

# THE WORD TOF TRUTH

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## *DIVINE GENERATION*

Jesus Christ said to His disciples: "Without Me ye can do nothing." This was true of those to whom He spoke, and it is still true of us today. The sooner we realize this the better off we will be.

Paul said: "**For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.**" 1 Cor. 2:11. This tells us that while human things can be known through human intelligence, divine things can only be known through divine enabling.

In view of these two statements it is evident that there has to be a work of God that makes possible every acceptable thing that any man ever does in relationship to God. This would need to be an enabling work as well as an empowering work. That there is such a work is declared in many places in Scripture. And the term that best describes and defines this work is "Divine Generation." This important truth is one that is not seen by many, or at the best is only partially understood, due to the fact that the passages which declare it are taken and forced to support ideas that are not in them.

It has been said that quite often we make our own troubles, after which we are troubled by the troubles we have made. This is true in the case of all those passages into which men have read the theological doctrine of "regeneration" or the so-called "new birth." In all theology this is supposed to be a one-shot experience, happening at the time of conversion, settling once and for all a man's relationship to God. It is held that as by a first birth one becomes a child of human parents, even so by a second birth one becomes a child of God. Those who say they have experienced this usually lay claim to having been "born again." Then when they come upon the passage that emphatically declares: "**Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for His seed remaineth in him and he cannot sin, because he is born of God**" (1 John 3:9), they are greatly troubled; because while they claim to have experienced this birth, they are too honest to claim they have experienced this matter of complete sinlessness.

This "trouble" seems to call for the manufacture or searching out of other theological doctrines to explain away this passage. Some who have a very low estimate of sin are able to claim such sinlessness simply because they have freed themselves from certain vices or have given up the use of

certain things which their sect calls sinful. Thus by their own private yardsticks they are sinless. Further claim is usually made that their sinlessness came about as the result of another work of God called by various terms such as sanctification, eradication, second-blessing, or the baptism of the holy Spirit.

But there are many who have a much keener sense of sin who, even though they live lives of much greater devotion than the self acclaimed perfectionist, would never think of claiming sinlessness or the complete inability to sin.

John most certainly wrote to those who were children of God; and who indeed had been "born of God," whatever this may mean, and yet to these very ones he had already said:

**My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. 1 John 2:1.**

It does not seem that God would make such marvelous provision for His sinning children if it were impossible for them to sin.

There are others who have developed a doctrine called "the two natures in the child of God", one nature which is the outcome of natural birth and a second nature received as a result of divine birth. It is held that all sin is the outflow of our "sinful nature" and no sin at all from our divine nature. This is supposed to take care of John's difficult declaration, since it is held that he is speaking of the divine nature when he declared, "whosoever is born of God does not commit sin." This is one way out of the difficulty, but it is unacceptable to the careful student of God's Word. We have only one nature, which is our human nature. And while we may be partakers of the divine nature, we must remember that it is human beings who partake of this divine nature as a result of belief in Jesus Christ.

To avoid misunderstanding, I want it to be known that I fully believe in the metamorphosis that takes place in a man when he enters into relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. However, I do not believe that this should be called a "new birth" or that it should ever be referred to as being "born again". We should not read this idea into the passage where the word "born" is found. We lose much precious truth in doing this and stultify the real truth that is being set forth in these passages. This is the truth of divine generation.

The real study of any passage is always first to ask, "What does it say?" This must be asked wholly apart from those ideas that may have been built upon it and the doctrines that are supposedly proved by quoting it. In fact the first question that needs to be asked concerning all these passages concerns the meaning of the word "born." This question may seem quite simple, but this is deceptive as it is actually a complex and difficult word.

The Greek word in all passages so far referred to is *gennao*, which is found 97 times in the New Testament and is translated as follows: **beget, 49; be born, 39; bear, 2; gender, 2; bring forth, 1; be delivered of, 1; conceive, 1; spring, 1; be made, 1.** It is one of a large family of words which have *ten* as their basic element. This same thing is found in numerous English words, all of which have the idea of *generating* or *producing* in them.

The basic and fundamental meaning of *gennao* is to generate, especially in the sense of giving origin to. The lexicons are prone to say that *gennao* means "to beget", and this presents no problem if we keep in mind that *generate* and *beget* are synonyms, and that they come into comparison in the sense of to give origin to or to produce. Of this word Cremer says: "Peculiar is the use made by Paul in some passages of the word to denote an influence exerted on some one, molding his life, as in Gal. 4:24." But I do not think this is a peculiar use at all. While the word *gennao* has shades of meaning, the word *generate* will serve as a foundation that must be considered in all occurrences. When this is done many passages take on a new light and life.

In 2 Timothy 2:23 Paul instructs Timothy *to* avoid foolish and unlearned questions "knowing that they do gender (*gennao*) strifes." The truth stated here is that these things are generating or producing strife.

In Galatians 4:24 Paul declared that the Sinai covenant "gendereth to bondage," which means that the law generated slavery, not freedom.

In Hebrews 11:11 we find that "sprang (*gennao*) there even of one, and him as good as dead, so many as the stars of the sky in multitude", which provides proof that a man produces or generates his descendants, an important point which will be considered later.

In Matthew 1:20 we find an interesting occurrence of *gennao* where it says of Mary "that which is conceived (*gennao*) in her is of the Holy Ghost." This passage shows that *gennao* has to do more with that which happened in the nine months before birth than with the actual birth (coming forth) of the child itself. The proper understanding of *gennao* in this passage will produce a much clearer appreciation of the virgin birth.

Thirty-nine of the 49 occurrences in which *gennao* is translated "beget" are found in the first chapter of Matthew. The truth stated here is that Abraham generated or produced Issac, and Issac generated or produced *Jacob*, and so forth through the entire chapter. When this is understood it becomes quite clear how names can be left out of so-called genealogical tables, since a man certainly generates or produces his grandsons through his son. In fact it would be entirely true to say that Abraham generated or produced David, for there never would have been a David if there had not been an Abraham. I feel we make a mistake if we regard Matthew 1 as a lineage table giving all the ancestors of *Jesus* Christ. Three kings are omitted from the list given in Matt. 1: 6-11 ( Ahaziah, Joash, and Amaziah). Could it be that these men had a place in the lineage, they had no part in generating or producing the one named *Jesus* Christ?

**Matthew 1:18** declares "**now the birth (*genesis*) of *Jesus* Christ was after this manner.**" The Greek word *genesis* is a verbal noun derived from *gennao* and means *generating*. Joseph had no actual part in the generating of *Jesus* Christ. This was entirely a work of the holy Spirit.

With these facts before us we are now able to move on to other truths concerning divine generation. In 1 John 5:1 we read:

**Whosoever believeth that *Jesus* is the Christ is born (*gennao*) of God.**

A quick look at this passage might cause one to think that it declares that belief in Jesus Christ is the cause, and that being "born of God" is the result. But this is not the truth set forth here. It is constantly quoted to prove this idea, but there are other statements in this same epistle that make such an interpretation untenable. The truth declared here is that the generating work of God is the enabling act that makes possible belief in *Jesus* Christ and that the *one* who does believe is a God-produced believer. Apart from the generating work of God, belief that *Jesus* is the Christ is not possible. This should serve as a warning to those who say they will believe when they get "good and ready." How do they know that the generating work of God will be there at their convenience?

