

Bible Student's Notebook The Herald of His Grace

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

Volume XVIII Issue 434-5

The Divine Calendar

by — A.E. Knoch (1874-1965)

s in the affairs of daily life, we need the kindly offices of a calendar to tell us the day or week or month or year. So, God has given us a calendar in order that we may locate ourselves in His grand affairs with which we are identified and in which we take an active interest.

We work a week and rest. So God does, too, when He restores the earth. For legal business we divide the year into twelve months. He, too, administers the cycles of earth's affairs in twelve economies. Still longer periods we group in five and its multiples, ten or twenty-five or a hundred. So He has given us five eons or ages.

Universal history may be considered from various viewpoints. Its divisions vary according to the special aspect. It falls into

Two Grand Creations

besides three special creations;

THREE HEAVENS AND EARTHS

as to its *material basis*:

FIVE WORLDS

as to moral Constitution;

FIVE EONS (OR AGES)

as to the duration, character and disposition of each world;

TWELVE ECONOMIES

for purposes of human administration;

A WEEK'S WORK for the *restoration* of the second earth:

FOUR MONARCHIES

in regard to governing principles;

THREE DAYS

as regards the *direction of affairs*;

besides various Periods or Eras, concerned with special occurrences or extraordinary dealings which arise.

In order to group these grand arrangements at a glance, we have prepared a chart synchronizing the various Divine activities. Only the most striking and difficult passages of Scripture have been quoted or referred to, so that the chart might be merely suggestive, and in no way force its unvielding and angular outlines upon the flexuous form of the living word (see the chart on the center pages).

Bible versions are so confusing in their use of the terms which God uses in His calendar that they are almost as much of a hindrance as a help. As a result, the many charts of the dispensations and ages are filled with confusion. In some, the long periods of ages or eons are subdivisions of the shorter "dispensations." We read of "the patriarchial age," "the age of law," and "the gospel age," when all of these are "dispensations" in this eon or age. To avoid this confusion of thought we use the term "eon," and base all on the accurate and consistent Concordant Version.



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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);
- the recovery of rich Biblical truth that has too long remained hidden under the veils of traditionalism, prejudice, misunderstanding, and fear (Mark 7:7, 13);
- the completeness of the believer in Christ (Colossians 2:10), with:
 - total freedom from sins (Colossians 1:14);
 - identity in His death, burial, and resurrection (Romans 6);
 - adult sonship position (Galatians 4).

This publication is a joint effort of a few members of the body of Christ. It is a product of our individual lives and ministries together. We do not claim infallibility for its contents. Our readers are asked to be as the Bereans and search the Scriptures (Acts 17:10-11; I Thessalonians 5:21).

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CALENDAR (continued from front page)

THE TWO GRAND CREATIONS

Creation, while the very antithesis of evolution and distinct from generation, was not the single act which we have been taught to believe. God's creatures move forward by steps, and this is His method in creation. Evolution is Satan's method: he glides along like the accursed serpent. The book misnamed Genesis is the book of beginnings: indeed this is its Divine title. Genesis or generation is not a beginning, but a repetition of what has already been.

In a beginning the heavens and earth were created. This was not necessarily "out of nothing," for "creation" does not speak of bringing matter into existence, but refers rather to such revolutionary changes in its form and condition as will be effected in the new creation (Isaiah 65:17; Revelation 21:1).

During the restoration of the wreck of the first earth there are two more creative acts. Living souls are created on the fifth day. Man is created on the sixth day.

In creation, as in the eons, God has anticipated His counsels for the earth.

If anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: the primitive passed by: behold! Lo! There has come new! (II Corinthians 5:17).

Not only all things are new, but Christ has become the Head of a New humanity, suited to the celestial spheres as Adam and his posterity are suited to life on earth (Ephesians 2:15). Such is the grace that our God has granted us! He could neither evolve nor generate creatures suited to His highest ideals, so, like the God He is, He creates us anew for our high estate!

This is anticipative, but the time will come when this sin-stained heaven and earth will flee from the awful presence of Him Who sits upon the great white throne (Revelation 20:11). Its heart-rending scenes will no longer be repeated, and God Himself bids us rejoice and be glad in His new creation, which neither Satan nor man shall ever mar!

THE THREE HEAVENS AND EARTHS

The present heaven and earth are but transient. Six times are we reminded that they shall pass by (Matthew 5:18; 24:35; Mark 13:31; Luke 16:17; 21:33; II Peter 3:10) and the seventh time we are told.

I perceived a new heaven and a new earth, for the former heaven and the former earth pass away; and the sea is no more (Revelation 21:1).

They have flown from the face of the enthroned and no place has been found for them (:11). With this agree the words in Peter's second epistle. After reminding his readers of the destruction of a previous heaven and earth by water, he tells them that the present would be destroyed by fire. God's Word had established them from of old and surrounded them by the element which was used for their destruction. But now the same word has constituted them a storehouse of fire towards the day of judgment and destruction of godless men. Then the elements shall be melted by combustion and the works it contains shall be found (II Peter 3:10).

The "earth" really means the dry land (Genesis 1:10). It does not include the sea. The waters which engulfed the earth were not there originally (Genesis 1:2; Job 38:8-11). Yahweh formed it to be inhabited (Isaiah 45:18). So it will be in the new creation (Revelation 21:1).

There was an earth before the present: there shall be one after this earth has vanished. So there are three earths. One, as originally created, lasted until the disruption spoken of in Genesis 1:2. The second is the present earth. The third will be inaugurated with the new creation (Isaiah 65:17; Revelation 20:11).

Three eons and three worlds are staged upon the present earth. It lasts until the new heavens and the new earth, or, as we are accustomed to saying, "forever" (Genesis 49:26; Deuteronomy 33:15; Psalm 78:69; 104:5; Ecclesiastes 1:4). After the new heavens and the new earth is the Consummation (I Corinthians 15:24).



THE FIVE WORLDS

The underlying thought of kosmos, the word for "world," is adornment or ornamentation. It is used in the Septuagint (LXX) to translate the Hebrew odi, "ornament" (Exodus 33:4-6; II Samuel 1:24; Isaiah 49:18; Jeremiah 2:32; 4:30; Ezekiel 7:20; 16:11; 23:40). In the inspired Greek Scriptures, it is used but once in the sense of ornament or adornment (I Peter 3:3). Speaking of wives, it reads,

Whose adornment, let it not be the outside ... but the hidden human of the heart.

