

Dr. Nora El-Agamy

ليليان رياض
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INTRODUCTION TO THE EPISTLE OF ST. PAUL TO THE COLOSSIANS

CLUSSE, COLOSSE

It was a small city in the district of PHRYGIAN west of ASIA MINOR ,east of EPHESUS ,west of ANTIOCH in PESIDIA on LYCOS river .LYCOS Valley was exposed to several earthquakes. Precipitations of cretaceous kills fill on it and toppled many of the districts landmarks. Meanwhile it gave the area distinct marvelous scenes of ...

It is neighboring to two important cities which are ,LAODICEA and HIESRAPOLIS. The three of which were famous for the trade of wood and dyes.

And due to the many volcanoes the district became abundant in pastiness. This led to the prosperity of wool manufacture and its dying. And thele became a special type of wool in COLOSSE known by the Colossian wool.

We do not know much of COLOSSE s history. HERODOT mentioned it as a great city in PHRYGIA in the day of sarkies, but it diminished until it became a small village in the day of St. Paul. Nothing is left in it in the present time except the village by the name of CHINOS or KINAS in TURKEY. It is situated under the shadow of mountain CADMIUMS, surrounded by high trees. Besides we find prominent in its suburbs traces of the old city of COLOSSE some domes, arcs and paved rocks.

Thus, there was a link between COLOSSE, LAODICEA and Hiesrapolis because they were close to each other. Therefore the Apostle recommended that the Epistle to the Colossians to be ready in LAODICEA , and that to the laodiceaians to be ready in COLOSSE.

YOSIFIOUS mentioned that the Jews have stayed in Phrygia for two centuries. And they copied the costumes of the citizen there, that those who accepted the Christian faith carried the fingerprints of the nation costumes specifically.

The service Epaphras in Colosse:

Up on the return of ST. Paul the apostle ,Timothy and Sila from the council of JERUSALEM (act 15) , they preached in the district of PHRYGIA and Gala tea .then ST . Paul again paced by these districts and encouraged all the disciples (acts .18:23), and this he did after his visit to EPHESUS .Some see that ST. Paul didn't go to COLOSSE , as he paced by the northern sides as mentioned in (act 19:4) while COLOSSE is located in the south That's why most scholars think that probably it is Epaphras who preached in COLOSSE , the one whom Paul the Apostle described as : (Our Dear fellow servant .. on your behalf Col. 1:7). And he also says : " who is one of u " (4: 12) , which proves that he is a citizen of COLOSSE . Probably he met ST. Paul EPHESUS where he believed at his hand , as the Apostle stayed two whole years in EPHESUS (ACTS 19: 10) .However some scholars see, there is no evidence that denies the missionary role of PAUL the Apostle there . Some see that a party of the Colossian accepted faith at the hands of Paul the Apostle during his mission in EPHESUS (53-56 A.D).

DATE OF WRITING:

The Epistle to the Colossians was written from prison, as did the Epistle to the Ephesians , Philippians and Philemon . the mass of early tradition fixes its origin in ROME during his first imprisonment there (acts 28) about (61-63 A.D).

A number of scholars suggest that earlier imprisonment in CAESAREA (58-60 A.D) or EPHESUS (55-56 A.D) offer a more likely occasion for the writings. But most probably he wrote it in ROME , for the following considerations :

1- when ST .PAUL enumerated his co workers, he could hardly have omitted the evangelist PHILIP with whom he had lodged shortly before his imprisonment (acts 21: 8-14) .

2- There is no hint in acts of the widespread preaching activity mentioned in the companion Epistles , Ephesians and Philippians.

3- It is hard to imagine what could have induced the runaway pagan slave ONESIMUS , to go to CAESAREA , while it is more liable that he went to ROME , which was full of persons just like him .

4- ST.PAUL hoped for an early relation (PHILIPPE 1 : 19 -25), which was out of question in CAESAREA since it could only be effect by a bribe , which ST .Paul wouldn't have allowed . Hence it may be expect that he be released Rome , probably during the second of the two years mention in (acts 28 :30) .

THE WRITTEN OF THE EPISTLE :

OUTER and INNER evidences came to emphasis that Paul the Epistle is the written of the Epistle .

1- There came in the introduction of the Epistle that ST. Paul and Timothy both wrote it .

2- Since ST . Paul is the written of the Epistle to Philemon as he openly declared : " I am Paul writing with my own hand " (phylum 19) , then if we compare this Epistle with the other we notice some commoner important mark such as mentioning the names of the workers with the Apostle : EPEPHRAS , MARSTRCHS , DIMAS and LUKE . Besides the Epistle to Philemon was written by the hand of Onesimus , while he also together with Tychicus delivered the Epistle to COLOSSE (cols 4 : 18) . Both letters were written in his prisonment in Rome (cols 4 : 1 1-24) .

3- it is proper to signify here that the Epistle carried the same style of the Epistle of ST .Paul , regarding its frame where it starts with an introduction containing thanks giving to GOD , then display the considerable sides followed by the practical

ethical sides .

OBJECTIONS AGAINST THE WRITTEN OF THE EPISTLE :

1- some object that the style of the epistle differ from his style in other epistle . the answer to this is that this epistle with a heresy that appeared in COLOSSE and required the Apostle's writing about the dominion of the lord JESUS over every creation and concerning the nature of CHRIST and his work . To the extent that the Epistle became an reference book to the church fathers , who relied on it to refute some heresies particularly to disproof the ARYOSAN heresies .

2- some object that the Epistle takes the GNOSIAN inclinations, while the GNOSTICIAN didn't attack CHRISTIANITY except in the second century . Thus the written should be after the first century . The refute to this is that the GNOSIAN as independent teams pretended to be CHRISTIAN who appeared in the second century . How the tried to intrude with their convey into the church since its start throw the JEWS who carried such trends and also some HELLENIANS who carried trends as well.

Accordingly the GNOSTICIAN did not comprise definite teams

the rule of a certain person such as MARCION and PHLANTIONS and PASILIDE except in the second century . but it existed before CHRISTIANITY , where JEWS and HELLINIANS adopted it .

3- The teaching concerning the lord CHRIST exceeds what came in the other ST . Paul's Epistle especially his role in creation which proves that it was written after the Apostolic era. The refute to this is that the eternity of lord CHRIST came also in the Epistle of PHILLIPE (Phil . 2: 9-11), and his role in creation was referred to in (1 corn 6: 8) ,and nobody doubted the genuinely of this were mentioned in the first epistle to the CORINTHIANS .

4- And due to the great resemblance between this epistle and that to the EPHISIANS , some scholars proclaimed that it was

written down depending on the latter . The refute to this is that by comparing similar verses in both epistles , we learn that the verses in COLOSSE is older than that which came in EPHESUS. Besides there is similar verses here to that in the epistle to the Philippians carrying the same fervent and spiritual atmosphere.

PURPOSE OF THE EPISTLE :

The purpose of the epistle is observed from the sequence of the epistle itself .EPEPHRAS went to ROME to bring to Paul the apostle the good news about the church in COLOSSE , where faith and love dominated (1: 4 , 2:5) However a heresy creped tow the COLOSSE'S communion ,that belittled the status of lord CHRIST , thus removed him from his thro , and denied his leadership of the church . ST . Paul had sent this epistle by the hands of EPEPHRAS to deal with this problem , but misfortune unable he was captured put to jail thus the Apostle sent it by the hands of TYCHICUS (4 : 7 -9).

Some see that the district surrounding COLOSSE had suffered from many heresies and the apostle wanted to secure them against these heresies that seemed to creep to words them. He praised them as an encouragement to let them be stead fast in faith , and refuse strange heresies : for though I am absent in the flesh ,yet I am with you in the spirit , rejoicing to see your good order and the steadfastness of your faith in CHRIST .as you have therefore received JESUS CHRIST the lord , so walk in him , (cols 2 :5-6) . while he wrote to the Galatians : "I marvel that you are turning away so soon from him who called you in the grace of CHRIST , to a different Joseph . O foolish Galatians Who has bewitched you : that you should not obey the truth ," (gal 1:6 , 3:1) .

PAUL the apostle concentrated in this epistle on the person of lord CHRIST therefore he used to repeat the name of CHRIST in it . PAUL the apostle wrote about the preeminence and the deity of CHRIST ,emphasizing that he is the very GOD

,one with the FATHER and equal to him ,superior to all other being , as if he shouts up : Don't allow anyone to usurp CHRIST'S place , and don't allow anyone to push you to deny him

TAKLING A Gnostic JEWISH HERESY :

It seems that a group of Jews set forth to PHYRGIA and settled there , this group adopted some Hellenic philosophies connected to GNOTICISM and they mixed them with some literal Jewish rites they assumed that what they had got of our lord JESUS was not enough to satisfy them spiritually and ethically . Thus they need to secure themselves against invasive troops (either they were good angles or wicked ones through customs that such beliefs present .

The most important of these false principles:

This heresy creped into two fields: first , ethics , sec , the realm of doctrine and theology and it offended the person of lord CHRIST .

1- Some Jews accepted some Gnostics concepts and mingled it with Jewish ones, and as they believed in the lord CHRIST they carried with them these traces gnosticism concentrated on GNOSIS(knowledge) as a way o approach to GOD , to them this knowledge is not a divine gift granted to the believer through GOD'S grace and his revelations , but it is an alignment that mean enjoys through his own effort by practicing asceticism.

Knowledge according to gnosticism differ fro the Hellenic point of view of knowledge for though both deny the enjoyment of knowledge or wisdom as a divine gift , yet the Gnostics see that it is due to man's effort through asceticism , while the Hellenic see that it is an outcome of man's effort through using his own mind .

According to gnosticism , man is bog to the evil matter , and he can approach to GOD only through mediating angelic be who help him to get rid of the world of matter and sin . meanwhile some Hellenic philosophers think that there are many A eons who have the power to ascent man from this world of matter to the supreme being gradually . the number of those a eons was usually twelve , everyone offers men to the other who is above him and more spiritual .

