



# Bible Student's Notebook™

## The Herald of His Grace

Presenting every man perfect in Christ Jesus. Colossians 1:28

Volume XVIII  
Issue 432

## The Fleeting vs. the Long

by — Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

*For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal (II Corinthians 4:17-18).*

This passage is a feeble attempt by the King James Version translators to convey a glorious truth written by Paul. His actual words are quite profound, but are masked by a failure of accurate translation. His use of contrasting Greek words is marred by improper English counterparts.



*Aiōnios* refers to that which lasts for an age. Note the accurate ways that the following translations render it:

- “age-lasting” (Emphatic Diaglott)
- “age-abiding” (Rotherham)
- “age-during” (Young)

In :17, he contrasts the *parautika* (momentary) nature of “light affliction” with the *aiōnios* (age-abiding) nature of the “far more exceeding ... weight of glory.”

The first Greek word used to contrast “age-lasting” is *parautika*. It is defined by James Strong as “momentary.”<sup>1</sup> Thus the *Concordant Version* contrasts:

In :18, he contrasts the *proskairos* (seasonal) nature of “the things which are seen” with the *aiōnios* (age-lasting) nature of “the things which are not seen.”

“a transcendently transcendent eonian burden of glory”

with

Paul’s contrasting words of choice are:

“the momentary lightness of our affliction.”

- parautika* with *aiōnios* (:17)
- proskairos* with *aiōnios* (:18)

Thus, *parautika* and *proskairos* are the contrasting words Paul uses with *aiōnios* (:18). Paul is *not* contrasting time with eternity, as appears to be the case in the *King James Version*. His contrasting is not absolute, but relative: a very short season as contrasted with a long, age-enduring period. A brief duration is compared with an expansive one. The contrasts are in reference to time: the difference between short and long, abbreviated and extended; not between “temporal” and “eternal.”

The second Greek word used, *proskairos*, defined by Joseph Thayer as “enduring only for a while.”<sup>2</sup> E.W. Bullinger defines it as “for a season,”<sup>3</sup> and is translated elsewhere in the *King James Version* as:

(see *FLEETING*, page 3858)

1. *Strong Exhaustive Concordance (Greek Lexicon).*
2. *Thayer's Greek Lexicon*
3. *Critical Lexicon and Concordance to the English & Greek New Testament*

The Fleeting vs. the Long ..... 3853  
The Unity of the Spirit ..... 3855



## **Bible Student's Notebook™**

*Paul Our Guide – Christ Our Goal*

ISSN: 1936-9360

Volume XVIII, No. 432 – January 21, 2014

This free weekly electronic publication (52 times a year) is dedicated to:

- the proclamation of the riches of God's abundant, exceeding grace (Romans 5:20; 11:6; Ephesians 1:7);
- the affirmation of God's purpose to save all mankind through the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ (I Timothy 2:3, 4; 4:10; Titus 2:11);
- the "preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began" (Romans 16:25);
- true freedom and liberty apart from law (Galatians 5:1);
- the organic nature of the church, the Body of Christ (I Corinthians 12);
- the distinct message and ministry of Paul, the apostle to the nations (Romans 11:13);
- the importance of receiving all whom Christ has received (Romans 14-15);
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# The Unity of the Spirit

## Ephesians 4:3-6

by – E. H. Clayton (1887- 1972)

God has made a unity for His saints and He enjoins us to endeavor to keep the unity. Like every other achievement wherewith God graces us, this unity is in spirit. To keep the unity is an individual matter, and should be the divine service of each saint. In this endeavor we ought not to have the idea that we are to establish a union with other saints, but rather simply to seek that we do not mar the unity by which the saints are constituted by God.

The significance of maturity is indicated by the unity of the spirit; it is a oneness first with Christ, the Lord, and so also between all the saints. To keep the unity we first need to acknowledge Him alone as our Lord, and hence of the details of our life.

To see the unity only as embracing those who realize the special truths of Ephesians is to fail to understand the question. We may have more intimate fellowship with those of like understanding, but that is not the limit of the spirit's unity.

In this respect the outward aspect is not in point, for whether or not outward unity is apparent, the spirit's unity is in being. Yet our obedience is to endeavor that we outwardly keep the unity, and to do so we ignore all other unities and associations, for any such alliances create but a superficial communion, which, in fact, amounts to division.