That this is the true message of this passage is clearly seen when these three verses are brought into comparison:

**Ye know that everyone that doeth righteousness is born (*gennao*) of Him. 1 John 2:29.**

**For love is of God; and every one that loveth is born (*gennao*) of God. 1 John 4:7.**

**Whosoever believeth that *Jesus* is the Christ is born (*gennao*) of God. 1 John 5:1.**

As stated before the last passage given above is often quoted in proof of the proposition that the way to be "born again" and thus become a child of God is to believe that *Jesus* is the Christ, that it is faith in Him that starts the operations of God that results in a "born again believer." But this is wrong for the very same epistle could be used to show that the way to experience the "new birth" is to do righteousness, and a third way would be simply to love one another.

But does John set forth three ways in which to be "born again?" Certainly not! John is not speaking about the theological idea that men call the "new birth." He is talking about divine generation, a work of God that must precede all belief, all works of righteousness, and all true love. Apart from divine generation none of these is possible.

It is the truth of divine generation that is in view in the words of our Lord to Nicodemus, which, as set forth in the *King James Version*, say:

**Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. John 3:3.**

It is strange indeed how many people quote this verse and claim this experience and yet they do not "see the kingdom of God." They do not even have a definition of this term, let alone any understanding of it. This verse is worthy of detailed study.

The word "again" here is *anōthen* which means "**above**" and does not mean "again." I doubt if this word would ever have been translated "again" if it were not for the whim of some translator in this verse and in verse seven. He revealed that he knew the true meaning when he translated it "above" in verse thirty-one. Such translating is inexcusable, and while no one today can say why it was done, there is reason to feel that this translator wanted to render this in some fashion so that the generating work spoken of here could be removed from the realm of a divine work and lowered to that which one human could do for another. They wanted this work to be something that a clergyman

could do for an infant through the ceremony of baptism. Thus they could take "born of water" in this passage and make it to mean the water ceremony which they performed. But they could not do this if *anōthen* was translated above, so, ergo, some other meaning must be found.

The Greek word that means "again" is *palin*. This is found 142 times in the New Testament and is translated consistently "again" in every occurrence. It is the word the Lord would have used if He had desired to set forth the idea of "again." But He did not use *palin*, He used *anōthen* which means "above", and is translated in harmony with this in every other occurrence. There are some who insist that *anōthen* is translated "again" in Galatians 4:9, where, they say, "again" is evidently its meaning. But this is entirely wrong. The word translated "again" in the Galatian passage is *palin* and the word *anōthen* is left untranslated. Most translators since the King James have followed suit except Rotherham who renders it "the weak and beggarly elementary principles unto which over again ye are wishing to come into servitude." Men have earnestly sought to justify translating *anōthen* by the word "again" but have utterly failed. Other Greek writings have been searched to find, evidence that this is what it means. Moulton and Milligan cite certain examples where they say "the meaning 'again', 'a second time' seems best to suit the context." But a translator with no axe to grind will know that the words "above all this" best suit the context of the examples given. This is about equal to our present idiom "on top of all this."

The declaration of our Lord to Nicodemus was: **"Except a man be generated from above he cannot see the kingdom of God."** This is a simple, literal, and honest translation of the Greek.

The Greek word for "see" here is *eideo* which is translated "know" in verse one, "tell" in verse eight, and "do know" in verse eleven of this same chapter. While this word does mean "see", it cannot be taken for granted that it always means to look upon or to behold with the eyes, inasmuch as this word is translated "know" in 281 of its 663 occurrences in the New Testament. A look at the dictionary will show that even in English "see" does not always mean simply to use the organs of vision, but more commonly implies a recognition and appreciation of that which is before one's eyes. This is what it means in this passage. Let us follow this out to its logical conclusions.

The man Nicodemus is identified as being one of the Pharisees and one of the rulers (a chief) of the Jews. One can easily imagine the prolonged and intense discussions that went on among these men concerning the person and works of Jesus. There were good men among these such as Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea, and in the beginning of His ministry, before rancor and bitterness entered in, the discussion among the rulers may have been on a high plane. We know little of what went on, but Nicodemus in his nighttime visit to Jesus made known the outcome of these discussions when he declared: **"We understand and appreciate by the facts we have observed that you are a teacher come from God: for no man can do these attesting miracles that you are constantly performing except God be with him."**

The pronoun "we" here can refer only to the Pharisees and the rulers of the Jews, as there is no other antecedent, and it is wrong to imagine one, such as certain men who may have accompanied him on his visit. His statement tells us that the rulers of the Jews recognized and appreciated the significance of the miracles of Christ, and that these stamped Him as a teacher come from God.

Since all the miracles of Jesus were performed to set Him forth as being the Christ, the One who would be the King of the Kingdom of God, and since they were foretastes of the kingdom of God it is evident that these rulers had apprehended and appreciated much important truth in relationship to the kingdom of God.

This confession of Nicodemus brought forth what must be regarded as both a commendation and a warning to him and to all who ruled in Israel. Our Lord declared in answer:

**Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a man be generated from above he cannot see the kingdom of God. John 3:3.**

What these rulers perceived, and Nicodemus confessed that they recognized and appreciated, was the direct results of God's generating work. Nicodemus had said "We know" (*eideo*), and the Lord answered, "Except a man be generated from above he cannot see" (*eideo*). Thus only one conclusion is possible. If Nicodemus spoke the truth then these men had been generated of God, otherwise they could not have perceived the messages of His miracles. Our Lord declared that a divine work had been done, an enabling work that had brought about the ability to perceive, and at the same time bringing a new responsibility and accountability to God that could not be ignored or treated lightly. The outcome of neglecting to act upon this generating work of God is set forth in a later passage.

**If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloke for their sin. He that hateth Me hateth My Father also. If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin: but now have they both seen and hated both Me and My Father. John 15:22-24.**

If they had heard His words and had seen His works, and had lacked the ability to recognize and appreciate the truths that these words and works were declaring, then they would not have been condemned. And since there was nothing in human ability that could cause them to understand the things of God, they had to be given divine ability. This they had enjoyed, for God had acted in a generating work that made this understanding possible. Thus their condemnation was just.

From the words of our Lord to Nicodemus we see a generating work of God that had made it possible that these rulers could comprehend and appreciate that He was a teacher come from God. Their next step would have been to heed and believe what He said, but, alas, very few took this step. Among those that did, some fell short of full fellowship with Christ.

**Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on Him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess Him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue: For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God. John 12:42, 43.**

God's generating power was behind their comprehension and understanding of the words and works of Jesus Christ. Then God's generating power was behind their faith, for it has always been true that he who believes that Jesus is the Christ is generated of God. And, furthermore, this same enabling power was there to make possible a true confession and complete identification with Christ, but in this they failed to respond. The praise of men meant more to them than the praise of God. Divine generation makes a thing possible, but it does not guarantee that the recipient of the work will act upon it. The enabling work is God's, the response is man's part.

Thus we see that Christ was not demanding that Nicodemus be generated of God. Nicodemus stood before Him as one who had experienced divine generation. He said "We know" (*eideo*), and

the Lord answered by informing him that this was proof of a divine activity in his life, since apart from divine generation no one can see (*eideo*).

This answer must have surprised Nicodemus. In reply to the Lord he asked a question.