2- The worship of angels :

The apostle wrote to them : " let no one defraud you of your reward , taking delight in false humility and worship of angels , intruding into those things which he has not seen , vainly puffed up by his fleshly minds , "(cols 2: 18) . They mist interpreted the verse : " then GOD said let us make man in our image " (GEN 1 : 26) assuming that GOD made angels create man. They went further to believe the lord CHRIST himself submitted to their authority , particularly on his deseeds to the earth and his ascent after the resuvection to heaven . hence the epistle came to emphasis that the lord CHRIST is the greater of the heavenly hosts as well as the creator of earth and all creation (cols 2:15) .

3- To please those angels it should be observed to prohibit eating and drinking certain food and drink that is considered unclean , besides certain literal rights should be practiced : don't touch , don't feel . they proclaimed that asceticion satisfies the spiritual needs of man, and realizes his reconciliation with GOD. The Apostle emphasized that literal practices couldn't review human nature that sin corrupted , but this is fulfilled by going to the grave with CHRIST in baptism ,where we also enjoy the resume life (cols 2:12) . By this strife becomes canonical and fruitful . Since you have put off the old man with his deep and put on the new man who is renewed in KNOWLEDGE according to the image of him who created him, (cols 3:11) .

4- They considered the material creation defiled and unclean , including the human body , therefore they refused CHRIST'S incarnation , that he became a true man having a true body.

5- they assumed the presences of varying ranks of angels , and that of them can mediate between material and GOD in place of CHRIST . Some thought that lord CHRIST is one of mediators , a savior between savior and a mediator between other mediators the epistle made it clear that is the reduning mediate of lord CHRIST based on the sacrifice of the eross (cols 1:14) his intercession being accepted , we life with him with remission of all own transgressions (cols 2:12-1).

6- The Apostle clarified that what GNOSTICS call for it nothing but vain glory according to tradition of material (cols 2:8,18).

7- Those JEWS couldn't get rid of their Jewish background , therefore they though that salvation is realize through practicing rituals and observances and fulfilling the saves according to Moses literally , such as the observances of Sabbath and monthly and yearly feasts , the prohibition of the unclean food , circumcison rites , ...etc. They used to approach GOD through angels , and they rept Jewish and Greek practices. The Apostle corrected these matters.

John lrysos tem :

It isn't worthy that GNOSTIE'S and JUADISM had appeared in a number of other churches such as CORINTHS , and this was rifled in denying the rise of the body , permitting fornication , and despising the body and misunderstanding asceticism.

GNOSTICISIM was not connected to the CHRISTIANTY , but it did adhere to some JEWS in the dispersion . This GNOSTIC attitude was a religion philosophical thought more than being a precise discipline , it succeeded in attracting pagans , JEWS and CHRISTIANS as well. Thus the Gnostic movement appeared and included dangerous teams under the leaders of persons who had such an influence on many and this took place in the second century. These GNOSTIC teams differed from each other , but with common broad lines . I have already delt with GNOTICISM in detail in our study of the school of ALEXANDRIA

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**IN BETWEEN THE EPISTLE TO THE
COLOSSIANS AND THAT TO THE EPHESSIANS :**

PAUL the apostle is the written of the epistle to the Colossians , the epistle to the Ephesians and the epistle to Philemon . The epistle to the Ephesians was written by the hands of TYCHICUS. The similarity between the two epistles is because both are addressed to close districts. In ASIA MINOR, and people in both districts had common social and ethical features. Besides that both had no Jewish origin but where of the nations. S .T PAUL emphasized in both epistle on the secret of GOD'S plan to accept the nation and their sharing with the Jews heavenly heritage as lord CHRIST abolished the enmity so as to create in him self one new man from the two , (eph 2:15).

This concealed secret was from ages , but now it is revealed to his saints to get to know the richness of glory of this secret in the nation (cols 1:6 -7). Although both epistle show similarity in style , yet each press on a certain aspect. Thus the epistle to the Ephesians wrote about all believers as the one body of lord CHRIST , while the epistle to the Colossians emphasized on the ONHEAD to the body , JESUS CHRIST. The first spoke of the church of Christ and the second about the CHRIST of the church , and they are integral.

Some scholars consider the epistle to the Ephesians as a natural extend of the epistle to the Colossians. For the latter spot lighted the rank of lord CHRIST and his work to refute the GNOSTIC thought that belittled the status of the lord and hide his position. While the epistle to the Ephesians came to present the result of the lord CHRIST'S work , that is the church the body of CHRIST which was in GOD'S plan before the foundation of the world. And it is the dearest beloved bride through which the principalities and power in the heavenly places may know the manifold wisdom of GOD (eph 3:11).

THE EPISTLE'S MAIN CONCEPTS :

As GNOSTIC thoughts attacked the person of our lord JESUS CHRIST and his sublimity being the creator of visible and invisible things , and him all things consist the heavenly and the earthly (1:15-20).

This epistle came to present a sincere picture of lord CHRIST in his glory and dignity. So CHRIST is all in all, "For in him dwells all the fullness of the GODHEAD bodily (2:10). He is everything to the believer .

In the day of S.T PAUL some thought that JESUS is a mere man and CHRIST is the divine spirit that's came up on him in his baptism and left him on the cross.

This means that CHRIST did not die but it is the man JESUS who died though they worshiped CHRIST yet they glorified the mediating troops as spiritual beings (1:16)and worshiped them together with CHRIST.

The epistle came to emphasis on the deity of the lord, and that in him alone we find satisfaction without any need to other mediators.

Some thought that the GOD of the old testament is the creator of the world and matter, and lord CHRIST came to save the world from him. Therefore PAUL the apostle made it clear that salvation was fulfilled by CHRIST , and was realized according to THE FATHERS will and love. He used to talk always about lord CHRIST and THE FATHER both together to break any fall GNOSTIC inclination (1:2; 2:2).

FAITH AND KNOWLEDGE :

We have seen that the GNOSTICS regard KNOWLEDGE "gnosis" as a foundation to faith, and that man is able to be saved through his KNOWLEDGE which is the fruit of his asceticism and personal strife. Some GNOSTICS look at CHRISTIANTY as an invitation to ignorance.

In fact PAUL the apostle declared in a positive way that KNOWLEDGE is essential and important for our salvation , but it is a gift of GOD'S grace to us. Thus GOD GIVES us KNOWLEDGE that surpass human mind. He sanctifies it and make it grow within us through the work of his holy Spirit the donor of enlighten. The apostle often repeats the word KNOW OR KNOWLEDGE , as he used to refer to the "mystery of GOD" or the "the mystery of CHRIST" to show that KNOWLEDGE is hidden even from the heavenly hosts, and lord CHRIST declares it to them and us.

The apostle also links KNOWLEDGE with "ethics in CHRIST" , so that we aren't occupied with theoretical KNOWLEDGE , but the KNOWLEDGE of daily experience through practicing the new life in JESUS CHRIST.

THE CHURCH AND SOCIAL EASTASIM :

The Gnostic believe that society is divided into two classes :

1- The class of the perfect, who appropriately do not get married, neither do they eat certain kinds of food, as marriage is defiled and some food are unclean.

2- The class of the simple non-perfect, they are allowed to get married, eat what so ever they because they are weak. The apostle eliminated such caste talking about lord CHRIST who reconciled all things to himself (1:20). Often he repeats the word " every" man in one and the same verse (1:28).

DOCTRINE AND ETHICS :

This epistle reveals to us the greatness of the person of CHRIST so marvelously, however no one can realize this greatness except those who live in JESUS CHRIST, thus take from the treasure of his grace abundantly, and find all true satisfaction in him, so it is a doctrinal practice epistle.

First: CHRIST is our life

+ In the epistle to the Romans we realize that CHRIST is our charity.

- + In the first epistle to the Corinthians, CHRIST is our wealth.
- + In the second epistle to the Corinthians, CHRIST is our comfort.
- + In Galatians, CHRIST sets us free.
- + In Ephesians, CHRIST is our life.(we are his body).
- + In Philippians, CHRIST is our happiness.
- + In 122 Thessalonians, CHRIST is coming for our glory.
- + In 1 Timothy and Titus, CHRIST is our teacher.
- + In 2 Timothy, CHRIST is an example to us.
- + In Philemon, CHRIST is our redeeming intercessor.
- + As to COLOSSIANS, he is everything to us." And you are complete in him (cols 2:10). We find in him everything and with him we need nothing :
- * He is the light that delivered us from the power of darkness (1:12-13) to become we ourselves light to the world.
- * And he is the savior who save us from the authority of the devil and all his influences, in whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins. (1:14)
- * He transfers us to his kingdom, that is the kingdom of SON of his love, (1:13). For through baptism in his name we enjoy SONSHIP to the FATHER, and we are counted the beloved children of GOD.
- * According to his deity, he is the image of the invisible GOD (1:15), in he our nature is renewed, to be after his image: and have put on the new image who is renewed in KNOWLEDGE according to the image of him who created him (3:10).
- In first ADAM, we lost the image of GOD and in second ADAM we restore the image.
- * He is the creator, "for by him a things were created," (1:16), he carried us in him as his body, he led us enlightened in him to enjoy his risen "and he is the head of the body, the church who is the beginning, the first born from the dead, that in all things he may have the preeminence" (1:18). " for you died, and your life is hidden with CHRIST in GOD". (3:3)
- * He became a head to us, his body in all things he may have the present eminence (1:18) to be a example to us in all things.

* Through his work of salvation, he unveiled to us the mystery of divine lord CHRIST that we enjoyed hope of glory : "which is CHRIST in you the hope of glory (1:27). "when CHRIST who is our life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory" (3:4). If GNOSTICISM had made wrong to the person of CHRIST and considered him as one of the AEONS, here PAUL the apostle invite us to enjoy fellowship with him to experience his passions "I ...fill up in my flesh for you, and fill up in my flesh. What is lacking in the afflictions of CHRIST (1:24), and his death: "for you died (3:3) and his burial" buried with him in baptism (2:12), and consequently we join in his glory "you also will appear with him in glory." (3:4). Thus with lord CHRIST we are in need of nothing !

As GNOSTICISM calls them to mere intellectual KNOWLEDGE as a way to salvation, in fact our possession of CHRIST is the true way, for he is "in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and KNOWLEDGE" (2:3).

