIS EP OURANIOIS = IN to THE supraHEAVENUES

The visual difference between the above and the usual word for the adjective "heavens" is seen by comparison with the following:

Col. 1:5 { EN TOIS OURANOIS = { IN to the HEAVENS

The preposition "EPI" prefixes the word "HEAVENLIES" in the first passage, shortened to EP+OURANIOIS. This addition or prefix bears upon the meaning and enriches the whole passage. The wealth of the phrase has elicited many

translations of the phrase. An analysis of each word in the phrase may be helpful.

EN and *EPI* { are both prepositions and would be diagramed:

IN SUPRA Seven different concepts of

Preposition *EN* or *IN* follow.

Likely they apply in one degree

or an or another to the Eph. 1:3 text.

The phrase is in the dative plural and answers the question, "WHERE?" and suggests "rest in". The usual connectives are *IN* and *TOGETHER*. Vine suggests "AS TO" but this is weak, the believer is *IN CHRIST*.

The preposition *EN* or *IN* denotes inclusion:

Col. 3:3 ...for you died and your life has been hid to- gether with Christ *IN* God.

3:4 When ever Christ, Our LIFE, shall be made

to appear (be made fully visible to the Church

which is His Body) then together (all of the Body & Christ) will be seen in glory.

For a moment our life is hid with Christ *IN* God, but when Christ the full measure of that life, Eph. 4:13, shall become visible and shine forth to us, then together, both will shine forth *IN* Glory. This Glory corresponds to the Hebrew "*Shekhinah*, i.e., the Shining Splendour of His Person".

The preposition *EN* or *IN* denotes the sphere of Action:

Eph.2:10 (C.V.) For we are His achievement, being

created *IN* Christ Jesus for good works

which God makes ready beforehand in

order that we should be walking *IN* them.

The "good work" of God in creating us in the sphere of Christ, sealing us IN Him (Eph.1:13), and giving us His Life, should cause us to joyfully be "walking about" in these prepared "good works".

The preposition EN or IN denotes the element of existence:

Eph. 2:15 ... in order that of the two He might
create IN Himself one New Man.

The preposition EN or IN denotes an efficient cause:

Eph. 2:13 ... ye the one being afar

became near

IN The blood of Christ.

3:12 IN Whom we have boldness and access

IN confidence through the faith of Him.

An admission IN confidence; EN, the predication here of manner, defining the tone of mind in which the admission to the presence of God is enjoyed and realized.

4:32 ... forgiving ... as also God IN Christ

forgave you.

God dealing graciously with us IN Christ, should be sufficient cause for us to be gracious to others.

1:15, 16 Therefore, I also,

when hearing of the faith which

relates to you IN The Lord Jesus,

and that for all the saints,

do not cease giving thanks for you. ..

The "Faith that relates to you **IN** The Lord Jesus" here is the same "One Faith" spoken of in Eph. 4:5, i.e., that special message given to Paul, the new truths of this Letter and that of Colossians. This was why Paul prayed that they might have a spirit

148

of wisdom and revelation in its realization, see verses 16, 17.

The preposition *EN* or *IN* denotes continuance in time:

Eph.3:21 To Him be the glory

IN the Church and

IN Christ Jesus

unto all the generations of the age of the ages: Amen.

The height of my "asking or thinking," verse 20, would be but rags to clothe my naked-loathsomeness, but He is able beyond all things to do, aye, superabundantly above the mightiest petition or the loftiest thought so that in the gentle out-reach of His power His *Shekhinah* will be seen **IN** the Church just as it is seen **IN** Christ. What a blessed union, how vast this potential destiny!

2:7 (C.V.) In order that, in the on-coming eons

He should be displaying the transcendent

riches of His grace in His kindness

to us IN Christ Jesus.

Having been saved by God's grace we are placed in an unending sphere of God's transcendent riches of grace in all the on-coming eons. The eons themselves will be the stage of this kindness. The meditational work of Christ is not intended in this verse although the A.V. uses "through" instead of "IN" Christ Jesus. Being IN Christ Jesus in this verse is a perfect balance of having

been **JOINTLY-RAISED** and **JOINTLY-SEATED** with Him of verse 6.

The preposition *EN* or *IN* denotes a point of time:

Eph.1:4 As He chose us IN Him before

the casting forth of the cosmos. ..

The casting forth of the cosmos, or if we use the A.V. use of the word "*kataboles*" in Heb. 11:11, "conceive", or "conception" and apply it to Eph. 1:4 it would read, "As He chose us IN Him before the conceiving (or founding) of the cosmos ..." The whole grand design of God in respect to the Body of Christ collectively and

149

individually, was accomplished BEFORE the *Kataboles*.... This point in time, or before our cosmic time, breathes the thought of an original intention in the purposes of God, if so, it is accomplished.

The preposition EN or IN denotes a result to take effect in time:

Eph.1:5 In love designating us beforehand for the placing of a Son-Heir....

It is assumed that the words, "in love" of verse.4 belongs to verse 5. It is God's delight to have Son-Heirs through Jesus Christ in accordance with His previously marked out designees for that status in the Household of the Mystery. This "Son-Heir" status in nowise forbids God from designating others to different roles, nor does this have to do with salvation. The text is not telling how one becomes a "child of God" as implied in the A.V., rather it speaks of a mature Son-Heirship status, as of one having full rights and entitlement to all the wealth inherent in the exceeding riches of His grace in this dispensation. No mere guest, stranger, or child is meant. John 1:12 rightfully tells how one becomes a "child of God", and it should so read. The placing of a Son-Heir, that ancient legal procedure of formal adoption, was the first step in securing an irreversible standing so as to receive the allotment of The Father. The formal taking possession of that allotment was called, "The Day of Redemption", i.e., The Father's possessions were loosed to the one adopted or placed as a Son-Heir. Unfortunately the word "redemption" has come to mean "loosed from our sins", as though the word was exhausted in that evangelical sense. In a unique way the Body

of Christ exists to show forth the exceeding riches of His grace. In love its existence was conceived, in His love it will be fulfilled forever.

To return to the phrase under consideration:

EN TOIS EPOURANIOIS

IN to THE supraHEAVENLIES

The definite article (*TOIS*) in the dative case implies direction, shown above by the "to" before the article.

The prefix *EPI* (*EP*) is transliterated as "supra" since the dative preposition implies superposition, rest upon, dependence

150

upon, with an over-view of having this or that in mind or motive. Because of this implied superposition prefixing the word heavenlies (or heavenly) many translators add the word "high" to the text, i.e., high heavens, high places, in the highest of all, above the heavens, higher than heaven itself, etc. One cannot assume that the phrase is referring to a physical three dimensional measurable area known to our laws of energy, time and space. By the addition of this prefix surely some thing superior was intended as God uses words with exactness and design.

EPOURANIOIS

The supra HEAVENLIES

The word translated "heavenly places" in the A.V., and the "heavenlies" in Rotherham's text (more correctly corresponding to the Greek text), is an adjective used as a substantive or noun. The Gospel of Matthew frequently uses the expression, "The Kingdom of the Heavens" in keeping with the Jewish intent of that Gospel, the "Heavens" being substituted for "God". So also the book of Daniel speaks of the "Heavens" and the "Most High" ruling (Dan. 4:25, 26) in the affairs of men, meaning that God rules and over-rules in the kingdoms of men.

How then is one to translate this word HEAVENLIES?

As mentioned earlier, this is in the dative case and answers to the question, "Where?" The answer is, "IN THE supra-HEAVENLIES. But, what does this phrase mean?

The A.V. adds "Places" after heavenly , implying a locality.

Other translators wrestle with the phrase and suggest the following:

- 1. In the Heavenly things.**
- 2. In the Heavenly Powers.**
- 3. In that which surrounds the earth.**
- 4. Higher than Heaven itself.**
- 5. Above the Heavens.**
- 6. In the Heavenly Realms.**

151

- 7. In the Upper Air.**
- 8. In the Celestials.**
- 9. On High.**
- 10. In the High Heavens.**
- 11. The Highest of All.**

One writer suggests:

The term, "In The Heavens" is used in the apocalyptic sense for all the attributes of God consistent with the spiritual blessings mentioned in the context of this passage.

The writer is saying in effect that all the spiritual blessing inherent in God that are capable of being enjoyed and shared by the Body of Christ are here spoken of under the covering phrase, "In the supra-Heavens", and that no further supplemental qualifying word such as "places", "things", "beings", etc., is needed. This of course would be the least troublesome explanation of the phrase and the one most in keeping with the context of "spiritual blessings". The "spiritual blessings" that context the phrase are not some undefinable elusive thing, but paced out throughout the Epistle, starting with the words of 1:4:

According as ...

One need but read the list of spiritual blessings that each verse unfolds, moreover each word is fraught with meaning adding to the great wealth of those blessings. And, these revelations concerning His own purposes, and our being made partakers of them, and beginning to enter into their reality now rather than relegating all of them to a remote and distant heaven, affects our enjoyment of them and causes an appreciation of God's grace hitherto unknown.

"Every blessing that is spiritual", (for such is the import of the Greek text), has ALREADY been granted to us by grace and in God's changeless purposes IN CHRIST. As "The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" all bounties are given to The "Son of His Love" and to those IN CHRIST. And this all long before sin had ever come upon the scene.

