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COMMENTARY

COMMENTARY ON
COLOSSIANS

by Adam Clarke.

*“Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without
which no man shall see the Lord” Heb 12:14*

Spreading Scriptural Holiness to the World

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A COMMENTARY AND CRITICAL NOTES

ON THE

HOLY BIBLE

OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS

DESIGNED AS A HELP TO A BETTER UNDERSTANDING
OF THE SACRED WRITINGS

BY ADAM CLARKE, LL.D., F.S.A., &c.

A NEW EDITION, WITH THE
AUTHOR'S FINAL CORRECTIONS

For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.—Rom. 15:4.

Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Old and New Testaments
A derivative of Adam Clarke's Commentary for the Online Bible

produced by

Sulu D. Kelley
1690 Old Harmony Dr.
Concord, NC 28027-8031
(704) 782-4377

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PREFACE TO THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE COLOSSIANS.

COLOSSE, or rather *Colassa*, (see on ^{<SIOIO>} **Colossians 1:1**.) was a city of Phrygia Pacatiana, now a part of *Natolia*, in Asia Minor, seated on an eminence on the south side of the river Maeander, now *Meinder*, near to the place where the river *Lycas* enters the earth, and begins to run under ground, which course it continues for about three-quarters of a mile, before it emerges and falls into the Maeander. Of this ancient city not much is known: it was situated between Laodicea and Hierapolis, and at an equal distance from either; and to this place Xerxes came in his expedition against Greece.

The government of this city is said to have been *democratic*, and its first magistrate bore the title of *archon* and *prætor*. The Macedonians transferred Colosse to the Persians; and it afterwards passed under the government of the Seleucidæ. After the defeat of Antiochus III., at the battle of Magnesia, it became subject to Eumenes, king of Pergamus: and when Attalus, the last of his successors, bequeathed his dominions to the Romans, this city, with the whole of Phrygia, formed a part of the proconsular province of Asia; which division subsisted till the time of Constantine the Great. After the time of this emperor, Phrygia was divided into Phrygia Pacatiana, and Phrygia Salutaris: and Colosse was the sixth city of the first division.

The ancient city of Colosse has been extinct for nearly eighteen hundred years; for about the tenth year of the Emperor Nero, about a year after the writing of this epistle, not only Colosse, but Laodicea and Hierapolis, were destroyed by an earthquake, according to Eusebius; and the city which was raised in the place of the former was called *Chonos* or *Konos*, which name it now bears. See New Encyclopedia. On modern maps Konos is situated about twenty miles NE. of *Degnizlu*, in lat. about 38° north, and in long. 29° 40' east of London.

The epistle to this city appears to have been written about the same time with that to the Philippians, viz. towards the end of the year 62, and in the ninth of the Emperor Nero.

That the two epistles were written about the same time is rendered probable by the following circumstance: In the Epistle to the Philippians, ^{<50619>}**Philippians 2:19**, St. Paul purposes to send Timothy to Philippi, who was then with him at Rome, that he might know their state. As Timothy joins with the apostle in the salutation at the beginning of *this* epistle, it is evident that he was still at Rome, and had not yet been sent to Philippi; and as St. Paul wrote the former epistle nearly at the close of his first imprisonment at Rome, the two epistles must have been written within a short space of each other. See the *preface* to the Epistle to the Philippians.

When, or by whom, Christianity was first preached at Colosse, and a Church founded there, we cannot tell; but it is most likely that it was by St. Paul himself, and during the three years in which he dwelt at Ephesus; for he had then employed himself with such zeal and diligence that we are told, ^{<41910>}**Acts 19:10**: “That all they that dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks.” And that Paul preached in *Phrygia*, the district in which this city was situated, we learn from ^{<41616>}**Acts 16:6**: “Now when they had gone through *Phrygia* and the region of Galatia;” and at another time we find that “he went over all the country of Galatia and *Phrygia* in order, strengthening all the disciples;” ^{<41823>}**Acts 18:23**. It has, however, been argued, from ^{<51001>}**Colossians 2:1**, of this epistle, that Paul had never been at Colosse; for he there says: *I would that ye knew what great conflict I have for you, and for them at Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh*. But the consequence drawn from these words does not absolutely follow. Dr. Lardner alleges a variety of considerations which induced him to believe that the Churches of Colosse and Laodicea were founded by St. Paul, viz.

1. That the apostle was twice in Phrygia, in which were Colosse, Laodicea, and Hierapolis. See the places above quoted from the *Acts* of the Apostles.
2. That he does in effect, or even expressly, say that he had dispensed the Gospel to the Colossians, ^{<51021>}**Colossians 1:21-25**. See particularly the 23d, 24th, and 25th verses.
3. From several passages in the epistle it appears that the apostle does not speak as to *strangers*, but to acquaintances, disciples, and converts. Some think that Epaphras, who is called their *apostle*, ^{<510107>}**Colossians 1:7**, was the first who planted Christianity among the Colossians.

But the arguments drawn from ~~<410>~~ **Acts 16:6; 18:23**, referred to above, are quite invalidated, if we allow the opinion of some learned men, among whom are *Suidas*, *Calepine*, *Munster*, and others, that the *Colossus*, a gigantic statue at Rhodes, gave its own name to the *people* among whom it stood; for the ancient poets call the inhabitants of the island of Rhodes, *Colossians*; and hence they thought that the *Colossians*, to whom St. Paul directs this epistle, were the *inhabitants* of *Rhodes*. This opinion, however, is not generally adopted.

From a great similarity in the doctrine and phraseology of this epistle to that written to the Ephesians, this to the Colossians has been considered an epitome of the former, as the Epistle to the Galatians has been considered an abstract of that to the Romans. See the concluding observations on the Epistle to the Galatians; and the notes on ~~<51004>~~ **Colossians 1:4**, of this epistle, and elsewhere.

Whether the *Colossians* to whom the apostle addresses this epistle were Jews or Gentiles, cannot be absolutely determined. It is most probable that they were a *mixture* of both; but that the principal part were converted Jews is most likely. This, indeed, appears to have been the case in most of the Asiatic and Grecian Churches; for there were Jews, at this time, sojourning in almost every part of the Roman empire, which then comprehended the greatest portion of the known world.

The *language* of this epistle is bold and energetic, the *sentiments* are grand, and the *conceptions* vigorous and majestic. The *phraseology* is in many places *Jewish*; and the reason is obvious: the apostle had to explain subjects which never had a name in any other language. The mythology of the Gentiles could not furnish terms to explain the theology of the Jews; much less, the more refined and spiritual system of Christianity.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE COLOSSIANS.

Chronological Notes relative to this Epistle.

- Usherian year of the world, 4066.
- Alexandrian era of the world, 5564.
- Antiochian era of the world, 5554.
- Constantinopolitan era of the world, 5570.
- Year of the Eusebian epocha of the Creation, 4290.
- Year of the Julian period, 4772.
- Year of the minor Jewish era of the world, 3822.
- Year of the Greater Rabbinical era of the world, 4421.
- Year from the Flood, according to Archbishop Usher, and the English Bible, 2410.
- Year of the Cali yuga, or Indian era of the Deluge, 3164.
- Year of the era of Iphitus, or since the first commencement of the Olympic games, 1002.
- Year of the Nabonassarean era, 809.
- Year of the era of the Seleucidæ, 374.
- Year of the Spanish era, 100.
- Year of the Actiac or Actian era, 93.
- Year from the birth of Christ, 66.
- Year of the vulgar era of Christ's nativity, 62.
- Year from the building of Rome, according to Varro, 814.
- Year of the CCXth Olympiad, 2.
- Jesus, high priest of the Jews.
- Common Golden Number, 6.
- Jewish Golden Number, 3.
- Year of the Solar Cycle, 15.
- Dominical Letter, C.
- Jewish Passover, April 10th.
- Easter Sunday, April 11th.

- Ephact, or the moon's age on the 22d of March, or the Xth of the Calends of April, 25.
- Year of the reign of Nero. Cæsar, the sixth emperor of the Romans, 9.
- In the first year of Albinus, governor of the Jews.
- Year of Vologesus, king of the Parthians, 12.
- Year of Domitius Corbulo, governor of Syria, 3.
- Roman Consuls, P. Marius Celsus, and L. Asinius Gallus, from Jan. 1st to July 1st; and L. Annæus Seneca, the philosopher, and Trebellius Maximus, for the remainder of the year.

CHAPTER 1.

The salutation of Paul and Timothy to the Church at Colosse, 1, 2. They give thanks to God for the good estate of that Church, and the wonderful progress of the Gospel in every place, 3-6; having received particulars of their state from Epaphroditus, which not only excited their gratitude, but led them to pray to God that they might walk worthy of the Gospel; and they give thanks to Him who had made them meet for an inheritance among the saints in light, 7-12. This state is described as a deliverance from the power of darkness, and being brought into the kingdom of God's dear Son, 13, 14. The glorious character of Jesus Christ, and what He has done for mankind, 15-20. The salvation which the Colossians had received, and of which the apostle had been the minister and dispenser, 21-26. The sum and substance of the apostle's preaching, and the manner in which he executed his ministry, 27-29.

NOTES ON CHAP. 1.

Verse 1. Paul, an apostle-by the will of God] As the word αποστολος, *apostle*, signifies *one sent*, an envoy or messenger, any person or persons may be the *senders*: but the word is particularly restrained to the messengers of the everlasting Gospel, sent immediately from God himself; and this is what St. Paul particularly remarks here when he calls himself an *apostle by the will of God*; signifying that he had derived his commission from an express volition or purpose of the Almighty.

And Timotheus] Though Timothy is here joined in the salutation, yet he has never been understood as having any part in composing this epistle. He has been considered as the amanuensis or scribe of the apostle.

Verse 2. To the saints] Those who professed Christianity. See Clarke's note on "~~4010~~Ephesians 1:1".

Which are at Colosse] Instead of *εν κολοσσαϊς*, at Colosse, or among the Colossians, ABC, and many other excellent MSS., with both the *Syriac, Coptic, Slavonic, Origen, Gregory Nyssen, Amphilochus, Theodoret, Damascenus, Theophylact, and others*, read *εν κολασσαϊς* in *Colassa*, or among the *Colassians*; and this is most probably the true reading. That this city perished by an earthquake, a short time after the date of this epistle, we have the testimony of Eusebius. That which at present is supposed to occupy the site of this ancient city is called *Konos*. For other particulars see the *preface* to this epistle. "~~5101~~Colossians 1:1"

Grace be unto you] See Clarke on "~~45107~~Romans 1:7".

And the Lord Jesus Christ.] This clause is omitted by many MSS., several *versions*, and some of the *fathers*. Griesbach has left it out of the text, not, in my opinion, on sufficient evidence.

Verse 3. We give thanks to God] Who is the author of all good; and from whom the *grace*, which has produced your conversion, has sprung by his mission of Christ Jesus. See the note on "~~4015~~Ephesians 1:15, 16".

Verse 4. Since we heard of your faith] This is very similar to "~~4015~~Ephesians 1:15". And it is certain that the apostle seems to have considered the Church at Ephesus, and that at Colassa to have been nearly in the same state, as the two epistles are very similar in their doctrine and phraseology.