Order or system seem to be the controlling idea in kosmos as the Spirit of God uses it. The deluge was sent not merely to drown the ungodly, but to put an end to the monstrous system of things which threatened the whole with a far worse fate. Therefore we read that He "spares not the ancient world" (II Peter 2:5). Peter reminds those who are about to face the judgment of "this present wicked eon" of what happened to crush the world as then constituted; but he reminds them also of still another world before the one which the flood destroyed (3:5-6).

The heavens were of old and the earth cohering out of and through the water; through which the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished.

This is the cataclysm of Genesis 1:2.

The present world is often spoken of in a way which can hardly be true of the next world, or coming eon. The Lord was not of this world (John 8:23), neither is His Kingdom of this world (John 18:36), for then would his officers fight. When this world began, after the flood, mankind was given the authority of life and death, the sword was placed in human hands (Genesis 9:5-6). So all the kingdoms of this world obtain and sustain their authority. It was not so before the flood, and it will not be so when He comes Whose right it is to reign.

The key to the division of the Divine calendar into its "worlds" lies in the otherwise enigmatic statement, "the eon of this cosmos" (Ephesians 2:2). This clearly shows that eons and worlds are contemporaneous: they synchronize. We are thus enabled to give a chart of all of the worlds, even when not specifically mentioned.

Let us rejoice then that "the fashion of this world is passing by" (I Corinthians 7:31). The system which so often jars and unnerves us is but transient and will yield to the grand kingdom world and the still grander world when the new earth springs forth in response to His Word. Yet even these grand worlds will not ornament His glory as that grand consummation when God will enjoy the ripened fruit which the worlds will win for Him.

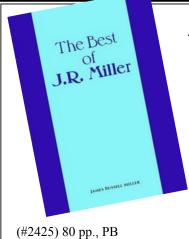
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by — James Russell Miller (1840–1912)

Miller was a prolific author, born of Irish/Scottish descent to James Alexander Miller and Eleanor Creswell, near Frankfort Springs, Beaver County, PA. He was a graduate of Westminster College (New Wilmington, PA), and Allegheny Theological Seminary (Allegheny, PA). Miller pastored churches in New Wilmington, PA, Philadelphia, PA, and Rock Island, IL, and was the author of over 60 published books, as well as countless booklets and pamphlets. He also served as supervisor of over two dozen periodicals with a combined annual circulation of over 66 million copies at the time of his death. This is the first in a collected series of his best selected articles.

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THE FIVE EONS (OR "AGES")

God's glory demands expression. The Son of God, who is the effulgence of that glory, is the executive of this Divine purpose (Hebrews 1:2). He is the Divine expression (John 1:1). Through Him, also, with this end in view. God made the eons.

The Eonian Times

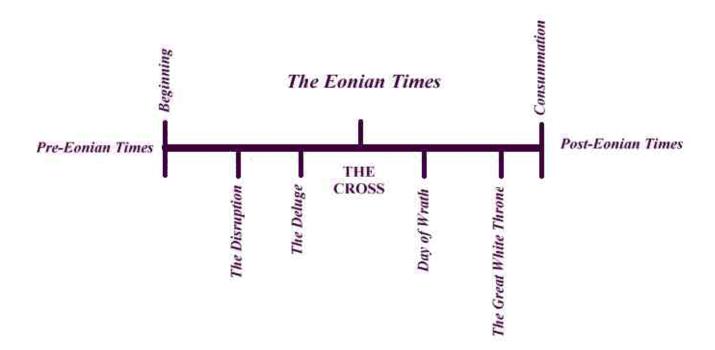
There was a time when there were no "ages" or eons to mark the dial of eternity. God's purpose and favor was promised to us before the eons first began their course. They were given to us before the times of the eons (II Timothy 1:9; Titus 1:2).

The Times of the Eons are the scene of sin. They record its entrance and foretell its exit. They had a definite Beginning and will have a definite Consummation. Theology has made one of its hugest blunders in stretching the terms descriptive of these times into such expressions as "forever" and "forever and ever."

As will be seen from the chart, these phrases have definite boundaries and a distinct end. The Scriptures use them of the past where all must acknowledge that they cannot denote "eternal." In order to hide this from us, the word usually translated "eternal" and "everlasting" is changed to "world"! (Romans 16:25; II Timothy 1:9; Titus 1:2). It simply means eonian, or the times occupied by the eons. If they had translated consistently, they would have rendered Ps. 73:12, "the ungodly, who prosper forever"!

Three Grand Divisions

The entire span of time is divided into three grand divisions. Before the beginning we have the Pre-Eonian Time. After the consummation, we have the Post-Eonian Times. Between these lie the Times of the Eons. This may be shown graphically thus:



The grand infinitudes of time before the Beginning and after the Consummation have much in common, chiefly that in the beginning God was all; in the consummation He will be *All in all*. Sin is entirely absent. This cannot be said of any of the eons. Satan was a murderer from the very Beginning (John 8:44), and the Son does not subdue all things until the Consummation.

The Symmetry of the Eons

All of God's handiwork is harmonious and symmetrical. Nature and revelation are both exquisitely poised. If we have before us even a crude representation of the grand outlines of universal history, it must reveal its innate beauty and comeliness.



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The cross is the crisis of the eons (Hebrews 9:26). It stands at the very center of the present evil eon, which is bounded in the past by *the Deluge*, and in the future by *the Day of Wrath*.

"The days of the Son of Man" are the antitype of the "days of Noah" (Matthew 24:37). Between these two severe judgments lies the eon in which we now live.

On either side we have the Disruption (Genesis 1:2) and the Great White Throne Judgment (Revelation 20:11-15). These are also the boundaries of the present earth. In one case water destroyed the earth. In the other it will be transformed by fire.

An eon further, on either side, we have *the Beginning* and *the Consummation. The Beginning inaugurates* what *the Consummation concludes.* These are the limits God has prescribed. Beyond, we cannot pass.

Thus we find that the eons are symmetrically grouped and pivoted upon the cross. To it all things converge; from it all things flow.

The *Pre-Eonian Times* and the *Post-Eonian Times* correspond. Before the eons, God is in solitary supremacy and after the eons He has regained that place in spite of the opposition of His creatures.

The first and the last eons correspond. The first eon was delegated to the sons of God, some of whom compassed earth's ruin (Genesis 1:2). The last eon is under the sway of the Son of God Who restores all to more than pristine glory (Hebrews 1:8).