152

Lest the temptation befall us to think of the phrase, "in the Heaven-lies", only in respect to a place known as "heaven", the text adds the words, "... In Christ."

Evidently The Divine Author of the Ephesian Letter intended us to think of the phrase, "In the Heavens" both as a condition and a sphere of blessing. Both including WHERE we are now, and WHERE Christ is also. Christ's Headship of the Church, His Body, is not a distant and remote thing, but is based upon an inseparable living relationship, hence, Christ is called, "Our Life", Col. 3:4. God sees us perfect and complete IN CHRIST now, and He sees The Perfect and Complete Christ in us. Nothing less would be worthy of grace.

The texts that speak of Christ "passing through the heavens", Heb. 4:14, and He being "higher than the heavens", Heb.7:26, are staggering to us since they suggest remote distances of inner and outer galactic space and time, but to God all this is infinitesimally zero. Indeed, instead of suggesting distance, the ascension of The Lord was an assurance of nearness during the Book of Acts so that Israel's Messiah's throne was one of accessible grace, Heb. 4:13-16, how much more now in the Mystery wherein all distinctions have been removed.

The word "heavenly" or "Heavens" (*Epouranios*) is not restricted in its meaning to that which is IN HEAVEN. Nor is it limited to that which is upon the earth.

1. Matt. 18:35 My Heavenly Father. In Eph.3:14, 15 this Fatherhood title of God is expanded to include the whole family, or every family in the heavens, and on earth.

2. John 3:12 ... tell you the heavenly things.... The immediate context suggests, "the ascent and descent " of Christ from heaven.

3. I Cor. 15:40 ... celestial bodies ... The stars, etc.

4. I Cor. 15:48, 49 ... Heavenly ... This is a synonym for Christ, The Heavenly One. It is placed in opposition to that which is Adamic and earthly. The "Image of the Heavenly" is explained in verses 50 and 54 as the living (not dead) corruptible putting on incorruption art

153

immortality. Only thus would death have no victim, victory, or sting.

5. Phil. 2:10 ... of things in heaven ... only "beings" would "bend the knee". The context distinguishes between the "heavenly" and "earthly".

6. 2 Tim. 4:18 ... His Heavenly Kingdom ... the text does not clarify if this kingdom is "in heaven", or "from heaven", or if it is "heavenly" in character and origin. If 2 Timothy belongs to the Acts period then its kingdom as well as the hope expressed in the Corinthian and Thessalonian Letters would coincide with the hopes and promises Abraham, summing in the new heavens, earth and new Jerusalem.

7. Heb. 3:1 ... partakers of a heavenly calling ... this is explained in Heb. 11:16 as a better place, a heavenly, a Fatherland that they were seeking (see Gr. text of Heb. 11:14). Hence God prepared for, them a City, Heb. 11:16, called "the Heavenly Jerusalem", Heb. 12:22, this comes out of heaven to the new earth, Rev. 21:2, 10.

8. Heb. 6:4 ... tasted of the Heavenly Gift ... certainly those of the Acts period tasting of the Heavenly Gift (the operations of The Holy Spirit) did not go to heaven to "taste" that gift.

9. Heb. 8:5 ... who serve ... the shadow of heavenly things ... the testimony of the Tabernacle wrought in symbol and type, only served the shadow of the Heavenly things themselves. The "heavenly" itself could only be seen in the person, the work, and the perfections of Christ Himself. This could not be limited to either heaven or earth. Thus, "Heavenly" here is put for the ultimate reality, and all else was "shadows".

The afore-going nine points covers all the N.T. usages of the word *Epouranios* aside from the phrase, "In The Heavens", as found in the Ephesian Letter. Before the Ephesian occurrences are considered briefly look at the following Hebrew words that translate the Hebrew equivalent of "*Epouranios*". The information is from Gesenius¹ *Heb. Lexicon*, pages 508 & 770, see for the full text.

1. *Marom* :

Height; what is high, lofty, sublime.

154

Used of mountains, Or God, i.e., "Most High". Used of leaders and Princes, also of Heaven, an inaccessible fortress, and of great honors.

2. *Ramam*

To be "high" lofty, exalted.

If this concept is carried over into the Ephesian passage it would read as follows:

Blessed be The God and Father

of our Lord Jesus Christ,

The One having blessed us

with every blessing

that is spiritual

In that which is The Most High,

Lofty, and Sublime

IN CHRIST.

This is truly to be carried by God's grace and primal purposes IN to-THE supraHEAVENLIES IN CHRIST.

The supraHEAVENLIES and Ephesians 1:20

The second usage of this unique phrase in the Ephesian Letter is found midst a wonderful context. The expression as confined within this setting illuminates that hope which God had in mind in calling forth the Body of Christ, and illustrates His allotment in the saints. The immensity of the hope to which God has called us, and the glorious riches of His heritage in the saints would only have meaning if what is considered "Divine wealth or riches" were deposited in the very life of the saints. This is the case, for The Fullness of Him Who fills all things (at the very least with His love, grace, and beauty) is for Himself filling full the Body of Christ so that it may be rightly called, as indeed Christ is called, His Fullness, See Eph. 1:18, 23; 3:19; 4:13. There is a "fullness" of God that can be shared just as there is an inherent fullness of Divine Being that belongs to God alone, this is attributable to Christ in Col 1:19; 2:9, and speaks of His God-hood albeit to that was added a perfect humanity for the purposes of identification and solidarity with our humanity, and to bring to an animate sentient creation an Image

155

(*Eikon*, Gr. Col. 1:15) of The otherwise Invisible God.

Notice in Paul's prayer of praise (Eph. 1:15-23) the focal-point:

Eph. 1:15 ... hearing of the Faith that relates to you ..., and that for all the saints,

1:17 giving you_a spirit of wisdom and understanding

1:18 The eyes of your heart having been enlightened, for you to perceive what is the prospect of its call, and what the glorious riches of the enjoyment of its allotment among the saints,

1:19 and what the transcendent greatness of its power for us who are believing,

1:22 and subjects all under His feet, and gave Him the Headship over all to the Ecclesia,

1:23 which is His Body, the Complement

(Fulness) of The One all things with

all things filling.

The object of the Faith, the ones needing a special spirit of revelation and wisdom to understand The Mystery, the party who is made The Father's allotment with its glorious riches and enjoyment, the "all saints" and "those who are believing" to whom the surpassing] greatness of His power is given and illustrated in the seating of our Lord far above all ... that all this is to the Church, His Body so that it is "filled full" and that thus as His Fullness, or Complement, it is used to fill up all that is lacking any where. In Eph. 4:19 this fullness is bound up with the "knowledge-surpassing love of The Christ", and in Eph. 4:13 with "full-growth, into the measure of the stature of The Fullness of Christ". While all this is beyond our asking or even our thinking still it includes in a

156

wonderful way the love of Christ, His kind of love, and to be in His stature in all its beauty. All that is said of Christ in Eph. 1:20-23, His raising, seating, and sovereignty, is not directed to Christ as it is in the Colossian Letter, but to the Church, His Body. In His raising, seating and sovereignty we are to see ourselves ... and what a blessed raising, seating, and sovereignty of grace it is! The kindred passage in Colossians 1:12,13 fill in the character of that hope:

Col. 1:12, 13 Giving thanks unto The Father that hath made you sufficient for your share in the inheritance of the saints in the Light, Who hath rescued us out of the Authority of the Darkness, and translated (us) into the Kingdom of The Son of His Love.

What a wonderful title for such a Kingdom! No wonder then, having been swept out of the Authority of the Darkness, Satan, and into this Kingdom of The Son of His Love, we are to behave even now, as "Light in the Lord", Eph. 5:8, and as God's New Humanity in Christ.

The Father's gracious actions toward those who are the recipients of the Mystery revelation have unfolded to their under-standing what their hope is and how it is to be made operative.

Eph. 1:19 And what the surpassing greatness of His power unto us who believe, According to the energy of the grasp of His Might

1:20a which He energized in the Christ when He raised Him from among the dead,

1:20b And, seated Him at His right hand in the Heavens, (i.e., in to THE supraHEAVENLIES)

1:21 Over-above all:

157

Principality, Authority, and Power and Lordship, and every Name that . is named, not only in this age, but

also in the coming one,

1:22a And, did put all things in subjection

beneath His feet,

1:22b And, gave Him to be Head over all things

UNTO THE ASSEMBLY,

1:23 which indeed IS HIS BODY

The FULNESS OF HIM

Who the all things in all is for Himself

filling up.

God's power for the Body of Christ is ACCORDING TO, in line with, in conjunction with the raising, seating and sovereignty of The Lord Jesus. When Christ was "seated" thus it was truly IN to THE supra HEAVENLIES, the most lofty, high, and sublime condition to-which He could be raised and seated, and the sphere to which that condition reached is expanded line upon in the texts listed. It was over-above all principality whether on earth or heaven, over-above all authority in whatever place it may be, over-above all power and Lordships in whatever dominions they may be exercised. Our Lord, and the Body of Christ co-joined with Him, is over-above every Name that is spoken not only in this present time but also in the oncoming. Then, what the Book of Revelation anticipated, and I Cor. 15:24-28 looked forward to, is accomplished in the subjection of all things to Christ ... but the texts do not stop there as though that were the end but go on to reveal a glorious Headship OVER ALL THINGS TO THE ASSEMBLY WHICH IS HIS BODY. God's revelation of Himself will always continue since He is infinite. Christ will always be the Expression of that

Divine manifestation. Christ will not vanish nor dissolve into the invisibility of God, and the Church His Body will not be terminated so that some thing or other takes its place, rather it will be the vessel for the unending "filling" from Him who fills all things with Himself so that His glory, grace and essential being may be made known everywhere.