Verse 6. Which is come unto you] The doctrine of the Gospel is represented as a *traveller*, whose object it is to visit the whole habitable earth; and, having commenced his journey in Judea, had proceeded through Syria and through different parts of Asia Minor, and had lately arrived at their city, every where proclaiming glad tidings of great joy to all people.

As it is in all the world] So rapid is this *traveller* in his course, that he had already gone nearly through the whole of the countries under the Roman

dominion; and will travel on till he has proclaimed his message to every people, and kindred, and nation, and tongue.

In the beginning of the apostolic age, the word of the Lord had certainly *free course*, did *run* and was *glorified*. Since that time the population of the earth has increased greatly; and, to follow the metaphor, the *traveller* still continues in his great journey. It is, the glory of the present day that, by means of the *British and Foreign Bible Society*, Bibles are multiplied in all the languages of Europe; and by means of the Christian missionaries, *Carey, Marshman, and Ward*, whose zeal, constancy, and ability, have been rarely equalled, and perhaps never surpassed, the sacred writings have been, in the compass of a few years, translated into most of the written languages of India, in which they were not previously extant. In this labour they have been ably seconded by the Rev. Henry Martyn, one of the East India Company's chaplains, who was taken to his great reward just when he had *completed* a pure and accurate version of the New Testament into *Persian*. The Rev. R. Morrison, at Canton, has had the honour to present the whole of the New Testament, in Chinese, to the immense population of that greatest empire of the earth. May that dark people receive it, and walk in the light of the Lord! And, by means of the *Wesleyan missionaries*, the sacred writings have been printed and widely circulated in the Singhalese and Indo-Portuguese, through the whole of the island of Ceylon, and the pure word of the Gospel has been preached there, and also on the whole continent of India, to the conversion of multitudes. Let every reader pray that all these noble attempts may be crowned with unlimited success, till the earth is filled both with the knowledge and glory of the Lord. *Talia secla currite!* Amen.

And bringeth forth fruit] Wherever the pure Gospel of Christ is preached, it is the *seed of the kingdom*, and must be fruitful in all those who receive it by faith, in simplicity of heart.

After *καρποφοροουμενον*, *bringeth forth fruit*, ABCD*EFG, many others, both the Syriac, Erpen's *Arabic*, the *Coptic*, *Sahidic*, *Æthiopic*, *Armenian*, *Slavonic*, *Vulgate*, and *Itala*, together with many of the *fathers*, add *καυ αυξανουμενον*, and *increaseth*. It had not only *brought forth fruit*, but was *multiplied* its own kind; every fruit containing *seed*, and every seed producing thirty, sixty, or a hundredfold. This reading is very important, and is undoubtedly *genuine*.

The grace of God in truth] Ye were *fruitful*, and went on *increasing* in the salvation of God, from the time that ye heard and acknowledged this doctrine to be of God, to spring from the grace or *benevolence* of God; and received it in truth, sincerely and uprightly, as his greatest gift to man.

Verse 7. As ye also learned of Epaphras—who is for you] Who this Epaphras was we cannot tell; only it is likely that he was a Colossian, and became, by the call and grace of Christ, a deacon of this Church, faithfully labouring with the apostle, to promote its best interests. Some think that he is the same with *Epaphroditus*, *Epaphras* being a contraction of that name, as *Demas* is of *Demetrius*; and it is remarkable that one of the *Slavonic* versions has *Epaphroditus* in this place. That he was a Colossian is evident from ^{<510412>}**Colossians 4:12:** *Epaphras, who is one of you, ο εξ υμων.* some think that he was the first who preached the Gospel among this people, and hence called an *apostle*. He was raised up among themselves to be their minister in the absence of the apostle, and he showed himself to be worthy of this calling by a faithful discharge of his ministry, and by *labouring fervently for them all*, and pressing them forward, that *they might stand perfect and complete in all the will of God.*

Verse 8. Your love in the Spirit.] *So we preached, and so ye believed.* The heavenly flame in the heart of this minister communicated itself to those who heard him; it was *like priest like people*. They enjoyed a spiritual, energetic ministry, and they were a *spiritual* people; they had a *loving spirit*, and *love* through the *Spirit* of God which dwelt in them. And of this love of theirs in the Spirit, and particularly towards the apostle, Epaphras gave full proof, not only by describing to the apostle the affection they felt for him, but in presenting to him those *supplies* which their love to him caused them to furnish.

Verse 9. For this cause] See on ^{<40115>}**Ephesians 1:15, 16**, where the same sentiment occurs.

That ye might be filled] Nothing could satisfy the apostle, either for himself or his hearers, but the fulness of the blessing of the Gospel of peace. The Colossians had knowledge, but they must have *more*; it is their privilege to be filled with it. As the bright shining of the *sun* in the firmament of heaven fills the whole world with light and heat, so the light of the Sun of righteousness is to illuminate their whole souls, and fill them with Divine splendour, so that they might know *the will of God, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding*; in a word, that they might have such

a knowledge of Divine things as the Spirit of truth can teach to the soul of man.

Verse 10. That ye might walk worthy of the Lord] Suitably to your Christian profession, exemplifying its holy doctrines by a holy and useful life. See Clarke's notes on "~~<800>~~Ephesians 4:1"; and on "~~<50127>~~Philippians 1:27".

Unto all pleasing] Doing every thing in the best *manner*, in the most proper *time*, and in a becoming *spirit*. Even a good work may be marred and rendered fruitless by being done *improperly*, out of *season*, or in a *temper* of mind that grieves the Holy Spirit.

Being fruitful in every good work] See Clarke on "~~<51006>~~Colossians 1:6".

St. Paul exhorts the Christians at Colosse, 1. To *walk*-to be active in their Christian calling. 2. *To walk worthily*-suitably to the dignity of that calling, and to the purity of that God who had called them into this state of salvation. 3. To do every thing *unto all pleasing*; that God might be pleased with the *manner*, the *time*, the *motive*, *disposition*, *design*, and *object* of every act. 4. That they should be *fruitful*; mere *harmlessness* would not be sufficient; as God had sown good seed, he expected good fruit. 5. That *every work* should be *good*; they must not be fruitful in some works and fruitless in others. 6. That they should increase in religious knowledge as time rolled on, knowing, by genuine Christian *experience*, more of God, of his love, and of his peace, day by day.

Verse 11. Strengthened with all might] That they might be able to walk worthy of the Lord, bring forth fruit, &c. See Clarke's notes on "~~<4013>~~Ephesians 3:13", &c.

According to his glorious power] According to that sufficiency of strength which may be expected from him who has all power both in the heavens and in the earth.

Unto all patience] Relieving, hoping, and enduring all things.

With joyfulness] Feeling the continual testimony that ye please God, which will be a spring of perpetual comfort. See Clarke's notes on "~~<8002>~~Ephesians 4:2".

Verse 12. Giving thanks unto the Father] Knowing that ye have nothing but what ye have received from his mere mercy, and that in point of *merit* ye can never *claim* any thing from him.

Which hath made us meet] ἱκανωσαντι. Who has *qualified* us to be partakers, &c. Instead of ἱκανωσαντι, some MSS. and versions have καλεσαντι, *called*; and B (the Codex Vaticanus) has both readings. *Giving thanks unto the Father, who hath called and qualified us to be partakers.*

Of the inheritance] εις την μεριδα του κληρου. A plain allusion to the division of the promised land by *lot* among the different families of the twelve Israelitish tribes. The κληρος was the *lot* or *inheritance* belonging to the *tribe*; the μερις was the *portion* in that *lot* which belonged to each *family* of that tribe. This was a type of the kingdom of God, in which *portions* of eternal blessedness are dispensed to the genuine Israelites; to them who have the circumcision of the heart by the Spirit, whose praise is of God, and not of man.

Of the saints in light] *Light*, in the sacred writings, is used to express knowledge, *felicity*, purity, comfort, and joy of the most substantial kind; here it is put to point out the state of glory at the right hand of God. As in Egypt, while the judgments of God were upon the land, there was a *darkness* which might be felt yet all the Israelites had *light* in their dwellings; so in this world, while the *darkness* and wretchedness occasioned by sin remain, the disciples of Christ are light in the Lord, walk as children of the *light* and of the *day*, have in them no occasion of *stumbling*, and are on their way to the *ineffable light* at the right hand of God. Some think there is an allusion here to the *Eleusinian mysteries*, celebrated in deep caves and *darkness* in honour of Ceres; but I have already, in the notes to the Epistle to the Ephesians, expressed my doubts that the apostle has ever condescended to use such a simile. The phraseology of the text is frequent through various parts of the sacred writings, where it is most obvious that no such allusion could possibly be intended.

Verse 13. Delivered us from the power of darkness] Darkness is here *personified*, and is represented as having εξουσια, *power, authority*, and *sway*; all Jews and Gentiles, which had not embraced the Gospel, being under this authority and power. And the apostle intimates here that nothing

less than the power of God can redeem a man from this darkness, or prince of darkness, who, by means of sin and unbelief, keeps men in ignorance, vice, and misery.

Translated us into the kingdom, &c.] He has thoroughly changed our state, brought us out of the dark region of vice and impiety, and placed us in the kingdom under the government of *his dear Son*, υἱοῦ τῆς ἀγάπης αὐτοῦ, *the Son of his love*; the person whom, in his infinite love, he has given to make an atonement for the sin of the world.

Verse 14. In whom we have redemption] Who has paid down the redemption price, even his own blood, that our sins might be cancelled, and we made fit to be partakers of the inheritance among the saints in light.

The clause, δια τοῦ αἵματος αὐτοῦ, *Through his blood*, is omitted by ABCDEFG, and by most others of weight and importance; by the *Syriac, Arabic* of Erpen, *Coptic, Æthiopic, Sahidic*, some copies of the *Vulgate* and by the *Itala*; and by most of the *Greek fathers*. Griesbach has left it out of the text. It is likely that the reading here is *not genuine*; yet that we have redemption any other way than through the sacrifice of Christ, the Scriptures declare not. The same phrase is used ^{<BOIOT>} **Ephesians 1:7**, where there is no *various* reading in any of the MSS., *versions*, or *fathers*.

The forgiveness of sins] ἀφεσιν τῶν ἀμαρτιῶν. *The taking away of sins*; all the *power, guilt, and infection* of sin. All sin of every kind, with all its influence and consequences.

Verse 15. Who is the image of the invisible God] The counterpart of God Almighty, and if the *image* of the *invisible* God, consequently nothing that *appeared* in him could be that *image*; for if it could be *visible* in the *Son*, it could also be *visible* in the *Father*; but if the *Father* be *invisible*, consequently his *image* in the *Son* must be *invisible* also. This is that *form of God* of which he divested himself; the ineffable glory in which he not only did not appear, as to its *splendour* and *accompaniments*, but concealed also its essential nature; that inaccessible light which no man, no created being, can possibly see. This was that Divine nature, the *fulness of the Godhead bodily*, which dwelt in him.