The second and fourth eons are also complimentary. The second was committed to the first Adam, while his sad failure is retrieved in the fourth eon by his greater Son, the Last Adam.

The Son of Mankind rules the fourth eon; the last is under the sway of the Son of God.

The present, the central eon, is the only one under *national* government. The death penalty, delegated to man in order to execute justice, leads to the most unjust act of all of the eons – the murder of the Son of God. His cross stands in solitary and solemn sublimity, in the very heart and center of all. It is the conclu-

sion or crisis of all former eons (Hebrews 9:26).

The Present Eon

With a laudable desire to "rightly divide the Word of Truth," it has become customary to assign the present economy to a distinct "age" from that in which our Lord lived while on earth. The distinctions which are made are most important and commendable; but if we use the term "age" to describe them, we are guilty of a radical departure from the form of sound words (II Timothy 1:13). Our Lord lived in the very same "age" as ourselves. We shall use the word "eon" as the representative of the Greek aion for the sake of clearness and consistency. We have been using the word "age"; but since this term has of late become associated with unscriptural thoughts which can be more easily avoided than corrected, we will use "eon" in the future. This will help to clear up the confusion which so many varying lists of the "dispensations" or "ages" may have caused.

The present economy is a *separate administration*, not a distinct eon from that in which our Lord spoke. Neither does it end until that "*coming eon*" ("*world to come*," AV) of which He told them (Mark 10:30; Luke 18:30) is inaugurated. He could not have meant that the present secret economy is the "*coming eon*," for that eon will be quite different from the present (Luke 20:35). Indeed, it is preceded by a resurrection (*cf.* 2 Timothy 2:18).

He could speak of the end of this eon and include much that can take place only after the present administration has run its course. The harvest at the end of this eon is connected with the Son of Man and the Kingdom (Matthew 13:39-40, 49).

When the disciples ask Him, "What shall be the sign of ... the conclusion of the eon" (Matthew 24:3), He does not initiate them into the present secret administration, He does not even stop to mention the destruction of Jerusalem, but warns them that the end will not come "until this gospel of the Kingdom" has been proclaimed as a witness unto all nations. The sign of the end of the eon is the Son of Man Himself coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory (Matthew 24:30).

Such, then, is the *future* boundary of this eon. But

when did it begin? We have seen of which our Lord's ministry is comprised within its bounds, but how long it had existed before this we are not directly told.

A remarkable expression in Ephesians 2:2 gives us the key to the solution of this question. It reads literally, "the eon of this cosmos." The thought is, the eon belonging to or associated with this cosmos, or system of things. When was the present order of things inaugurated? In II Peter 2:5 we read of the antediluvian as "the ancient world." There were worlds before the present. It also tells us that the present world dates back only to the deluge.

It may be well to remind ourselves that while the word "world" has a wide application, it refers primarily to the organic, systematic constitution of creation or society. It never refers merely to the material substance of which the universe is composed.

Order is pleasant to behold, so we are not surprised to find that the Greek word *kosmos* reverts at times to its original meaning "ornament" (I Peter 3:3). Indeed, its verb always means "to adorn." A radical change in the disposition of authority – such for instance, as the committal of government to human hands after the flood; and such as will occur when the Son of Man takes the reins of government in the Day of the Lord – these changes work such a revolution in the constitution of human society that each is a distinct system, or world, by itself.

There was a world then, before the deluge; and another will be inaugurated at "the coming eon."

The present world began at the deluge and ends with His manifestation. This eon also ends at that time, and, as it is the *eon* of this world, it, too, began at the deluge. *The worlds and the eons synchronize*. They are but different aspects of the same thing. A *world* recognizes the *constitution* of affairs, while an *eon* is concerned with the *effects* of such a system and its *duration*.

The Readjustment of the Eons

The system or plan of the eons had been adjusted with a view to Israel's acceptance of Messiah. When Israel refused to accept Him, a readjustment was necessary. This is what the apostle explains to believ-

ing Hebrews (who were most vitally interested in the turn affairs would take now that the nation as a whole did not believe). The eons were readjusted to suit this new emergency, so that the state of things they looked upon was not evolved from the previous condition of affairs, before Israel was thrust aside (Hebrews 11:3, "the worlds were framed"!). Meanwhile, believing Hebrews must await the coming of the Kingdom, as the cloud of faithful witnesses before them had done.

Yet, God does not wait. He hastens on and, in spirit, lavishes upon aliens rich blessings greater far than those which Israel spurned. Instead of hindering, they hasten the outflow of His favor. Instead of waiting a thousand years for a new creation with its attendant reconciliation of mankind, these are brought forward immediately. Though men send Christ back without His earthly crown, God gives Him the sovereignty celestial. In place of paradise regained, we see the sovereignty of the empyrean attained. The interval of Israel's apostasy gives the needed opportunity to attend to those celestial regions which had not been included in His counsels concerning the earth. He fills up the Word of God (Colossians 1:25) and provides for the complete reconciliation of the entire universe (:20).

The Consummation of the Eons

In this light we can understand the statement of the apostle that the consummation of the eons had been attained (I Corinthians 10:11) – not, indeed, that consummation which waits more than two eons before it can be realized, but that *spiritual* consummation effected by their readjustment.

The present administration harmonizes closely with consummation. Both are balanced by the pre-eonian times. In these God is sovereign in His work, unhampered by the help of man. Hence, matters are not inceptive and fragmentary, but mature and complete.

In Christ, all who are His are both mature and complete. Just as the consummation ushers in the time when all things are perfected and there is no need of further effort, so it is now, *in spirit*. The imperfect transitory administrations of the past have been brushed aside. So satisfactory is it all to God that ▶



He Himself comes forth to win men to Him (II Corinthians 5:20) and, unhindered by sin, gives them the highest place in all of the universe (Colossians 3:3).

The return to sacrifice and law and ceremony in the coming eon of the Kingdom but emphasizes the fact that, in spirit, we are far beyond its earthly administrations. They are a retreat to fit the Davidic covenant, which falls far short of the transcendent favor that is ours.

In conclusion, let us rejoice again that so fervent was His affection that it refuses to wait until the tardy eons have brought His blessings to us, but floods us with its favors long before it finds its place upon the Divine Calendar.

THE TWELVE ECONOMIES

An economy or administration (usually called a "dispensation") has been defined as that practical adjustment or organization of affairs which is calculated to affect a desired end. It includes the thought of a dispensation, but is not confined to giving or dispensing. The Administration of Government through Noah included the dispensation of authority by means of which it might be effectual, but it also included the disposition of this authority, and the dispersion of Babel when it was abused. The leading thought is that of administration, management, stewardship.