Second: the church in CHRIST

a- the church is united with CHRIST as her head (1:18), thus by his incarnation, he is neither foreign to her nor she to him, but she is his body. The origin of this concept came in the words of our lord JESUS CHRIST himself (mare john 2:19,22

Lord CHRIST makes us adherent to him and united with him as being the head of man (1 corn 11:3). His relationship with us is that of spiritual marriage. " for the husband is head of the wife, as also CHRIST is head of the church ; and he is the savior of the body." (eph 5:23).

b- the church finds her comfort in CHRIST in the midst of her passions, for she considers pain filling up in her flesh what is lacking in the affections of CHRIST, and she witness to the cross, and experiences the sweetness of follow ship with her misfired CHRIST (1:24).

c- lord CHRIST opened the way to the church as he granted her to walk in him (2:6)for her relationship with him is unceasing by dynamic, always works to fulfill the will of her heavenly groom. " rooted and built up in him (2:7), and practices everything in his name, particularly thanks giving to the FATHER (3:17,2:7).

d- the church enjoys to be complete in him (2:10), she will accept nothing but to be after his image and thus be satisfied.

e- to die with him (2:20), be buried with him (2:12), rise with him (2:1), be hidden with him (3:3)and appear with him in glory (3:4).

f- and was granted renewal through baptism, which remains to be constant renewal through repentance until she absolutely carries his image (3:10).

g- she feels wealth, and the royal life, as she possesses him "in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and KNOWLEDGE (2:2,3, 4:16).

h- her law is faith in CHRIST, practical love for all the saints and hope in heaven (1:4-5).That's the key of the book "faith, hope and love." This grace from its three aspects is related permanently in new testament with the experience of CHRISTIAN life. This rule is presented in this book in various ways. This book, as other epistles of our teacher PAUL the apostle came to reveal the call of the BIBLE, which is :faith in CHRIST, to love him in his brethrens and be with him in his heavens.

i- this epistle unveils church spirit and its joyous environment. For through the epistle's aim is to warn against false teachers, and philosophers who are arrogant and carry vain philosophies, yet it declares quiet obviously, how the church should be like through possessing her CHRIST as being the head who grants her all richness and fullness.

Besides she experiences the power over the devil and all his armed forces where there is no place yet

to darkness there, experience the joyful kingdom of GOD, and lead the royal way to become an icon of her creator. Thus the apostle presents his experience to the church as a victorious life joyous and glorious even in the midst of passions.

j- this joyous church life does not lead to negligence but to the serious attitude "in CHRIST" (1:6), and asking for the heaven

(3:12), especially love which is the bond of perfection (14). Seriously the door of heart is opened that peace of GOD reigns in it, and one experiences the permanent life of fellowship. (3:15).

Our joyous church life pushes us to vigilance with thanksgiving, prayer and preaching the mystery of CHRIST (4:2,3). And instructs us in family relations (3:18-21). And leads us in our relationship with others (3:21-25). It is a kind of life that is practiced in church, home and in the street for its an interior life whose roots is in our depths. It directs our feelings, emotions, capacities, talents, words and attitudes. It interferes in every action, hidden or apparent, in other words our CHRISTIANITY is hidden in CHRIST, that we see him in everybody, and he leads us by himself to enjoy him.

k- this epistle reveals that CHRISTIANITY is a practical call to enjoy freedom, where CHRIST have set us free from the devil and his darkness. And have granted us SONSHIP to the FATHER to enjoy his kingdom, and have given us himself as being wisdom. Through this freedom we refuse every call for the deadly letter and misunderstanding of asceticism, thus we serve our CHRIST as children in glory. This freedom in CHRIST draws us to certain obligations, thus the epistle presents what we should avoid, what we should strive for and how we ought to give thanks.

ITS DIVISIONS:

As the epistle presents to us the person of CHRIST, so where never to we look at it CHRIST is transfigured before us. For in him we are grounded and steadfast (1:23). CHRIST is the eternal who carries us to his eternal life. He grants us continuous growth to draw us towards him (2:7). He is the true life, the donor of everything (3:3) and he is the leader of other behavior.

- 1- CHRIST is depth ch1
- 2- CHRIST is height ch2
- 3- CHRIST is within us ch3
- 4- CHRIST is the leader of our behavior ch4

1	2	3	4
<p>CHRIST is the depth (1:23) . As a creator, first born, leader and head, he takes us to the depth to raise us to reconciliation with the FATHER (1:14-20)</p> <p>*Through him we are granted the eternal mystery (1:26).</p> <p>*Through him we are bought perfect in wisdom (1:28)</p>	<p>CHRIST is the height (sublimity)</p> <p>* above all human philosophy (2:8)</p> <p>* above flesh circumcision</p> <p>* above principalities and powers (2:15)</p> <p>* above literality of law (2:16).</p> <p>* above the basic principles of the world (dominating spirits (2:20)</p>	<p>CHRIST is glory of inner life</p> <p>* our life is hidden with him (3:3).</p> <p>* eternal glory (3:4).</p> <p>* we carry his features, especially love wisdom thanks giving.</p>	<p>CHRIST is the leader of apparent</p> <p>* he is the fast law (3:18-25).</p> <p>* he is the community (4:1)</p> <p>*our duty present him the world (4:5).</p>

CHAPTER 1

+ Verse 1

Then lest this should seem owing to their peculiar weakness, he joined others also with them, and as yet condemned them not. But why does he say, "And as many as have not seen my face in the flesh"? He shows here after a divine manner, that they saw him constantly in the Spirit. And he bears witness to their great love.

St. John Chrysostom

In Colos., hom. 5.

+ Verse 2

"I strive," he says. To what end? That they may be kint together. What he means is something like this; that they may stand firm in the faith. He does not however so express himself; but extenuates the matter of accusation. That is, that they may be united with love, not with necessity nor with force...

I would have you fully assured: not "unto riches" only, but "unto all riches"; that your full assurance may be intense, as well as in all things.

St. John Chrysostom

In Colos., hom. 5.

+ Verse 3

"Hid," for think not in truth that you already have all; they are hidden also even from Angels, not from you only; so that you ought to ask all things from Him. He himself gives wisdom and knowledge...

St. John Chrysostom

In Colos., hom. 5.

verse 5

The direct thing to have said here was, "even though I be absent in the flesh, yet, nevertheless, I know the deceivers"; but instead he has ended with praise, "Joying and beholding your order, and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ." "Your order," he means, your good order. "And the steadfastness of your faith in Christ." Thus us still more in the way of encomium. And he said not "faith," but steadfastness, as to soldiers standing in good order and firmly. Now that which is steadfast, neither deceit nor trial can shake asunder.

St. John Chrysostom

In Colos., hom. 5.

+ Verse 6

"Walk you in Him," for He is the Way that leads to the Father: not in the Angels; this way leads not thither.

St. John Chrysostom

In Colos., hom. 6.

+ Verse 7

Now that which is rooted, never can remove. Observe how appropriate are the expressions he employs. "And built up," that is, in thought attaining to Him. "And established" in Him, that is, holding Him, built as on a foundation. He shows that they had fallen down, for the word "built" has this force. For the faith is in truth a building; and needs both a strong foundation, and secure construction. For both if any one build not upon a secure foundation it will shake; and even though he do, if it be not firm, it will not stand.

St. John Chrysostom

In Colos., hom. 6.

+ Verse 8

Sees you how he shows him to be a thief, and an alien, and one that enters in softly? For he has already represented him to be entering in. "Beware"...

Then because the term "philosophy" has an appearance of dignity, he added, "and vain deceit." For there is also a good deceit; such as many have been deceived by, which one ought not even to call a deceit at all. Whereof Jeremiah speaks; "O Lord, You has deceived me, and I was deceived" (Jer. 20:7); for such as this one ought not to call a deceit at all; for Jacob also deceived his father, but that was not a deceit, but an economy. "Through his philosophy," he say "and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ." Now he sets about to reprove their observance of particular days, meaning by elements of the world the sun and moon; as he also said in the Epistle to the Galatians, "How turn you back again to the weak and beggarly elements?" (Gal. 4:9) And he said not observances of days, but in general of the present world, to show its worthlessness: for if the present world be nothing, much more then its elements. Having first shown how great benefits and kindnesses they had received, he afterwards brings on his accusation, thereby to show its greater seriousness, and to convict his hearers.

St. John Chrysostom

In Colos., hom. 6.

+ Verse 9, 10

By "fullness" is meant "the whole." Then the word "bodily," what did it intend? "As in a head."

...

"And you are made full in Him." What then does it mean? That you have nothing less than He.

St. John Chrysostom

In Colos., hom. 6.

+ Verse 11

"The body of sins." He means, "the old life." He is continually adverting to this in different ways, as he said above, "Who delivered us out of the power of darkness, and reconciled us who were alienated," that we should be "holy and without blemish." (Col. 1:13,21) No longer, he says, is the circumcision with the knife, but in Christ Himself; for no hand imparts this circumcision, as is the case there, but the Spirit. It circumcises not a part, but the whole man. It is the body both in the one and the other case, but in the one it is carnally, in the other it is spiritually circumcised; but not as the Jews, for you have not put off flesh, but sins. When and where? In Baptism. And what he calls circumcision, he again calls burial.

St. John Chrysostom

In Colos., hom. 6.

verse11

He speaks of a greater thing than circumcision, for they did not merely cast away that of which they were circumcised, but they destroyed it, they annihilated it.

St. John Chrysostom

In Colos., hom. 6.

+ Verse 14

"In doctrines" [ordinances], he says. What doctrines? The Faith. It is enough to believe. He has not set works against works, but works against faith...

To the Cross then He affixed it; as having power, He tore it asunder. What bond? He means either that which they said to Moses, namely, "All that God has said will we do, and be obedient" (Ex. 24:3), or, if not that, this, that we owe to God obedience; or if not this, he means that the devil held possession of it, the bond which God made for Adam, saying, "In the day you eatest of the tree, you shalt die." (Gen. 2:17) This bond then the devil held in his possession. And Christ did not give it to us, but Himself tore it in two, the action of one who remits joyfully.