The first-born of every creature] I suppose this phrase to mean the same as that, ^{<BOIOT>} **Philippians 2:9**: *God hath given him a name which is above every name*; he is as *man* at the *head* of all the creation of God; nor can he

with any propriety be considered as a *creature*, having himself created all things, and existed before any thing was made. If it be said that God created *him* first, and that he, by a delegated power from God, created all things, this is most flatly contradicted by the apostle's reasoning in the 16th and 17th verses. {^{<S10116>} **Colossians 1:16, 17**} As the Jews term Jehovah מְלִיכָא בְרִיךְ שֶׁל עוֹלָם, *becoro shel olam, the first-born of all the world, or of all the creation*, to signify his having created or produced all things; (see Wolfius in loc.) so Christ is here termed, and the words which follow in the 16th and 17th {^{<S10116>} **Colossians 1:16, 17**} verses are the proof of this. The phraseology is Jewish; and as they apply it to the supreme Being merely to denote his eternal *pre-existence*, and to point him out as the *cause* of all things; it is most evident that St. Paul uses it in the same way, and illustrates his meaning in the following words, which would be absolutely absurd if we could suppose that by the former he intended to convey any idea of the *inferiority* of Jesus Christ.

Verses 16. & 17. For by him were all things created, &c.] These two verses contain parts of the same subject. I shall endeavour to distinguish the statements of the apostle, and reason from them in such a way as the premises shall appear to justify, without appealing to any other scripture in proof of the doctrine which I suppose these verses to vindicate.

Four things are here asserted: 1. That Jesus Christ is the Creator of the universe; of all things visible and invisible; of all things that had a beginning, whether they exist in time or in eternity. 2. That whatsoever was created was created FOR himself; that he was the sole end of his own work. 3. That he was prior to all creation, to all beings, whether in the visible or invisible world. 4. That he is the preserver and governor of all things; for by him all things consist.

Now, allowing St. Paul to have understood the terms which he used, he must have considered Jesus Christ as being truly and properly *God*.

I. Creation is the proper work of an infinite, unlimited, and unoriginated Being; possessed of all perfections in their highest degrees; capable of knowing, willing, and working infinitely, unlimitedly, and without control: and as creation signifies the production of *being* where all was *absolute nonentity*, so it necessarily implies that the Creator acted *of and from* himself; for as, previously to this creation, there was no being, consequently he could not be actuated by any *motive, reason, or impulse*,

without himself; which would argue there was some being to produce the *motive* or *impulse*, or to *give* the *reason*. Creation, therefore, is the work of him who is *unoriginated*, infinite, unlimited, and eternal. But *Jesus Christ is the Creator of all things*, therefore Jesus Christ must be, according to the plain construction of the apostle's words, truly and properly GOD.

II. As, previously to creation, there was no *being* but God, consequently the great *First Cause* must, in the exertion of his creative energy, have respect to himself alone; for he could no more have respect to that which had *no existence*, than he could be *moved* by *nonexistence*, to produce existence or creation. The Creator, therefore, must make every thing *FOR himself*.

Should it be objected that Christ created *officially* or by *delegation*, I answer: This is impossible; for, as creation requires absolute and unlimited power, or omnipotence, there can be but *one* Creator; because it is impossible that there can be *two* or *more* Omnipotents, Infinites, or Eternals. It is therefore evident that creation cannot be effected *officially*, or by *delegation*, for this would imply a *Being conferring the office*, and *delegating* such *power*; and that the *Being* to whom it was delegated was a *dependent Being*; consequently not *unoriginated* and *eternal*; but this the nature of creation proves to be absurd. 1. The thing being impossible in itself, because no limited being could produce a work that necessarily requires omnipotence. 2. It is impossible, because, if omnipotence be *delegated*, he to whom it is delegated *had it not before*, and he who delegates it *ceases to have it*, and consequently *ceases to be* GOD; and the other to whom it was delegated *becomes God*, because such attributes as those with which he is supposed to be invested are *essential* to the nature of God. On this supposition *God ceases to exist*, though infinite and eternal, and another not naturally *infinite* and *eternal* becomes such; and thus an *infinite* and *eternal Being* ceases to exist, and another infinite and eternal Being is produced in *time*, and has a *beginning*, which is absurd. Therefore, as *Christ* is the *Creator*, he did not create by *delegation*, or in any *official way*.

Again, if he had created by *delegation* or *officially*, it would have been for that *Being who gave him that office*, and delegated to him the requisite power; but the text says that *all things were made BY him and FOR him*,

which is a demonstration that the apostle understood Jesus Christ to be truly and essentially God.

III. As all *creation* necessarily exists in *time*, and had a *commencement*, and there was an *infinite duration* in which it *did not exist*, whatever was *before* or *prior* to that must be *no part of creation*; and the Being who existed prior to creation, *and before all things*-all existence of every kind, must be the unoriginated and eternal God: but St. Paul says, *Jesus Christ was before all things*; ergo, the apostle conceived Jesus Christ to be truly and essentially God.

IV. As every *effect* depends upon its *cause*, and cannot exist without it; so *creation*, which is an *effect* of the *power* and *skill* of the Creator, can only exist and be preserved by a continuance of that energy that first gave it being. Hence, God, as the *Preserver*, is as necessary to the continuance of all things, as God the *Creator* was to their original production. But this *preserving* or *continuing* power is here ascribed to *Christ*, for the apostle says, *And by him do all things consist*; for as all being was derived from him as its *cause*, so all being must *subsist by him*, as the *effect* subsists *by and through* its *cause*. This is another proof that the apostle considered Jesus Christ to be truly and properly God, as he attributes to him the *preservation* of all created things, which property of preservation belongs to God alone; ergo, Jesus Christ is, according to the plain obvious meaning of every expression in this text, truly, properly, independently, and essentially God.

Such are the reasonings to which the simple letter of these two verses necessarily leads me. I own it is possible that I may have misapprehended this awful subject, for *humanum est errare et nescire*; but I am not conscious of the slightest intentional flaw in the argument. Taking, therefore, the apostle as an *uninspired* man, giving *his own view* of the Author of the Christian religion, it appears, beyond all controversy, that himself believed Christ Jesus to be God; but considering him as writing under the *inspiration of the Holy Ghost*, then we have, from the plain grammatical meaning of the words which he has used, the fullest *demonstration* (for the Spirit of God cannot lie) that he who died for our sins and rose again for our justification, and in whose blood we have redemption, was *GOD over all*. And as *God* alone can give salvation to men, and God only can remit sin; hence with the strictest propriety we are commanded to believe on the *Lord Jesus*, with the assurance that we shall

be saved. Glory be to God for this unspeakable gift! See my discourse on this subject.

Verse 18. He is the head of the body] What the apostle has said in the two preceding verses refers to the *Divine* nature of Jesus Christ; he now proceeds to speak of his *human* nature, and to show how highly that is exalted beyond all created things, and how, in that, he is *head* of the *Church*-the author and dispenser of light, life, and salvation, to the Christian world; or, in other words, that from him, as the *man* in whom the fulness of the Godhead bodily dwelt, all the mercy and salvation of the Gospel system is to be received.

The beginning, the first-born from the dead] In ~~<46150>~~ **1 Corinthians 15:20**, Christ is called *the first-fruits of them that slept*; and here, the *chief and first-born from the dead*; he being the first that ever resumed the natural life, with the employment of all its functions, never more to enter the empire of death, after having died a natural death, and in such circumstances as precluded the possibility of deception. The **αρχη**, *chief, head, or first*, answers in this verse to the **απαρχη**, or *first-fruits*, ~~<46150>~~ **1 Corinthians 15:20**. Jesus Christ is not only the first who rose from the dead to die no more, but he is the first-fruits of human beings; for as surely as the *first-fruits* were an indication and pledge of the *harvest*, so surely was the *resurrection* of Christ the proof that all mankind should have a resurrection from the dead.

That in all-he might have the pre-eminence] That he might be considered, in consequence of his mediatorial office, as possessing the *first* place in and being *chief* over all the creation of God; for is it to be wondered at that the human nature, with which the great Creator condescended to unite himself, should be set over all the works of his hands?

Verse 19. For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell] As the words, *the Father* are not in the text, some have translated the verse thus: *For in him it seemed right that all fulness should dwell*; that is, that the majesty, power, and goodness of God should be manifested in and by Christ Jesus, and thus by him the Father reconciles all things to himself. The **πληρωμα**, or *fulness*, must refer here to the Divine nature dwelling in the man Christ Jesus.

Verse 20. And, having made peace through the blood of his cross]

Peace between God and man; for man being in a sinful state, and there being no peace to the wicked, it required a reconciliation to be made to restore peace between heaven and earth; but peace could not be made without an atonement for sin, and the consequence shows that the blood of Christ shed on the cross was necessary to make this atonement.

To reconcile all things unto himself] The enmity was on the part of the *creature*; though God is angry with the wicked every day, yet he is never *unwilling* to be reconciled. But man, whose carnal mind is enmity to God, is naturally *averse* from this reconciliation; it requires, therefore, the *blood of the cross* to atone for the sin, and the influence of the Spirit to reconcile the transgressor to him against whom he has offended! **See Clarke's notes on "⁴⁷⁵¹⁹2 Corinthians 5:19", &c.**

Things in earth, or things in heaven.] Much has been said on this very obscure clause; but, as it is my object not to write *dissertations* but *notes*, I shall not introduce the opinions of learned men, which have as much ingenuity as variety to recommend them. If the phrase be not a kind of collective phrase to signify *all the world*, or *all mankind*, as Dr. Hammond supposed *the things in heaven* may refer, according to some, to those persons who died under the Old Testament dispensation, and who could not have a title to glory but through the sacrificial death of Christ: and the apostle may have intended these merely to show that without this sacrifice no human beings could be saved, not only those who were then on the earth, and to whom in their successive generations the Gospel should be preached, but even those who had died before the incarnation; and, as those of them that were faithful were now in a state of blessedness, they could not have arrived there but through the *blood of the cross*, for the blood of calves and goats could not take away sin. After all, the apostle probably means the *Jews* and the *Gentiles*; the state of the former being always considered a sort of *Divine* or *celestial* state, while that of the latter was reputed to be merely *earthly*, without any mixture of *spiritual* or *heavenly* good. It is certain that a grand part of our Lord's design, in his incarnation and death, was to reconcile the Jews and the Gentiles, and make them *one fold* under himself, the great Shepherd and Bishop of souls. That the enmity of the Jews was great against the Gentiles is well known, and that the Gentiles held them in supreme contempt is not less so. It was therefore an object worthy of the mercy of God to form a scheme that might reconcile these two grand divisions of mankind; and, as it was his

purpose to reconcile and make them one, we learn from this circumstance, as well as from many others, that his design was to save the whole human race.

Verse 21. And you, that were sometime alienated] All men are *alienated* from God, and all are *enemies in their minds* to him, and show it by their *wicked works*; but this is spoken particularly of the *Gentiles*. The word **απαλλοτριωω**, which we render to *alienate*, to *give to another*, to *estrangle*, expresses the state of the *Gentiles*: while the *Jews* were, at least by profession, *dedicated* to God, the *Gentiles* were *alienated*, that is, *given up to others*; they worshipped not the true God, but had gods many and lords many, to whom they dedicated themselves, their religious service, and their property. The verb **αλλοτριωω**, to *alienate*, being compounded here with the preposition **απο**, *from*, signifies to *abalienate*, to *estrangle utterly*, to be *wholly the property of another*. Thus the *Gentiles* had alienated themselves from God, and were alienated or rejected by him, because of their wickedness and idolatry.