The spirit's unity is defined by, and based on, seven features which are fundamental to the present economy, and therefore of the Ephesian epistle. Before each of these the word "ONE" is used, and so they are made thoroughly unique. These embody the saint's relationship to each other, and also to the Lord.

While each item has connection with both relationships, yet the first three – body, spirit and expectation – refer most particularly to the saints' relationship to each other; then we have the central feature of the "ONE" Lord.

The one faith and one baptism refer particularly to our relationship to the Lord, yet also linking us to the one God and Father. Both the Lord and God sustain a connection with each component, for They are the Creators of the one body which is united by the serene disposition of the one spirit and hence has the one expectation.

The figure here is of the saints' relation to one another: they are members of one organism, and they cooperate in mutual sympathy, being dependent and helpful according to the constraints of love.

The established peace extends the illustration to the special feature of this economy which makes the Body to be a joint-body, even though essentially the latter is based on the vivifying, rousing and seating of an election from the nations and from Israel. This item of one body covers the members from these two divisions of humanity.

This is the loving and gracious disposition inculcated by the doctrine of the present economy: it displays the boundless grace and love which we have received from God and so accords with God's attitude.

Thus the one spirit speaks of the quality of our mind renewed by God's teachings to us through Paul. They are the scale of our life's activity. The fact of our being one body necessitates this common spirit. It is not that we have the spirit of Christ, or are baptized by the spirit, but it is that the nature or character of our activities are those which accord with the truth of our being one body, and in this all factors of division, whether arising from the flesh or racial features, should be inert, for we have one spirit to exemplify the grace which is toward us.

This harmonizes with the one body and one spirit. In 1:18, it is seen as the prospect, which is the realization of our expectation. By the enlightening of the eyes of our heart, that is, the center of our being, ►

we perceive the prospect to which we are called. And so we are able to understand that the *entry* into it requires means which constitute us to be pre-expectants in Christ Jesus.

Hence we look to meet the Lord in the air, and while so doing we wait for Him to call us to our citizenship which belongs to the heavens. We know He is able to do this. Our expectation is thus incidental to our calling.

The one body, one spirit and one expectation are features which concern unity as regards the saints' relationship to one another, because they are Christ's and hence have one Lord.

This absolutely excludes any question of delegated authority in the spirit's unity. The saints are peers of the one who ministers to them. Only the elders and supervisors represent Him in matters of order and discipline.

It ought to be obvious that the *one* Lord is the center and vitality of the spirit's unity. To Him we become

related because of the one baptism by spirit. For Him we slave and accord Him the fullest and all rights and authority over us.

By the figure association, this refers to the specific doctrine of this economy. It is spoken of in 1:15; the faith (or teaching) which relates to you. This signifies that all ought to believe the same – and so we should, if all saints accurately appreciated this teaching and how it establishes Christ Jesus as Lord.

The unity of faith should be attained through this teaching and the teachers, for both should direct us to our Lord, and to all His concerns in regard to this economy.

Until we rise to the discriminations necessary to correctly partition the Word of Truth, we shall fail to achieve the unity of faith.

Teachers ought to have established themselves in this respect before embarking on their work, but few have the full-orbed view necessary, and generally are lacking in apprehending what is the faith which relates to the present.



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This is no mere ceremonial matter, but a vital factor which makes real our unity with Christ. It is the baptism in spirit into His death and so into the life we have in Him.

Thus we are cleansed and unified, sealed and made safe. The spirit makes its home in us, and we are enabled to acknowledge Him as our Lord, and to follow the lead of His spirit.

No one, in this economy, is commissioned to be baptizing; not even the apostle Paul was commissioned to engage in this – He was to preach the evangel. It is through the preaching that the one baptism ensues, for the word of the evangel conveys this baptism to the chosen and shows that, to them, it is association with Christ Jesus in His death to sin and subsequent entombing and resurrection therefrom.

Thus one baptism gives us the spirit of life which is in Him, and so His righteousness. All of His glories become ours, since relation to Him is an actual reality for us and for Him.

Such an item has special aptness in regard to the nations; those of Israel were well instructed as to *one* God and needed but to realize that their *one* God was also God of the nations. But the nations were atheists (without God; Ephesians 2:12), yet had many gods (I Corinthians 8:5).

To the nations, then, this item would come with particular force; they now have *one* God and He is Father; unity is with Him and the Lord as well as with the saints. From Him come all blessings through Christ Jesus, and all conduct is before Him.