Much of the confusion found in the more advanced expositions of "dispensational truth" arises from the failure to distinguish the economies from the eons and the eras. The present eon includes eight economies and several eras. Changes in administration are much more frequent than the grand constitutional convulsions attending a change in eons.

It is notable that, for purposes of administration, God divides into *twelve*. Twelve apostles administer justice to twelve tribes which administer it to the earth. So it is most satisfactory to find that He administers the affairs of earth in a series of twelve distinct economies.

Each one *begins* with a *dispensation* and almost all *end* in *judgment*.

1. The Economy of INNOCENCE

We begin with Adam in the garden of Eden, an economy which is marked off from all others, except the last, by the absence of sin, and differs from the final economy in that the innocence of Adam will be displaced by Divine righteousness. This economy was brought to a close by Adam's expulsion from Eden.

2. The Economy of Conscience

Innocence did not restrain Adam from offending his Creator. Now that he has acquired the knowledge of good and evil, the next is characterized by the possession of conscience in which mankind is tested under entirely different conditions. The blessings of Eden had been no restraint. Will their loss and the rigor and toil of living teach mankind the blessedness of obedience to God's Word? On the contrary, Eve had listened to the serpent, but now mankind becomes actually and physically tainted by intercourse with the evil emissaries of Satan. At its close only one man, Noah, is found who was physically free from this incurable sin. As the line of the Seed, by Whom alone help was to come, must be preserved at all hazards, he is preserved when the balance of mankind is swept away by the flood.

3. The Economy of Government

Conscience has failed, so in the next economy man is invested with the authority of life and death, thus to enable him to restrain the flood tide of evil. In it we see the beginnings of the rule of man over man. We may call it government.

Alas, Noah, its head, could not even govern himself, and all government since has taught the same lesson. Instead of using this new power to exalt their Creator and preserve His righteousness, they use this new administration to make a name for themselves. Men hitherto had been units, but now government unites them into one. This gives them the power of concerted action; but when they think to make a name for *themselves*, God steps in and takes steps to make a name for *Himself*. He confounds their language and breaks them up into nations, which He disposes according to the boundaries of that one nation through whom He purposes to govern the earth.

4. The Economy of Promise

Babel ends this ambitious administration and leads us to the economy of promise. Leaving the bulk of mankind to the status which conscience and government gave, Yahweh turns to one man, Abram, "a Syrian," and promises him both a land and a Seed. By him He would bless all of the other nations. This promise was absolutely unconditional, and depended solely upon Yahweh's faithfulness and His ability to carry out His own Word. So, when the time came, He delivered the sons of Israel out of Egypt and was about to bring them into the land of which He had spoken. Unbelief interfered. They "limited" the Holy One of Israel, but placed no limits upon their own abilities when it came to the requirements of His holiness.

5. The Economy of the Law

Israel must be taught the vanity of their own works before they can enter the land in such a way as to exalt Him. Otherwise they, too, like the other nations, will make a name for *themselves* and not for Yahweh. In their self-confidence they say, "*All that Yahweh speaks will we do and hearken*" (Exodus 19:8). So, for a time the promises are in abeyance and they enter law.

Yet, even before the stone tablets can reach them, they have broken the first commandment which comprehends them all. Only Yahweh's great name, which was now linked with their welfare, kept Him from consuming them (Exodus 32:7-14). Moses takes the tables down, but breaks them at the foot of Mount Sinai so that they never reached the people (:19).

The second set he took and put into the ark, beneath the propitiatory shelter (Exodus 34:4; 40:20). So, in connection with the law, we find priesthood and sacrifice and a Divine ritual, apart from which it could only have consumed them. If they had kept the law, they would have been a kingdom of priests, through whom the other nations might draw nigh. They would have been His peculiar treasure.

In their repeated failures, even after He brought them into the promised land, He allowed the nations to drive them back to Himself and He raised up rulers for their deliverance. Yet the scepter of Yahweh did not suit them, so they rejected Him and desired a king like the other nations. In His anger, Yahweh gave them a king, but took him away in His wrath, placing David over them to shepherd His people and foreshadow His Beloved. Then, when priests and kings failed, He sent prophets; but they mocked the messengers of God, and despised His words and misused His prophets, until the wrath of Yahweh arose against His people until there was no remedy. Therefore He brought the Chaldees upon them (II Chronicles 36:16-17).

This administration itself is divided into four important epochs:

- (1) The Rulers (Judges) from Moses to Saul
- (2) The Kings
- (3) The Seventy Years' Captivity
- (4) The Return

6. The Economy of the Incarnation

God's faithfulness is seen in bringing a remnant back from captivity and preparing for incarnation.

The test of conformity to His holy law had utterly failed. The thunders of Sinai could not bring them *up* to a thrice holy God. So His Son comes *down* to them, not in His majesty and might to an awful mountain top, but down into the very vale of sorrow, veiled by a human frame, dispensing blessing on every side, claiming the allegiance of the heart rather than the work of their hands.