Enemies in your mind] They had the *carnal mind*, which is enmity against God; and this was expressed in their outward conduct by *wicked works*. See Clarke's note on "**Romans 5:10**". The mind is taken here for all the *soul, heart, affections, passions, &c.*

Verse 22. In the body of his flesh] By Christ's assumption of a human body, and dying for man, he has made an atonement for sin, through which men become reconciled to God and to each other.

To present you holy] Having saved you from your sins.

Unblamable] Having filled you with his Spirit, and written his law in your *hearts*, so that his love, shed abroad in your hearts, becomes the principle and motive to every action. The *tree* therefore being good, the *fruit* is also good.

And unreprouable] For, being filled with love, joy, peace, meekness, gentleness, and goodness, against these there is no law; and as they were called to love God with all their heart, soul, mind, and strength, and their neighbour as themselves, the whole *spirit* and *design* of the law was fulfilled in them, for *love is the fulfilling of the law*.

In his sight] At the day of judgment. None can enjoy heaven who have not been *reconciled* to God here, and shown forth the fruits of that

reconciliation in being made *holy* and *unblamable*, that, when they come to be judged, they may be found *unreprovable*.

Verse 23. If ye continue in the faith] This will be the case if you, who have already believed in Christ Jesus, continue in that faith, *grounded* in the knowledge and love of God, and *settled-made firm* and perseveringly *steadfast*, in that state of salvation.

And be not moved away] Not permitting yourselves to be seduced by false teachers.

The hope of the Gospel] The resurrection of the body, and the glorification of it and the soul together, in the realms of blessedness. This is properly the Gospel HOPE.

To every creature which is under heaven] A Hebraism for the whole human race, and particularly referring to the two grand divisions of mankind, the Jews and Gentiles; to both of these the Gospel had been preached, and to each, salvation by Christ had been *equally* offered. And as none had been excluded from the offers of mercy, and Jesus Christ had tasted death for every man, and the Jews and Gentiles, in their great corporate capacity, had all been invited to believe the Gospel; therefore, the apostle concludes that the Gospel was preached to every creature under heaven, as being offered without restrictions or limitations to these two grand divisions of mankind, including the whole human race.

Verse 24. Rejoice in my sufferings for you] St. Paul always considers his persecutions, as far as the Jews were concerned in them, as arising from this simple circumstance-his asserting that God had chosen the Gentiles, and called them to enjoy the *very same privileges* with the Jews, and to constitute one Church with them.

It was on this account that the Jews attempted his life at Jerusalem, when, in order to save it, he was obliged to appeal to Cæsar; the consequences of which persecution he was now suffering in his imprisonment in Rome. See Clarke on "^{5101D}Colossians 4:2".

That which is behind of the afflictions of Christ] I have still some afflictions to pass through before my race of glory be finished; afflictions which fall on me on account of the Gospel; such as Christ bore from the same persecuting people.

It is worthy of remark that the apostle does not say *παθηματα*, the *passion* of Christ, but simply *θλιψεις*, the *afflictions*; such as are common to all good men who bear a testimony against the ways and fashions of a wicked world. In these the apostle had his share, in the *passion* of Christ he could have none. He trod the wine press *alone*, of the people there were none with him.

His body's sake] Believers, both of Jews and Gentiles, who form that one *body*, of which Christ is the *head*.

Verse 25. Whereof I am made a minister] Having received especial commission from God to preach salvation to the Gentiles.

According to the dispensation] *κατα την οικονομιαν*. According to the Gospel *economy* or *institution*; the *scheme* or *plan* of salvation by Christ crucified.

To fulfil the word of God] The Greek *πληρωσαι θον λογον του θεου* may be translated, *fully to preach the doctrine of God*. See ^{<61519>}**Romans 15:19**, and the note there. Were we to take the word in its common meaning, it might signify to accomplish the purpose of God, as predicted by the prophets.

Verse 26. The mystery which hath been hid] The mystery is this: that God had designed to grant the Gentiles the same privileges with the Jews, and make them his people who were not his people. That this is what St. Paul means by the *mystery*, see ^{<608>}**Ephesians 3:3**, &c.

Made manifest to his saints] It is fully known to all who have embraced the doctrine of Christ crucified; to all Christians.

Verse 27. The riches of the glory] God manifests to these how abundantly glorious this Gospel is among the Gentiles; and how effectual is this doctrine of Christ crucified to the salvation of multitudes.

Which is Christ in you, the hope of glory] In this and the following verse there are several remarkable particulars:—

I. We find here the *sum* and *substance* of the apostle's preaching.

1. He preached *Christ*, as the only Saviour of sinners.

2. He proclaimed this Christ as being *in* them; for the design of the Gospel is to put men in possession of the Spirit and power of Christ, to make them

partakers of the Divine nature, and thus prepare them for an eternal union with himself. Should it be said that the preposition *εν* should be translated *among*, it amounts to the same; for Christ was *among* them, to enlighten, quicken, purify, and refine them, and this he could not do without dwelling *in* them.

3. He preached this *present* and *indwelling* Christ as the *hope of glory*; for no man could rationally hope for glory who had not the *pardon* of his sins, and whose nature was not sanctified; and none could have pardon but through the blood of his cross; and none could have glorification but through the indwelling, sanctifying Spirit of Christ.

II. We see the *manner* in which the apostles preached.

1. *They warned every one*-they showed every man his danger; they proved that both Jews and Gentiles were under sin; and that the wrath of God was revealed against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men; that time and life were uncertain; and that now was the day of salvation.

2. *They taught every man in all wisdom*-they considered the world in a state of ignorance and darkness, every man being through sin ignorant of himself and God; and the apostles taught them to know themselves, viz., that they were sinners, wretched, helpless, and perishing; and they taught them to know God, in his purity, justice, and truth, and in his mercy through Christ Jesus. Thus they instructed men in all wisdom; for the knowledge of a man's self and his God constitutes all that is essentially necessary to be known for present and eternal happiness.

III. The *end* which the apostles had in view in thus preaching Christ: to *present every man perfect in Christ Jesus*. The words *τελειον εν χριστω*, perfect in or through Christ, signify two things: 1. That they should be *thoroughly instructed* in the doctrines of Christianity, so that they should know the truth as it is in Jesus. 2. That they should be made partakers of the grace of the Gospel, so that they might be saved from all their sins, and be filled with His fulness. The succeeding chapter amply proves that nothing less than this entered into the apostle's design. Men may dispute as they please about *Christian perfection*, but without it no soul shall ever see God. He who is not saved from *all sin* here, cannot, to his joy, see God hereafter. This perfection of which the apostle speaks, and to which he laboured to bring all men, was something to be attained in and *through Christ*. The apostles preached Christ *in* the people; and they preached him

as crucified for mankind. He who *died for* them was to *live in* them, and fill their whole souls with his own purity. No *indwelling sin* can be tolerated by an *indwelling Christ*; for he came into the world to save his people from their sins.

IV. We see who were the objects of the apostle's ministry: the Jews and Gentiles; **παντα ανθρωπον**, every man, the *whole human race*. Every man had sinned; and for every sinner Christ had died; and he died for them that they might be saved from all their sins. The apostles never restrained the offers of salvation; they made them frankly to all, believing that it was the will of God that all should believe and be saved: hence they warned and taught every man that they might, at the day of judgment, present every man perfect in Christ Jesus; for, although their own personal ministry could not reach all the inhabitants of the earth, yet it is by the doctrines which they preached, and by the writings which they have left on record, that the earth is to be filled with the knowledge and glory of God, and the souls of men brought to the enjoyment of the fulness of the blessing of the Gospel of peace.

Verse 29. Whereunto I also labour] In order to accomplish this end, I labour with the utmost zeal and earnestness; and with all that strength with which God has most powerfully furnished me. Whoever considers the original words, **αγωνιζομενος κατα την ενεργειαν αυτου την ενεργουμενην-εν δυναμει**, will find that no verbal translation can convey their sense. God worked *energetically* in St. Paul, and he *wrought energetically* with God; and all this was in reference to the salvation of mankind.

1. THE preceding chapter contains the highest truths in the Christian religion, conveyed in language peculiar to this apostle; a language never taught by man, clothing ideas as vast as the human mind can grasp, and both coming immediately from that inspiration of the Almighty which giveth understanding.

2. What the apostle says on the Godhead of Christ has already been distinctly noted; and from this we must conclude that, unless there be some secret way of understanding the 16th and 17th verses, {^{<51016>}**Colossians 1:16, 17**} which God has nowhere revealed, taken in their sober and rational sense and meaning they must for ever settle this very important point. Let any man of common sense and reason hear these words, whose mind had not been previously warped by any sentiment on the subject, and

who only knew, in religious matters, this one great truth, that there is a God, and that he made and governs all things; and then let him be asked, Of whom doth the apostle speak this? Would he not immediately answer, *He speaketh of God?* As to the difficulties on this subject, we must consider them difficulties rather to our limited intellect, than as belonging to the subject. We can know but little of an infinite and eternal Being; nothing, properly speaking, but what himself is pleased to reveal. Let us receive, *this* with gratitude and reverence. See my discourse on the sum and substance of apostolic preaching.

COLOSSIANS

CHAPTER 2.

The apostle shows his great concern for the Church at Colosse and at Laodicea; and exhorts them to steadfastness in the faith, and to beware of being seduced by specious and enticing words, 1-5. And to walk in Christ, as they had been taught, and to abound in faith and holiness, 6, 7. To beware of false teachers, who strove to pervert the Gospel, and to lead their minds from him in whom the fulness of the Godhead dwells; with whom they were filled; by whom they had received spiritual circumcision; and into whom they were baptized and were quickened, and raised from a death of sin to a life of righteousness, 8-12. He points out their former state, and the great things which Christ had done for them, 13-15. Warns them against particular tenets of the Judaizing teachers relative to meats, drinks, holydays, festivals, and the specious pretences of deceivers, 16-19. And shows that all the things taught by these, though they had a show of wisdom, yet perished in the using, and were the commandments and doctrines of men, 20-23.

NOTES ON CHAP 2.

Verse 1. What great conflict] The word **αγων**, which we here render *conflict*, is to be understood as implying *earnest care* and *solicitude*, accompanied, undoubtedly, with the most fervent application to the throne of grace in their behalf. The **αγωνιζομενος** of the preceding verse gave the apostle occasion to use the word **αγων** here. He *agonized* with God, and his *agony* was for them.

Laodicea] A city of Asia Minor, on the borders of *Caria*, *Phrygia*, and *Lydia*. It was originally called *Diospolis*, or the city of Jupiter, and afterwards *Rhoas*; but obtained the name of *Laodicea* from *Laodice*, the wife of Antiochus. It is now called *Ladik*. It was formerly celebrated for its commerce, and the fine black wool of its sheep. Colosse, or the city of the Colossians, lay between it and Hierapolis. This *Hierapolis* was also a town of Phrygia, famous for its hot baths: it is now called *Bambukholasi*.