This also ought to correct orthodoxy on the subject of the Trinity. The crude notions of the nations were not

fully shed, but were dressed in new form to agree apparently with some phrases of the Scripture; yet they missed the truth of *one* God and Father.

That God is also our Father is well known, but only in a superficial sense. Rarely do we find it understood with the full significance required by the evangel of God. The evangel has brought us the spirit of sonship; in this we should realize the tender affection that God has for us, and the dignity and maturity afforded by our being sons of God, for we have passed from being merely children of God.


To own God as our Father, in the sense required by God's evangel, is the highest expression of our faith which can be uttered by us. Its reality, in this economy, is significant that we are His in that relationship which has its full height shown at the consummation, for it is to God, as the Father, that Christ Jesus our Lord becomes subject when relinquishing the Kingdom at the consummation.

Such a feature emphasizes to us that God as our Father is no mere nominal expression, but rather it states the adulthood which comes to us through the glory of the evangel. Moreover, it indicates our submission to God since He is in fact our Father, caring for, providing for and loving immeasurably His sons.

The major barrier to our endeavors regarding this unity of the spirit is lack of obedience to our Lord. It ought to be within the apprehension of every saint that the word "*one*" precedes each item enumerated, yet in the initial stage we appear to ignore it; later we lack the humility to adjust our faith and understanding to this fact, and rather do we adopt a degree of militancy to demonstrate our own particular views, with the result that demarcations are enlarged and so emphasized.

No, we even might begin to formulate a demonstration that the spirit's unity was not purposed to be outwardly displayed until we meet our Lord, and so enter into our allotment and its participation. Yet it should be apparent that it is our own lack which has produced the existing situation. Saints of prior generations failed before us, and we either follow them, or if we have any penetration and seek to adjust, then there comes a point when we also begin to spoil matters, even as did our fathers.

Let us attain maturity and so glorify the unity that God has made. ■



***The Concordant Commentary on the New Testament***  
by — A.E. Knoch (1874-1965)  
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First published more than 60 years ago, this work is more valuable than a seminary education! A must have for every student of Scripture!

*FLEETING (continued from front page)*

*"for awhile" (Matthew 13:21)*

*"for a time" (Mark 4:17)*

*"for a season" (Hebrews 11:25)*

Seasons (such as winter, spring, summer and fall) are relatively short contrasted with longer-lasting periods of time (such as years, decades, centuries and millenniums).

On a further note, just because we are assured that something will last through an entire age, or ages, does not mean that it will not in fact also last beyond that period. Some things, such as the "glory" referred to in the passage under consideration, will continue long after the eon, or eons, have ended.<sup>4</sup> The final eon is simply the prelude of glory that is to come. Yet, this was not the contrasting consideration given by Paul in the context of his statement of II Corinthians 4. His was not between "temporal" and "eternal," but between "temporary" and "eonian."

4. Another such example is the Word of God which is said to stand for the ages. "The grass withers, the flower fades, but the Word of God stands age-abiding!" (Isaiah 40:8).

Now, read II Corinthians 4:17-18 in more literal translations.

*For the momentary light matter of our tribulation, more and more exceedingly an age-during weight of glory doth work out for us – we not looking to the things seen, but to the things not seen; for the things seen are temporary, but the things not seen are age-during (Young).*

*For, the momentary lightness of the tribulation, in a manner yet more and more excelling, is working out for us, an age-abiding weight of glory – so long as we are not looking out for the visible things, but for the invisible; for, the visible things, are temporary, whereas, the invisible, are age-abiding (Rotherham).*

*For the momentary lightness of our affliction is producing for us a transcendently transcendent eonian burden of glory, at our not noting what is being observed, but what is not being observed, for what is being observed is temporary, yet what is not being observed is eonian (Concordant). ■*

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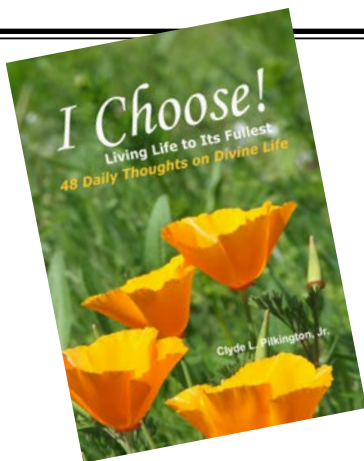


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