**How can a man be generated when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb and be born? John 3:4.**

There is no doubt but that this question was asked in order to draw further information from the Lord about this strange matter of being generated from above. He infers that the only generating he knows anything about is that which takes place in the mother's womb, and that once this was complete nothing could be added to it. He certainly knew even as we do today that a man's capabilities and possibilities are inborn, and that these are fixed within us when we issue forth. Stated in present day language, that the genes of the father combined with those of the mother as developed over a nine month period make us what we are. This explains why there was a Caruso and why there was a Shakespeare. All the education, training, and practice that a man could obtain in twice his lifetime would never make it possible for him to sing like Caruso or to write like Shakespeare.

In his question Nicodemus toyed with the idea that the essential generating work the Lord spoke about was somewhat like and somewhat related to the human generative process. But the Lord quickly set him right by declaring in answer to his question:

**Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be generated of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. John 3:5.**

In this passage two divine genes are set forth which when combined do a generating work which make it possible for a man to comprehend and also to enter the kingdom of God-not just to come under it and be a subject of it but actually to enter into it and be a part of it.

Quite a bit of confusion exists in regard to this verse due to the failure of most translators to properly render two figures of speech. Two metaphors are used here. Something is called *hudor* which translated means "water", but actual water is not meant. Something else is called *pneuma* which translated means "wind", but actual wind is not meant. But in most versions we get translation of the first metaphor and interpretation of the second. If we had actual literal translation of both words it would read: "Except a man be generated of water and of wind", even as *pneuma* is translated "wind" in verse eight. And if we had interpretation of the figures in both places it would read: "**Except a man be generated of the Word and of the Spirit.**"\*

It is necessary to make a choice here, and the choice should be clean cut. We can be either translators or interpreters, but we should not try to be both in the same phrase. As an interpreter of God's Word I do not hesitate to say that what the Lord meant was "Except a man be born of the Word and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." I have capitalized both Word and Spirit so that all will know that God's Word and God's Spirit is meant.

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\* I set forth this interpretation knowing quite well that certain detractors will have a good time at my expense ridiculing the phrase "generated of wind," But let them enjoy themselves.

Where the first impossibility was "he cannot see", here it is "he cannot enter", and both statements have reference to the kingdom of God. This has troubled some students inasmuch as the Bible

declares that when the kingdom of God comes in that stage called "**the full grain in the ear**" (Mark 4:26-29) all men are under it and become responsible to it. As the Psalmist puts it, "yea, for the rebellious also, that the Lord God may dwell among them." Psalm 68:18. But this presents no difficulty since the kingdom of God will be inaugurated on earth by the enlightenment of mankind and by God pouring out of His Spirit upon all flesh (Acts 2:17). This will provide the enabling power that is required before anyone can recognize and appreciate God's kingdom. That some who come under the kingdom of God will later be cast out of it is declared in many places in God's word.

**That which is generated of the flesh is flesh; and that which is generated of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto you, You must be generated from above. John 3:6, 7.**

Even if it were possible for a man to go back through the processes of nature and be generated over again, the very best the flesh could bring forth would be flesh. The unpredictable genes of human beings can produce some very intelligent, capable, and wonderful people. As their latent abilities are developed they accomplish some amazing things in the human realm. Some men seem to be born with an innate ability to comprehend the highest branches of mathematics, yet no man is born with even the ability to comprehend that two and two makes four in the realm of divine matters. That which the flesh generates is always flesh, but it generates nothing that will make it possible for a man to recognize and appreciate the kingdom of God.

As a further clarification our Lord adds a pertinent illustration of those who have experienced the generating work of the Spirit of God.

**The wind blows where it wills, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it came from or where it is going. So is everyone that is generated by the Spirit. John 3:8.**

Since this illustration is of those who are "generated by the Spirit", we should be honest interpreters and keep it that way. When men are generated by God's Spirit there is no possible way for anyone to tell what caused this to be done, what the divine purpose was in it, or what the end result will be. We know from the Word that God generates, and that His generating work makes possible by men such things as love, works of righteousness, perception of God's truth, and, most important of all, belief that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God. Apart from divine generation such belief would not be possible.

This fact is bound to cause us to wonder if this enabling work is one that God does for every man. As to this I have not yet found any statements in Scripture that will permit a firm conclusion one way or the other. But it can be said for sure that if God has generated in regard to faith in Christ, then an enormous responsibility rests upon that one. It can now be determined that he is either a believer or an unbeliever. But only God can determine this. However of this I am assured: Whenever and wherever Christ is faithfully presented, when the gospel that concerns Him is proclaimed, God will provide the ability for the hearer to comprehend and believe. We can do our part, and God will do His part, but the hearer still has a part that he alone can do.

### **God Never Generates Sin**

We now return to the passages with which we started-those which declare that "**whosoever is generated of God does not commit sin**" (1 John 3:9), and the companion statement "**we know that whosoever is generated of God sinneth not**" (1 John 5:18). As we have already seen, there are statements which precede both of these passages which have to be considered in their interpretation. John has already declared "**If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the**



**truth it not in us" (1 John 1: 8).** Now if we interpret 1 John 3:9 and 5:18 as some do, then we should say that we "have no sin," and that we "have not sinned" (1 John 1:10). But if we do this we are practicing self- deception and truth is not in us.

There is no doubt but that John is dealing with the habitual practice of sin. This being so it makes these passages to read:

**Everyone who in Him is constantly abiding is not habitually sinning. Everyone who is constantly sinning has not perceived Him, nor has he known Him. 1 John 3:6.**

**Whosoever is generated of God doth not habitually commit sin because His seed remains in Him and he is not able to constantly practice sin, because he is generated of God. 1 John 3:9.**

The lesson to be learned here is that the generating work of God never leads to sin nor does it result in sin. John does not say that a child of God never sins. Indeed he admits the possibility of sin in the Christian's life. But he does insist that God's generating work will never produce sin. Even though sin may enter the life of a child of God it will never be the outcome of divine generation.

God's generating work always has a definite purpose, a specific end in view. It is likened to a man planting seed. If he wants wheat, he plants that which will produce wheat. The seed always remains the actual seed planted. God never plants a seed that will produce sin.

James has something to say that is related to this:

**Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth He any man: But every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished bringeth forth death. Do not err my beloved brethren. James 1:13-16.**

Divine generation is a work of grace, an act of love and favor to the undeserving. It is a manifestation of God's grace, even if we refuse its help. It is not a one-shot thing, as it takes place innumerable times in the life of every believer. God generates in regard to that which He would be pleased to see in our lives. Apart from it we could not believe. Apart from it we cannot comprehend the kingdom of God. Apart from it we cannot enter into it.

Divine generation makes these things possible. It also makes them probable. But we cannot say it makes them positive.

**The End**

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## ***WHAT IS AN EON*** **(Continued from Vol. XVI, No.3)**

### **A SUGGESTED SOLUTION**

In the previous study we considered the problem imposed upon the Bible student by the many occurrences of the Greek word *man* in the New Testament. It is found 128 times, and in almost every occurrence a statement is made about something that is represented by this word. But until we know what this word means we cannot know what the Spirit of God is talking about.

Some are quite well satisfied that it means "ever" in all passages where the *King James* translators have so rendered it, and that it means "world", "age", "course", or "eternal" in other passages where it is so translated. But with this the Bible student can never be satisfied. He has chosen the way of truth, and he is no longer willing to accept the inadequate renderings of careless translators.