As many as have not seen my face in the flesh] From this it has been conjectured that St. Paul had never been at either Colosse or Laodicea, and

this, from the letter of the text, appears probable; and yet, his having passed more than once through this country, preaching and strengthening the Churches, renders it very improbable. It is, therefore, most likely that we should understand the apostle as speaking collectively; that he had the most earnest concern, not only for the welfare of those Churches with which he was acquainted, such as Colosse and Laodicea, but also for those to whom he was not personally known.

Verse 2. That their hearts might be comforted] That they might have continual happiness in God, having constant affiance in him.

Being knit together in love] The word *συμβιβασθεντων*, or *συμβιβασθεντες*, which is the true reading, but both of equal import here, signifies being united, as the beams or the timbers of a building, by mortices and pins. The visible Church of Christ cannot be in *union* with God unless it have *unity* in itself, and without *love* this unity is impossible.

Unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding] That is, that they might have the most indubitable certainty of the truth of Christianity, of their own salvation, and of the general design of God to admit the Gentiles into his Church. This is the grand mystery of God, which was now laid open by the preaching of the Gospel.

And of the Father, and of Christ] These words are variously written in different MSS., *versions*, and *fathers*: *The mystery of God-of God in Christ-of God who is in Christ-of God concerning Christ-of God who is Christ-of the God Christ-of God and Christ-of God the Father of Christ-of God the Father, and our Lord Christ-of God and the Father of Christ-of God the Father, in Christ-of the God Christ Jesus, Father and Lord, &c., &c., &c.*

This great variety of versions leaves the strongest presumption that the words in question are glosses which have crept into the text, and are of no authority. *Griesbach* has left them out of the text.

Verse 3. In whom are hid] Or rather *in which*; referring to the *mystery* mentioned above. In this glorious scheme of Christianity all the treasures—the abundance and excellency, of wisdom and knowledge are contained. No scheme of salvation, or Divine knowledge, ever equalled in its depth and excellency the Gospel plan. A scheme which the wisdom of

God alone could devise, and which his power and infinite mercy alone could accomplish.

Verse 4. Lest any man should beguile you] The word *παραλογιζηται* means to deceive by sophistry or subtle reasoning, in which all the *conclusions* appear to be fairly drawn from the *premises*, but the premises are either *assumed* without evidence, or *false* in themselves; but this not being easily discovered, the unthinking or unwary are carried away by the conclusions which are drawn from these premises. And this result is clearly intimated by the term *πιθανολογια*, *enticing words, plausible conclusions* or *deductions* from this mode of reasoning. The apostle seems to allude to the Gentile philosophers, who were notorious for this kind of argumentation. Plato and Socrates are not free from it.

Verse 5. For though I be absent in the flesh] It is hardly possible that such words as these in this verse could have been used to perfect *strangers*; they argue a considerable knowledge of the people, and a knowledge founded on personal acquaintance. The original is exceedingly soft and musical:—

ει γαρ και τη σαρκι απειμι,
αλλα τω πνευματι συν υμιν ειμι,
χαιρωμ και βλεπων υμων την ταξιν, κ.τ.α.

The whole verse shows that this Church was *sound* in *doctrine*, and *strict* in *discipline*. They had *steadfast faith* in Christ, and regular *order* or discipline among themselves.

Verse 6. As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus] Many persons lay a certain stress on the words *as* and *so*, and make various fine heads of discourses from them; viz. *As* ye received Christ in a spirit of *humility*, *so* walk in him; *as* ye received him in a spirit of *faith*, *so* walk in him, &c., &c. This may be all proper in itself; but nothing of the kind was intended by the apostle. His meaning is simply this: Seeing ye have embraced the doctrine of Christ, continue to hold it fast, and not permit yourselves to be turned aside by sophistical or Judaizing teachers.

Verse 7. Rooted and built up in him] It is not usual with the apostle to employ this double metaphor, taken partly from the *growth of a tree* and the *increase of a building*. They are to be *rooted*; as the good *seed* had been already *sown*, it is to take root, and the roots are to spread far, wide, and deep. They are to be *grounded*; as the *foundation* has already been

laid, they are to *build* thereon. In the one case, they are to bear much fruit; in the other, they are to grow up to be a habitation of God through the Spirit. See the notes on ^{<4021>}**Ephesians 2:21, 22; 3:17.**

Abounding therein with thanksgiving.] No limitation is ever set to the operations of God on the soul, or to the growth of the soul in the knowledge, love, and image of God. Those who are brought into such a state of salvation should abound in gratitude and loving obedience, as they grow in grace.

Verse 8. Beware lest any man spoil you] The word **συλαγωγῶν**, from **συλη**, *prey*, and **αγειν**, *to lead or carry away*, signifies to *rob*, or *spoil* of their goods, as if by *violence* or rapine. Their goods were the salvation they had received from Christ; and both the Gentile and Jewish teachers endeavoured to deprive them of these, by perverting their minds, and leading them off from the truths of Christianity.

Philosophy and vain deceit] Or, the *vain or empty deceit of philosophy*; such philosophizing as the Jewish and Gentile teachers used. As the term *philosophy* stood in high repute among the Gentiles, the Jews of this time affected it; and both *Philo* and *Josephus* use the word to express the whole of the Mosaic institutions. So the former: **οι κατα μωσην φιλοσοφουντες**. “Those who embraced the philosophy of Moses;” PHIL., Deuteronomy Nomin. Mutand. And the latter; **τρια παρα ιουγαισις ειδη φιλοσοφειται**. “There are three systems of philosophy among the Jews,” (Bell. Jud., lib. ii. cap 8, sec. 2,) meaning the *Pharisees*, *Sadducees*, and *Essenes*, as immediately follows. The Jewish philosophy, such as is found in the *Cabala*, *Midrashim*, and other works, deserves the character of *vain deceit*, in the fullest sense and meaning of the words. The inspired writers excepted, the Jews have ever been the most puerile, absurd, and ridiculous reasoners in the world. Even *Rabbi Maymon*, or *Maimonides*, the most intelligent of them all, is often in his master piece (the *Moreh Nevochim*, the *Teacher of the Perplexed*) most deplorably empty and vain.

After the rudiments of the world] According to the doctrine of the *Jewish teachers*; or, according to the *Mosaic institutions*, as explained and glossed by the scribes, Pharisees, and rabbins in general. We have often seen that **hzh ml w[h** *haolam hazzeh*, *this world*, of which **του κοσμου τουτου** is a literal translation, is frequently used to express the Jewish system of rites, ceremonies, and institutions in general; what the apostle

calls *the tradition of men*, namely, what men, unauthorized by God, have taught as doctrines received from him. Our Lord frequently refers to and condemns these traditions.

Not after Christ.] Not according to the simple doctrine of Christ, viz.: HE died for our offences; believe on the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved.

Verse 9. For in him dwelleth all the fulness] This is opposed to the *vain* or *empty* doctrine of the Gentile and Jewish philosophers: there is a *fulness* in Christ suited to the *empty, destitute* state of the human soul, but in the philosophy of the Jews and Gentiles nothing like this was found; nor indeed in the more refined and correct philosophy of the present day. No substitute has ever been found for the grace of the Lord Jesus, and those who have sought for one have disquieted themselves in vain.

By the *Godhead* or *Deity*, θεοτης, we are to understand the *state or being of the Divine nature*; and by the *fulness* of that *Deity*, the infinite attributes essential to such a nature.

Bodily.] σωματικως signifies *truly, really*; in opposition to *typically, figuratively*. There was a *symbol* of the Divine presence in the Hebrew *tabernacle*, and in the Jewish *temple*; but in the *body* of CHRIST the *Deity*, with all its plenitude of attributes, dwelt *really* and *substantially*: for so the word σωματικως means; and so it was understood by the ancient Greek fathers, as is fully shown by SUICER, in his *Thesaurus*, under the word.

“The fulness of the Godhead dwelt in Christ ‘*bodily*,’ as opposed to the Jewish *tabernacle*, or *temple*; *truly* and *really*, in opposition to *types* and *figures*; not only effectively, as God dwells in good men, but *substantially* or *personally*, by the strictest union, as the soul dwells in the body; so that God and man are one Christ.” See *Parkhurst*.

Verse 10. And ye are complete in him] και εστε εν αυτω πεπληρωμενοι. And, ye are filled with him. Our word *complete* quite destroys the connection subsisting in the apostle’s ideas. The philosophy of the world was *empty*, κενη, but there was a *πληρωμα*, or *fulness*, in Christ; the Colossians were *empty-spoiled* and deprived of every good, while following the *empty* philosophy and groundless traditions of Jewish and Gentile teachers; but since they had received Christ Jesus they were *πεπληρωμενοι*, *filled* with him. This is the true meaning of the word, and

by this the connection and assemblage of ideas in the apostle's mind are preserved. No fanciful *completeness in Christ*, of a believer, while incomplete in himself, is either expressed or intended by St. Paul. It is too bad a doctrine to exist in the oracles of God.

The head of all principality] See the notes on ^{<50116>}Colossians 1:16, 17.

Verse 11. In whom also ye are circumcised] All that was designed by circumcision, literally performed, is accomplished in them that believe through the Spirit and power of Christ. It is not a cutting off of a *part* of the flesh, but a *putting off* the *body* of the *sins* of the flesh, through the circumcision of Christ; he having undergone and performed this, and all other rites necessary to qualify him to be a mediator between God and man; for, being made under the *law*, he was subject to all its ordinances, and every act of his contributed to the salvation of men. But by the circumcision of Christ, the operation of his grace and Spirit may be intended; the law required the circumcision of the flesh, the Gospel of Christ required the circumcision of the heart. The words *των αμαρτιων*, *of the sins*, are omitted by ABCD*EFG, several others, by the *Coptic*, *Æthiopic*, *Armenian*, *Vulgate*, and *Itala*; and by *Clement*, *Athanasius*, *Basil*, *Cyril*, and several others. Griesbach has omitted them.

Verse 12. Buried with him in baptism] Alluding to the *immersions* practised in the case of *adults*, wherein the person appeared to be buried under the Water, as Christ was buried in the heart of the earth. His rising again the third day, and their emerging from the water, was an emblem of the resurrection of the body; and, in them, of a total change of life.

The faith of the operation of God] They were quickened, changed, and saved, by means of faith in Christ Jesus; which faith was produced by the operation or energy of God. *Believing* is the act of the soul; but the *grace* or *power* to *believe* comes from God himself.

Verse 13. And you, being dead in your sins] See Clarke's notes on ^{<50101>}Ephesians 2:1:", &c.

The uncircumcision of your flesh] This must refer to that part of the Colossian Church which was made up of converted *heathens*, for the *heathens* alone were *uncircumcised*.

Verse 14. Blotting out the hand-writing of ordinances] By the hand-writing of ordinances the apostle most evidently means the

ceremonial law: this was against them, for they were bound to fulfil it; and it was contrary to them, as condemning them for their neglect and transgression of it. This law God himself has blotted out.

Blotting out the hand-writing is probably an allusion to ~~Heb~~ **Numbers 5:23**, where the curses written in the book, in the case of the woman suspected of adultery, are directed to be blotted out with the bitter waters. And there can be little doubt of a farther allusion, viz., to the custom of discharging the writing from parchment by the application of such a fluid as the *muriatic acid*, which immediately dissolves those ferruginous calces which constitute the *blackening* principle of most inks. But the East India inks, being formed only of simple *black*, such as burnt *ivory*, or *cork*, and gum water, may be wiped clean off from the surface of the paper or parchment by the application of a *wet sponge*, so as to leave not one legible vestige remaining: this I have often proved.