The supraHEAVENLIES and Ephesians 2:6

The break between chapters one and two of Ephesians is unfortunate since what has been said in Eph. 1:19-23 is applied in chapter two. That super-abundant power of God effected in Christ illustrates what God has begun and will continue to do in the Body of Christ. The analogy is striking:

Ephesians 1:20, 23 Ephesians 2:5-7

... when He raised Him from Gave us life together with The

among the dead, Christ (lit., jointly made alive

in Christ), and raised us up together (lit., jointly raised),

and seated Him at His right and seated (lit. jointly-seated

hand IN THE HEAVENLIES us together IN THE HEAVENLIES in Christ

... His Body, The Fullness of That He might point out in the

Him who the all things in all is on-coming ages the surpassing

for Himself filling up. Riches of His favor in graciousness upon us in Christ Jesus.

To be jointly made alive in Christ is to attribute to the Church, the Body of Christ, not only the quickening power operative in raising Christ from among the dead but a union involving a "Body-likeness", since the "raising" of Christ involved a body, albeit one that death could not corrupt in any way.

The Father's Throne became a "joint" throne upon the "seating" there of our Lord. He is enthroned with all the "rights" of God. This is certainly more than

just a physical throne, and a physical seating. It is where ever He holds dominion, even to where His peace is ruling in our hearts ... or His power displayed in the out-reaches of time and space. The Body of Christ shares His position, His seating, and in His Headship shares His sovereignty. When the texts draw our attention to Christ being, "Over-above all, etc.," and "all things in subjection beneath His feet", and "... Head over all", a sovereignty is involved, and the only sovereignty

159

mentioned in the Mystery Letters is the Kingdom of the Son of His Love* Col. 1:13, into which we have been transported, and of which we have been made "Joint-heirs", Eph. 3:6. The Body of Christ will have obtained the perfect maturity so that it will measure up in all things and in all ways to the stature of The Fullness that is in Christ, Eph. 4:13, and thus the remedial redemption in Christ will have gone on to fully accomplish its purposes, and in the endless display of God's grace there will be a compensation for the existence and havoc wrought by sin over the long *eons*.

We of the nations, hitherto displaced and homeless, have been made jointly-alive, jointly-raised, and jointly-seated **IN THE HEAVENLIES IN CHRIST**. This condition and sphere of blessing has been granted to us by pure unassisted, and unforced grace. The Mystery program is of grace in its origin, its rule, its household, and in its continuance. Thankfully, neither merit nor demerit enter in to it. Hence it will continue forever.

To speak of being "Jointly-seated" in the heavenlies in Christ is to go beyond freedom of access to The Father, (Eph. 2:18; 3:12). Of course without the full access there could be no "seating". The solidarity of the present believer with Christ is so complete that in God's intention they are "one". "Made out of His flesh and bones" Eph. 5:30, is omitted by some manuscripts, but it may well be telling us that we are to be part of His glorified body, since the first part of the verse suggests this, "... members of His Body." We are made to share in His Divine Life, why not His substance? This would be a fitting step from the indwelling life and would explain much of the substance of the believer once we have shed this old Adamic body.

"IN, THE HEAVENLIES" of Eph. 2:6 is qualified by the words "IN CHRIST" just as in Eph. 1:3. God has placed us in a sphere & condition of "seating". This is "IN CHRIST". Even now we sit there IN HIM! ! ! And we shall sit there with Him forever and ever. We cannot be severed now from Christ, nor ever in the

future. This is the significance of the "continued showing of grace" in the seventh verse (Eph. 2:7).

***The Father's throne shared jointly =Kingdom of Christ and of God.**

159

The supraHEAVENLIES and Ephesians 3:10

The usage of the phrase, "In the Heavens" in the blessed third chapter of Ephesians is surrounded by majestic truths, all out-croppings of The Mystery, all diverse but all interrelated.

The context of the phrase is the whole third chapter but falls into that portion that draws an inference or deduction from a whole series of statements relating to the great Secret:

Eph. 3:8 Unto me

The less than least of all saints

Was given this favor

Unto the nations to announce

the glad message of the Untraceable

Riches of The Christ,

3:9 And, lo bring to light

What is the Administration (Dispensation) of the sacred Secret

which had been hidden away from

the ages in God, Who did all things

create:

3:10 In order that now

Unto the Principalities (Rulers),

and the Authorities

In the HEAVENLIES

might be made known, (that

they might get to know)

through means of the Assembly,

the manifold wisdom of God,

3:11 According to a plan of the ages

Which He made in the Anointed (The Christ)

Jesus our Lord.

In Ephesians 1:21 the seating of Christ was "far above" all

160

rulers, authorities, power, and lordships where ever they may be and who ever they may be. This included the then current age and in that which would be on-coming. The object of this supremacy and sovereignty, this Headship "Over-all", Eph. 1:22, was to the Church, His Body.

In Ephesians 2:6 we were made to have a joint-seating there with Him. From this joint-seating a deduction is drawn in verse 7, "That in the ages to come He may show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through (in) Christ Jesus." The point or object of His sealing is to make us the recipients of His excelling grace , even its riches. This could be shown in an infinite number of ways since the wealth comes from an undiminishable source.

An unusual function is assigned to the Church in Ephesians 3:10. Hitherto it had been the passive object of The Father's actions but now it was to be the means through which the Rulers and Authorities in the heavenlies are instructed in the

multifarious-variegated wisdom of God. How this is done is not revealed. As to the substance of this variegated wisdom of God to be made known to these beings, it can only be supposed that since the context of this unusual and singular commission is The Mystery, that this would be the subject-matter taught. Also, it would encompass all the aspects of the Secret, from the Household-rule (dispensation) of the grace of God to The Christological center of The Mystery as so deeply emphasized in the companion Colossian Letter. It would not be without reason that the Rulers and Authorities in the heavenlies would be introduced in this fashion. Since all of the third chapter is saturated with the spiritual blessings of grace it would be difficult to draw any other deduction but what these beings, whatever they may be, share in the blessings of The Mystery. As to whether they will be "peers" or "equals" in its vast out-workings with the Body of Christ can only be judged by several texts that speak of Christ as sharing a joint-headship with others than the Body

... to reunite for Himself

(under One Head) the All

Things in The Christ,

Eph. 1:10 The things upon the Heavens,

161

And the things upon the Earth,

In Him.

Col. 1:18 And He is The Head of the Body,

the Assembly.

Eph. 1:22 And gave Him to be Head over

All things ...

Col. 2:10 Who is The Head of all Principality

and Authority.

At least the above verses broaden out The Headship of Christ to include the very creation of which Eph. 3:9 speaks just before the mention of this commission of

the Body of Christ to Rulers and Authorities (Eph. 3:10). Earth had been the crucible and arena of the Out-working of redemption and of His purposes initiated long before the advent of man. The context of the phrase here, "In the heaven-lies" at least intimates that what has been enacted upon earth by God in grace radiates in its effects throughout all of creation. Thus, "According to a plan of the ages", Eph. 3:11, hidden in God, now began to unfold and each part began to be put into its proper place. "In the heavenlies" is still a condition and a sphere of blessing.

In toTHE supraHEAVENLIES and Ephesians 6:12

This last usage of this unique phrase is the most difficult to explain. Its meaning here cannot be in contradiction to what has gone on before. The earlier texts have a wonderful consistency, and the Scriptural admonition of having two or three witnesses is more than heeded here. Rotherham's translation is rather graphic:

Because our struggle:

{is not against blood and flesh, but

{Against the Principalities

Eph. 6:12} {Against the Authorities { of this

{Against the World-Holders {darkness {Against the spiritual forces of wickedness

In the Heavenlies

162

Before considering in greater detail the Arena of Conflict and the Believer, please take the time to read over carefully the following observations by Dr. A.J. Roddy on the above verse:

The phrase: *en tois epouraniois*

in the heavenlies

(1) Is it to be understood as modifying the spiritual forces of Wickedness? Is Paul writing of these as existing

In the heavenlies?

or,

(2) Does the phrase relate to the sphere of the believer? Is Paul saying that it is in respect to the heavenlies that we have this struggle?

Against the first:

This would mean that the phrase is used as an attributive adjective. However, attributive adjectives must be definite (i.e. must have the definite article) if the noun to which they refer is definite. This phrase does not have the definite article. Paul could have expressed this in two ways if he had meant the phrase to modify *ta pneumatika*, the spiritual forces:

a. *ta en tois epouraniois pneumatika*

the in the heavenlies spiritual forces/things

b. *ta pneumatika ta en tois epouraniois*

the spiritual/etc. the in the heavenlies

In favor of the second:

The article is absent. In such a case a phrase like this would be used adverbially or predicatively. It functions as an answer to the questions of how, when, where and why. In this case it answers the question, "where"? Not being syntactically related to *ta pneumatika* (the spiritual forces/things) by the repetition of the article *ta*, it can be understood as an adverbial phrase indicating the sphere and condition of the struggle.

