

## "Head over all things to the church."

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"And hath put all things under His feet and gave Him to be the HEAD over all things to the Church." Ephesians 1: 22.

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How great is the grace that inducts us into the knowledge of God's secret thoughts in eternity! Time is circumscribed, it is a circle with boundaries before and after but, outside of time and created things, before the foundation of the world, God planned for His Son (see Ephesians 1: 10). Part of that plan was to make Him HEAD of all things and another part of the plan was to give the Church to Him.

Christ, knowing the Divine purpose, set his love to the accomplishment of it; He "loved the Church and gave Himself for it." The greatest love known to men is that of a man for his wife — the bridegroom for his bride — how great is the love of Christ for the Church, that He gave HIMSELF for it. There is not only love, but compatibility. The ideal relationship; suitability in holiness and intelligence.

God's picture of Christ and the Church is set forth so clearly and simply, before man's fall. Adam was made in the image and likeness of God, set up as head over the earth, rendered competent to be God's delegate on the earth. He was allowed, in that sphere of glory to feel a want. There was none with whom he could communicate his thoughts, he had no companion like himself; he was alone and felt his need in this respect. Then God gave him a bride, formed of his life, bone of his bone, flesh of his flesh, comely, suitable to himself, a competent partner in that glorious headship. She is taken out of his side while he is in a deep sleep and on his awakening, God brings the woman to him for the satisfaction of his love and to be the sharer of his glory.

This is all a beautiful picture of Christ and the Church in that transcendent glory of Christ as Head over all things. Blessed happy portion of each of us who have, through grace, been called into this wonderful Assembly of God. It is interesting and instructive to note that in the Epistle to the Ephesians the Spirit of God through the Apostle does not begin with the life of Christ, but with His death, of which the deep sleep of Adam was a figure.

The truth of the Church was not made known in the Old Testament, and the first mention we have of it is by the Lord, given to us in Matthew 16: 18, "Upon this rock I will build my Church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it," and in the Scripture quoted at the head of this paper we have the first mention of the place of the Church with Christ in His glory as **Head** over all things.

It is the Church of the living God and everything in it is living; it is formed of "living stones" (1 Peter 2: 5) and, as we learn from Romans 8: 8, 9, everything of man after the flesh has been judged and ruled out of the Church since, "they that are in the flesh cannot please God." It is formed of those born anew of God and indwelt by one Spirit, the Holy Spirit of God, by whom all are baptised into **one body**, in which all earthly distinctions are gone. In that Body there is no ritualism, no rationalism and no lawlessness. There is variety in action and function, yet one body, as Romans 12: 3-5 shows; and under one control, it is here for the will of God, set free and separate from the world, entirely transformed. From 1 Corinthians 12: 4, we learn the differing members of the body and their functions, but one permeating life throughout the body. Then the differing capabilities of the members, but one Lord controlling (verse 5); the different detailed works but one God whose end is to be served (verse 6). A simple illustration of this is to be found in men working on some construction. All operations are

to fulfil the plan and will of the contractor. The foreman directs the men, and then the detailed operations, the fruit of life, eye, brain, fingers, hands, feet, etc.

In Ephesians 4 we have the administration of the Head in giving gifts to men. He gave Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors and Teachers for the perfecting of the saints — speaking the truth in love and growing up to Him in all things, every part responsive to direction.

In Colossians 1 and 2 we have brought before us the truth that all fulness resides in Him, **the Head**, and thus there is the exhortation to hold the **Head** in contrast to heeding the beguiling persuasions of men.

Again, how great is the grace that has not only wrought us for a place in the Church but has revealed to us His thoughts and purposes concerning it in Christ Jesus, and the Ephesian assembly was the masterpiece of the ministry of the Apostle Paul, under Christ. Alas! he had to visualise the sad failure that would come in after his departure as recorded in Acts 20: 29-32, and which has developed over and over again throughout the history of the Church on earth.

In the light of this, well might we take heed to the warning of the Apostle given to Timothy in the first chapter of his First Epistle and also in his Second Epistle in each chapter of which he calls attention to the influences militating against the maintenance of the **truth**. Jude also warns us of Apostasy and the need for loyalty. While Revelation 3 gives us a door closed against Christ on earth, in Revelation 4 a door is opened in Heaven, indicating that our viewpoint is henceforth to be from above, not from anything on earth.