Nailing it to his cross] When Christ was nailed to the cross, our obligation to fulfil these ordinances was done away. There may be another reference here to some ancient mode of *annulling* legal obligations, by *nailing them to a post*; but I do not recollect at present an instance or example. Antiquated *laws* are said to have been thus abrogated.

Verse 15. And having spoiled principalities and powers] Here is an allusion to the treatment of enemies when conquered: they are *spoiled of their armour*, so much the word **απεκδυσειν** implies; and they are *exhibited* with contumely and reproach to the populace, especially when the victor has the honour of a *triumph*; to the former of which there is an allusion in the words **εδειγματισεν εν παρρησια**, *making a public exhibition of them*; and to the latter in the words **θριαμβευσας αυτους**, *triumphing over them*. And the *principalities* and *powers* refer to the emperors, kings, and generals taken in battle, and reserved to grace the victor's triumph. It is very likely that by the **αρχας και εξουσιας**, *principalities* and *powers*, over whom Christ triumphed, the apostle means the **twycn nesioth** and **twvr roshoth**, who were the *rulers* and *chiefs* in the *Sanhedrin* and *synagogues*, and who had great authority among the people, both in making constitutions and explaining traditions. The propagation of *Christianity* in Judea quite destroyed their spiritual power and domination; just as the propagation of *Protestantism*, which was Christianity revived, destroyed, wherever it appeared, the false doctrine and domination of the pope of Rome.

In it.] The words **εν αυτω** refer rather to *Christ*, than to the *cross*, if indeed they be genuine; of which there is much reason to doubt, as the *versions* and *fathers* differ so greatly in quoting them. Griesbach has left them out of the text.

Verse 16. Let no man-judge you in meat, or in drink] The apostle speaks here in reference to some particulars of the *hand-writing of ordinances*, which had been *taken away*, viz., the distinction of *meats* and *drinks*, what was *clean* and what *unclean*, according to the law; and the necessity of observing certain *holydays* or *festivals*, such as the *new moons* and particular *sabbaths*, or those which should be observed with more than ordinary solemnity; all these had been taken out of the way and nailed to the cross, and were no longer of moral obligation. There is no intimation here that the *Sabbath* was done away, or that its moral use was superseded, by the introduction of Christianity. I have shown elsewhere that, *Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy*, is a command of *perpetual obligation*, and can never be superseded but by the final termination of time. As it is a *type* of that rest which remains for the people of God, of an eternity of bliss, it must continue in full force till that eternity arrives; for no *type* ever ceases till the *antitype* be come. Besides, it is not clear that the apostle refers at all to the *Sabbath* in this place, whether Jewish or Christian; his **σαββατων**, of *sabbaths* or *weeks*, most probably refers to their *feasts of weeks*, of which much has been said in the notes on the Pentateuch.

Verse 17. Which are a shadow] All these things were *types*, and must continue in force till the Christ, whom they represented, came; the apostle therefore says that the *body*-the *substance* or *design* of them was of *Christ*-pointed him out, and the excellent blessings which he has procured. The word **σκια**, *shadow*, is often used to express any thing *imperfect* or *unsubstantial*; while the term **σωμα**, *body*, was used in the opposite sense, and expressed any thing *substantial*, *solid*, and *firm*. The law was but the *shadow* or *representation* of good things to come; none should rest in it; all that it pointed out is to be sought and obtained in Christ.

Verse 18. Let no man beguile you] **μηδεις υμας καταβραβευετω**. Let no man take the *prize* from you which the **βραβευς**, *brabeus*, or judge in the contests, has assigned you, in consequence of your having obtained the victory. This any reader will see, is an allusion to the Olympic and Isthmian games, and to the prizes assigned to these who had obtained the victory in

one or more of the contests which there took place. The Colossians had fought and conquered under the direction of Christ, and he, as the sole judge in this contest, had assigned to them the prize; the false teachers, affecting great modesty, humility, and sanctity, endeavoured to turn them aside from the Gospel, and to induce them to end in the *flesh* who had begun in the *Spirit*. Against these the apostle warns them.

In a voluntary humility and worshiping of angels] This is a difficult passage, and in order to explain it, I shall examine the meaning of some of the principal terms of the original. The word **θελειν**, *to will*, signifies also *to delight*; and **ταπειμοφροσυνη** signifies not only *lowliness* or *humility of mind*, but also *affliction of mind*; and **ταπεινουσ την ψυχην**, **Leviticus 16:20, 31**, and in many other places, signifies to *afflict the soul by fasting, and self-abnegation*; and **θρησκεια** signifies *reverence* and *modesty*. Hence the whole passage has been paraphrased thus: Let no man spoil you of the prize adjudged to you, who delights in mortifying his body, and walking with the apparent *modesty of an angel*, affecting superior sanctity in order to gain disciples; *intruding into things which he has not seen*; and, notwithstanding his apparent humility, his mind is *carnal*, and he is *puffed up* with a sense of his superior knowledge and piety. It is very likely that the apostle here alludes to the *Essenes*, who were remarkably strict and devout, spent a principal part of their time in the contemplation of the Divine Being, abstained from all sensual gratifications, and affected to live the *life of angels* upon earth. With *their* pretensions all the apostle says here perfectly agrees, and on this one supposition the whole of the passage is plain and easy. Many have understood the passage as referring to the *adoration of angels*, which seems to have been practised among the Jews, who appear (from **Tobit**, xii. 15; *Philo*, in lib. *de Somn.*; *Josephus*, War. lib. ii. cap. 8, sec. 7) to have considered them as a sort of *mediators* between God and man; presenting the prayers of men before the throne; and being, as *Philo* says, **μεγαλου βασιλεως οφθαλμοι και ωτα**, *the eyes and ears of the great King*. But this interpretation is not so likely as the foregoing.

Verse 19. And not holding the Head] Not acknowledging Jesus Christ as the only Saviour of mankind, and the only *Head* or *chief* of the Christian Church, on whom every member of it depends, and *from* whom each derives both light and life. For a farther explanation of these words see **Clarke's notes on "Ephesians 4:16"**, where the figures and phraseology are the same.

Verse 20. If ye be dead with Christ] See the notes on **Romans 6:3, 5.**

From the rudiments of the world] Ye have renounced all hope of salvation from the observance of Jewish rites and ceremonies, which were only *rudiments, first elements, or the alphabet*, out of which the whole science of Christianity was composed. We have often seen that *the world* and *this world* signify the Jewish dispensation, or the rites, ceremonies, and services performed under it.

Why, as though living in the world] Why, as if ye were still under the same dispensation from which you have been already freed, are ye subject to its ordinances, performing them as if expecting salvation from this performance?

Verse 21. Touch not; taste not; handle not] These are forms of expression very frequent among the Jews. In *Maccoth*, fol. xxi. 1: “If they say to a Nazarite, *Don’t drink, don’t drink*; and he, notwithstanding, drinks; he is guilty. If they say, *Don’t shave, don’t shave*; and he shaves, notwithstanding; he is guilty. If they say, *Don’t put on these clothes, don’t put on these clothes*; and he, notwithstanding, puts on heterogeneous garments; he is guilty.” See more in *Schoettgen*.

Verse 22. Which all are to perish with the using] These are not matters of eternal moment; the different kinds of meats were made for the body, and go with it into corruption: in like manner, all the rites and ceremonies of the Jewish religion now perish, having accomplished the *end* of their institution; namely, to lead us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith.

After the commandments and doctrines of men?] These words should follow the 20th verse, {**Colossians 2:20**} of which they form a part; and it appears from them that the apostle is here speaking of the traditions of the elders, and the load of cumbrous ceremonies which they added to the significant rites prescribed by Moses.

Verse 23. Which things have indeed a show of wisdom] All these prescriptions and rites have indeed the appearance of wisdom, and are recommended by plausible reasons; but they form a worship which God has not commanded, and enjoin macerations of the body, accompanied with a humiliation of spirit, that are neither profitable to the soul, nor of

any advantage to the body; so that the whole of their religion is nothing worth.

WHAT is here termed *will-worship*, **εθελοθρησκεια**, signifies simply a mode of worship which a man chooses for himself, independently of the *revelation* which God has given. The whole system of *Deism* is an **εθελοθρησκεια**, a worship founded in the will or caprices of man, and not in the wisdom or *will* of God; and it is just as profitable to body and soul as that of which the apostle speaks. God will be served in his own way; it is right that he should prescribe to man the truths which he is to believe, and the ordinances which he is to use. To refuse to receive his teaching in order to prefer our own fancies, is to light a farthing candle as a substitute for the noonday sun. From the beginning of the world God has prescribed the worship which was best pleasing to himself, and never left a matter of such moment to man. The nations which have either not had a revelation, or refused to receive that which God has given, show, by their diversity of worship, superstition, absurdity, and in many cases *cruelty*, what the state of the whole would have been, had not God, in his infinite mercy, blessed it with a revelation of his will. God has given directions concerning his worship; and he has appointed the *seventh day* for the peculiar exercises of spiritual duties: other times he has left to man's convenience; and they abuse the text who say that the appointment of particular times and places for religious service is *will-worship*. God prescribes the *thing*, and leaves it to man, except in the case of the Sabbath, to appoint the *time* and the *place*; nor is it possible to be too *frequent* in God's worship, any more than to be too *fervent*.

COLOSSIANS

CHAPTER 3.

The apostle exhorts the Colossians to heavenly-mindedness after the example of Christ, that they may be prepared to appear with him in glory, 1-4. Exhorts them also to mortify their members, and calls to their remembrance their former state, 5-7. Shows how completely they were changed from that state, and gives them various directions relative to truth, compassion, meekness, long-suffering, forgiveness, charity, 8-14. Shows that they are called to unity and holiness; and commands them to have the doctrine of Christ dwelling richly in them; and how they should teach and admonish each other, and do every thing, in the name of the Lord Jesus, 15-17. The relative duties of wives, 18. Of husbands, 19. Of children, 20. Of fathers, 21. Of servants, 22. He concludes by showing that he that does wrong shall be treated accordingly, for God is no respecter of persons, 23-25.

NOTES ON CHAP. 3.

Verse 1. If ye then] εἰ οὖν. *Seeing then that ye are risen with Christ; this refers to what he had said, ^{<S10212>}Colossians 2:12: Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him. As, therefore, ye have most cordially received the doctrine of Christ; and profess to be partakers of a spiritual religion, that promises spiritual and eternal things; seek those things, and look to be prepared for the enjoyment of them.*

Verse 2. Set your affection on things above] τὰ ἄνω φρονεῖτε. *Love heavenly things; study them; let your hearts be entirely engrossed by them. Now, that ye are converted to God, act in reference to heavenly things as ye did formerly in reference to those of earth; and vice versa. This is a very good general rule: “Be as much in earnest for heavenly and eternal things, as ye formerly were for those that are earthly and perishing.”*

Verse 3. For ye are dead] *To all hopes of happiness from the present world; and, according to your profession, should feel no more appetite for the things of this life, than he does whose soul is departed into the invisible state.*

Your life is hid with Christ in God.] Christ is your *treasure*; and where your treasure is, there is your heart. Christ lives in the bosom of the Father; as your heart is in him, ye also sit in heavenly places with Christ Jesus. Christ is the *life* of your souls; and as *he* is hidden in the bosom of the Father, so are ye, who live through and in him.