St. John Chrysostom

In Colos., hom. 6.

verse15

"Having put off from himself the principalities and the powers." He means the diabolical powers; because human nature had arrayed itself in these, or because they had, as it were, a hold, when He became Man He put away from Himself that hold. What is the meaning of "He made a show of them"? And well said he so; never yet was the devil in so shameful a plight. For whilst expecting to have Him, he lost even those he had; and when That Body was nailed to the Cross, the dead arose. There death received his would, having met his death-stroke from a dead body. And as an athlete, when he thinks he has hit his adversary, himself is caught in a fatal grasp; so truly does Christ also show, that to die with confidence is the devil's shame...

For since the Angels have suffered nothing like it, He therefore does everything for this, showing that His death achieved a mighty work. There was, as it were, a single combat. Death wounded Christ: but Christ, being wounded, did afterwards kill death.

St. John Chrysostom

In Colos., hom. 6.

+ Verse 16

He said not, "Do not then observe them," but, "let no man judge you." He showed that they were transgressing, and undoing, but he brought his charge against others...

He said not "in clean and unclean," nor yet "in feasts of Tabernacles, and unleavened bread, and Pentecost," but "in part of a feast": for they ventured not to keep the whole; and if they did observe it, yet not so as to celebrate the feast. "In part," he says, showing that the greater part is done away. For even if they did keep Sabbath, they did not do so with precision.

St. John Chrysostom

In Colos., hom. 7.

+ Verse 17

Some persons here punctuate thus, "but the body" is "of Christ," i.e. the truth is come in with Christ: others thus; "The Body of Christ let no man adjudge away from you," that is, thwart you of it.

He shows that the whole arose out of vainglory. But what is on the whole the drift of what is said? There are some who maintain that we must be brought near by Angels, not by Christ, that were too great a thing for us. Therefore it is that he turns over again what has been done by Christ, "through the Blood of His Cross" (c. 1:20); on this account he says that "He suffered for us"; that "He loved us." (1 Pet. 2:21)

+ Verse 20-22

You are not in the world, he says, how is it you are subject to its elements? how to its observances? And mark how he makes sport of them, "touch not, handle not, taste not," as though they were cowards and keeping themselves clear of some great matters, "all which things are to perish with the using." He has taken down the swollenness of the many, and added, "after the precepts and doctrines of men."

+ Verse 23

"Show," he says; not power, not truth. So that even though they have a show of wisdom, let us turn away from them. For he may seem to be a religious person, and modest, and to have a contempt for the body.

"Not of any value against the indulgence of the flesh." For God has given it honour, but they use it not with honour.

They dishonour the flesh, he says, depriving it, and stripping it of its liberty, not giving leave to rule it with its will. God has honoured the flesh.

COLOSSIAN

+ Verse 5

His love for each church and his desire to help them all in their problems caused him to be present spiritually to them all (1Cor. 5:3).

+ Verse 6

Since Jesus Christ is pre-eminent over all, the image of God, the Creator of all, etc., why should there even be a desire to seek other mediators? Jesus is the Messiah, the anointed One of God. He is the Word, the message from God to man. He is also the Lord, the Jehovah of the Old Testament (Phil. 2:11).

They had "received" the Lord by simple faith; they had received Him as Saviour, as the source of life and happiness. If He was needed to rescue from eternal perdition, He is also needed to guide and direct the Christian in the fail choices that life forces upon him (John 6:39; Rom. 8:35-39). We are commanded to "walk in him." We all live and move and have our being in Christ, we are all sustained by Him (1:17). From 3:5-17 Paul shows how the Christian is to walk.

+ Verse 7

We are to seek in Him and in Him alone the satisfaction of all our spiritual needs He alone is sufficient.

+ Verse 8

This part of the letter is built around three warnings. First, don't let yourself be drawn after any human philosophy that takes Christ's place.

Don't let anything take Christ's pre-eminent place, and don't let anyone cause you to deny Him.

Keep your eyes open and set a watch (Ezek. 3:17-21). Generally it is the ignorant and unprepared that are robbed (Luke 12:39), that are victims of imposture.

Philosophy is man's effort to reach and understand God and His universe by his own strength. It falls short of its goal (1 Cor. 1:21) and therefore is very dangerous (1 Tim. 6:20).

Tradition is not necessarily evil in itself. Basically the word refers to a group of sayings or doctrines handed down from one to another (Gal. 1:14; 1 Cor. 11:2). They may be good (2 Thess. 2:15; 3:6), useless (1 Peter 1:18), or even definitely evil when they come into conflict with the Word of God (Matt. 15: 1-9). In the case of Colossians 2:8 the tradition definitely is in the last class, for it is in opposition to the true doctrine as revealed in Christ.

From verse 20 we discover that the "elements" refer to the religious observance of certain do's and don't (2:20-23). It is the effort of man to reach God by self-denial and good works. The keeping of the law cannot save (Gal. 2:16; Eph. 2:8,9). The danger of all philosophy is that it may fall under the condemnation of being *not according to Christ*. In all our attempts to draw near to God we must remember that it is only in and through our Saviour that we have access to God.

+ Verse 10

One of Paul's most characteristic concepts is that of being "in Christ."

There are 21 references to our relationship to the Lord Jesus in the first two chapters, making an average of almost one in every other verse.

To be "in Christ" is to walk and talk with Him, to be controlled by Him.

It's impossible to render *perfected* into English with just one word. It means to fill up, to make full, to complete in every particular, to perfect (Matt. 13:48; John 3:19).

+ Verse 11

By Christ we are brought to perfection (v. 10), by Him also we are brought into covenant relation with God.

Physical circumcision was an Old Testament sign showing the man's covenant relationship to God (Rom. 4:11,12). It was also a mark for division between Jew and Gentile. At the cross Christ Jesus destroyed this wall of separation (Eph. 2:14-28).

It is on the basis of faith that we all, Jew and Gentile, enter into covenant relationship with God (Rom. 3:29,30; Gal. 5:6).

+ Verse 12

Buried with him in baptism is given significance only if the form employed is immersion. It testifies to the mode in use in Paul's day (Rom. 6:3-5). They have died to the old life-the things mentioned in 3:5-9 are ended.

His resurrection guarantees ours (1 Cor. 15:20-23). Jesus is called "firstborn from the dead"; that is, our guarantee of resurrection (1 Cor. 15:20).

+ Verse 13

Death is not annihilation. Instead, it is separation-separation from God. We are born in the spiritually dead image of Adam (1:15; Gen. 5:3). And we remain so until we are "made alive" by God.

Even so, uncircumcised flesh is better than an uncircumcised heart (2:11; Rom. 2:25-29). "It is the spirit that quickens, the flesh profits nothing" (John 6:63).

+ Verse 14

Here twice he says that it is opposed to us. The law is on our enemy's side and in a sense was our enemy. How? Because at the same time that it destroyed our appeal to ignorance by opening our eyes to sin, it in no way gave us strength to obey its precepts (Rom. 7:7-25). It is Jesus Christ alone who can both reveal sin for what it is and give us the power to overcome it. Paul says "us," including himself with the coming of grace, the law was done away even for the Jew.

The law has stood between Jew and Gentile, between both and God. It was an impenetrable wall of separation. But Jesus Christ threw it down and carried it away. He united both Jew and Gentile and gave them access to God through Christ (Eph. 2:14-18). Our Lord accomplished this reconciliation by *nailing it to the cross* (1:20). The nails that pierced our Lord's hands and feet served also to fasten the law to the cross. The law has no more dominion over us. Or does it?

+ Verse 15

We must not fear or bow to demonic forces, nor may we underestimate their power. They are still stringer than any saint apart from the power of God. But thanks be to God who ever helps us to win the victory (Rom. 8:37).

+ Verse 16

Two things had been held against them: their sins and uncircumcision (v. 12). Through Christ their sins were forgiven (v. 13), and the law, which separated Jew and Gentile, was removed (v.14). Beyond that the Lord emerged as sole Victor over the forces of Satan (v. 15). On this foundation Paul commands, *let no one criticize you!*

The false teachers in Colosse were demanding that the Gentiles keep certain aspects of the law (v. 14). In addition to circumcision they demanded that they keep the Levitical laws *in* [respect to] *food and drink* (v. 21). This was in spite of the fact that the counsel in Jerusalem, about 12 years before, had given a resounding *No* to such ideas (Acts 15:28, 29).

We are to do what we do as unto the Lord. He alone has the right to judge us.

+ Verse 17

A shadow is just a reflection of the real thing. It includes truth and has prophetic value (Heb. 8:5; 9:9; 10:1). But when the fullness of truth is known, parables are no longer necessary.

Paul always returns to the Lord, He is the center of interest. Of 23 verses in this chapter, He is mentioned in all but five of them. *Of* here could imply either "belongs to" or "comes from." Paul probably meant both, that our Lord is the Author and Director of our new life. His commands we must keep (John 15:10), but more than the commands is the love and fellowship we can have with Him.

+ Verse 18

Beguile represents with difficulty the composite Greek word which means to rule against in some sort of contest. There it means to frustrate, to rob, to cause to miss the prize.

+ Verse 19

And not holding the head is equivalent to "and not after Christ" in verse 8. Special interests must not be allowed to crowd Jesus Christ out of the center.

Body here refers to the Church universal. These ties are of a spiritual nature instead of denominational.

The Church *in strengthened and knit together* in such a way as to repel the attacks of satanic forces (Matt. 16:18).

+ Verse 20

Turning now from the negative warnings (vv. 8,16,18), Paul now presents some positive aspects of our relationship to Christ.

The decrees of men were rejected (v. 8), the burden of the Old Testament laws was removed (v. 14). Are we free then to be as disobedient as we please? (Gal. 5:13). No! Instead of being bound by a multitude of laws, we are free to keep the commands of Christ (John 15:10).

+ Verse 22

The law is made to be kept, yet it is the "using" of the law that brings destruction.

Our spiritual life must not be dependent on *do's* and *don't's* but on the love we have for the Lord Jesus (v. 8).

When self-mutilation, exercise, or restraint become the ends in themselves, we have surpassed the value and are harboring heretical ideas.

COLOSSIANS

INTRODUCTION

They used to approach God through angels; they held many Jewish and Grecian observances. These things then he is correcting.