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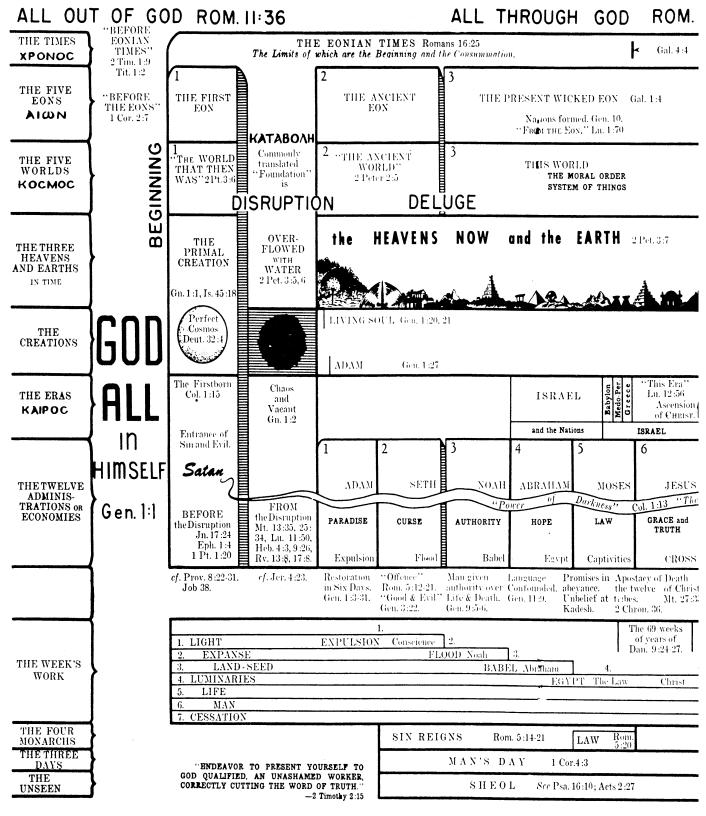
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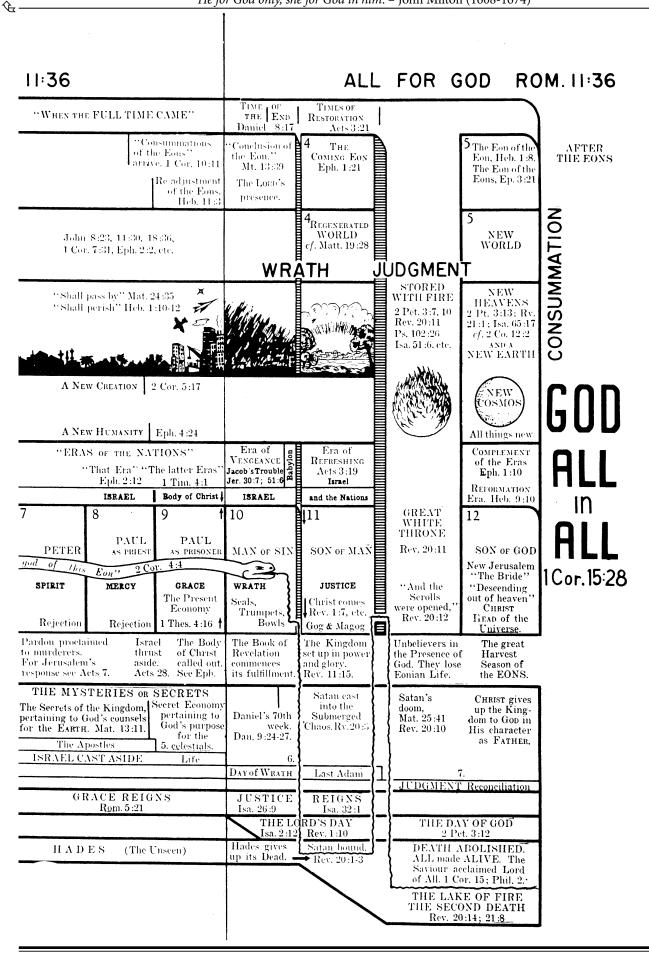
tures such as teaching, music, interviews, book reviews and testimonies.

Clyde L. Pilkington, III – station manager www.BibleStudentsRadio.com

The Divine Calendar



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Like the previous economy, this is a private one, confined to Israel. He was sent only to the lost sheep of the House of Israel. He was a Servant of the Circumcision. The other nations still continued under the conditions which were inaugurated when Yahweh scattered them in order to school Israel, His glory, to be His channel of blessing to them.

Israel had not believed Yahweh's promises, they had broken His law, and now still worse they murder the Son, the Messiah He had appointed for them!

This is the crisis of the eons: this final fact that fully and incontrovertibly establishes man's utter enmity to God. Innocence, Conscience, Government, Promise, Law and His Presence – all is summed up in that cross, all unite their voice to cry "Away with Him!"; but the cross not only proves that fact, but provides for it and makes it the needed background for the display of His inexhaustible stores of grace and glory.

Three eras mark this economy: the era of the proclamation of the Kingdom, ending with the Transfiguration; the Announcement of His sufferings, ending with the cross; and the Resurrection era, ending with the Ascension.

7. The Pentecostal Economy

Man's utter ruin is now no longer an issue, neither is it a bar to blessing. So that, in spite of that fearful deed, pardon is proclaimed to His very murderers in the Pentecostal economy.

The Kingdom is again proclaimed, as in the Master's early ministry, only now it is to follow a season of renovation to prepare for its presence. The powers of the Kingdom administration are anticipated, just as the spies had entered the land bringing back the fruit of Canaan (Hebrews 6:5). Yet, after repeated opposition, when the truth is brought home to the Sanhedrin by Stephen, they follow in the footsteps of their fathers, refuse the Spirit's testimony, thrust the King and Kingdom from them and turn back into the wilderness. Had they obeyed, the Kingdom would have come and they would have been the kingdom of priests to rule and bless the other nations. Since they have failed, these blessings are made good to the other nations in a spiritual fulfillment. This leads to the transition.

8. The Economy of Transition

This is characterized by Paul's priesthood for the nations. Paul could not do as the priests in the coming eon will do, and bring the nations nigh by means of the ritual at Jerusalem; but in place of this he brings them nigh by means of the gospel of God (Romans 15:16). When he does this, he also proclaims the Kingdom itself to the Jews among the nations. Yet the climax came when they, together with the Jews in Jerusalem, try to kill him. Instead of rejoicing at the spread of God's glory, they are jealous for the "people, the law and this holy place" (Acts 21:28). Culture of the natural heart of man only produces its bitter fruit in more abundant measure.

Left to themselves since Babel, the nations have had none of the schooling in the ways of God which Israel had. God, seeing that it would get Him glory, is found by those not informed concerning Him (Romans 15:21). Many among the nations believe and receive the blessing promised through Abram. His physical seed, the sea shore sand, is swallowed by the sea, but his spiritual seed, the stars of heaven, begin to multiply as the darkness falls.

9. The SECRET Economy

Finally, then, Israel as a nation is thrust aside and we enter the secret economy. This is characterized by Paul's imprisonment. In this, the present administration, God is carrying out the determinations which antedate the eons, which concern the celestials and their restoration, rather than the earth's peoples and the eons which mark its history. Our place and portion in Christ must be kept quite distinct from these eons, for they are in a realm where time has not been marked off by these earth-born divisions.

The oracles of God are now committed to the custody of the nations. They are grafted into the olive tree (Romans 11:17), but they unite with Israel in chaining God's ambassador and in thrusting God Himself from His creation. They dispose of all of their affairs so as to get along without Him. The nominal avowal of His Name is attached to the worship of Satan, who cooperates in the development of every means to bring the golden age without the intervention of Messiah.

