

# *Ephesians One*

**Ephesians 1:1. *Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus.***

*Paul*, which signifies “little” or “small,” but great in humility and in simplicity of obedience to the truth.

***An apostle of Christ Jesus.*** Not, indeed, as a substitute for that “son of perdition” that was lost from the number of the chosen twelve, but as the bearer of a special, precious commission, authorized to proclaim among the nations of the earth—not the coming kingdom of God on earth, but the unsearchable riches of the Christ of God Himself (Eph. 3:8).—E. F. Stroter.<sup>1</sup>

***By the will of God.*** Paul believed that the Divine will is the root and origin of all Christian righteousness and blessedness. And this is the secret of a strong and calm and effective Christian life. The secret is hard to learn. We find it difficult not to interpose something between “the will of God” and our personal redemption; between “the will of God” and our obedience to the Divine law; between “the will of God” and the work which we are doing for God and for mankind; and so the direct action of the power and grace of God upon our life is deflected and impeded. . . .

When God comes into real and close contact with the soul, we can think only of Him, not ourselves; of His mercy, not our own faith; of His grace, not our own consent to receive it; of His choice of us, not our choice of Him; of His will, not our own submission to it.

Paul was an apostle “by the will of God.” His own will consented, no doubt, to receive the apostleship, but it was the habit of his mind to refer his whole apostolic life and work directly to God. Our own spiritual activity reaches its greatest intensity when we are so filled with the glory of the Divine righteousness, the Divine love, and the Divine power, that we are conscious only of God, and all thought of ourselves is lost in Him.—R. W. Dale.<sup>2</sup>

*To the saints which are at Ephesus.* There are no “born” saints. Noble men, of high aspirations, of unimpeachable character, lovable, gentle, kind, of tender feelings, we find in all walks and conditions of life. They are such by birth and training. But saints are a new creation in Christ Jesus only, through faith in Him, that justifieth the ungodly.—E. F. Stroter.<sup>3</sup>

In the early days, all Christians were “saints.” The title did not attribute any personal merit to them; it simply recalled their prerogatives and their obligations. Whenever they were so described they were reminded that God had made them His own. They were “holy” because they belonged to Him.—R. W. Dale.<sup>4</sup>

*And the faithful in Christ Jesus.* A higher position in the universe cannot be imagined. The Son has clearly defined it, as He speaks to the Father before His going hence: “I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one” (John 17:23). . . .

God cannot be more highly honored by men than when they credit Him with meaning honestly the very highest things He speaks of. With this least of the particles in a sentence, the little word “in,” this greatest of all things is said. This must be received by faith. It is the very key to the true understanding of this precious epistle, which, from beginning to end, is tuned to this one note: “In Christ Jesus.”—E. F. Stroter.<sup>5</sup>

Those whom he describes as “saints” he also describes as “the faithful in Christ Jesus.” Scholars are divided as to whether Paul means that they have faith or whether he means that they have fidelity. The word which he uses may stand as well for the one idea as for the other. Had he been asked in which sense he employed it, I think he might have answered that faith carries fidelity with it. For to Paul faith was very much more than intellectual belief; it was an act in which the intellect, the heart, the conscience, and the will acknowledged Christ as the Redeemer and the Ruler of men. As long as faith of this kind exists in a man, Christ has sovereignty over his life; and the man’s faith guarantees his fidelity.—R. W. Dale.<sup>6</sup>