The believer is indeed associated with the implied meaning of the phrase, "In the Heavenlies". It is that condition and sphere to which he has been called in and with Christ. Even so, there is a wrestling, a conflict. In spite of being blessed with every blessing that is spiritual (Eph. 1:3), there are Antagonist and foes that would seek to becloud His faithfulness and detract us from the glory of Christ. So, a conflict exists -- but not against blood and flesh (bloodied flesh?). It is against (or "with" - the-*pros* as in John 1:1) the spiritual hosts Paul here names.

The phrase may well simply indicate the sphere of the struggle, just as the phrase indicates the sphere of the, believer's experience in and with Christ. May not the very lofty nature of the sphere be an issue in the struggle?

Aside from all of the above, it should be mentioned that the Chester Beatty *Papyrus #46* omits the phrase in Eph. 6:12 altogether. This third century manuscript is one of the most important Pauline manuscripts, but the fact that it stands alone weakens any authenticity it may have for the omission of the phrase (A.J.R.).

THE WARFARE

The prelude to the conflict of Ephesians six is found in Ephesians 4:14 where maturity in Christ is the only safeguard against (the infantilism manifested by one being constantly tossed about as flotsam is, and jetsam-wise surging about aimlessly, caught by every whispering wind of "I have heard something", or eddied about by human caprice, or caught by the designing craftiness of those who deliberately systematize error with full intent to deceive.

It is well if we recognize our foes whether from within ourselves, or from without. In order that the temper of the conflict does not embitter our hearts Paul equates the beautiful, "growing into Him in all respects" with a kindred "truthing in love", Eph. 4:15. If to give one's self to the flames of martyrdom for Christ without love was "profitless" (I Cor. 13:3), how meaningless would it be to speak out the great truths of The Mystery without manifesting love or grace?

164

For the rest,

Eph. 6:10 Be empowering yourselves in The Lord

and in the grasp of His Might.

The call to arms! No sham battle this with wooden swords and bucklers made with castaway lids. Nor is this the pseudo warfare of a supposed Church Militant with imitation soldiers, standards, and trumpets. This is not the battle of "blood against blood, flesh against flesh" so common in the spectacle of the gladiators, or the ruthlessness of the Roman spear. It is not the war of marching armies, global conflict, or "matter-disintegration bombs". It is a; warfare having to do with spiritual concepts and realities. It is of the "spirit" and not of the "flesh".

Looking down the long corridors of the past one sees the enslavement of the spirit followed by the bondage of the will, and finally that of the body.

God's spiritual strength and power is for the using, and is more than adequate for the task enjoined upon us. It is this same strength that invalidated the normal corruption of the grave in respect to our Lord, Eph. 1:19, and made His death and resurrection (murderous deeds at the hands of sinful men, Acts 2:23) yield benefits that will be operative forever; so too it will work in us to accomplish His gracious purposes. In this contest are we to learn too that the arm of flesh profits nothing? Are we to learn discipline in spiritual things, clarity of thought, of faith, of love, of truth? The

call to arms is not to help God certainly, He needs no help. Nor is

the outcome of the contest in doubt. Can Heb. 5:8 help us here?

Even though He was a Son

Heb. 5:8 Yet learned from what He suffered

obedience;

5:9a And being made perfect ...

He who was sinless learned obedience! Experimentally His sinless manhood was tested all the Days of His Flesh so that "outcries and tears", Heb. 5:7, were no stranger to Him. Strange, He prayed to be delivered from death, and was heard. He did not need to die. What a conflict confronted Him so that it was necessary to die in a certain way at a certain time, to gain a certain goal.

165

We are joined to Him in His death, burial, raising, and seating. We are joined to Him in that same conflict.

The conflict to which we are called raises the whole question of evil in God's universe. The answer to a problem of such magnitude must be but hinted at in such a study as this. It is felt however that some thoughts must be expressed on the subject, albeit briefly.

An Excursive into the Origin of Evil

Isa. 45:6b, 7.

A.V. Rotherham

**I am The LORD, and there That there is none besides
is none else. Me, I am Yahweh and there
is none else:**

**I form the light, and create Forming light and creating
darkness: I make peace, and darkness, making prosperity
create evil: I The LORD do all and creating misfortune.**

**These things. I –Yahweh Who doeth all
these.**

The words of the above were addressed to Cyrus, a Persian

Conqueror. In the context he is called, "My Anointed, " i.e., "*Messiah*". There was in this noble Servant a foreshadowing of the greater *Messiah* who would deliver His people, and restore them to their land and heritage.

In its purest form the religion of the Persians was of ONE God, symbolized a circle with wings, -- the circle denoting completeness, perfection and the eternity of God; -- the wings denoting His all encompassing Presence. They believed in an Anti-God, called *Ahriman* (*Angro-mainyus*), a god of darkness and evil, a god independent of *Jehovah*, not made by Him, but existing with all the attributes of deity. Thus, the omnipotence of *Jehovah* (or, the One God of Goodness) could not reach beyond the "good", it could not accept responsibility for evil in the universe, it could offer no solution for its problems. Must God's goodness be thus limited, or His power?

166

The answer to Cyrus, and to all who question the Divine Omnipotence, is given in the quotation from Isaiah. There are not other gods, there is no God besides Me. If evil exists it is not because there is another god, *Ahriman*. There is only one sole Lord and Ruler of and in all the Universe. All belongs to Him, He is responsible for everything in that universe, darkness or light, good or evil. Evil can be used of Him as well as good. He tolerates and controls evil. The "evil" here is not equated with "sin". The Scriptures declare unequivocally that certain

things are not "*ek*" "out" from The Father.* But the presence of evil must be consistent with some purpose of God in allowing it to be, so much so that His power is not justifiably impugned, nor His goodness stained. In the sense that evil was allowed to be is the only sense in which it can be said to have been created by Him, unless it be "moral evil", the consequence of "sin".

Christ did not attribute the evil that men do to God or to Satan, Matt. 15:19, but to man himself. In its first instance the relationship of sin to mankind is attributed to Adam, Rom.5:12, not as one would suppose, to God or Satan. There is no "transgression" without a "prohibition" if only it be a simple line drawn and a "thou shall not cross ... ". To much of the evil about us we can claim authorship, and in the realm of spiritual things the law of sowing and reaping is as rigid as in the material world.

In respect to "evil" there is much that we are totally ignorant of. The first temptation was, "... to be as gods, knowing good and evil (Gen. 3:5). The man and the woman henceforth were as gods, "... to know good and evil" (Gen. 3:22). The mark of spiritual maturity was the ability to discern what is good and what is evil,

Heb. 5:14. To know by instruction from God what is good and what is evil would have equipped Adam and Eve with the sum of all knowledge both in the use of moral forces and material forces. Only

God is qualified to use unlimited power in either the spiritual or

*"The coveting of the flesh, the coveting of the eyes, and the vain grandeur of life -- is NOT of (*ek*) The Father, but is of (*ek*) the world." I John 2:16. "God is Light, and in Him is no darkness at all" (1:5b).

material sphere. Only God knows what means to use to accomplish certain ends. The pure physical endowment of the race is almost beyond comprehension with thought he can reach beyond the stars, he knows that he is, and even in his dying he knows he dies. He knows more than all the orbs of space and time.... What the believer learns in Christ is, in the spiritual. He learns on his own the lessons of hate, envy, unkindness and selfishness. He thinks to unleash the creative power of God if he can but crack the codes of energy, time and space, but first he needs to know, "what is good and what is evil."

There is much we do not know of the forces beyond ourselves. Does the stone we cast away so casually move a star? Or the storm that tosses about our little ship, does it bring life back to an arid 1 weary land? Is illness and death a tragedy as we are wont to think, or a blessing? Is the struggle with adversity an evil? Could there be some blueprint plan Divine too vast for us to grasp as yet because we stand too close to these events and not afar?

There is a unity in God's creation, its law is one. However limited! the comparison, the "law of being" is the same in God as in man. So for the first stirrings of evil one must go back to creation itself.

The creativeness of God is manifest in a creation, a creation in which intelligent beings think thoughts after Himself. We are urged to have the mind of Christ in Phil. 2, and to be "imitators of God" in Eph. 5, -- would God want less than what we are now at our highest, or even at our lowest? The question comes, "What kind of beings does God want?" Are they to have wills to make choice of Him because! He is worthy, or to love Him because in Him all love abounds, or to reason after His thoughts in the beauty of His handiwork and to test their own skills, or to have life with Him and yet apart so that their oneness is one of free choice and not slavery?