However, it needs to be fully realized that this word is hard to define and difficult to understand. This is true of all complex words. Consider, as an example our word *love*, a word we hear, read, and use almost every day. But let the reader try to define it, and he will find it extremely difficult, even after he has made use of the help offered by an unabridged dictionary.

At the close of the previous study it was promised that in another study certain truths would be pointed out that would suggest a solution. The reader could help himself quite a bit here by finding some of the things the Bible has to say about eons. This is of great value. If all the information one had about a motorcycle is that it has two wheels, this would suggest at once that a motorcycle is in fact a motor bicycle. Thus definite progress has been made in understanding this word. Even so it can be with the word *eon*.

For example, Matt. 12:32 reveals that there is a present eon and there is a coming eon; Matt. 13:22 shows that there are worries related to this present eon that are burdensome enough to stifle the work of the Word in the life of an individual; Matt. 13:39, 40 and 49 speaks of the end or consummation of the eon; Luke 1:33 declares that Jesus Christ shall reign over the house of Jacob for the eons; 2 Cor. 4:4 speaks of the "god of this eon"; Gal. 1:4 declares that Christ has delivered us from the present evil eon. In Eph. 1:21 we find the same language used as in Matt. 12:32 which speaks of "this present eon and the one impending." Eph. 2:2 speaks of "the eon of this world" and by appositional statements suggests that "the eon of this world" is "the prince of the power of the air" and also "the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience."

Consider this illustration. Among the first lessons that a child must learn are those that have to do with government. These early lessons have to do with parental government, quickly advancing to school jurisdiction. A child does not learn about government by learning to pronounce the word, then being taught to repeat a definition of it. This would bring no understanding. He must gain from experience and teaching certain knowledge which bit by bit will fall into place until he advances to that point where each time he reads or hears the word *government* he will draw upon his reserve of knowledge and come to a proper understanding of what is meant by this word in view of the context in which it stands. And he will do this by always remembering that government has the basic meaning of authoritative direction and control. This basic idea will always come to mind when he reads about city, county, state, or federal governments; of aristocratic, democratic, or republican government; when men are referred to as "the government"; when it speaks of one word governing another in a sentence. In all this complexity of use he will always keep the basic idea in mind.

The basic idea that is inherent in complex words is never a complete definition. Therefore it is apt to be rejected as a definition since it does not express all its complexities. This can be tested by considering the basic meaning of the word "love" that will be found in any dictionary.

From its New Testament usage we are able to gather a great deal of information about the word *eon*, but an adequate, succinct definition is at present not possible. The best we can now do is learn all we can about it, adding line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little, until we come to the place where the knowledge gained will congeal into a true understanding.

Since man cannot reason from the particular to the general we will need to start with a great general truth that permeates the entire Word of God, yet it is one that is sadly neglected and only partially understood. All believers hold fragments of this truth, but few indeed ever see more than certain parts. This truth can best be described as *the flow of God*, or as some might prefer it *the outflow of God*. It is my opinion that those who come to an understanding of this truth will no longer have great difficulties with the words *eon* and its cognate adjective *eonian*.

We will begin with a passage from the Psalms which may at first seem remote from and unrelated to any study of the word *eon*. It is a beautiful and inspiring passage.

**There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the most High. Psalm 46:4.**

This passage is a prophecy. It concerns the glory of Jerusalem in the day when the kingdom of God is a reality upon the earth. It is related to the time when God will speak from heaven (46:6), make wars to cease to the ends of the earth (46:9), and be exalted among the nations and in the earth (46:10). There are many who believe that this is brought about by the second coming of Christ, and that it is impossible apart from His personal return to the earth, but I believe and insist that it is the result of the outflow of God in the day that He decides to inject Himself into the affairs of men and govern the world.

The river here is not an actual river, even though God will give Jerusalem all the water it needs. This river is the great flow of God that will bring His blessings upon the earth as a whole and some of its streams bring blessings to Jerusalem. This passage gives us a marvelous picture of the flow of God.

It should be noted here that first we have the river (flowing water), then this divides into streams of channels and that some of these channels flow on to make glad the city of our God. The diligent student will have no trouble in developing this picture. There is the stream that will flow to the rulers in Israel and from them out to others; one flowing to the resurrected David (Eze. 34:23, 24), and then out to the twelve men who will sit upon twelve seats of government judging the twelve tribes of Israel (Matt. 19:28). Yet these are only channels that come from the greater stream. And without further hesitation it can be said that this river, this divine flow, this outflow of God is the *eon* to come, spoken of in so many places in the New Testament.

This brings us face-to-face with the basic idea that is in the word *man*. It always has to do with something that is flowing, or which is related to that which is flowing. It is used in connection with many things that have the idea of flowing in them.

At this point it will be helpful to consider some of the history of the word *aion*, as this has bearing upon our study.

Thayer says that the "Etymologicum Magnum" (a book giving the derivations of all Greek words) states that *aion* is so connected with *aemi* (to breathe) as to denote properly that which causes life, vital force. Thus the earliest history of this word shows its use in relationship to that great flow of life from God apart from which nothing could live. As Paul declared the universally known truth, "In him we live, and move, and have our being" (Acts 17:28). Thus from a word related to the flow of life to all men came the word *aion*.

However, this word was not originally spelled *aion*, but *ainon*, which in the course of time became shortened to *aion*. In the New Testament the original spelling persists in a geographical name, given as *Aenon* in our versions.

**And John also was baptizing in Aenon near to Salim, because there was much water there. John 3:23.**

The Greek spelling in this passage is *ainon* which all lexicons agree means a spring, that is, a free-flowing fountain of water. If any wonder about this Greek name for a place in Palestine, it is enough to say that there were many of these. After the conquests of Alexander the Great (B.C. 334-323) Greek became the hybrid language of Palestine and Egypt.

The word *ainon* (later *aion*) is the same as the Latin word *aevum*, which Thayer says "is *aion* with the Aeloic digamma." It is from *aevum* that we get our word *age*. It is evident that when the Latin made use of this Greek word to describe a cycle of time, he did so because he viewed time as flowing onwards in cycle after cycle.

There is a geographical name which comes from *mono* This is "Avon", the name of several rivers in Great Britain, the most famous of these being the one on which Stratford is located. This word is thought to be of Celtic importation, appearing in Welsh as *afon* and in Manx as *aon*. It appears more or less disguised in a vast number of river names all over the Celtic area of Europe. In the British Islands it appears in such forms as Evan, Aune, Anne, Ive, Cuney and Inney; in France as Aff, Aven, Avon, Aune; in Italy as Avenza and Avens; in Portugal as Avia; and Avano in Spain. These names all have to do with rivers, that is, with flowing waters, for this is what the name "Avan" means-the flower.

### **The Everflowing God**

The God revealed in the Bible is one who gives, therefore, He is a giver; the ever-giving One who "giveth to all, life, add breath" (Acts 17:25). Our God loves, therefore, He is a lover; the ever-loving One whose very being is love. Our God saves, therefore, He is a Savior, the ever-saving One who stands as the Savior of the world and the Savior of mankind. These are truths that most believers recognize and hold to be true. But equal to all of these and just as important is the fact that our God flows, therefore, He is a flower, the everflowing One. Thus it is not strange that Abraham, after he straightened out all his difficulties with Abimelech over a well, rose above all these earthly matters and called upon "the name of Jehovah, the eonian God", meaning the everflowing God, who was more impart ant than any well of water.