CHAPTER 1

+ Verse 1,2

"And faithful brethren in Christ." (Col. 4:16) Whence, says he, art you made a saint? Tell me. Whence art you called faithful? Is it not because you were sanctified through death? Is it not because you have faith in Christ? Whence art you made a brother? For neither in deed, nor in word, nor in

achievement didst you show yourself faithful. Tell me, whence is it that you has been entrusted with so great mysteries? Is it not because of Christ?

For we are called faithful, not only because we have faith, but also because we are entrusted of God with mysteries which not even angels knew before us.

+ Verse 3

"Praying always for you."

He shows his love, not by giving thanks only, but also by continual prayer, in that those whom he did not see, he had continually within himself.

+ Verse 5

He speaks of the good things to come. This is with a view to their temptations, that they should not seek their rest here. For lest any should say, "And where is the good of their love toward the saints, if they themselves are in affliction?" he says, "We rejoice that you are securing for yourselves a noble reception in heaven." "Because of the hope," he says, "which is laid up."

+ Verse 6

He now gives them credit. "Is come," he said metaphorically. He means, it did not come and go away, but that it remained, and was there.

"As first gains the hearer by his praises, so that even though disinclined, he may not refuse to hear him.

"Since the day you heard it."

Marvelous! that you quickly came to it and believed; and straightway, from the very first, showed forth its fruits.

Because as soon as you received it, so soon you knew the grace of God.

But the spiritual love is higher than all, as it were some queen ruling her subjects; and in her form is bright: for not as the other, has she aught of earth for her parent; neither habitual intercourse, nor benefits, nor nature, nor time; but she descends from above, out of heaven. And why wonderest you that she needs no benefits in order that she should subsist, seeing that neither by injuries is she overthrown?

Now that this love is greater than the other, hear Paul saying; "For I could wish that I myself were anathema from Christ for my brethren." (Rom 9:3) What father would have thus wished himself in misery?

NATURAL FRIENDSHIP AND SPIRITUAL ONE

For he who became a friend from receiving benefits, will, should these be discontinued, become an enemy; he whom habitual intercourse made inseparable, will, when the habit is broken through, let his friendship become extinct. A wife again, should a broil have taken place, will leave her husband, and withdraw affection; the son, when he sees his father living to a great age, is dissatisfied. But in case of spiritual love there is nothing of this. For by none of these things can it be dissolved; seeing it is not composed out of them. Neither time, nor length of journey, nor ill usage, nor being evil spoken of, nor anger, nor insult, nor any other thing, make inroads upon it, nor have the power of dissolving it. And that you mayest know this; Moses was stoned, and yet he made entreaty for them. (Ex. 17:4) What father would have done this for one that stoned him, and would not rather have stoned him too to death?

+ Verse 9

"For this cause." What cause? Because we heard of your faith and love, because we have good hopes, we are hopeful to ask for future blessing also. For as in the games we cheer on those most who are near upon gaining the victory, just so does Paul also most exhort those who have achieved the greater part.

Not for one day do we pray for you, nor yet for two, nor three. Herein he both shows his love, and gives them a gentle hint that they had not yet arrived at the end.

He says; not, "that you may receive, "for they had received; but "that you may be filled" with what as yet was lacking. Thus both the rebuke was given without offense, and the praise did not suffer them to sink down, and become supine, as if it had been complete.

That through the Son we should be brought to Him, and no more through Angels. Now that you must be brought to Him, you have learnt, but it remains for you to learn this, and why He sent the Son. For had it been that we were to have been saved by Angels, He would not have sent Him, would not have given Him up.

For, he that has known God, and been counted worthy to be God's servant, yes, rather, even His Son, see how great virtue he needs. "Strengthened with all power." He is here speaking of trials and persecutions. We pray that you might be filled with strength, that you faint not sorrow, nor despair.

And this he does everywhere: when he is about writing to any with somewhat to blame them for, and somewhat to praise, he first praises them, and then comes down to his charges. For he first conciliates the hearer, and frees his accusation from all suspicion, and shows that for his own part he could have been glad to praise them throughout; but by the necessity of the case is forced into saying what he does.

+ Verse 11

Long-suffering towards one another, patience towards those without. For long-suffering is toward those whom we can requite, but patience toward those whom we cannot. For this reason the term patient is never applied to God, but long-suffering frequently.

+ Verse 13

He said not "darkness," but "power" for it had great power over us, and held us fast. For it is grievous indeed even to be under the devil at all, but to be so "with power," this is far more grievous.

A great thing indeed is it to have delivered from darkness even; but to have brought into a kingdom too, is a far greater. See then how manifold the gift, that he has delivered us who lay in the pit; in the second place, that He has not only delivered us, but also has translated us into a kingdom.

Those that were enemies, those that were in darkness, as it were on a sudden he had translated to where the Son is, to the same honour with Him.

+ Verse 15

However, he said not "first created," but "firstborn." Then it is reasonable that he should be called many things. For he must also be called a brother "in all things." (Heb. 2:17) And we must take from Him His being Creator; and insist that neither in dignity nor in any other thing is He superior to us?

To have only a bearing on Him is enough to continue anything and bind it fast. So also the word "firstborn," in the sense of a foundation. But this does not show the creatures to be consubstantial with Him; but that all things are through Him, and in Him are upheld. Since Paul also when he says elsewhere, "I have laid a foundation" (1Cor. 3:10), is speaking not concerning substance, but operation.

+ Verse 17

For everywhere He is first; above first; in the Church first, for He is the Head; in the Resurrection first.

+ Verse 18

So that in generation also He is first. And this is what Paul is chiefly endeavoring to show.

+ Verse 19

He said not "Resurrection," but "firstborn" showing that He has sanctified us all, and offered us, as it were, a sacrifice. The term "fullness" some use if the Godhead, like as John said, "Of His fullness have all we received." That is, whatever was the Son, the whole Son dwelt there, not a sort of energy, but a Substance.

+ Verse 20

The word "reconcile," shows the enmity; the words "having made peace," the war.

A great thing indeed it is to reconcile; but that this should be through Himself too, is a greater thing; and a greater still, - how through Himself? Through His Blood.

Because not by speaking words, but by giving Himself up for the reconciliation, He so wrought everything. But what is "things in the heavens"?

The earth was divided from heaven, the Angels were become enemies to men, through seeing the Lord insulted. "To sum up," all things in Christ, the things in the heavens, and the things upon the earth." (Eph. 1:10)

Angels again appeared on the earth thereafter, because that Man too had appeared in heaven.

For in the earth indeed, the peace was twofold; with the things of heaven, and with themselves; but in heaven it was simple. For if the Angels rejoice over one sinner that repents, much more will they over so many.

+ Verse 21

Here he goes to show that He reconciled those even who were unworthy of reconciliation. For by the saying that they were under the power of darkness, he shows the calamity in which they were. But lest, on hearing of "the power of darkness," you should consider it Necessity, he adds, "And you that were alienated," so that though it appear to be the same thing that he says, yet it is not so; for it is not the same thing to deliver out of the evils him that through necessity came to suffer, and him that if his own will endures.

And seeing he had made mention of the "things in the heavens," he shows, that all the enmity had its origin from hence, not thence. For they indeed were long ago desirous, and God also, but you were not willing.

And throughout he is showing that the Angels had no power in the successive times, Forasmuch as men continued enemies; they could neither persuade them, nor, if persuaded, could they deliver them from the devil. For neither would persuading them be any gain, except he that held them were bound; nor would binding him have been of any service, except they whom he detained were willing to return. But both of these were needed, and they could do neither of them, but Christ did both.

And he said not simply "were at enmity," but "were alienated," which denotes great enmity, nor yet "alienated" [only], but without any expectation even of returning. "And enemies in your mind," he says; then the alienation had not proceeded so far as purpose only - but what? "in your wicked works" also. You were both enemies, he says, and you did the works of enemies.

+ Verse 22

Again he lays down also the manner of the reconciliation, that it was "in the Body," not by being merely beaten, nor scourged, nor sold, but even by dying a death and most shameful. Again he makes mention of the Cross, and again lays down another benefit.

For, not that He might deliver us from evil only, did He suffer so great things, but that also we might obtain the first rewards; as if one should not only free a condemned criminal from his punishment, but also advance him to honour.

+ Verse 23

Wonderful! what a forcible metaphor he uses; he says not only not tossed to and fro, but not even moved. And observe, he lays down so far nothing burdensome nor toilsome, but faith and hope; that is, if you continue believing, that the hope of the things to come is true.

For great was his authority, as being now everywhere celebrated, and the teacher of the world.

And "minister," he says, that is, bringing in nothing from myself, but announcing what is from another.

+ Verse 24

It seems indeed to be a great thing he has said; but it is not of arrogancy, far be it, but even of much tender love towards Christ; for he will not have the sufferings to be his own, but His, through desire of conciliating these persons to Him. And what things I suffer, I suffer, he says, on His account: not to me, therefore, express your gratitude, but to him, for it is He Himself who suffers.

So that He is not ashamed to call these sufferings also his own (as Acts 9:5). For He did not only die for us, but even after His death He is ready to be afflicted for you sakes. He is eagerly and vehemently set upon showing that He is even now exposed to peril in His own Body for the Church's sake, and he aims at this point, namely, you are not brought to God by us, but by Him, even though we do these things, for we have not undertaken a work of our own, but His.

+ Verse 25

By "dispensation" he means, that He require not deeds, nor actions, nor good works, but faith and baptism. For you would not otherwise have received the word. "For you," he says, "to fulfill the word of God." He speaks of the Gentiles, showing that they were yet wavering, by the expression, "fulfill."

+ Verse 27

"To whom God was pleased to make known," he says. Yet His will is not without reason. By way of making them accountable for grace, rather than allowing them to have high thoughts, as though it were of their own achieving, he said, "To whom he was pleased to make known." "What is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles."

For, on a sudden, to have brought men more senseless than stones to the dignity of Angels, simply through bare words, and faith alone, without any laboriousness, and faith alone, without any laboriousness, is indeed glory and riches of mystery. They were wont to worship stones and the earth; but they learned that themselves are better both than the heaven and the sun, and that the whole world serves them; they were captives and prisoners of the devil: on a sudden they are placed above his head, and lay commands on him and scourge him: from being captives and slaves to demons, they are become the body of The Master of the Angels and the Archanfels; from not knowing even what God is, they are become all at once shares even in God's throne.