Verse 4. When Christ, who is our life] When Christ comes to judge the world, ye shall appear with him in his glory, and in an eternal state of blessedness.

Verse 5. Mortify, therefore, you members] **νεκρωσατε.** *Put them to death:* the verb is used metaphorically to signify, to *deprive a thing of its power, to destroy its strength.* Use no member of your body to sin against God; keep all under dominion; and never permit the *beast* to run away with the *man.* To *gratify* any sensual appetite is to give it the very food and nourishment by which it lives, thrives, and is active. However the body may suffer by excessive sensual indulgences, the *appetite* increases with the indulgence. Deny yourselves, and let reason rule; and the *animal* will not get the ascendancy over the *rational man.* **See Clarke's notes on “^{<501>}Romans 6:11”, &c.**

Inordinate affection] **παθος.** *Unnatural and degrading passion;* bestial lusts. See ^{<502>}**Romans 1:26, 27;** and the notes there.

Evil concupiscence] **επιθυμιαν κακην.** As **επιθυμια** signifies *strong and vehement desire* of any kind, it is here joined with **κακη**, *evil*, to show the sense more particularly in which the apostle uses it.

Covetousness, which is idolatry] For the covetous man makes his money his god. Now, it is the prerogative of God to confer happiness; every godly man seeks his happiness in God; the covetous man seeks that in his money which God alone can give; therefore his covetousness is properly *idolatry.* It is true his idol is of *gold* and *silver*, but his idolatry is not the less criminal on that account.

Verse 6. The wrath of God cometh] God is angry with such persons, and he inflicts on them the punishment which they deserve.

Verse 7. In the which ye also walked sometime] When ye were in your unconverted state, ye served divers lusts and pleasures. **See Clarke on “^{<503>}Romans 7:5”, and “^{<504>}Ephesians 2:2”.**

Verse 8. But now ye also put on all these] See Clarke on

“^{<402>}**Ephesians 4:22**”. Being now converted, sin had no more dominion over them.

Anger, wrath, &c.] They had not only lived in the evils mentioned ^{<502>}**Colossians 3:5**, but also in those enumerated here; and they had not only laid aside the former, but they had laid aside the latter also. They retained no bosom, no easily besetting, sin. They were risen with Christ, and they sought the things which were above.

Blasphemy] The word seems here to mean *injurious* and *calumnious speaking*.

Verse 9. Lie not one to another] Do not deceive each other; speak the truth in all your dealings; do not say, “My goods are so and so,” when you know them to be otherwise; do not undervalue the goods of your neighbour, when your conscience tells you that you are not speaking the truth. *It is naught, it is naught, saith the buyer; but afterwards he boasteth*; i.e. he underrates his neighbour’s property till he gets him persuaded to part with it for less than its worth; and when he has thus got it, he boasts what a good bargain he has made. Such a knave speaks not truth with his neighbour.

Ye have put off the old man] See Clarke’s notes on “^{<506>}**Romans 6:6**”; and particularly on ^{<511>}**Romans 13:11-14**. Ye have received a religion widely different from that ye had before; act according to its principles.

Verse 10. And have put on the new man] See on ^{<520>}**Romans 12:1, 2**.

Is renewed in knowledge] IGNORANCE was the grand characteristic of the heathen state; KNOWLEDGE, of the Christian. The utmost to which heathenism could pretend was a certain knowledge of nature. How far this went, and how much it fell short of the truth, may be seen in the writings of *Aristotle* and *Pliny*. Christianity reveals God himself, the author of nature; or, rather, God has revealed himself, in the Christian system with which he has blessed mankind. Christianity teaches a man the true knowledge both of himself and of God; but it is impossible to know one’s self but in the light of God; the famous *γνωθι σεαυτον*, *know thyself*, was practicable only under the Christian religion.

After the image of him that created him] We have already seen that God made man in his own image; and we have seen in *what* that *image*

consisted. See Clarke's notes on "⁴⁻⁰¹⁰²⁶Genesis 1:26", and on ⁴⁻⁰⁰²³Ephesians 4:23,24. Does not the apostle refer here to the case of an artist, who wishes to make a perfect resemblance of some exquisite form or person? God in this case is the artist, man is the copy, and God himself the *original* from which this copy is to be taken. Thus, then, man is made by his *Creator*, not according to the image or likeness of any *other being*, but according to *his own*; the image **του κτισαντος**, of the Creator. And as the Divine nature cannot exist in *forms* or *fashions*, moral qualities alone are those which must be produced. Hence the apostle, interpreting the words of Moses, says that the image in which man was made, and in which he must be *remade*, **ανακαινουμενον**, *made anew*, consists in *knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness*.

Verse 11. Where there is neither Greek nor Jew] In which new creation no inquiry is made what *nation* the persons belonged to, or from what *ancestry* they had sprung, whether in *Judea* or *Greece*.

Circumcision nor uncircumcision] Nor is their peculiar form of religion of any consideration, whether *circumcised* like the *Jews*, or *uncircumcised* like the *heathens*.

Barbarian, Scythian] Nor whether of the more or less tractable of the nations of the world; for although *knowledge*, and the most refined and sublime knowledge, is the object to be attained, yet, under the teaching and influence of the blessed Spirit, the most dull and least informed are perfectly capable of comprehending this Divine science, and becoming wise unto salvation.

Bond nor free] Nor does the particular *state* or *circumstances* in which a man may be found, either help him to or exclude him from the benefit of this religion; the *slave* having as good a title to *salvation by grace* as the *freeman*.

But Christ is all, and in all.] All *mankind* are his creatures, all *conditions* are disposed and regulated by his providence, and all *human* beings are equally purchased by his blood. He alone is the source whence all have proceeded, and to him alone all must return. He is the Maker, Preserver, Saviour, and Judge of all men.

Verse 12. Put on-as the elect of God] As the principal design of the apostle was to show that God had *chosen the Gentiles*, and *called* them to

the same privileges as the Jews, and intended to make them as truly his people as the Jews ever were, he calls them the *elect* or *chosen* of God; and as the Jews, who were formerly the *elect*, were still *beloved*, and called to be *holy*, so he calls the Colossians *beloved*, and shows them that *they* are called with the same *holy calling*.

Bowels of mercies, &c.] Be merciful, not in *act* merely, but in *spirit* and *affection*. In all cases of this kind let your *heart* dictate to your *hand*; be *clothed* with *bowels of mercy*-let your tenderest feelings come in contact with the miseries of the distressed as soon as ever they present themselves. Though I know that to *put on*, and to be *clothed with*, are figurative expressions, and mean to *assume* such and such characters and *qualities*; yet there may be a higher meaning here. The apostle would have them to *feel* the *slightest touch* of another's misery; and, as their clothes are put over their body, so their tenderest feeling should be always within the reach of the miserable. Let your feelings be at hand, and feel and commiserate as soon as touched. See Clarke on "~~4:1~~ Ephesians 4:2". Instead of οἰκτιρισμὸν *mercies*, in the *plural*, almost every MS. of importance, with many of the fathers, read οἰκτιρισμῶν, *bowels of mercy*, in the *singular*. This various reading makes scarcely any alteration in the sense.

Verse 13. Forbearing one another] Avoid all occasions of irritating or provoking each other.

Forgiving one another] If ye receive offence, be instantly ready to forgive on the first acknowledgment of the fault.

Even as Christ forgave you] Who required no satisfaction, and sought for nothing in you but the broken, contrite heart, and freely forgave you as soon as you returned to Him. No man should for a moment harbour ill will in his heart to any; but the offended party is not called actually to forgive, till the offender, with sorrow, acknowledges his fault. He should be *ready* to forgive, and while he is so, he can neither feel hatred nor malice towards the offender; but, as Christ does not forgive us till with penitent hearts we return unto him, acknowledging our offences, so those who have trespassed against their neighbour are not to expect any act of forgiveness from the person they have injured, till they acknowledge the offence.

Forgive, says the apostle, καθὼς καὶ ὁ χριστὸς *even as Christ forgave you*-show the same disposition and the same readiness to forgive your offending brethren, as Christ showed towards you.

Verse 14. And above all these things] **επι πασι δε τουτοις.** *Upon all, over all;* as the *outer garment* envelopes all the clothing, so let *charity* or *love* invest and encompass all the rest. Even *bowels of mercy* are to be set in motion by *love*; from *love* they derive all their *feeling*, and all their *power* and *promptitude* to action. Let this, therefore, be as the *upper garment*; the *surtout* that invests the whole man.

Which is the bond of perfectness.] Love to God and man is not only to *cover* all, but also to *unite* and *consolidate* the whole. It is therefore represented here under the notion of a *girdle*, by which all the rest of the clothing is *bound* close about the body. To love God with all the heart, soul, mind, and strength, and one's neighbour as one's self, is the *perfection* which the new covenant requires, and which the grace and Spirit of Christ work in every sincerely obedient, humble believer; and that very love, which is the fulfilling of the law and the *perfection* itself which the Gospel requires, is also the *bond* of that *perfection*. It is by love to God and man that love is to be preserved. *Love begets love*; and the more a man loves God and his neighbour, the more he is enabled to do so. Love, while properly exercised, is ever *increasing* and *reproducing* itself.

Instead of **τελειοτητος**, *perfection*, several reputable MSS., with the *Itala*, read **ενοτητος**, *unity*; but the former is doubtless the genuine reading.

Verse 15. And let the peace of God] Instead of **θεου**, *God*, **ξριστου**, *Christ*, is the reading of ABC*D*FG, several others, both the *Syriac*, the *Arabic* of Erpen, *Coptic*, *Æthopic*, *Armenian*, *Vulgate*, and *Itala*, with several of the *fathers*; on this evidence *Griesbach* has inserted it in the text.

Rule in your hearts] **βραβευετω.** Let the peace of Christ *judge*, *decide*, and *govern* in your hearts, as the *brabeus*, or judge, does in the Olympic contests. No heart is right with God where the *peace of Christ* does not rule; and the continual prevalence of the peace of Christ is the decisive proof that the heart *is* right with God. When a man loses his *peace*, it is an awful proof that he has lost something else; that he has given way to evil, and grieved the Spirit of God. While peace rules, all is safe.

In one body] Ye cannot have peace with God, in yourselves, nor among each other, unless ye continue in *unity*; and, as *one body*, continue in *connection* and *dependence* on him who is your only *head*: to this ye are *called*; it is a glorious state of salvation, and ye should be for ever *thankful* that ye are thus privileged.