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10. The Economy of WRATH

So long as God is graciously calling out His own He does not interfere; but when they are taken out, His earthly people Israel come before Him again, which ushers in wrath.

Judgment must begin at the house of God (I Peter 4:17). It begins in the assemblies of Israel (Revelation 2-3), and ends in the seven last plagues and doom of Babylon. Satan is cast out of his heavenly domains and gets all of the world to worship his messiah. Thunders, lightnings, hail and great earthquakes are tokens of the tremendous judgments which will clear the scene for the administration of the Kingdom in "the Coming Eon."

11. The KINGDOM Economy

In this economy, the knowledge of God takes the place of Conscience; a King administers a just government; the Promises are fulfilled; the Law is inscribed in the hearts of His people; Satan is bound; Yahweh is once again in their midst. Every possible incentive is offered for allegiance to Him.

Yet when Satan is loosed for a little season at its close, he succeeds in raising an immense army to besiege the holy city, Jerusalem. *The creature cannot stand apart from his Creator.* Fire from above devours all opposition. Then follows the burning of the entire earth and all of the fruit of man's eons of effort to make all ready for the final economy.

12. The Economy of the Fullness of Times

Then Christ shall be head over the whole universe. Sin, which seemed to mar His glory, will be seen to have been its somber setting. Man's failure has heralded His success. Man's hate was but the flame that spread the perfume of love's incense.

Everything is created anew and founded upon the work of the cross. The cross is the fulcrum upon which the eleven economies which find fulfillment upon the present earth balance. Surrounding it, we have the central economy, the Incarnation, His Presence upon the earth. Three times He visits the earth. Erstwhile in Eden, again in the coming eon,

and midway between these glorious theophanies, He deigns to wear the garb of mortal man, to veil His glories and descend to the accursed death.

That life he lived, that death He died, both create an administration without a parallel, a solitary central economy around which the others cluster.

Before it came Law. After it Law's counterpart, the Pentecostal Economy. In both, unbelief and zeal for law keeps the blessing from them. As their fathers did, so do they. Beyond this, on either side, is Promise, and Paul's Separation. The promise to Abraham is made good to believing Israelites and the nations. Still further on either side are Government and Paul's Imprisonment. The former is before Israel's day and the latter after Israel has been thrust aside. Both deal with the nations and, in each, man is making a name for himself. Beyond these in either direction we find Conscience and Judgment. These are characterized by the two great judgments: the Flood, and the Day of Wrath. In each, malignant heavenly hosts take a very prominent part and are finally bound to keep them from further mischief. As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be in the days of the Son of Man. Then comes Eden and the Millennium. Both are blessed, with the curse removed and a Man at the head of all creation.

If our delight is in God and in His way with mankind, we will note that each of these economies deals with a distinct problem, and is the subject of a distinct administration. Anarchy was perfectly right during Conscience, for if Conscience did its duty, there was no need for Government. Yet now, even God's saints must be subject to properly constructed authorities. The eradication of vice, crime and injustice is the very purpose of the administration of Wrath, and it will then be accomplished. To attempt to suppress it now is only to heal over the sore and is entirely out of line with God's present purpose. "Disposed to the terrestrial" will be most commendable in the millennium, but now it is the mark of apostasy (Philippians 3:19). Then the height of blessing will be citizenship in Jerusalem, the city of the great King; but now we are enfranchised in the celestial realms, above both the world and the evil eon from which we have been delivered.



From this it appears that what is blessedly true in one economy may be utterly false in another. All is God's Word, but are not His *truth* unless properly apportioned. This is the key to unlock the difficulties which have caused so much discord and division among God's people. All who value God's approval will never ignore the proper division of His Word.

It is of the utmost importance, in "going back" to "New Testament" doctrine and practice, that we do not draw back too far into the Transitional or Pentecostal economy and thus add to the confusion in which we find ourselves. Some truths hold good in all administrations, but the characteristic truth of any economy cannot be misplaced without becoming a malignant error.

THE WEEK'S WORK

From the chaos of the first earth (Genesis 1:2) until its readjustment (2:2) were seven days – a week's work. This is *not* a record of creation, but of the readjustment of the chaos for the following eon.

There are three distinct creations recorded in the first chapter of Genesis. Each was perfect, as all God's creations perforce must be. The first included the heavens and the earth. Isaiah tells us (45:18) that the earth was not created "without form" or "vain" (Hebrew, theu,¹ in both passages). It became so through Satan's interference. The six days' work was occupied principally with making it fit to be inhabited again. This was a material creation.

The next creation was on the fifth day (Genesis 1:21). Living souls are created in the waters and in the air.

The third creation was humanity (:27) in the image of God.

The bulk of subsequent revelation deals with man's readjustment after Satan had contrived his overthrow, just as the six days dealt with the restoration of the earth. Seven periods, or "days," in the moral history of mankind, each commencing with an "evening" and ending with a "morning," corresponding to the week's work demanded for the material restoration of the earth. The material is a parable of the moral. Each of the Divine activities on the six days

pictures the work of a period of earth's history.

It is a delight to thus trace God's handiwork and find the program, as it were, all laid down at the very start.

While twelve administrations aptly divide the dial of the economies, these must be kept quite distinct from this series, which is concerned, not with Divine administration, but with the *work* of restoring fallen man. We constantly make such distinctions as these in daily life. We date our documents from the *month* in which they are drawn up; but we "have enough of" (the meaning of the Hebrew *seven*) work in a *week*. We stop the seventh day. In nature the musical scale and color spectrum are satisfied with seven. And throughout Scripture work is usually accomplished in seven steps. Israel at Jericho and the judgments of the Apocalypse are well known examples.

The First Day

Light is made first. Not heavenly light, but earthly. It may need faith for some to accept the fact of light on earth before either sun or moon, but the moral counterpart is easily comprehended. Before God revealed Himself from heaven, He had written righteousness upon men's hearts so that their conscience testified as to what was right or wrong. This period begins with the judgment of Adam and coincides with the economy of conscience.

The Second Day

Like the fifth day, its sphere is the waters and the expanse. The waters above are separated from those beneath the heavens. During the economy of Conscience, the light of nature is replaced by the knowledge of evil, which spread to such an extent that mankind had to be destroyed by the deluge.