"Which is Christ in you?" But if He be in you, why seek you Angels? "Of this mystery." For there are other mysteries besides. But this is really a mystery, which no one knew, which is marvelous, which is beside the common expectation, which was lid.

+ Verse 28

What sayest you, "every man"? Yes, this is what we are earnestly desirous of doing, he says.

"In Christ," that is, in the knowledge of Christ. For he that knows what Christ has done, will have higher thoughts than to be satisfied with Angles.

+ Verse 29

He shows that this is the work of God. He, now, that makes me strong for this, evidently wills it.

In saying this, he shows that many are fighting against him. Then great is his tender affection.

CHAPTER 3

+ Verse 1

Wonderful! Whither has he led our minds aloft! How has he filled them with mighty aspiration! It was not enough to say, "the things that are above," nor yet, "where Christ is," but what? "seated on the right hand of God." From that point he was preparing them henceforward to see the earth.

+ Verse 2-4

This is to prepare the way for drawing them off from pleasure and ease. Such is his wont: when establishing one position, he darts off to another; as, for instance, when discoursing of those who at supper were beforehand with one another, he all at once falls upon the observance of the Mysteries.

See how he has removed them into the very heaven. For, as I said, he is always bent upon showing that they have the very same things which Christ has; and through all his Epistles, the tenor is this, to show that in all things they are partakers with Him. Therefore he uses the terms, Head, and Body, and does everything to convey this to them.

"In glory," he said, not merely "manifested." For the pearl too is hidden so long as it is within the oyster. If then we be treated with insult, let us not grieve; or whatever it be we suffer; for this life is not our life, we are strangers.

Nothing is more blessed than this burial, whereat all are rejoicing, both Angels, and men. and the Lord of Angels. At this burial, no need is there of vestments, nor to confine, nor of anything else if that kind. Wouldest t you see the symbol of this? I will shoe thee a pool wherein the one was buried, the other raised; in the Red Sea the Egyptians were sunk beneath it; but the Israelites went up from out of it; in the same act he buries the one, generates the other.

Marvel not that generation and destruction take place in Baptism; for, tell me, dissolving and cementing, are they not opposite? It is evident to all.

+ Verse 5

What is worse than such a covetousness? This is worse than any desire. This is still more grievous than what I was speaking of, the madness, and the silly weakness about silver. "And covetousness," he says, "which is idolatry." See in what the evil ends.

Not for the sake of the sorrows of the poor so I say thee things, but for your salvation; for they will perish, will perish, that have not fed Christ.

He said that this is not our life, but another, that which is in heaven. Tell me now. When he said, Mortify your members that are upon the earth, is then the earth also accused? or does he speak of the things upon the earth as them selves sins?

Lo! he has expressed the whole in the class. For envy, anger, sorrow, all are "evil desire."

He said not, "upon you," but, "upon the sons of disobedience."

+ Verse 9,10

It is worth inquiring here, what can be the reason why he calls the corrupt life, "members," and "man," and "body," and again the virtuous life, the same. And if "the man" means "sins," how is it that he says, "with his doings"? For once he said, "the old man," showing that this is not man, but the other. The moral choice does rather determine one than the substance, and is rather "man" than the other. For his substance casts his

not in- to hell, nor leads him into the kingdom, but men themselves: and we neither love nor hate any one so far as he is man, but so far as he is such or such a man.

He means the choice, with the acts. And he calls him "old," on purpose to show his deformity, and hideousness, and imbecility; and "new," as if to say, Do not expect that it will be with this one even as with the others, but the reverse: for ever as he farther advances, he hastens not on to old age, but to a youthfulness greater than the preceding.

+ Verse 11

With him, there is no difference admitted either of nation, or of rank, or of ancestry, seeing he has nothing of externals, nor needs them.

If you have only this "man," you wilt obtain the same things with the others that have him.

"But Christ," he says, "is all, and in all": Christ will be all things to you, both rank, and descent, "and" Himself" in you all." Or he says another thing, to wit, that you all are becomes one in Christ, being His Body.

+ Verse 12

He shows the easiness of virtue, so that they might both possess it continually, and use it as the greatest ornament.

"A heart of compassion." He said not "mercy," but with greater emphasis used the two words. And he said not, that it should be as towards brethren, but, as fathers towards children.

+ Verse 13

Great is the example ! and thus he always does; he exhorts them after Christ.

+ Verse 14

Now what he wishes to say is this; that there is not profit in those things, for all those things fall asunder, except they be done with love; this it is which clenches them all together; whatsoever good thing it be you mentions, if love be always, it is nothing, it melts away.

+ Verse 15

"The peace of God." This is that which is fixed and steadfast. If on man's account indeed you has peace, it quickly comes to dissolution, but if on God's account, never.

Let not anger, he says, act as umpire, let not contentiousness, let not human peace, for human comes of avenging, of suffering no dreadful ill. But not this do I intend, he says, but that which He Himself left.

Because of peace we are one body, and because we are one body, we are at peace.

And He well added, "And you be thankful." For this is to be thankful, and very effectively, to deal with his fellow-servants as God does with himself, to submit himself to the Master, to obey; to express his gratitude for all things, even though one insult him, or beat him.

+ Verse 15

"And you be thankful," he says. For this is what he everywhere especially seeks; the chiefest of good things. Give we thanks then in all things; whatever may have happened; for this is thankfulness.

+ Verse 15

Nothing is holier than tongue, which in evils gives thanks to god; truly in no respect does it fall short of that of martyrs; both are alike crowned, both this, and they.

+ Verse 16

"Let the word of Christ dwell in you"; that is, the teaching, the doctrines, the exhortation, wherein He says, that the present life is nothing, nor yet its good things. If we know this, we shall yield to do hardships whatever. (Matt. 6:25, &c.) "Let it dwell in you," he says, "richly," not simply dwell, but with great abundance.

And mark the wisdom of this blessed man. He said not, "Let the word of Christ" be in you, simply, but what? "dwell in you," and "richly."

This is the cause of all evils, the not knowing the Scriptures. We go into battle without arms, and how ought we to come off safe?

You throw everything upon us. You alone ought to learn from us, and your wives from you, your children from you; but you leave all to us. Therefore our toil is excessive.

Mark also the considerateness of Paul. Seeing that reading is toilsome, and its irksomeness great, he led them not to histories, but to psalms, that you mightest at once delight your soul with singing, and gently beguile your labours. "Hymns," he says, "and spiritual songs." But now your children will utter songs and dances of Satan, like cooks, and caterers, and musicians; no one knows any psalm, but it seems a thing to be ashamed of even, and a mockery, and a joke. There is the treasury house of all these evil.

Teach him to sing those psalms which are so full of the love of wisdom; as at once concerning chastity, or rather, before all, of not companying with the wicked, immediately with the very beginning of the book.

When he has been instructed out of the Psalms, he will then know hymns also, as a diviner thing. For the Powers above chant hymns, not psalms. For "a hymn," says one, "is not comely in the mouth of a sinner" (Ecclus. 15:9).

What is the hymn of those above? The Faithful know. What say the cherubim above? What say the Angels? "Glory to God in the highest." (Ps cxii 112:5) Therefore after the psalmody come the hymns, as a thing of more perfection.

He means either this, that God because of grace has given us these things; or, with the songs in grace: or, admonishing and teaching one another in grace; or that they had these gifts in grace; or, it is an epexegesis and he means, from the grace of the Spirit.

And even if you be in the market-place, you canst collect yourself, and sing unto God, no one hearing thee. For MOses also in this way prayed, and was heard, for He says, "Why you cries unto Me? (Ex. 14: 15) albeit he said nothing, but cried in thought - wherefore also God alone heard him - with a contrite heart. For it is not forbidden one even when walking to pray in his heart, and to dwell above.

+ Verse 17

For if we thus do, there will be nothing polluted, nothing unclean, wherever Christ is called on. If you eat, if you drink, if you marry, if you trace, do all in the Name of God, that is, calling Him to aid thee: in everything first praying to Him, so take hold of you business. Wouldest you speak somewhat? Set this in front. For this cause we also place in front of our epistles the Name of the Lord. Wheresoever the Name of God is, all is auspicious. For if the names of Consuls make writings sure, much more does the Name of Christ. Or he means this; after God say you and do everything, do not introduce the Angels besides.

Whereonsoever the Name is place, there all things are auspicious. If it casts out devils, if it drives away diseases, much more does it render business easy.

Hear how in the Name of God Abraham sent his servant; David in the Name of God slew Goliath. Marvelous is His Name and great.

Nothing is equal to this Name; marvelous is it everywhere. "You Name," he says, "is ointment poured forth." (Cant. 1:3) He that has uttered it is straightway filled with fragrance. "No man," it is said, "can call Jesus Lord, but by the Holy Ghost." (1 Cor. 12:3) So great things does this Name work. If you have said, In the Name of Father, and Son, and Holy Ghost, with faith, you has accomplished everything. See, how great things you has done!

We have been regenerated by this Name. This if we have, we beam forth; This makes both martyrs and confessors; This let us hold fast as a great gift, that we may live in glory, and be well-pleasing to God, and be counted worthy of the good things promised to them that love Him, through the grace and lovingkindness, &c.

+ Verse 18,19

That is, be subject for God's sake, because this adorns you, he says, not them. For I mean not that subject which due to a master, nor yet that alone which is a nature, but that for God's sake.

For it is possible for one who loves even, to be bitter. What he says then is this. Fight not; for nothing is more bitter than this fighting when it takes place on the part of the husband towards the wife.

From being loved, the wife too becomes loving; and from her being submissive, the husband becomes yielding. And see how in nature also it has been so ordered, that the one should love, the other obey.

Do not therefore, because your wife is subject to thee, act the despot; nor because your husband loves you, you be puffed up. Let neither the husband's love elate the wife, nor the wife's subjection puff up the husband.

Fear not in being a subject; for subjection to one that loves you has no hardship. Fear not in loving, for you hast her yielding. In no other way then could a bond have been.

+ Verse 20

See how he would have us do all not from nature only, but, prior to this, from what is pleasing to God, that we may also have reward.