The truth of the outflow of God is of such great importance that it would be well if all who believe in Him would read straight through their Bibles with the preeminent thought in mind of noting all passages that have bearing upon this one subject. I know that they rejoice when they are shown a passage like Isa. 44:3 which says: **'For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thy offspring.'** But think how much happier they would be about it if they came upon this themselves.

Those who believe in God and who have learned of Him from the revelation given in His Word know quite well that God is the unlimited source of all that the human race lacks and sorely needs. He is the infinite source of all the light, truth, justice, wisdom, righteousness, joy, peace, healing, health, happiness, life, order, virtue, love, purity, and power that mankind needs today. And yet if we consider each one of these, they are sorely lacking in men in general and becoming harder to find in men in particular. This leads to the conclusion that God is not flowing out and flooding the world

with these things today. If He were men would be quickly overwhelmed by them and would be carried along by the very force of them.

But let no one think that God is not flowing at all today, for most certainly He is. He never ceases to be God and He never ceases to flow. His present flow is one of gracious acts performed in a secret method of dealing. We will never know what this flow of grace has done for the world, for mankind, and for the individual until that day comes when His record of grace can be minutely examined and all the untraceable riches of the present flow can be traced out. There is today a divine eon, a divine flow from God. This *is* what makes life possible upon this earth. For if God should determine to gather to Himself His breath and His Spirit, then all flesh would perish in that instant and man would return to the dust (Job. 34:14, 15). Yes, God is actively working today. Without Him we would be unable to do anything. His generating work makes many things possible. I have no sympathy with the ideas that are often put forth that say if we cannot prove that God is at work, this is proof that He is not working at all.

Nevertheless, the fact remains that God is not doing today all that He can do, neither is He doing all that He has declared He will someday do. This is all in harmony with His present purpose. But the rivulets of grace are not sufficient to overcome the present flood tide of evil. God will have to do more, much more than He *is* doing now. We look upon the flood of evil and we are inclined to cry:

**Oh that thou wouldest rend the heavens, that thou wouldest come down, that the mountains might flow down at thy presence, as when the melting fire burneth, the fire causeth the waters to boil, to make thy name known to thine adversaries, that the nations may tremble at thy presence! When thou didst terrible things we looked not for, thou camest down, the mountains flowed down at thy presence. For since the beginning of the world (*olam*, corresponds to *aion*) men have not heard, not perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, beside thee, what he, hath prepared for him that waiteth for him. Isa. 64:1-4.**

### **The Present Evil Eon**

That there is a present evil flow of things, none can deny. That it is a broad and mighty river, all must admit. Its present flood stage is frightening. It is a river that is kept full by the millions of sewers which daily pour into it and forms much of its contents. This is the present evil eon, the present evil flow of things, a thing so obvious that none can deny it, and yet so obscure and mysterious that none can understand it.

Everyone who has stopped to consider it feels that his life is played upon by mysterious forces. These are waves and billows of influence that arise outside of us and are bent upon shaping our lives for good or for evil. In fact there is today a divine eon that would make men devout and godly; there is a human eon that would make men good and religious; and there is an evil eon that would make, men unbelieving, ungodly and wicked. Many good men are behind and are a part of the human eon, and they ever seek to get men to put on the forms of godliness but to neglect the power of godliness. God in Christ is the source of the divine eon and His present flow of grace makes it possible for us to deny and disown all ungodliness, irreverence and worldly desires, and to live sanely, righteously and devoutly in the present eon (Titus 2:12).

The word "influence" is significant here, for this word is closely related to "flow," and thus is vitally related to the word *eon*. At one time men believed that there was an ethereal fluid that flowed from the stars and affected the actions of men. They called this "influence". This idea still prevails in present day astrology. But the Bible student has better knowledge than these crude ideas of the things that influence men. They are influenced by God, they are influenced by Satan, and they are influenced by men. Those influenced by Satan are caught up in the present evil flow of things.

The present evil flow started with Satan when he fell away from God. "I beheld Satan as lightning fall from the heaven" (that is, fall from God), is the word of the Lord Jesus concerning this (Luke 10: 18). This brought sin into the universe, and later through the sin of Adam it flowed into the world. The present evil eon is composed of everything that alters or affects the conduct, character, and thoughts of men in ways that are contrary to God. These influences that make men what they are are intangible and imperceptible, and we learn of them by observing their effects or results. This explains why Archbishop Trench long ago described the present evil eon as being:

All that floating mass of thoughts, opinions, maxims, speculations, hopes, impulses, aims, aspirations, at any time current in the world, which it may be impossible to seize and accurately define, but which constitute a most real and effective power, being the moral, or immoral, atmosphere which at every moment of our lives we inhale, again inevitably to exhale,-all this is included in the *aion*, which is, as Bengel has expressed it, the subtle informing spirit of the *kosmos*, or world of men who are living alienated and apart from God. *Synonyms of the New Testament*.

Particular attention needs to be given here to the phrase "the subtle informing spirit of the world" as the force of this is apt to be missed. The word "informing" in this quotation does not have to do with the communication of knowledge, as it is used in its older meaning of to form in respect to character, to give a definite shape or order to. This is another basic fact related to the word *eon*. It has to do with that which flows, but also which flows for the purpose of giving shape or character to.

The shape and character of the present order of things, this present world, is the outcome of this present evil eon. The shape of the world to come is the effect of the coming eon.

This is the eon that will produce the kingdom of God upon the earth. This is the eon in which we shall live eonian life.

There is much more to consider, but for the present we will close with the simple exhortation to all who read these lines-"Praise God from Whom all blessings flow."

**To Be Continued**

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## **SOUND DOCTRINE**

It is part of Paul's solemn charge to Timothy, and through him to us, that the time will come when men "**will not endure sound doctrine**" (2 Tim. 4:3). The word "doctrine" here should be "teaching", and in this passage it has to do with knowledge that is imparted by one who teaches. Any man that teaches will be facing up to reality if he acknowledges the truth of God's declaration that there will be an era when men will be intolerant toward knowledge which is imparted if that knowledge is sound. This brings us face-to-face with the questions: What is meant by sound teaching? How can a man make an honest decision as to the soundness of the things he seeks to

impart? Is anyone able to overcome his bias, his prejudice, and his pride and make a true judgment as to the soundness of his own teaching? In answer to the last question all will agree that the least he can do is to try.

The word here translated "sound" is *hugiaino*. It is derived from the word *hugies* which is found fourteen times in the New Testament where it is translated "whole" thirteen times. In all these it has to do with being sound in health, that is, without disease, infirmity, or impairment of any kind. In Titus 2:8 it is translated "sound" where it is related to speech. From this it seems that unsound speech would be the kind that leaves something vital unsaid, which if it were said it would change the impression somewhat.

The word *hugiaino* is found twelve times and is translated "sound" (7), "whole" (2), "wholesome" (1), "be in health" (1), and "safe and sound" (1).