May not most evil be but good perverted? Must man prove that he can love by loving less worthy objects, or testing truth by untruth, or obedience by disobedience? Are we to prove that our wills are truly ours by not yielding to another, even God? Or, that we are free by using our freedom as license? The very creation of rational intelligent beings involves the risk of evil. If on the other hand such beings were created sinful then sin would be the law of

168

their being and there would be no such thing as evil or sin, -- and of the need for redemption. The moment that a man stood upright as a distinct entity from His creator, that he could fall would be a very real possibility, aye more, a fact that must have been foreseen and provided for in the purposes of God. The simple prohibition of not experimenting in either "good or evil" belongs to an age of innocence that every moral parent imposes upon his child. But once the will to be free asserts itself that freedom must be tested, the door must be pressed open, and once opened then the choice of what to do is that which every thinking being must answer for himself. The choice in one direction may make him more Christ-like, or bring tragedy. It was not out of a depraved nature that our first parents sinned, nor was it because of a sinless nature that caused Christ to do The Father's will.

Creating rational creatures free involves the very real likelihood that they would choose another path if only to see where it would lead. The way back to The Father's House is long and arduous, and behind the race lies the wreckage attending that choice. Maybe it will be etched in our memories so that we will not be tempted to go that way again, or must the lesson be learned from a dead skeletal planet?

In the act of creating rational free creatures lies the possibility of evil. God accepted this, and made provision for it.

In creating rational creatures as separate entities from

Himself God must either make such creatures irrational and let their obedience be without moral or spiritual volition and value, or give them freedom of choice and action.

In view of all this, and in spite of man's adverse choice, God accepts the responsibility for having made us as we are, darkness and light, good and evil. God steps into human history in the person and in the redemptive work of Christ. He meets every need, He removes every difficulty, He becomes the true expression of a God whose essential nature is love. He, Himself, in the person of Christ walks the weary road homeward with us, and with us enters into our Golgotha ...

... redeemed ...With the precious blood

I Pet. 1:18, 20 of Christ, as of a Lamb without blemish

169

and without spot: who was foreordained

before the foundation of the world. ..

I form the Light and create Darkness; Isa. 45:7 I , The Lord, do all these things.

The Panoply of God

(Cont. fr. p. 163)

The Apostle's entreaty, "... be empowering yourselves in The Lord ..." (Eph. 6:10), highlights several interesting facts:

- 1. The Divine sufficiency is readily available to every one.**
- 2. God's grace is automatic, but in the arena of spiritual conflict His enabling power functions on a "faith cooperative basis"! Individual integrity is not obscured in an outthrust of superabundant power, nor is individual existence and experience suppressed or extinguished in an absorption into a "mass" Christ, as of a Buddhistical nirvana.**
- 3. Each of us are to enter the field of conflict and confront the Foe. The empowerment and means are available for routing the enemy, but no provision is made for avoiding the contest. Victory has already been assured if the "Panoply of God" is utilized.**
- 4. God does not choose to eradicate evil now, either in us, the world, or Satan. Evil is overruled of God for good.**

Jacob's wrestling crippled him, but also made him a "Prince with God". Job's great trial under Satanic oppression caused him to know himself and God, and "he repented in dust and ashes". The wayward son was brought to himself under the harsh taskmaster in a distant land, and he confessed, "I have sinned ..." and returned to his Father's House. Satan sifted Peter as wheat; he "cursed and swore" that he knew not The Man, and weeping bitterly he discovered God's faithfulness in spite of "fearful faith". Satan thought that in bringing about the death of our Lord that he had gained an advantage, but did not know that God in His wisdom would use this unlikely means of accomplishing

everlasting redemption.

Put on the complete armour (*panoply*)

Eph. 6:11 of God, with a view to your having
power to stand against the strategies
of the Adversary.

The only other instance in the N.T. where this word "*panoply*" is found is in
Luke 11:21, 22:

Whensoever the mighty one (Satan) may be
guarding his own dwelling, in peace
are his goods;

But whensoever a Mightier (Christ) than he
shall come upon and vanquish him,
his (Satan's) *panoply* He (Christ)
taketh away wherein he (Satan) was
trusting, and his spoils He distributed.

In any contest with Christ, Satan's *panoply* is inadequate. While Satan is a
"mighty one" there is One who is "Mightier than he." In our warfare the full
panoply of God's provision is more than adequate against all the methodized
stratagems of the Adversary.

Of course, the Devil of Hollywood films and of Christendom is a myth, but the
Satan of Scripture is an awesome being; majestic in his beauty, tremendous in
his power, position, and influence. We speak condescendingly and glibly of him,
but not so Michael, the Archangel, he dared not bring an accusation against him
(see Jude 9). The guilt of our sinfulness makes a bogymen scapegoat very
convenient, and this accounts for much of what has been attributed to Satan.
Since the dawn of time it has been true that if one is found guilty of one thing
then every possible crime is laid at that one's door. Satan is indeed, "The Man-
Slayer", but it is a certain Man that he sought to prevent from coming into the

world. He is the "Father of THE LIE", but it is a certain LIE that has to do with the person and work of The Lord Jesus. Adam and Eve stood in his presence as in the presence of a superior being, not an inferior. He is the "*Nachash*", the great "Shining One" bearing the name of the

171

"Fleeing Serpent" constellation, hence that "Old Serpent-Dragon" of the Book of Revelation. He was "Lucifer, the Son of the Morning", and even now he comes as an "Angel of Light", and his ministers, as ministers of righteousness, Cp. 2 Cor. 11:14, 15. If Satan came to us in the horrors of human debasement; as for instance in the "Exorcist"? then no one is deceived, and from such a one all would turn away. No, it is in the realm of the spiritual that Satan has to do, and it is in that realm we have a conflict, and if the *panoply* of God's providing is not used then for that moment Satan will have gained an advantage and the glory of Christ will have been less than our "all in all".

1. Eph. 6:11b ... to stand against the strategies of the Adversary.

The word "wiles" (A.V.) and "strategies" (Rotherham) is the Gr. word, "*methodeias*", i.e., methodized, doing something after a certain orderly and systematic way". This is the "cunning craftiness" of Eph. 4:14 whereby deception is brought to bear upon believers to stunt their spiritual growth. Spiritual growth in this context is the perfecting or adjustment of the saints; the adjustment from the book of Acts program with its signs, miracles, and wonders -- and its hope of Israel; the New Covenant, the New Jerusalem, the coming King. There would be the adjustment to The Mystery with its leaving behind all the kindergarten of Israel's religion and forward to that which is spiritual, in the heavenliles, in Christ.

The Colossian Letter deals more specifically with the stratagems deployed against those to whom the Mystery is addressed.

Human tradition had nullified the effectiveness of The Word of God during the time of the prophets as well as during the days of our Lord's earthly ministry, Mk.7:13. During the Acts period there was a "Christo-Judaic" party that emphasized faith in Christ but felt that the Mosaic Law with its legalism in respect to days, diets and rituals, should be binding upon all believers. Intentionally or not, this endorsed the then subordinate place and portion afforded those of the nations to the "Israel of God". While the non-Jewish believers were not the peers of the favored nation, still by God's grace and simple faith they were given a family status "in

Abraham", as the Epistle to the Galatians so fully testifies. Even then, when the doctrine of "grace, plus law" was carried to its logical conclusion, it was held to endanger and invalidate the great doctrines of justification by faith, and the closely related standing of the believer in the grace of God. Romans, chapters three to six are an expose of these.

In the current Mystery Dispensation, not only would elements of the former strategies be perpetuated, but additional quasi-religious claims would be hurled against those embracing the Mystery. The continued propagation of the tenets of the earthly ministry of Christ, as well as the Acts ministries, cannot help but seriously detract from The Mystery ministry of Paul. No part of The Word of God can be neglected without a corresponding loss, but how much more so when we fail to heed or believe God's last and final revelation, The Mystery. The Mystery has made many of the former programs inoperative. Our calling is so high that it ill behooves us to perpetuate the shadows of Israel's religion; the water, the washings, the days, the rituals, the types, the emblematic, the earthly wonders, the signs, the miracles, the buildings, the externals -- in Christ we are above all that.

It is apparent on every side that the *panoply* of God cannot be neglected, for Satan by religion has gained an advantage already. It is tragic that The Mystery Ministry of Paul that called forth these warnings is hardly known today, and in its place is the "religion" that Paul warned against.

JUDAISM

Judaism, with its kindred spirit of legalism, with the stressing of Sabbaths, or holy days, or meats -- of which Paul so earnestly warned in Col. 2:16, 17, 20 & 21 -- is looked upon as an adjunct of spiritual Christianity today. The abolishment of all ordinances in the death of our Lord should be an unceasing cause of rejoicing rather than our practicing, in one form or another, the very things that were canceled out by a "nailing it to His cross", Col. 2:14. Paul's insistence upon a spiritual circumcision, i.e., "a cutting off of life" in Christ's death, Col. 2:11, is by far and large, accepted; but the spiritual "baptism" is rejected! Yet it is God who has co-buried and co-raised us WITH CHRIST.

Colossians expresses this so vividly:

Col. 2:12 Co-buried with Him in the Baptism,

Nestle- In Whom (Christ) ye were co-raised,

Marshal Through the faith of the

Text- operation of God ...

Raising Him from among the dead.

God has been pleased to co-mingle us with Christ's Death-Baptism, Lk. 12:50, at Calvary. Only God could have forged this bond that binds us to our crucified and risen Lord. Water baptism, in this great feat, seems so sadly out of place, as it does in the wonderful spiritual unity of Eph. 4:3-7. Surely, surely, only God's operation could accomplish this Divine Baptism, this Identification.