The Third Day

This is marked by the separation of the waters from the land and by the seed; fit picture of the dispersion of Babel, when all the nations were disposed according to the number of the Sons of Israel. Then Abraham emerges and a land is given to him and a Seed promised. Thus from the very beginning to the end of revelation the waters denote "peoples and multi-

Strong's #H8414, tôhû.

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tudes and nations and tongues" (Revelation 17:15). Israel is the only stable foothold in all of the earth, although in their present condition, scattered amongst the nations, they are like a mountain cast into the sea (Matthew 21:21).

The Fourth Day

Like the first, this day records the introduction of light; but now the light is not in the earth but over it, deposited in heavenly light bearers. The sun and moon and stars are first seen upon the earth. Just so in the administration of the Law and in Messiah's and the apostles' ministry. The law was like the cold, lifeless, reflected light of the moon. Christ's presence was like the sun. He was the Light of the World. The apostles were like stars. Twelve stars crown, the Sun clothes and the moon is beneath the feet of the woman, Israel (Revelation 12:1).

The Fifth Day

As the fourth day corresponded with the first day, so the fifth day corresponds with the second day. Both concern the waters and the heavens. Now, however, it is *life* in the waters and in the heavens.

We have seen how the nations are pictured by the waters, and Israel by the land. After Peter tells the apostles and elders of the reception of the gospel by the nations, and Paul and Barnabas declare what signs and wonders God had wrought among the nations through them, James recalls the fact that when Israel is restored there will be nations "upon whom His Name is called" (Amos 9:12), showing that some of the nations of that day will have believed previous to Israel's restoration. Is not this the life in the waters? This life was the subject of prophecy. Isaiah speaks concerning Him,

A slight thing is it for you to become My Servant, to raise up the tribes of Jacob, And the dispersed of Israel to restore, Behold, I give you also for a light to the nations, To become My salvation unto the ends of the earth (Isaiah 49:6, C.V.).

Moreover, the nations, under Paul's early ministry, receive *spiritual* life. The dove is the type of the holy spirit, even as other "birds of the air" represent evil spirits;

so that spiritual life is most aptly represented by life in the air, which was a part of the fifth day's work.

The fact that spiritual life is *continued* among the nations during this dispensation of the Secret does not interfere with the absolutely secret character of this administration.

Each day's work abides. We enjoy light within and from above; we have conscience and revelation. The separation of the "waters above" from the "waters beneath" (the second day's work) still continues. The separation of the dry land from the waters is still in evidence; for the mountain, even when cast into the sea, cannot be dissolved in it. So that while the work of the present economy is concerned primarily with heaven's restoration (of which the "Week's Work" knows nothing), we enjoy the fruit of the five previous days' work and especially that aerial life which brought us to the borders of the celestial realms.

The Sixth Day

The sixth day corresponds with the third. Both deal with the land. Now, however, we have *life* on the land, and the Seed is seen as a Man. So it will be. Even in these, the closing days of this eon, the nations have rejected God just as Israel did before them. God will return to His earthly people and all Israel shall be saved. Then He will bring forth the second Man, the last Adam (of whom the first was but a feeble figure) Who will rule the whole earth to His glory.

The Seventh Day

Man begins his days in the morning, but God begins with an *evening* and concludes with a morning. The judgment session in the garden introduced the first day, the flood the second, Babel the third, Egypt's plagues the fourth, Israel's rejection the fifth, the Dispensation of Judgment the sixth and the final judgment of the Great White Throne ushers in the eternal Sabbath. This is the day which He will bless and sanctify, and He will rest in all of the work which He had created in order to make it.

Each item of *earth's* restoration called forth God's approval, but the heavenly firmament called forth no such commendation (Genesis 1:7). Yet, at the last, ▶

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when we displace Satan's sovereignty in the heavenly regions, then all will be, indeed, *very good!*

THE FOUR GREAT MONARCHIES

During ten administrations man's responsibility to God is tested. He is dealt with upon four distinct principles. These are Sin, Law, Grace and Justice. The last three are Divine interpositions. The first was the immediate result of Adam's offense.

Sin

Sin reigned, by Death, from Adam to Moses (Romans 5:14, 21). Adam's spiritual life consisted in the presence and favor of Yahweh. When He left the earth and ascended to the heavens, man became insensible to His existence. They were not ruled by His eye, but rather by the fact of His absence. This is Death. Nothing can possibly be done aright apart from His presence and favor. So they were subject to lawlessness, which is Sin. It tyrannized over them by virtue of the presence of Death.



The Problem of Evil and The Judgments Of God

by — A.E. Knoch #3850, 346 pp, PB, \$15.95 (+ \$3.99 S&H = \$19.94)

This book traces the divine function of evil from its inception to its

consummation, by presenting scriptural solutions to the various long-debated questions concerning God and His sovereignty. Here is what one of our readers has written about *The Problem of Evil*:

"The litmus test for motive in any writer is whether or not the power of the 'Cross' is being diminished or supplanted in any way; Knoch unfolds each point with the loving simplicity of someone who has faced and answered the critics with the overarching victory of Calvary. One comes away from each chapter of this work once again realizing that the offense of the 'Cross' has driven so many wonderful and freeing truths out of what is traditionally taught and practiced."

Law

Law came alongside, being given only to the nation of Israel. The other nations still continued under Sin's sway; but Law gave no real relief. It rather strengthened Sin's hold even upon the chosen people (Romans 5:20).

Grace

Then came Grace, in Christ. The realm of Sin was in the darkness of death. The reign of grace is in the light of life through Jesus Christ, our Master. Sin gained the throne through one man, Adam. Just so, Grace was enthroned by one Man, Messiah. Sin extended to every son of Adam. Grace does the same. In scope and extent it completely covers Sin; but Sin's abundance only tempted a superabundance of Grace. Now *grace reigns!* Not Law, not Sin, but pure, undiluted, unmixed, matchless Grace!

The tyrant Sin can no longer keep the sinner from His presence. The Law no longer stands Sin's sentinel. They have slain their thousands. Grace grants life to tens of thousands. Grace alone rises to the heights of heaven and seats its favorites upon the universal throne!

Justice

When God's favor is finally refused, nothing remains but Justice; and, until the bitter fruits of Sin are destroyed, Justice is spelled Judgment. This is the fourth and final monarch of the earth. When His judgments are in the earth the inhabitants will learn righteousness. Then will He set up His kingdom in the earth, and His Name in that day will be "Yahweh-Tzdqnu"² – Yahweh our Righteousness.