These facts indicate that in order for a teaching to be sound it must be based upon the whole Word of God, that is, upon every revealed fact that has any bearing upon it. The one who teaches must always be a student. He must always be asking the questions: "What are the facts?" and "Are these all the facts?" If a single fact is twisted to make it conform to an idea, that fact becomes crippled and any teaching built upon it becomes unsound. If a fact is inflated out of due proportion it may become a malignancy that will reach out and destroy every healthy fact that has any bearing upon the subject. If a fact is ignored, suppressed, left unconsidered, or not stated then the teaching presented is not whole or complete and can never be called sound.

There are many ideas that men seek to impart, which they claim are solidly grounded upon the Word of God that prove to be very unsound teaching when they are considered in the light of all the facts that are declared in the Word.

### **Is All Out Of God**

An example of this is seen in the teaching that is summed up in the words "all is out of God", a teaching so strange that some people will not believe that it is being taught. "Oh, but he doesn't believe that!" is the answer often given when this teaching is analyzed and refuted.

New voices have arisen to present and defend this teaching, the latest one being called "Echoes of Grace." This is published in Phoenix, Arizona by Mr. George Addair, who serves also as its Editor. When examined this proves to be nothing more than echoes of the teaching of The Concordant Publishing Concern and Mr. A. E. Knoch. Ordinarily I would be inclined to let it pass unnoticed if it were not for the fact that it has been given wide recognition due to its commendation by the Editors of *The Berean Expositor* and *Truth for Today*, commendations which I am sure are now regretted by both of these brethren.

Among those who claim relationship to God there have always been those who supposed that nothing could happen independently of the divine will whether evil or good, whether sin or righteousness. This idea is usually supported and supposedly proved by quoting a short phrase out of a long sentence in Ephesians which, when taken out of context, appears to say that God works "**all things after the counsel of His own will**" (Eph. 1:11). Then a statement in Romans is quoted which says "**of Him, and through Him, and to Him are all things**" (Rom. 11:36). Here we are dutifully pointed to the Greek which most certainly reads "out of Him", and this is supposed to be the epigrammatic argument that proves that "all is out of God", the good as well as the evil.

By passages such as these, God is made responsible for all that ever happens in the universe. Or, as Mr. Addair quite frankly states it: "Now, even though God is not participating in the violent crimes suggested by our objectors, the Bible does nonetheless say that HE IS RESPONSIBLE FOR IT. He is universally responsible for everything. We have already cited much Scripture to uphold this." (Echoes of Grace, Vol. I-No.2, page 28, the emphasis is his).

That sentence is a bit confusing, but it seems clear that the pronoun "it" refers to "the violent crimes." This typographical error we can easily straighten out, but I defy anyone to straighten out the idea that anyone (even God) can be a non-participant in something for which he is responsible.

The Bible declares that "the works of the flesh are manifest which are these: Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like" (Gal. 5:19-21). But it seems that Mr. Addair would have us believe that the flesh is not responsible for these things, since they are the responsibility of God. However, he does clear God of actual participation in things such as these.

If the statements from Romans 11:36 and Ephesians 1:11 were sound quotations, and if they were the only facts that have any bearing on this matter, then it would be quite clear that "all is out of God" and that He does "work everything according to the counsel of His own will." But here we are face to face with twisted facts, partial facts, ignored facts, all of which results in a teaching that is completely unsound.

Before a doctrine is built upon any passage one must always make sure of translation and interpretation. One fact of paramount importance that needs to be considered is that the words translated "all things" in Romans 11:36, I Cor. 8:6, and Eph. 1:11 are *ta panta*. At first glance this would appear to be the neuter, plural, definite article linked up with the neuter plural form of *pas* (all). Literally translated this would mean simply "the all", but there are numerous occurrences which such a literal rendering would hardly make sense.

The very first occurrence of this phrase shows that it is a demonstrative expression, idiomatic in character, and points to that which has just been spoken of or is about to be spoken of. In Mark 4:11 it is translated "all these things", and it is limited to the things set forth in the context, the things that had been done in parables. If these things are considered collectively it should be rendered "all this" but if separately then "all these." It is always related to a group of things and the idiom will stand either translation.

However, it needs to be remembered that *ta panta* is to a certain extent a Pauline idiom. Mark uses it but once and John uses it twice. All 34 other occurrences are found in the writings of Paul. Therefore, it is to him that we look for a crystal clear example of the meaning of this idiom.

This is found in Col. 3:8 where it is properly translated "all these" and refers to a list of things about to be mentioned.

**But now ye also put off all these (*ta panta*); anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth.**

Even A. E. Knoch who translates *ta panta* by the term "the universe" four times in the first chapter of Colossians must bow to the inevitable truth and translate it "all these" in this fifth occurrence in this short letter.



In Romans 11:36 Paul, having set forth numerous divine acts which are difficult to understand sums it up by saying "that out of Him, and through Him and for Him are all these" and no interpreter has any right to expand" all these" to include a single thing not already listed in the context.

In Ephesians 1:11, Paul having set forth numerous things related to the purpose of God adds the declaration that this is in harmony with the purpose of the One who is working "all these" (or, "all this" if viewed collectively) after the counsel of His own will. Again no one has any right to read one thing into this passage which is not already set forth in the context. To do so is to add to God's Word.

### **These Are Not Out of God**

Another fact that must be faced is the numerous statements in Scripture that declare that certain things are not out of (*ek*), using the very same preposition that Paul used in Rom. 11:36.

**To certain of the Pharisees the Lord said: "Ye are out of (*ek*) your father the devil" John 8:44. To the same men again He said: "He that is out of (*ek*) God heareth God's words, ye therefore hear them not because ye are not out of (*ek*) God." John 8:47. In 1 John 3:8 the writer declares: "He that committeth sin is out of (*ek*) the devil" Again he says: "Whosoever doeth not righteousness is not out of (*ek*) God." Finally he declares: "For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not out of (*ek*) the Father, but is out of the world." 1 John 2:16. In view of these plain statements those who would read the ideas of "universality" into Romans 11:36 need to reconsider their interpretation. "All things" in Romans 11:36 cannot mean everything without exception or distinction. Such teaching ignores many facts. It is not sound.**

**The End**

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

### **EPHESIANS 1:4, 5**

**According as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, KJV.**

**According as He chooses us in Him before founding His order, we to be holy and flawless in His sight, in love designating us beforehand for the place of a son for Himself through Jesus Christ, in accord with the good pleasure of His will, TRV**

We must ever keep in mind that the subject of the long sentence we are considering is the exaltations with which we have been exalted among the most exalted ones in Christ. To exalt a person is to raise that one high, to put in an eminent position, to raise in dignity, power, or character. It is our spiritual exaltations that are being detailed in this long sentence.

**ACCORDING AS** - This is the Greek word *kathos*, formed from *kata* (according) and *hos* (as). It means harmonious correspondence or agreement. God's choice of us is one chord in the harmony that makes up our exaltations. As used here this word emphasizes the connection between our "every spiritual exaltation" and our choice by God. To be chosen is to be exalted. God's choice of us is the first of these spiritual exaltations to be set forth in this long list.

**HE CHOOSES** - *exelexato*, aorist middle of *eklegomai*, which means to elect, to pick out, to choose, but is always used in a technical sense as choosing one for an office, or choosing one for special service. In the New Testament it always means just what it means in English when used in a political context. We elect presidents, governors, senators, and mayors. Our elections are to an office and have to do with performing special service.