`Circumcision, as a symbol, could only signify a "cutting off of the flesh" this was first impressed upon Abraham long before the Law of Moses to show him that the flesh was incapable of producing spiritual life. As to God, our old nature was "cut off", or "put to death" in the death of our Saviour. What better place than there to forever close the judicial book on the old nature so that it need not be a factor ever again in God's dealings with us. If it was not dealt with satisfactory in the "cutting off of Christ" at Calvary it would have remained to mar our relationship with The Father. God is happy to accept us in The Beloved, Eph. 1:6, and in Him gives us an irrevocable life, place and position. Legalism gives the old nature something to do so that our religious flesh can feel some merit, for it does not seem fit that Christ's work in our behalf should be a work of infinite perfections and that it is in solid union with Him that God is forever free to relate to us on the merits of Christ and not ourselves. We should recognize that the old nature will try every means to assert itself and usurp the completeness that God has given us in Christ. The old nature may even seek to gain merit by confessing itself, as if God were unaware of its potential, its sins, its deviousness. The old nature can call attention to itself by negatives, i.e., "do not touch, handle, or taste", as well as by positives, i.e., "do certain things." Instead of resting in God's grace, our old nature wants to come to God with Christ in the role of a "helper" and with "something" in our hands. As Dr. E.W. Bullinger said, "If your something does not agree with my something I may kill you." If not physically, then spiritually, for legalism kills love, and faith, and joy,

and happiness. That legalism parades in a religious dress makes it doubly dangerous.

MYSTICISM

The Mysticism of which Colossians 2:8, 18, warns is that type of mysticism that looks to some sort of "intermediate being or thing" as steps toward God. Its name and mode may change from generation to generation but its inner pattern remains somewhat the same. Paul cautions about intruding into the realm of the unseen; worshipping of angels, seeking after the old "Elements or Rudiments of the Cosmos". The mysticism of ritual, magic formulas, paths of enlightenment, trances, etc., all find expression when Christ's Headship (Col. 2:19) is not given its rightful place. The way to God is wide open equally for everyone, and there is no need for the intermediation by any being, whether angel!, saint, seer, priest, pastor, or friend. Nor do we need to search among the rudimentary or elementary powers of the universe to have a full and free access to The Father. All The Fullness of The Godhood resides in Christ, and, having Him we need naught besides, Col. 2:9. To use a weak term, when we found Christ, we found God. He is The *Eikon!* of God, Col. 1:15, with which and in which God is revealed to us. He is not merely a "step" toward God, but the whole ladder.

There is a true mysticism that consists in an awareness of God's love and fellowship in worship and prayer-. But it does not surrender the fortress of the mind to other' influences such as hypnotic chanting, repetitious intonations, mind expansion drugs, or occult influences.

PHILOSOPHY

An effective stratagem used of Satan is a certain type of philosophy, Col. 2:8, cp. verse 4. This has no reference to the legitimate love and pursuit of wisdom by intellectual means and moral self-discipline, or the investigation of causes and laws underlying reality. All of God's handiwork bears the very closest scrutiny and to trace out the laws of the mind or the universe is but to reach out and touch the infinite intelligence and power of God; no Christian need fear honest investigation in any realm. But the type of philosophy The Scriptures speak of in a derogatory way is that which answers to our pride but is a direct enemy to all that is freely given to us by the grace of God. This is a spirit of intellectual exclu-

siveness, just as Judaism produced a spirit of religious exclusiveness by way of its formalism, so this claim to a superior wisdom hidden from others produces a

caste system in which degrees of knowledge becomes the criteria of spirituality. Some sort of initiation rite before or after impartation of special knowledge is usual with this type of philosophy, just as in some of the secret secular lodges. All the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are included in the knowledge of God in Christ. All God's wisdom has been hidden away in Christ:

Col. 2:3 In Whom are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge hidden away.

Christ, as the Wisdom of God, is personified as such in Proverbs 8:23-31, and I Cor. 2:7. One need not go to ancient Cabalistic writings to discover more spiritual wisdom in reference to God, nor to modern authors. The Mystery of the Ephesian-Colossian Letters (Col. 1:25), completes The Word of God, God's revelation of Himself and His purposes. The Mystery is the unit that completes the whole.

The messenger and the message used of God to bring to completion The Word of God is explicitly stated in the following verses:

Col. 1:24 ... for His Body's sake, which is the Church:

1:25 Whereof I am made a minister, according

to (in accord with) the Dispensation of

God, which is given to me for you, to

fulfill (complete) the Word of God;

1:26 Even The Mystery, which hath been hid

(hidden away) from the ages and from

generations, but is now (just now) made

manifest to His Saints:

God has been pleased to close The Canon of Scripture with the dispensational message of The Mystery, through an inspired Apostle, not through apocryphal books claiming some hidden wisdom; nor was it through means of uninspired men living years later. Paul's statement would be without meaning if other portions

of Scripture were still to be revealed and written; or of other writings at a later date were to be on par with Scripture.

Paul could truly say to his hearers at that time, and to all others:

Col. 1:28 Whom we preach,

warning every man, and

teaching every man,

in ALL WISDOM;

That we may present every man

Perfect in Christ Jesus.

In Ephesians 5:27 Christ is to present the Church to Himself, i.e., "set it beside Him"; in Colossians 1:27 & 28 the riches of the glory of The Mystery (The Christ set forth in the Colossian Letter) is to be the means used to present (set beside) every man perfect in Christ Jesus. It is EVERY MAN, not an exclusive few. It is free to all, it is universal. Every man mature in Christ -- what a presentation! It is in ALL WISDOM, not some gained by secret oaths, not gained because the exclusive property of a select few, but it is ALL WISDOM, just as all redemption is found IN CHRIST. Nor would it be a partial wisdom that could be added to later on by other supposed leaders, or would-be cultist.

This Gnostic-Philosophic system taught and teaches that evil is inherent in matter or physical things. To quote Lightfoot:

God must express Himself in some way. There must be some

evolution, some effluence, of Deity. Thus The Divine being germinates, as it were; and the first germination again evolves a second from itself in like manner. In this way we obtain a series of successive Emanations, which may be more or fewer, as the requirements of any particular system demand. In each successive evolution the Divine element is feebler. They sink gradually lower and lower in the scale, as they are farther re-moved from their source; until at length contact with matter is possible, and creation ensues. These are the Emanations, *aeons*, spirits, or angels, of this Gnosticism, conceived as more or less concrete and

personal according to the different aspects in which they are regarded in different systems.

177

The Colossian Heresy ... End Quote, P. 76 & 77

In the physical universe as in the spiritual, the control of The Christ is absolute, it is universal, and it is complete. We do not become "gods" through an "eternal progression on the one hand, nor is the physical evil so as to require a progression from God to creation, on the other. The universality of "all things" being in Christ should satisfy our faith and our hearts. Colossians 1:14-18 shows that Christ stands at the forefront of Creation, whether in the natural realm or the spiritual:

Col. 1:14-18 In Whom we have our redemption - the remission of our sins, -

Who is an Image of The Unseen Cod,

Firstborn of all creation, -

Because IN HIM were created all things

in the heavens and upon the earth, the

things seen and the things unseen,

whether thrones or lordships or

principalities or authorities, -- they

all through Him and for Him have been

created, and He is before all, and they

all IN HIM hold together;

And He is The Head of the Body, the

Assembly, Who is The Beginning,

Firstborn from among the dead,

In order that He might become in all

things Himself pre-eminent; -

This Gnostic-Philosophic system had and has a great deal to say about "reaching The Fullness of God", whether this is personified or left as an abstraction. The Colossian Letter again answers this desire:

Col. 2:9, 10. Because IN HIM dwelleth (is completely

at home) all The Fullness of The Godhead

bodily (substantially), and ye are

IN HIM filled full, -- Who is The

Head of all Principality and Authority.

The Godhead is resident in Christ, and in Him it is

178

exhausted. In Him resides the totality of Divine Powers and Attributes. In Him abides The Plenitude (The Fullness, The *Pleroma*) of The Divine Nature. In Him and through Him it is communicated to us. He is not subservient to any other power, but is their Head. In possessing Him as our Lord there is no room, nor need, for any other power or authority. The "Fullness" that we seek is found only In Christ Jesus our Lord. Not in spiritual gifts, nor experiences, nor anything else.

Each of these stratagems merge to produce some wall of exclusiveness, some barrier that can only be the property of a few. In the Dispensation of the Grace of God all exclusiveness brings the love and grace of God in contempt. How much more so when they are held forth as a condition of blessing and acceptance with God. Any thing that engenders spiritual pride, that creates a caste system about itself is at variance with pure grace.

Col. 3:11 Wherein there cannot be Greek and Jew, Circumcision and Uncircumcision, Foreigner, Scythian, Bond, Free, But, All Things, and IN ALL, CHRIST.

Christ is in all alike. He reaches to the lowest without distinction, and, equally without distinction, raises all to the highest.