+ Verse 21

And he said not, "Love your children," for it had been superfluous, seeing that nature itself constrains to this; but what need correction he corrected; that the love should in this case also be the more vehement, because that the obedience is greater.

So that what he discourses with the servants alone is not for their masters' sake, but for their own also, that they may make themselves the objects of tender affection to their masters. But he sets not this forth openly; for so he would doubtless have made them supine.

+ Verse 22

But that none might be pained, he added, "to your masters according to the flesh." Your better part, the soul, is free, he says; your service is for a season. It therefore do you subject.

For hear the prophet saying. "God has scattered the bones of the men-pleasers." (Ps. 53 - 6 Sept.) See then how he spares them, and brings them to order. "But in singleness of heart," he says, "fearing God." For that is not singleness, but hypocrisy, to hold one thing, and act another; to appear one when the master is present, another when he is absent.

+ Verse 23

He desires to have them freed not only from hypocrisy, but also from slothfulness. He has made them instead of slaves free, when they need not the superintendence of their master; for the expression "heartily" means this, "with god will," not with a slavish necessity, but with freedom, and of choice.

+ Verse 25

For what if you are a servant? it is no shame to you. And truly he might have said this to the masters, as he did in the Epistle to the Ephesians. (Eph. 6:9) But here he seems to me to be alluding to the Grecian masters. For, what if he is a Greek and you a Christian? Not the persons but the actions are examined, so that even in this case you oughtest to serve with good will, and heartily.

CHAPTER 3

+ Verse 1

Paul commands *seek the things [which are] above*. "Life on a higher plane" is neither automatic nor easy. It requires constant effort to find and fulfill. We must seek God's will, yes, God Himself.

+ Verse 2

Adam and the adamic nature symbolize that which is earthy; Christ, the last Adam symbolizes the heavenly (1 Cor. 15:45-49). On what are you to fix your mind and heart?

+ Verse 3

Why should we shut our eyes, ears, and hearts to the world? *For you are dead*. The death spoken of here is not physical death. Nor is it separation from God (2:20). Death is separation; in this case separation from the world and its evil. Even more it is the turning of our backs to our pre-Christian ways of living (vv. 7,8).

And your life is hid with Christ in God. What life? Certainly not that of our body or soul. It is our spiritual relationship to God and the outworking of His will in us. Christ is our life (v. 4) and we are to live as He would live (1 John 2:6).

+ Verse 4

This can refer to either of two events: the second coming, or His glorification in the life of the believer. The verb means to disclose, to bring to light (1:2; Rom. 3:21).

Paul's use of *you* shows that his reference is not at all to the second coming, but rather to the exaltation and glorification of the Lord in the life of the believer. *You*, because Paul had already become so Christlike he could say, "Be imitators of me" (1 Cor. 11:1). Now he seeks the same for the Colossians.

+ Verse 5

Don't play with any sin or evil habit, for though dead each has tremendous "resurrection" power. We can destroy them and in a moment bring them back to life.

Fornication, in plain words is prostitution, the junction of two human bodies outside the marriage vow (1 Cor. 6:15-18). It includes, as well, moral uncleanness, adultery (Matt. 5:32), and incest (1 Cor.5:1). *Uncleanness* is moral impurity. It can refer to mixed motives (1 Thess. 2:3). *Passion* denotes violent emotion. Here it is used of abnormal affections (Rom. 1:26) or any affection that comes between us and God. *Evil lust*. Lust indicates basically a strong desire, good or bad (Luke 22:15), though generally used in a bad sense in the New Testament (Rom. 1:24).

In fact, anything that fills our hearts and minds in His place must be called the same.

+ Verse 6

The word indicates God's attitude toward those who continue to rebel, those who refuse His dearest gift.

+ Verse 7

You *walked* refers to the whole pre-Christian experience as one unit. Now we are commanded to walk in such a manner as will glorify our Lord (2:6; 1 John 2:6)

+ Verse 8

Anger is almost synonymous with *wrath* and signifies a strong emotion or passion of the mind (Acts 19:28). While *wrath* is more a disposition of the mind, anger is a fleeting thing, that moment of intense passion mixed with an overpowering desire to take vengeance or to destroy that which gets in our way.

Blasphemy is the act of speaking disrespectfully and irreverently of divine things, the casting of reproach into the face of the Almighty (Matt. 12:31, 32).

+ Verse 9

God is truth (Deut. 32:4) and finds the lie one of the most hateful of sins (Prov. 6:16-19). There is no place for liars in Heaven (Rev. 22:15); and good reason, for Satan is their father (John 8:44).

+ Verse 10

It's one thing to receive new life, and quite another to put it on and live it (Rom. 6:4). This new man is created in righteousness and holiness (v. 12; Eph. 4:24).

Now it is by the measure of the Son of God that we must live (1John 2:6) and by which we will be judged (Eph. 4:13).

+ Verse 11

In the New Testament *Greek* often stands for Gentile (Rom. 1:16).

This sign of the old covenant was taken away by Christ's sacrifice (2:11; Rom. 2:25-19). He broke down this wall of separation and made one new spiritual family without distinctions (2:14; Eph. 2:11-20).

Barbarian to the Greek, like *Gentile* to the Jew, meant all other peoples. Both are roughly equivalent to our "foreigner".

Scythian, the climax of barbarity, of roughness.

Rather Christ is all and in all. Not in the pantheistic sense. He is everything to us and for us: Creator, Saviour, Brother, Intercessor, Goal. We have no need to seek anyone else.

+ Verse 12

These organs were considered to be the seat of the deepest passions and affections.

+ Verse 13

He paid a terrible price for our forgiveness, none of which was forced upon Him. He did it out of love.

He paid the full price of the "complaint" that God had against us. He wiped out the record and restored us to right standing with God. Now we are asked by Paul to forgive others in the same manner: so also you.

+ Verse 14

Which is the bond of perfection. Love holds all the graces together in the new man and draws the Christian through them on to perfection. The word translated "bond" is the same as in 2:19; Ephesians 4:3; Acts 8:23, and means "hold together with chains." So great is love that without it the other graces become hollow mockery.

Not only are you to let peace in, but to let it *rule your hearts*. Peace must be predominant in our nature, it must preside over our daily struggle, and must govern our hearts as we seek the solutions to our problems.

+ Verse 16

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly is the ninth (3:1,2,5,9,12,13,15); and last command on the development of the Christian personality.

Paul states three ways in which we can teach and warn others: *by means of psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs*. The first refers to sacred songs, especially those of the Old Testament. The second refers to songs of praise and worship to God (Acts 16:25; Heb. 2:12). The last is the ordinary word for song.

To God the beauty consists in whether or not the Singing comes from the heart.

+ Verse 17

In the name of means "to the glory of" (John 14:13).

Rejoicing and gratitude to God form a way that we can walk worthy of Christ (1:12).

Aside from Jesus we have no access to God, not even to thank Him.

+ Verse 18

This is one that American Christian women generally shy away from and that their husbands grasp. The men, however, have no right to force their wives to be obedient; for the submission required is not that of wither the child or the slave (vv. 20:22). Instead, it is a voluntary obedience. The wife is to subordinate herself.

Just like a two-headed person, a two-headed family cannot exist long. The stresses and strains are too many, divorce too easy. The phrase "in the Lord" is not a limitation of their obedience to the things of God. Instead, their submission is to be worthy of the Lord and glorify Him (v. 17).

+ Verse 19

Often the wife's natural inclination to be submissive is frustrated by the husband's failure to comply with this verse.

Christ loved us so much He gave His life for His Bride. So the husband is to love his wife as himself (Eph. 5:28,29), and even more than himself.

He who loves his wife in that manner is not going to be harsh or bitter toward her. All such would be inconsistent with love.

+ Verse 20

Here the command is to listen, to accept submissively, and to obey (Acts 12:13; 6:7; Matt. 8:27). Nor are we to obey grudgingly. Rather, God desires that each should render voluntary and loving obedience to his parents.

+ Verse 21

In ancient society the father was unquestionably head of the home, and hence, the only one apt to be guilty of breaking this command.

Provoke not your children, that is, don't over-irritate or exasperate them. Don't force them to drastic action. Instead of nagging, the father's attitude is to be similar to that demanded in verse 19. Treat them as human beings, respect their ideas, and don't expect unreasonable things from them.

Punishment is to teach and develop the character of the child, not to break him or cause him, to lose confidence and respect for his parents.

+ Verse 22

But the control and influence of our earthly masters or employers is limited to this physical life. They cannot touch our souls except we let them (Luke 12:4,5).

Men pleasers are those who have no interest in the job itself. Their aim is to see that their work is noticed and at the same time to get by with as little as possible.

+ Verse 23

Soul is almost synonymous with *heart* (v. 22) and refers to the innermost urges and desires of our being.

Some man may be our boss or judge today and tomorrow, but God is ever on the throne, and He it is to whom we are responsible (v. 24).

+ Verse 25

God is impartial. Sin is sin, even when committed by the believer (Heb. 12:28, 29).

CHAPTER 4

+ Verse 1

What is "just"? What is "equal"? To place them in plenty of everything, and not allow them to stand in need of others, but to recompense them for their labor. For, because I have said that they have their reward from God, do not you therefore deprive them of it. And in another place he says, "forbearing threatening" (Eph 6:9), wishing to make them more gentle; for those were perfect men; that is, "with what you measure mete, it shall be measured unto you." (Matt. 7:2)

+ Verse 2

For the devil knows, he knows, how great a good prayer is; therefore he presses heavily. And Paul also knows how careless many are when they pray, wherefore he says, "continue" in prayer, as of somewhat laborious, "watching therein with thanksgiving."

For thus is the custom of the Saints to pray, and to give thanks for the common benefits of all.

+ Verse 3

Wonderful! The great athlete said not "that I may be freed from my bonds," but being in bonds he exhorted others; and exhorted them for a great object, that himself might get boldness in speaking. Both the two are great, both the quality of the person, and of the thing. Wonderful! how great is the dignity!

+ Verse 4

His bonds display, not obscure him... Yes, my bonds give me the greater boldness; but I pray for God's furtherance, for I have heard the voice of Christ saying, "When they deliver you up, be not anxious how or what you shall speak." (Matt 10:19)

A prisoner is in fear, when there is nothing beyond hounds: but one that despise death how should he be bound? They did the same as if they had put in bonds the shadow of Paul, and had gagged its mouth.