When *eklegomai* is used in the middle voice it shows that the subject of the verb acts in his own interest. Here it means, "He chooses us out for Himself." In translating *exelexato* the word "chooses" is used to express an act which while it happened at one point of time in the past the results continue to the present. Strictly speaking the aorist tense is timeless. We have been chosen (elected) by God and we remain chosen until that time when we are given the position and place of service for which we have been elected.

This is one of twenty-one occurrences of *eklegomai* in the New Testament-one of a family of three words, the other two being *eklektos* and *ekloge*, which are in order verb, noun, and adjective. Out of 51 occurrences of these three words some form of the word *chose* is used to translate them 29 times and some form of *elect* is used 22 times. If these words had always been translated instead of transliterated, the words *elect* and *election* would disappear from the New Testament. This would deprive certain Calvinists of their strongest support, since they take the position that since these words are found there they prove the entire doctrine of election which they teach. However, it is only the technical terms of Calvinistic theology that can be found in the Bible, and much of this is because they were placed there by translators. When the passages are examined in which these terms occur they do not teach the Calvinistic ideas of election. When the New Testament speaks of God electing men, choosing them, foreordaining them, or predestinating them it means something quite different than Calvinism means when it uses these same words.

If it were not for the erroneous doctrines that have been built upon the word *election* it would be easy for the Bible student to grasp its meaning. In Luke 6:13 this is the word used where it says:

**And when it was day, He called unto Him His disciples: and of them He chose (elected) twelve, whom also He named apostles.**

If any have trouble with the Biblical teaching of election, here is a crystal clear example of it in action. Our Lord had many disciples. These He called together and out of them He chose (elected) twelve. These He named apostles. The election of these twelve men took place on a certain definite day in the year 31 A.D. (as we reckon it), and this election set these men apart and marked them out to serve in a special way the One who elected them. This is the truth that is harmonious with all of God's elections. Election has to do with those who are already related to God being chosen to serve. All of God's elections take place within the lifetime of the one who is elected.

If all of the 51 occurrences of the Greek words *eklegomai*, *eklektos*, and *ekloge* are carefully considered the student will find that they never have to do with forgiveness, redemption, or believing. No one is elected to be saved, but some who are saved are elected for special service.

**IN HIM** - It is in Him that we are chosen because we are in Him, and for no other reason. The citizens of the United States elect a man to be President because he is the one they consider best qualified for the office. We are elected by God because we are in Christ Jesus. This epistle is addressed "to all the saints" and these are identified as "the ones being and believing in Christ Jesus." All of these are "chosen of God." This is the address on the envelope of this epistle, and no sympathy *is* given to the efforts of some to alter this address so that these truths apply only to what they call "the truth of the church of the mystery."

**BEFORE FOUNGING HIS ORDER** - Inasmuch as this translation is quite different from the King James Version it needs to be explained in detail. At all times in this study the words *order* and *world* will be used as exact equivalents. The Greek reads *pro kataboles kosmos* which translated literally means "before founding of order." There are no definite articles in this phrase and no justification can be found for inserting two of them as most translators do. There is justification for adding "His" before *kosmos* since it is His order that is in view, and the totality of social, political, and cultural arrangements will be founded by Him.

There are some who equate "founding" with the original creation of the heavens and earth and insist that we were elected or chosen before we or any other created thing existed. There are others who insist that *katabole* means "disruption" or "overthrow" and they refer this to the pre-Adamic cataclysm which disrupted the original world or order and resulted in the earth becoming waste and empty. Those who hold this view make much of the definite articles here (which are not in the Greek) as they would like for this to point to one definite historical occurrence. But even if *katabole* does mean disruption or overthrow there would still be no reason for referring this to the pre-Adamic disruption of the original world.

We need to remember that God's order or arrangement was disrupted by the entrance of sin into the universe, by the entrance of sin and death into the world, by the flood of Noah's time, and by the great sin of Israel.

I cannot agree that *katabole* here refers either to the original creation or to the disruption that followed. If it does then this would mean that God made choice of me before I had any existence. This may make sense to those who have swallowed without thinking the Calvinistic doctrines of election and predestination, but it fails to make sense to the one who has made a careful study of the Biblical revelation in regard to these matters. The witness of Scripture requires me to believe that God's election of me took place in my lifetime, that it happened as a result of believing in Jesus Christ, and that it is based upon the fact that I do believe in Him and am now in Him.

The eleven occurrences of the verbal noun *katabole* in the New Testament do not offer too much help in understanding its meaning since the context is the same in all occurrences. Some things are said to be before (*pro*) *kataboles* (founding) and some things are said to be from or after (*apo*) *kataboles* (founding), but it is difficult to say what "founding" is referred to. However, there is one exception in Heb. 11: 11 where *katabole* is translated "conceive", but should be translated "received strength for founding a seed" as Rotherham does it.

In order to understand the words *kataboles kosmos*, much more attention needs to be given to the word *kosmos*. This word in its most common Greek usage means the sum and total of everything that constitutes an orderly universe. We must ever keep in mind that the earth is not the "world." The world is the order, the system that surrounds and is upon the earth. It is the *kosmos* that makes life possible upon the earth. It can be thought of as being man's total environment which is essential to his life and well-being. It is an exceedingly complex thing which is still beyond our full comprehension. Let us consider some of its wonders.

While, as said before, it is not the earth, yet the roil that covers this planet is an essential part of man's world. The sun above us is also an essential part of man's world, being at just the right distance from the earth to supply the proper amounts of heat and light, plus countless other known and unknown benefits.

It is the sun that draws the water from the land and sea into the sky, holding it in vapory suspension until other forces form it into drops to spill upon the thirsty land. Falling, as it does, down through the atmosphere it absorbs the carbon-dioxide gas in the air, making it acid, going into the soil where it makes solid substances soluble, providing the material required by all plants that spring from the soil.

This same sun that draws up the water also provides the rays of sunlight, which, according to our present knowledge leaves the sun at a speed of 186,000 miles per second, arriving upon the earth eight minutes later. Upon arrival the sunbeam falls upon the green leaves of a plant and sets in motion the most important and profound series of chemical reactions known to man.

In the presence of sunlight a green plant takes the carbon-dioxide gas from the air and combines it with water to produce the solid substance known as carbohydrates. One of the waste products of this carbohydrate production is oxygen which the plant disposes of by releasing it into the air. This entire process is called photosynthesis. Almost all life is dependent upon it.

Animals (including man) eat carbohydrates of plants as food. They also inhale the oxygen given off by the plants in order to oxidize or burn up the food. A waste product of food oxidation is carbon dioxide which the animal exhales into the air where it is again picked up by the plant to start the process all over again.

Water is also a vital part of this world. This marvelous fluid formed of two gases is so ordered by divine law that it contracts as its grows colder until it reaches 40° F, becoming a solid at 32 ° F, when its law of contraction changes direction and it begins to expand with an irresistible force. This change of law is essential to the well-being of life upon the earth, for if this were not so as soon as one layer of ice formed it would sink to the bottom, as would each successive layer until all rivers and lakes became a solid mass of ice.

And yet things like these are only glimpses of parts of the whole of this marvelous and complex world that God has made (Acts 17:24). Nevertheless, they help us to understand why God loves the world, why He sent His Son to be the Savior of the world, and why He intends to establish it or found it so that it cannot ever again be disrupted or turned from its course.