ASCENTECISM

An effective and attractive stratagem of Satan that is most damaging to the concepts of grace and the completeness of the believer in Christ, is that of asceticism. This could be called a "super-holiness of the flesh". From age to age its dress varies but it is generally occupied with a self-imposed humility, harsh treatment of the body, and a lot of prohibitive rules. Extreme groups look down upon marriage, eat only special foods, and have oath-bound societies. These groups exist well only in communal-style-type of life. To Christ, it was not what one ate that made a difference but what came out of the heart. All this is alien to that grace of God that is more than sufficient to the trials and pressures found in the main stream of life. Paul is certain and definite with his instruction to the Body of Christ that spiritual growth only comes from giving The Headship of Christ its rightful place. If this is done there is a growth that is from God. Both Ephesians 4:13-16 & Col. 2:19 insist that

179

growth is a product of a living relationship to Christ our Head, not in a substitutionary prattling of the flesh. It is a harsh lesson to learn -- that the flesh cannot produce spiritual life. The flesh wants to be religious, and it wants some thing to do. The religion of Israel consisted largely in "carnal, i.e., soulish" ordinances, well described in Col. 2:18-23, and summed up in the words, "Touch not, taste not, handle not ..." These denials, or even those normal and honorable desires of the flesh, do not satisfy the indulgent cravings of the flesh. Whatever obtains our attention, get to us. If this is the flesh, if even in a negative way, then the flesh will further stimulate the very passions and appetites that the ascetic seeks to subdue. Asceticism that looks at austerities of the flesh as the fullness of life in Christ is truly deceived, and Satan has gained an advantage. Is it so difficult to grasp, that God's grace and love are to be the governing factors in our lives, not religion -- specially that of the flesh with its laws, rules, and ordinances! Let us rather always be rejoicing in the perfections of The Christ, and the completeness God has given us in Him. Let us accept the fact that our old humanity, for good or ill, will be with us until death. Surely, the eternal unfolding of The fullness of God in Christ, and we in Him, is compensation enough to justify its receipt by grace through faith without seeking to interpose some thing generated by our religious flesh, however good.

* * * *

In the great arena of Truth we are to hold the field, Eph. 6:13, 14. Truth and righteousness are to be our dress. We are to make haste in telling forth the

perfections of the Glad-message of God's peace, a peace universal to all in the heavens and earth, and within the Body of Christ. Faith in the verity of God's Word is to be our defense; our minds are to be helmeted with that great Salvation-Deliverance each of us possess in Christ. God places in our hands the most wonderful gift of all, "The Word of God", i.e., that message of The Mystery that reflects in all its parts, The Perfections of The Christ --so that all the pieces of the past, present and future fit together to make a perfect whole. By means of all this, our lives are to become a prayer to God, unceasing. Paul strikes at the heart of this in the words of Ephesians:

With all prayer and supplication, praying in every season

In Whom an entire building, in process of being fitly joined

180

in spirit ... (6:18).

together is growing into a holy shrine in (The) Lord; in Whom ye also are being builded together into a habitation of God in Spirit

(2:21 & 22).

God's dwelling place, that holy place, is not the piles of stone nor even the cathedral of the stars, but the Body of Christ is to be that holy habitat of God. For this goal the poor shadowy structures of the Tabernacle and Holiest of All in Israel's Temple had to give way to that which seeks our spirits in which to dwell, a dwelling in which only a New Humanity, Christ filled, is to be the "Holy Place" In Christ, our Lord, an entire structure is being fitly joined together all parts of a united blueprint, each adjusted harmoniously and beautifully to the other so that the design of the Great Architect is seen in the whole. When the structure is complete God's plan, as envisioned in the first act of creation, is fulfilled. This is now a growing and on-going structure "in Christ". Just as "in Christ" all The Fullness was pleased to dwell, Col. 1:19, so now in Him that eternal tabernacle (of which Israel's was but a poor shadow) is to be made inclusive of the Body of Christ. This is a "growing" living structure, not as the Tent in the wilderness or the Temple of Gold in Jerusalem. He whom the Heaven of Heavens cannot contain, will reside in the Body of The Christ just as it does in Him, our Head. Its existence is to be a well-spring of prayer and praise to Him who doeth all things well.

* * *

As Paul closed his ministry in the period of the book of Acts, the events taking place about him seemed to be the fulfillment of prophecy. He wrote, as typical of that time, "*Maranatha*", 1 Cor. 16:21, i.e. "The Lord cometh", that is, in judgment. God revealed a great Secret to Paul, and in The Scriptures of Truth, to us. A part of that Secret is in the on-coming ages of Paul's day, and ours, God would be pleased to show His grace:

Eph. 2:7 That He might point out in the on-coming ages the surpassing riches of His favor in graciousness upon us in Christ Jesus.

181

That the impending events did not take place should be attributed to the formation of the New Humanity in Christ in grace. Just as all those were saved in the ship because God was protecting Paul from death until his task was complete, so the world reaps a benefit of grace too, and rightly so, from God so richly blessing those who are "in Christ". Today we are again hearing the cry of "*Maranatha*", but these will be proved wrong just as have others. In Christ, God is now announcing His "peace" to the near and the afar off, Eph. 2:17. Why do we object to God being ruthless and tyrannical in His grace and love now? Could it be because we are trying to conduct and propagate a program not now in operation?

In future issues of *Scripture Research* additional material will be developed relating to The Great Mystery. The author in writing this article is aware that many will rejoice in these truths while not agreeing in many particulars. Fortunately, the author does not seek a following and would only ask each believer to own The Headship of Christ, and that He alone is sufficient for all things. What is of vital concern is that the glory of Christ be never debased, and that the perfections of His person and the completeness of His Work be always honored. Our "completeness in Him" should be greatly treasured.

Note One

The Letter to Philemon

The Letter and its purpose:

- 1. The contents reflect back upon its author,, Paul cared.**
- 2. It is the only personal letter of Paul to be preserved.**
- 3. It has a simple'' yet rare beauty. It shows courtesy, tact, and a firm but gentle love.**
- 4. It was sent with the Colossian Letter, borne by Tychicus, Col. 4:7-10.**
- 5. Its purpose was to reconcile a master to his slave, and to return a wayward slave to his master.**

Both men were Paul's friends, and both men were indebted to Paul for their spiritual lives.

Paul sought to frame his appeal in terms of Christ, in Whom there is no bond or free, slave or master.

182

Others are included in the address besides Philemon, verse 2, since this issue would touch their lives as well as others. It is a reminder that whatever the problem, we must conduct ourselves as those who are first of all Christians. The problem of slavery has bloodied the pages of history.

Philemon: A man of wealth, position, and faith. Verses 4-7.

Onesimus: The Slave. His name means, "Profitable", but he had defrauded his master, verses 18-19, and had

decamped, vs. 15. The usual punishment for either offense was death.

Paul's Child: Onesimus was begotten through Paul's travail of im- prisonment, vs. 10.

The Fugitive: Onesimus had fled to Rome to loose himself midst the hoards of slaves there, only to be captured by Christ! How little we know the end of the path we tread. The strange turnings ahead of us. The slave was brought to Paul,

and Paul pointed out The Christ. The faces of the friends fade away but that of Christ remains. The fugitive became "profitable", verse 11.

The Problem: Shall Onesimus go through life a fugitive, unpardoned?

Tychicus: He would take the slave under his care, Col . 4:7-9, and bear this letter. ,

Philemon: A noble character, then rise to greater heighis, vs. 12- 17, 20 21. The Slave: A brother in Christ, vs. 16, to be received as if he was the Apostle Paul, vs. 17 (As we are accepted in Christ), A debt owed? Christ-like, Paul would repay it, vs. 18, 19. Freed? Philemon would do more than Paul asked, vs. 21.

Relationship? A brother beloved in Christ, vs. 16. (By: R.H.S.)

182

Note Two

If ye continue In the faith, Col. 1:23. (By; A.J.R.)

Greek transliteration: (A condition of the first class),

Ei ge epimenete tei pistei tethemeliomenoi

If ye continue in the faith having been founded...

Robertson, *Short Grammar*, p. 435 states: "The condition (protasis) uses the indicative mode is determined by that mode, that is to say, the condition is assumed in the statement, which is all that the condition deals with, as being either true or untrue, a fact or non-fact. He means that the condition deals with the statement of the proposition, not with the actual facts. To quote again, "The indicative mode in the condition always makes a clear-cut assertion one way or the other. If the subjunctive or optative is used in the condition (protasis) a doubtful statement is made, whatever may be the actual fact or truth in the case."

Here, then, you have a condition of the first class (there are four classes). It is introduced by ei , if, with the present indicative active. The type admits any indicative tense, however. The condition in Col. 1:23 has the same pattern as that of Matthew 4:3, "If thou be The Son . . . of God ... (A.V.)," which should read, "If thou art (= since thou art), etc.

A condition of the first class is "determined as fulfilled (Robertson, P. 437)" This condition assumes the reality of the condition. The indicative states that it is a fact, as far as the speaker is concerned. It may not be so, but the speaker or writer regards it as a fact.

Matthew 4:3 means, "Since you are The Son of God." or "If (as I concede) you are The Son of God"

12:27 has the same pattern, showing that for the sake of argument Christ conceded as true the charge of the Pharisees, i.e., "Let us say it is a fact that I am casting out demons by Beelzebub, then by whom, etc.?"