It is of principal importance that we acknowledge the reigning monarch. It is a question of life and death. If we are loyal to Grace, whose right it is to reign, we will enjoy life and light and liberty. Yet if we turn traitor and swear fealty to Sin, or Law, or even Justice, they can but deal out death and darkness and despair. All hail! thou regnant, glorious Grace!

Jeremiah 23:6 – Strong's #H6664, tsedeq, E.W. Bullinger, Zidkenu in his Companion Bible notes.

THE THREE DAYS

Three radically distinct periods follow the sin of man. First man himself is given a free hand to see what he can do. This is "Man's Day." It is brought to a close when Yahweh, the Subjector or the "Lord" of Israel, takes matters into His own hands. That will be "the Lord's Day." His effort is perfect in itself, but only serves to emphasize man's utter depravity. Then all is dissolved and created anew. That will be "The Day of God."

Man's Day

The Corinthians walked in line with humanity (I Corinthians 3:3 "as men"). Not only so, they were applying man's standards to the apostle's work; but he thought it a very small matter to come under their investigation or under that which obtains during Man's Day (I Corinthians 4:3, "man's judgment"). The present, then, is Man's Day. A little reflection will turn this truth into a searchlight by which we may discern the true features of the dark scene around us. It is not God's Day now, nor Yahweh's Day. It is Man's Day. In order that this be so, God must restrain His hand. He cannot interfere without changing the character of the day. Man must have a show to see what he can do without God. He may form an alliance with Satan and the unseen powers of darkness, but he does not want God. Man wants happiness, but it must be apart from the Blessed One. "Man, know thyself" is the motto of the scholar; and they will not rest until they have, with Satan's help, crystallized that "divinity" which they claim indwells them.

We know God, and bless Him and worship Him alone; but Man's Day will ripen into the worship of a man and the utter repudiation of God and His Christ.

The Lord's Day

When man has reached the height of his iniquity, Yahweh comes upon the scene. He is the God of Israel. Man's false god and his prophet are cast alive into the lake of fire; his governments are overturned, his works destroyed. During Man's Day it was repugnant to God's glory for righteousness and happiness to crown man's efforts; but now Yahweh blesses His people Israel and all of the other nations through them. Even such blessed environments do not change

the human heart; so that the coming of the Day of God finds Satan once more at the head of a host of his human dupes, only to be summarily consumed.

The Day of God

This ushers in the day in which God and not man will be supreme. It will be the reflection of His perfect will. Mankind will have learned that its own way is its own woe, and His way its only weal. In Yahweh's Day He interposed Israel, the Priest Nation, between them and Himself; but now, though they excel in rule and blessing, He is reconciled to all of His creatures. No priest, no temple is needed to fend His holy character.

During the Day of God no effort needs to be made to better the condition of mankind, for His presence insures perfect and unending bliss. During Yahweh's Day righteousness will reign and loyalty to the great King calls for the immediate punishment of sin. Then, too, a perfect condition of affairs will be to His glory.

Not so now. God is not in any of Man's pet schemes for self-help, self-culture, self-advancement and the elevation of the race to happiness and contentment. He would not have them either happy or content without Him. He is not profited by better sanitation or purer morals or more devout religion so long as each advance would but deny His sentence on mankind and flies in the face of His favor in furnishing a real release from all that drags man down. Re-creation – not reformation – is God's program now.

Since man is having his day now, let it be the part of those who love God to refrain from aiding and abetting man in his rebellious schemes for this world's betterment. Man would make it a paradise without Yahweh, if he could. The most dreadful calamity which could overtake him would be success. It would thrust God out of His own creation; it would enthrone Satan; it would defeat Messiah.

True loyalty to Him demands that we *wait* for God's Son from heaven to be transfigured into His ineffable likeness; that we bear *witness* of His coming to the world; that we *warn* them of His heavy hand upon the very best of their endeavors.



We are so thankful for the ministry the Lord has blessed you with as it has blessed us more that you will ever know. Thank you for your diligence in the Word and proclaiming truth! -GA

I just want to share with you my appreciation for your book <u>Due Benevolence</u>. I don't think I can really tell you how much it did to set me free from past bondage. Thanks for being so bold in bringing this book into being. – **WA**

I just wanted to take a minute to thank you. I continue to read the *Bible Students Notebook* newsletters and am always encouraged by them. I feel like I am not alone in my thoughts, concerns and beliefs when I read them.

I appreciate all you do. I am out here listening! I also wanted to share with you that in one of the audio/videos I heard of you speaking about Father and His relationship with Jesus the Son and your relationship with your father

and your son, it was such a powerful message to me and His love just poured out on me during that message. I hope that encourages you. Keep on keeping on! -NC

God is love and He is using us in mighty ways. Keep up the good fight. -PA

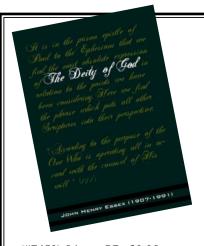
I always print out the BSNs and save them. – CO

The <u>Bible Student's Radio</u> programming has been outstanding lately and I am so grateful for it all.

Clyde, please know that you always have a friend and brother in this part of the country, regardless of all that you endure from day to day. I stand with you my dear friend. – *OH*

I watched the videos this morning of your outstanding presentation of <u>Judas</u>. Just wanted to say thank you for those and others you've done, and for all that you are sharing. -CO

Thank you for all the encouraging messages that you send to me and our fellow brothers and sisters in our Lord Christ Jesus. I will not try to go into detail because it is too difficult for me. But I would not wish to be anywhere else than in Christ our life. I pray that our Father enables you to carry on. Your email messages encourage me every morning. -TX



(#**7450**) 84 pp., PB, \$9.95 (+\$3.99 s&h = \$13.94)

The Deity of God

by – John Henry Essex (1907-1991) Nottingham, England

Creation cannot help itself that all of its achievements are futile because of the slavery of corruption, but we take immense comfort from the fact that, in spite of all of its present "groaning and travailing," it was subjected to vanity in expectation of the eventual realization of that glorious freedom which is now already being enjoyed by the children of God.

It is in the prison epistle of Paul to the Ephesians that we find the most absolute expression of the Deity of God in relation to the points we have been considering. Here we find the phrase which puts all other Scriptures into their perspective:

According to the purpose of the One Who is operating all in accord with the counsel of His will (1:11).

God is the captain of the ship of the universe; all of His creatures are its passengers. He is guiding the vessel across the ocean of time from the port that is called "All in God" to the haven that is termed "God in all."

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