Admirable! how great is the wisdom of Paul! Observe, he does not put everything into his Epistles, but only things necessary and urgent. In the first place, being desirous of not drawing them out to a length; and secondly, to make his messenger more respected, by his having also somewhat to relate; thirdly, showing his own affection towards him; for he would not else have entrusted these communications to him.

+ Verse 8

Here he shows his great love, seeing that for this purpose he sent him, and this was the cause of his journey; and so when writing to the Therssalonians, he said, "Wherefore when we could no longer forbear, we thought it good to left behind at Athens alone, and sent Timothy our brother." (1Thess. 3:1,2) And to the Ephesians he sends this very same person, and for the very same cause, "That he might know your estate, and comfort your hearts." (Eph 6: 21,22) See what he says, not "that you might know my estate," but "that I might know yours." So in no place does he mention what is his own. He shows that they were in trials too, by the expression, "Comfort your hearts."

+ Verse 9

And he adds too the praise of their city, that they might not only not be ashamed, but even pride themselves on him.

+ Verse 10

Nothing can surpass this praise. This is he that was brought up from Jerusalem with him. This man has said a greater thing than the prophets; for they call themselves "strangers and foreigners," but this one calls himself even a prisoner. Just like a prisoner of war he was dragged up and down, and lay at every one's will to suffer evil of them yes rather worse even than prisoners.

+ Verse 11

This man was probably a Corinthian

"Fellow-workers," he says, "unto the kingdom of God." So that being partakers of the trials, they become partakers of the kingdom.

+ Verse 9

Paul calls a slave brother: with reason; seeing that he styles himself the servant of the faithful. (2Cor 4:5) Bring we down all of us our pride, tread we under foot our boastfulness.

+ Verse 12

In the commencement of this Epistle also, he commended this man for his love; for even to praise is a sign of love; thus in the beginning he said, "Who also declared unto us your love in the Spirit." (Col 1:8) To pray for one is also a sign of love, and causes love again.

And he says, "always striving for you in prayers." He said not simply "praying," but "striving," trembling and fearing.

+ Verse 15

See how he comments, and knits them together with one another, not by salutation only, but also by interchanging his Epistles. Then again he pays a compliment by addressing him individually. And this he does not without a reason, but in order to lead the others also to emulate his zeal. For it is not a small thing not to be numbered with the rest. Mark further how he shows the man to be great, seeing his house was a church.

+ Verse 16

Some say that this is not Paul's to them, but theirs to Paul, for he said not that to the Laodiceans, but that written "from Laodicea."

+ Verse 17

Wherefore does he not write to him? Perhaps he needed it not, but only a bare reminding, so as to be more diligent.

+ Verse 18

This is a proof of their sincerity and affection; that they both looked at his handwriting, and that with emotion.

"Remember my bonds. Grace be with you. Amen." He has released their terror. For although their teacher be in bonds, yet "grace" releases him. This too is of grace, the granting him to be put in bonds. For hear Luke saying, The Apostles returned "from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonour for the Name." (Act. 5: 41)

Art you lifted up because of your good deeds? Remember Paul's bonds, that you has suffered nought of that kind, and you wilt be lighted up no more.

Remember Paul's bonds, and you wilt see who unreasonable it is, that whilst he was in perils, you shouldest be in delights. Again, is your heart set upon self-indulgence? Picture to your mind Paul's prison-house; you art his disciple, his fellow-soldier. How is it reasonable , that you fellow-soldeir should be in bonds, and you in luxury?

TEARS

Think of his tears: a three year space, night and day, he ceased not to weep. (Act. 20:31) With this adorning deck you cheek; these tears do make it bright. I say not, that you weep for other, (I wish indeed it could be even so, but this is too high for you,) but for your own sins I advise you to of this.

"Remember my tears" (Act 20:31), he says, as here "bond."

What fountain wilt you compare to these tears? that in Paradise, which waters the whole earth? But you wilt have mentioned nothing like it. For this fount of tears watered souls, not earth. If one were to show us Paul bathed in tears, and groaning, would not this be better far to see, than countless choirs gayly crowned?

This makes the eyes of the soul more beauteous, it curbes the belly: it fillies with the love of wisdom, with much sympathy: and it is able to soften even a soul of adamant. With these tears the Church is watered, with these would are planted; yes, though there be fir sensible and substantial, yet can these tears quench it; these tears quench the fiery darts of the wicked one.

Remember we then these tears of his, and we shall laugh to scorn all present things. These tears did Christ pronounce blessed, saying, "Blessed are they that mourn, and blessed are they that weep, for they shall laugh." (Matt. 5:4; Luke 6:21) Such tears did Isaiah too, and Jeremiah weep; and the former said, "Leave me alone, I will weep bitterly" (Isa 22:4, Sept.) : and the latter, "Who will give my hear water, and mine eyes fountains of tears?" (Jer. 9:1); as though the natural fount were not enough.

Nothing is sweeter than these tears; sweeter are they than any laughter. They that mourn, know how great consolation it possesses. Let us not think this a thing to be deprecated, but one to be even exceedingly prayed for; not that others may sin, but that, when they sin, we may be heart-broken for them.

These eyes saw Paradise, saw the third heaven: But I count not them so blessed because of this sight, as because of those tears, through which they saw Christ. Blessed, indeed, was that sight; for he himself even glories in it, saying, "Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? (1 Cor 9:1); but more blessed so to weep.

So did Christ also, that happily they might reverence His tears.

Remember we these tears: thus let us bring up our daughter, thus our sons; weeping when we see them in evil.

So the tears are not painful: yes, the tears that flow from such sorrow are even better far than those due to worldly pleasure. Hear the Prophet saying, "The Lord has heard the voice of my weeping, he has heard the voice of my supplication." (Ps. 6:8).

When we entreat a sinning brother, we ought to weep, grieving and groaning; when we exhort any one, and he gives us no heed, but goes on perishing, we ought to weep. These are the tears of heavenly wisdom. When however one is in poverty, or bodily disease, or dead, not so; for these are not things worthy of tears.

Nothing does so wipe out sins, as tears.

Nothing is sweeter than tearful eyes. For this is the noblest member we have, and the most beautiful, and the sould's own. And therefore we are so bowed therewith, as though we saw the soul itself lamenting.

CHAPTER 4

+ Verse 2

Paul has given us his own example in 1:3,9. We must be intently engaged seeking blessings from God.

Rather, much praying enables us to search out the plan of God and commune with Him. It also helps develop knowledge of Him, whom to know is eternal life. Prayer not only changes "things" but also "us."

+ Verse 3

Paul did not ask them to pray for his burdens to be eased, nor that he be released from prison (v. 18). Much less did he seek that his life should be spared (Phil. 4:11). In that dark hour his only thought was *that God should open a door of the word to us*

The "mystery of Christ" is the "word" Paul sought to proclaim. As in 1:5 and 2:16 it refers to the Gospel message in general and the person of Christ in particular. Here Paul is referring specially to the revealed truth about our Lord Jesus, His person and work as the Messiah of God. Paul's only prayer was that he might make Him known.

+ Verse 5

Walk in wisdom is equivalent to walk in him (2:6).

+ Verse 7

Timothy is excluded because he is listed in 1:1 as co-author with Paul if the whole epistle.

+ Verse 8

Tychicus was honored and trusted by Paul, not only to carry the letter and report on the condition of things in Rome, but also to settle and comfort their hearts.

+ Verse 9

Onesimus was a runaway slave on the way back to his master, Philemon. Conversion changes him from a useless slave into a faithful and beloved brother. In order to exalt him in the eyes of his master and the local church Paul uses almost the same description that he does of Tychicus (v. 7) and Epaphras (1:7).

Certainly it does not mean that he was a member of the Colossian church. He heaped upon Onesimus the honour of being co- ambassador with Tychicus to the church.

+ Verse 10

This is *not* the same Aristarchus which is mentioned in the Book of Acts (19:29; 20:4; 27:2). That one was a Macedonian from Thessalonica; this one is a Jew (v. 11). Whether he accompanied Paul to Rome or was carried there prisoner at a different time, we do not know. At any rate, from a cell in Rome he sends his expression of good wishes to the brethren in Colosse.

Mark came from a well-to-do Jewish family in Jerusalem and early came in contact with the Gospel (Acts 12:5,12). As a young man, he went as attendant to Paul and Barnabas on their first Journey, but soon dropped out (Acts 12:25; 13:5,13). Though finally reconciled to Mark (2 Tim. 4:11), Paul split away from Barnabas over him (Acts 15:37).

+ Verse 11

Not the same Justus mentioned in Acts 1:23.

There were three Jewish Christians (Aristarchus, Mark, and Justus) and three Gentile Christians (Epaphras, Luke, and Demas). Timothy, who was a mixture is mentioned in 1:1 as co-author.

+ Verse 13

The three cities (Colosse, Laodicea, and Hierapolis) were situated very close together and could all be visited in the course of one day's travel. That this letter was directed both to the Colossians and to the Laodiceans (4:16) but not to those in Hierapolis indicates that the conditions prevailing in these two cities were not yet present there.

+ Verse 15

Paul took an active interest in these churches, even though he did not know the majority of the believers (2:1).

Who was Nympha? Where did she live? It is possible that the "church in her house" is the same as that of Hierapolis, since that town is not mentioned here (v.13).

It was common in New Testament times for a richer brother to open his bigger house for meetings.

John's letter to the Laodiceans, written some thirty years later, shows that church in the final stages of apostasy (Rev. 3:14-19).

+ Verse 16

Many have left that since the words "in Ephesus" are omitted by the best manuscript from Ephesians 1:1 that Ephesians is the lost letter to the Laodiceans.

+ Verse 17

Archippus was not in Colosse, but rather was a minister to the church in Philemon's house (Phil. 2). Yet he was close enough for them to convey a message to him.

+ Verse 18

Actually means his signature. After discovering that others had written letters in his name (2 Thess. 2:2), Paul took up the custom of signing them himself (2 Thess. 3:17).

While we should not seek persecution, we should welcome it as an opportunity to serve and glorify Him.