12:28, "If (as is indeed the case = since) I am casting out (demons) by The Spirit of God ..."

183

So in Col. 1:23 the meaning is, "If (as i say is indeed the case) you are staying by your faith," (*epimeno*, means to "stay at", or "remain," then by extension, to persevere, continue.). A paraphrase of the passage would be:

... to present you consecrated, blameless, and unblamable (free from blame and free from the charge of it) before Him, since it is my inspired opinion true, that you are staying by your faith (in Christ), founded and grounded, and not being moved away (Middle Voice could read, not moving yourselves away from) the Gospel hope, etc.

(Note: They are staying by their faith, and not moving away from hope.)

Note Three

To Fill up of the Sufferings of Christ

Greek Transliteration: Colossians 1:24

antanaplero ta hystere mata ton thlipseon Christou

fill up the things lacking of the afflictions of Christ

antanaplero (only N.T. usage). The prefix "anti" (ant-) implies,

"On my part" = "I fill up on my part".

thlipseon - afflictions, sufferings, but NOT the *pathemata*, the vicarious suffering or the passion of Christ!

tou Christou. If subjective genitive, it would mean the things Christ

Himself endured. If objective genitive, it would mean the things endured for Him. Meyer says: Paul's afflictions as Christ's, because endured in fellowship with Him. Bauer (*Lexicon*): I fill up what is lacking in suffering. Paul supplies the lack that may exist in the church's proper share of Christ's sufferings Paul does it instead of —hyper—the church, His Body.

Whether Christ's is taken as "belonging to Christ," or "endured by Christ," or "endured for Christ", is a matter of interpretation and cannot be decided on the basis of grammar and syntax. Each example is decided by its own context. In itself the genitive is neither subjective nor objective.

184

Some examples of Objective Genitives:

Rom. 10:2, zeal of God = zeal for God

Mk. 11:22, have faith of God = have faith in/toward God

Acts 4:9, a good deed of an impotent man = to/for an impotent man

Mt. 12:31, the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit = against the H.S.

2 Cor. 5:14, is it Christ's love for Paul, or Paul's love for Christ that constrains him?

The main thrust of the passage is that Paul suffered, Christ was its immediate cause, and its end, but the suffering was not vicarious. The Body of Christ reaped the gracious benefit of that suffering. (By: A.J.R.)

* * *

Note Four

The Mystery of Col. 2:2b

Greek transliteration: Col.2:2b

tou mysterious tou Theou Christou

the mysterion of God - Christ / God's Mystery
of Christ

The "*Christou*" in the passage may be a "appositional Genitive", not The Mystery as it relates to God, but rather God's Mystery, Christ. That is, the whole Mystery being related to and embodied out in Christ.

The textual variants read with almost every possible filling in"!

1. The Mystery of God, which (Mystery) is Christ.
2. The Mystery of God and of Christ (combined).
3. The Mystery of God, Father of Christ.
4. The Mystery of God and Father of Christ.
5. The Mystery of God Father, and of Christ.
6. The Mystery of God and Father and of Christ.
7. The Mystery of God which is in Christ (which ref. to Mystery)

185

#1 above seems to be favored over other Ms. authority. This is saying that God's Mystery or Secret has to do with the glory, the person, the perfections, and the *pleroma* (Fullness) of The Christ. It is tragic that some would separate The Mystery of Christ's person from the purposes for which He was instrumental in His Work.

The "genitive", i.e., "of" without a preposition must be interpreted by the context. Bauer says, "God's Secret or Mystery". It belonged to Him until it was revealed in The Person and Work of Christ in the present program of God. (By: A.J.R.)

Note Five

The Reward of the Inheritance

Greek transliteration of Col. 3:24: (First part by A.J.R.)

apolempsesthe ten antapodosin & conclusions

ye will receive the repayment by R.H.S

antapodosin repayment is from apolambano. "receive". Baur: "Esp. of wages". He cites Rom. 1:27, A.V. "recompense", "receiving back" – Marshall. Both Baur and Vincent interpret the statement to mean that the inheritance is the reward.

antapodosin is from the kindred verb antapodidomi, "I give back, repay, return, as "to return thanks to God." In the bad sense of getting even, revenging, punishing.

The English word "recompense" can mean "reward", but the agent—word, antapodotes, means "paymaster". The basic meaning of the noun is "repayment". Young: "a giving back again".

In classical Greek, the verb means to give back, repay, to make something to be so and so, to correspond with, to deliver in turn, to explain in turn; and the noun: a giving back in turn, repayment.

186

Conclusions

We have already been made meet (prepared, fit, fully furnished) for our allotment, our part, of the saints (holy ones) in light, Col. 1:12.

There is also the "riches of the glory of the allotment of the Father in the saints", Eph.1:18. All this is "our compensation."

Contrasting Col. 3:24, 25 & Eph. 6:8 with 2 Cor. 5:10

In respect to the Ephesian and Colossian texts there is no

"Judgement Seat"

In 2 Cor. 5:10 there is a "Judgment Seat", and "judgment" in respect to things done through one's bodily actions, whether "good or bad."

In Colossians (3:25) the text merely reads:

For the (one) doing wrong will receive

what he did wrong ...

This is in the same tenor as Gal. 6:7, the law of sowing and reaping in this life, not the hereafter. If you sow discord, you will receive discord, if you sow hate it will come home to roost, if you sow love surely love will come to you. None of this affects what we have been made in Christ Jesus by grace. This is not to say that we are to be careless, in our lives but rather grow up into Him in all things. But, one does not grow by striving, but by living -- and letting The Christ be completely at home in our hearts.

In Ephesians 6:8 it is what we know, and it is "whatever good thing" one does, and it is this that we receive; and this not in respect to good or bad or whether we are "bond or free."

In Colossians 3:24, 25 it is again what we "know", and what we "know" is that we will receive the recompense of the inheritance, for we serve The "Lord Christ", and rest in His faithfulness, His righteousness, and His endless love.

No question of obtaining this recompense is implied, it is not

187

in doubt, and it is as inclusive as God's grace is inclusive.

*** * ***

APPRECIATION

Appreciation is due Dr. A.J. Roddy for the great help he has given in this booklet's preparation. Any reference to the construction and grammar of the Greek N.T. will reflect his handiwork. I alone bear the responsibility for the deductions and conclusions drawn from his evidence and/or other authorities used in this study. R. H. Schaefer

Rotherham's "*Emphasized Bible*" is largely the text used in this study although wanting here and there, it is an excellent translation.

188

(Inside back cover)

DEATH-WATCH

THE CAPTIVE OF THE SPEAR

If, at last this ancient head by Roman sword is taken,
while life remained, these palsied lips that worthy Name has spoken.

It is but fitting that as I at first raised the sword,
at the end, by that same blade I fall!

Between these two strokes,
my dim eyes were op'ed, and shall be closed.

"Captive of the Spear," betokened.

Frettered hands, midst chains that bind me;
but by Another captive taken, and in His
triumph train, the power of His grace proclaimed.

In this damp dungeon's hidden cell; no star, sun
or moonlight reaches.

Piercing these enclosures, His love
makes mere shadowy substance of these
iron-pinioned bars.

On shaky knees, midst the soil of my body's
waste, I pray - and Praise!

That Thou! in my odorous state should dwell-!

And, bathe this cell with the vistaed rainbow
colors of Thyself!

You shut me in, and clanged the cage-like doors.

But, Thy gentle presence is with me,

touching me,

as I lie upon my bruised sores.

Oh! Christ, Fellow Prisoner!

Thou too knew the Lictor's, lash, the furrowed

back, the lanced side. Puddled beneath Thy

feet was thine own blood, as now is mine!

Lord, behold, "Thy Prisoner"!

Thou too a Captive art.

Thy chains of love,

Bind us, heart to heart!

by: R. H. Schaefer

(On outside of back cover)

This issue of *Scripture Research* has been a difficult one to write since it sets forth the premise that only Ephesian and Colossians reveal The Mystery of this present dispensation.

I treasure every word of The Word of God, and believe that Christ is found in all it's parts. It is all for us, for our learning, but it is not all directed to us for our practice and hope. Truths that have been carried over from former programs are very selective, and as a rule, have been enlarged-upon. New truths are not always contradictory to the old but are frequently their completion. The "purpose of the ages" in it's unfolding in the past, present, and future, is all bound up with this great dispensational program. It is The same Christ

**with whom we have to do, The same blood He shed --
but the scenes are drawn with bolder strokes and reach
out into the infinite.**

**It is my conviction that in these Mystery Epistles God is
giving us a sight of the goal toward which all has been
moving. In a way, this is all I am trying to say in this
study. The Christ of the Colossian Letter -- in all His
grandeur, glory, and grace, is The Christ that is to be
"filling full" the Church which is His Body with
Himself. This is beyond the new nature, rather it is the
"Hope of Glory" that we look forward to, that glory
and none other (Col. 1:27). The "Body of Christ" will
then be "that perfect man" and will have grown up so
as to fully reflect the measure of the stature, of The
Fullness of Christ (Eph. 4:13). When this takes place,
God's purpose in creation will have been reached.
Ultimately, to me, all lines of truth will lead to this goal
whatever their intermediate paths may be.**

R. H. S.