Through the conduct of man, much that is foreign to the world has penetrated into the world. "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin" (Rom. 5:12). Since that original transgression sin has penetrated so far into the world that the word itself can be used to set forth that order of things which is alienated from God. But the fact remains that God loves the world and that He sent the Son to be its Savior.

The declaration that Christ is the Savior of the world is the positive guarantee that the world is going to be saved. To be saved the world must be rescued, delivered, and made safe. At present we see it in the grip of sin and death, but Christ Jesus is the lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world (John 1:29). The creation itself will be delivered from the bondage of corruption (Rom. 8:21). And it will be made safe when it is established or founded by God. This was promised by the Psalmist when he looked into the future and saw the assumption of divine sovereignty by Jehovah, the kingdom of God upon the earth.

**Say among the nations that the Lord reigneth: the world also shall be established that it shall not be moved: He shall judge the peoples righteously. Psalm 96:10.**

**The Lord reigneth, He is clothed with majesty; the Lord is clothed with strength, wherewith He has girded Himself: the world also is established, that it cannot be moved. Psalm 93:1.**

It is this establishing or founding of the world that Paul refers to in Eph. 1:4 when he declares that the believer in Christ Jesus has been chosen to perform a special service before the foundation of the world. The founding of the world is still future, and when it takes place it will be the final aspect of that great salvation by which the world is saved.

**WE TO BE HOLY AND FLAWLESS IN HIS SIGHT** - This is what we have been elected to be. In our country the citizens elect a man to be President or Governor, but there is nothing we can do about determining in advance the character the man chosen will display when he fills the office and performs his service. All we can do is hope and trust he will do nothing to bring disgrace upon the office and the country. But with God it is different. He not only chooses us and marks us out for exalted service, which is what "holy" means, but He will impart to us such character that it is said in advance that we will be flawless in His sight.

Such flawless servants and such flawless service is an essential aspect of the world He will establish, a positive feature of His government. They are an important feature of the new order of things God will found and establish, for the kingdom of God is a well ordered system of government, embracing the entire earth, administered by Christ Jesus through those whom He appoints, a system which will meet the needs of every man upon the earth. The word *order* signifies a condition in which everything is so arranged as to play its proper part, and it implies a divine future arrangement or organization of mankind. We who now believe in Jesus Christ will have a unique place of service in God's coming order. We will learn more about this service in later passages in this epistle.

The Greek word for "flawless" is *amomos*, which should be noted in other occurrences: Eph. 5:27 (without blemish), Col. 1: 22 (unblamable), Heb. 9:14 (without spot), 1 Peter 1:19 (without blemish), Jude 1:24 (faultless), Rev. 14:5 (without fault). The words for in His sight are *katenopion autou*, and they speak of God's penetrating, searching gaze. The time will come when God will find no fault in us or in our service.

An illustration of all this may be helpful. About fifteen years ago President Eisenhower sought from Congress the authority to found or establish a department of health, education, and welfare as a part of the federal government. He announced in advance that if his request were granted he would

appoint Mrs. Oliveta Hobby as the first Secretary. Thus he made choice or elected a Secretary of a department before it was founded or established. Congress granted the authority and the department was established with Mrs. Hobby as its Secretary. She served well and brought credit to the office, but President Eisenhower could not guarantee her conduct in advance.

Even so we have been chosen in advance of God establishing His own order upon the earth, and we have the promise that when it becomes a reality we will serve God in that order, with a further guarantee that we will bring no reproach upon the one who elected us to perform this service.

**IN LOVE** – These words are usually related to what has gone before, but are construed here as belonging to and introducing what is said in verse five. In a very special way, God loves the one who loves Jesus Christ, the one who believes that He came out from God (John 16:27). It is the believer concerning whom God in love makes a determination beforehand.

**DESIGNATING US BEFOREHAND** - These three words translate the word *proorisas*, aorist active participle of *proorizo*, which means to determine or designate beforehand. Our position, our character, and our service in God's coming order is determined by Him in advance of establishing this order. This has reference to our service, and not to our redemption, forgiveness, or justification.

**FOR** - This is the first of 35 occurrences of this important preposition (*eis*) in this epistle. It literally means "into", and denotes either entrance into, the end in view, or in relationship to. Here it declares that God designated us beforehand with a certain end in view. This end is declared in the next statement.

**THE PLACE OF A SON** - These five words are used to translate *huiiothesia*, a compound word from *huios*, "a son", and *tithemi*, "to place" (somewhat like our word *antithesis* which means to place one thing against another). The word "son" as used in the New Testament is poorly understood and badly abused. No man can claim to be an honest interpreter of the Bible until he has come to grips with it and sought a complete understanding of this important word. In the great effort that has been made by evangelicals to emphasize and magnify what is called "the new birth", they have lost sight of the greater truth of sonship. The King James Version has created much confusion here by translating *huios* "children" in numerous places and then translating *teknon* by the word "son" in many occurrences.

In the Scripture "son" is an index of character. A son can be the equal of his father if their characters are equal. No one can be the son of anyone or anything unless he in some manner manifests that one or that thing in his character. A son exhibits the character of that of which he is son. He represents, he expresses, he manifests.

Sonship comes from investiture and not from birth. It involves privileges and rights which are not the inherent properties of children. Jesus Christ is both the Son of God and the Son of man. He is able to fully represent and express man to God. This is important, for how can one believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God if he does not know what this title means.

At present we are God's children. When God establishes His benevolent government upon the earth we will be placed as sons. At present we are designated to be placed as sons. It is ignorant pretense for anyone to say that he is a son of God today. This statement is made in full cognizance of John 1:12 and 1 John 3:1 and 2. These are mistranslations and should read "children of God."

Some may point to Galatians 3:26, which should read "sons" instead of "children." But it needs to be remembered that the believers in the Acts period possessed such marvelous gifts that they were in a very limited way "sons of God." At the best it was only partial as they were waiting the *huiothesia* (adoption) as Rom. 8:23 shows.

All of the rich blessings that will qualify us as and constitute us sons of God are now reserved among the heavens for us. (Col. 1:5).

**FOR HIMSELF** - This should be kept with the preceding words "the place of a son for Himself." We can better understand this if we keep in mind that in ancient times sonship was a recognized social institution which is practically unknown in our times. A man usually established his eldest boy as his son, but in cases where a man had no male children we find the best illustration of what Paul is saying here. If such a man had wealth and inherited position it was imperative that he chose someone to be his son and heir. A faithful slave was often chosen for sonship. This is the case portrayed by General Wallace in the story of "Ben Hur." Our Father God will have many sons (Heb. 2:10), and these will manifest His glory.

**IN ACCORD WITH THE GOOD PLEASURE OF HIS WILL** - He does all this because it pleases Him, even as we read in Luke 10:21, "for so it seemed good in Thy sight."

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

\*\*\*\*Please note that our new address is 339 SOUTH ORANGE DRIVE, LOS ANGELES 36, CALIFORNIA. Our friends are asked to note also that the words "South" and "Drive" are very important in this address since many streets in this big city have the word "Orange" in their name. Please destroy any mailing envelopes you may have which have our old address on them. We moved on August 20 and are very happy about our new location. We have gone through the throes of remodeling and redecorating, also the task of learning to live and work in much less space than what we had before. But we have worked it all out and are glad that the task of relocating is now complete.

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