Verse 16. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly] I believe the apostle means that the Colossians should be *well instructed in the doctrine of Christ*; that it should be their constant study; that it should be frequently preached, explained, and enforced among them; and that *all the wisdom* comprised in it should be well understood. Thus the doctrine of God would dwell richly, that is, abundantly, among them. But there appears to be here an allusion to the *Shechinah*, or symbol of the Divine presence, which *dwelt* in the *tabernacle* and first *temple*; and to an opinion common among the Jews, which is thus expressed in *Melchita*, fol. 38, 4: ⲙⲧ ⲏⲣⲱⲥⲏⲥ ⲙⲱⲓⲙ ⲓ ⲃ ⲏⲙ [ⲙⲧ ⲏⲏⲃⲧⲱ; *In whatever place the LAW is, there the SHECHINAH is present with it.* Nor is this a vain supposition; wherever God's word is seriously read, heard, or preached, *there* is God himself; and in that Church or religious society where the truth of God is proclaimed and conscientiously believed, there is the *constant dwelling of God*. Through bad *pointing* this verse is not very intelligible; the several members of it should be distinguished thus: *Let the doctrine of Christ dwell richly among you; teaching and admonishing each other in all wisdom; singing with grace in your hearts unto the Lord, in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs.* This arrangement the original will not only bear, but it absolutely requires it, and is not sense without it. **See Clarke's note on ⲉⲑⲏⲥⲓⲁⲛ Ephesians 5:19**".

The *singing* which is here recommended is widely different from what is commonly used in most Christian congregations; a congeries of *unmeaning* sounds, associated to bundles of nonsensical, and often ridiculous, *repetitions*, which at once both deprave and disgrace the Church of Christ. *Melody*, which is allowed to be the most proper for devotional music, is now sacrificed to an exuberant *harmony*, which requires, not only many *different kinds of voices*, but *different musical instruments* to support it. And by these preposterous means the *simplicity* of the Christian worship is destroyed, and all *edification* totally prevented. And this kind of singing is amply proved to be very injurious to the personal piety of those employed in it; even of those who enter with a considerable share of humility and Christian meekness, how few continue *to sing with GRACE in their hearts unto the Lord?*

Verse 17. Whatsoever ye do in word or deed] Let your words be right, and your actions upright.

Do all in the name of the Lord Jesus] Begin with him, and end with him; invoke his name, and pray for his direction and support, in all that ye do; and thus every work will be crowned with all requisite success. Doing every thing in the name of God, and referring every thing to his glory, is as rational as it is pious. Could it be ever supposed that any person would begin a *bad* work in God's name? However, it is so. No people in the universe more strictly adhere to the *letter* of this advice than the *Mohammedans*; for they never undertake a work, eat meat, nor write a book, without prefacing all with:—

[Arabic]

Bismillahi, Arrahmani, Arraheemi;

“In the name of the most merciful and compassionate God.”

Not only books of *devotion*, but books on all *arts* and *sciences*, books of *tales* and *romances*, books of *poetry*, and those on the *elements* of reading, &c., begin thus; nay, it is prefixed to the [Arabic] *Lizit un Nissa*, one of the most abominable productions that ever came from the pen of man, and is precisely the same among the Mohammedans, as the infamous work of *Nicholas Chorier*, called *Elegantiae Latini Sermonis*, falsely attributed to *John Meursius*, has been among some called Christians. Of both, with a trifling hyperbole, it may be said: “Surely these books were written in hell, and the author of them must certainly be the devil.”

Giving thanks to God] Even *praises*, as well as *prayers*, must ascend to God through this *Mediator*. We have no authority to say that God will accept even our *thanksgiving*, unless it ascend to him through Christ Jesus.

Verse 18. Wives, submit yourselves] Having done with *general* directions, the apostle comes to *particular* duties, which are commonly called *relative*; because they only belong to persons in certain *situations*; and are not incumbent on all. No *woman* has the duty of a *wife* to perform but she who is one, and no *man* has the duty of a *husband* to perform but he who is married.

The directions here to wives, husbands, children, parents, servants, and masters, are so exactly the same in substance with those in ~~112~~ **Ephesians 5:22-33; 6:1-9**, that there is no need to repeat what has been said on those passages; and to the notes there the reader is requested to refer.

As it is fit in the Lord.] God commands it; and it is both *proper* and *decent*.

Verse 19. Be not bitter against them.] Wherever *bitterness* is, there *love* is wanting. And where love is wanting in the married life, there is hell upon earth.

Verse 20. Children, obey-in all things] That is, in *the Lord*-in every thing that your parents command you, which is not contrary to the will or word of God.

Verse 21. Fathers, provoke not] See Clarke's notes on "~~4005~~ Ephesians 6:4".

Verse 22. Servants, obey] See on ~~4005~~ Ephesians 6:5-8.

Verse 24. The reward of the inheritance] Here, ye have neither *lands* nor *property*; ye are *servants* or *slaves*; be not discouraged, ye have an inheritance in store; be faithful unto God and to your employers, and Christ will give you a heavenly inheritance.

Verse 25. But he that doeth wrong] It is possible for an unfaithful servant to wrong and defraud his master in a great variety of ways without being detected; but let all such remember what is here said: He that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he has done; God sees him, and will punish him for his breach of honesty and trust. Wasting, or not taking proper care of the goods of your master, is such a *wrong* as God will resent. He that is unfaithful in that which is *little*, will be unfaithful in *much*, if he have opportunity; and God alone is the defence against an unfaithful servant.

There is no respect] God neither *esteems* nor *despises* any man because of his *outward condition* and *circumstances*; for there is no respect of persons with him. Every man is, in the eye of God, what he is in his soul: if *holy*, loved; if *wicked*, despised and rejected.

COLOSSIANS

CHAPTER 4.

The duty of masters to their servants, 1. Continuance in prayer recommended, to which watchfulness and thanksgiving should be joined, 2. And to pray particularly for the success of the Gospel, 3, 4. Directions concerning walking wisely, redeeming of time, and godly conversation, 5, 6. He refers them to Tychius and Onesimus, whom he sends to them for particulars relative to his present circumstances, 7-9. Mentions the salutations of several then at Rome, of whom he gives some interesting particulars, 10-14. Sends his own salutations to the brethren in Laodicea, and to Nymphas and the Church at his house, 15. Directs this epistle to be read in the Church of the Laodiceans, and that to them to be read at Colosse, 16. Directions to Archippus relative to his ministry, 17. Concludes with salutations to the people at Colosse, to whom he sends his apostolical benediction, 18.

NOTES ON CHAP. 4.

Verse 1. Masters, give unto your servants] This verse should have been added to the preceding, to which it properly belongs; and this chapter should have begun with ^{<5104D>}**Colossians 4:2.**

That which is just and equal] As they are *bondmen* or *slaves* of whom the apostle speaks, we may at once see with what propriety this exhortation is given. The condition of *slaves* among the Greeks and Romans was wretched in the extreme; they could appeal to no law; and they could neither expect justice nor equity. The apostle, therefore, informs the proprietors of these slaves that they should act towards them both according to *justice* and *equity*; for God, their Master, required this of them, and would at last call them to account for their conduct in this respect. Justice and equity required that they should have proper food, proper raiment, due rest, and no more than moderate work. This is a lesson that all masters throughout the universe should carefully learn. Do not treat your servants as if God had made them of an inferior blood to yours.

Verse 2. Continue in prayer] This was the apostle's general advice to all; without this, neither wives, husbands, children, parents, servants, nor masters, could fulfil the duties which God, in their respective stations, required of them.

All might, power, and life come from God; his creatures are continually dependent upon him for all these: to earnest, persevering prayer, he has promised every supply; but he who prays not has no promise. How few *wives* feel it their duty to pray to God to give them grace to behave *as wives*! How few husbands pray for the grace suited to their situation, that they may be able to fulfill its duties! The like may be said of *children, parents, servants, and masters*. As every situation in life has its peculiar duties, trials, &c.; so to every situation there is peculiar grace appointed. No man can fulfil the duties of any station without the grace suited to that station. The grace suited to him, as a *member of society in general*, will not be sufficient for him as a husband, father, or master. Many proper marriages become unhappy in the end, because the parties have not earnestly besought God for the grace necessary for them as husbands and wives. This is the origin of family broils in general; and a proper attention to the apostle's advice would prevent them all.

Watch in the same] Be always on your guard; and when you have got the requisite grace by praying, take care of it, and bring it into its proper action by watchfulness; by which you will know *when*, and *where*, and *how* to apply it.

With thanksgiving] Being always grateful to God, who has called you into such a state of salvation, and affords you such abundant means and opportunities to glorify him.

Verse 3. Praying also for us] Let the success and spread of the Gospel be ever dear to you; and neglect not to pray fervently to God that it may have free course, run, and be glorified.

A door of utterance] *θυραν του λογου*. The word *θυρα*, which commonly signifies a *door*, or such like entrance into a house or passage through a wall, is often used metaphorically for an *entrance* to any business, *occasion* or *opportunity* to commence or perform any particular work. So in ^{<44-47>}**Acts 14:27**: *The DOOR of faith is opened to the Gentiles*; i.e. there is now an *opportunity* of preaching the Gospel to the nations of the earth. ^{<61-69>}**1 Corinthians 16:9**: *A great and effectual DOOR is opened*

unto me; i.e. I have now a glorious *opportunity* of preaching the truth to the people of Ephesus. ^{<41212>}**2 Corinthians 2:12**: *When I came to Troas-a DOOR was opened unto me; I had a fine opportunity of preaching Christ crucified at that place. So, here, the θυρατου λογου, which we translate door of utterance, signifies an occasion, opportunity, or entrance, for the doctrine of the Gospel. The same metaphor is used by the best Latin writers. Cicero, xiii. Ep. 10: Amicitia fores aperiuntur; the DOORS of friendship are opened-there is now an opportunity of reconciliation. And Ovid, Amor. iib. iii., Eleg. xii. ver. 12:—*

JANUA per nostras est adaperata manus.

“The gate is opened by our hands.”

Of this use of the word among the Greek writers *Schleusner* gives several examples. See also ^{<41118>}**Revelation 3:8**, where the word is used in the same sense. To multiply examples would be needless; the apostle excites them to pray, not that *a door of utterance*, i.e. a *readiness and fluency of speech*, may be given to him and his fellow labourers, but that they may have an *opportunity of preaching the doctrine* of Christ; and so the term **λογος** is to be understood here, as well as in many other places of the New Testament, in most of which we have either lost or obscured its meaning by translating it *word* instead of *doctrine*.

The mystery of Christ] The Gospel, which had been *hidden* from all former times, and which revealed that purpose long hidden in the Divine councils, that the Gentiles should be called to enjoy the same privileges with the Jews.

For which I am also in bonds] He was suffering under Jewish malice, and for preaching this very mystery; for they could not bear to hear announced, as from heaven, that the *Gentiles*, whom they considered eternally shut out from any participation of the Divine favour, should be made fellow heirs with them of the grace of life; much less could they bear to hear that *they* were about to be *reprobated*, and the Gentiles *elected* in their place. It was for asserting these things that they persecuted Paul at Jerusalem, so that to save his life he was obliged to appeal to Cæsar; and being taken to Rome, he was detained a prisoner till his case was fully heard; and he was a prisoner at Rome on this very account when he wrote this Epistle to the Colossians. See **Clarke’s note on** ^{<51024>}**Colossians 1:24**’.

Verse 4. That I may make it manifest] It was a *mystery*, and he wished to make it *manifest*-to lay it *open*, and make all men *see* it.

Verse 5. Walk in wisdom] Act wisely and prudently in reference to them who are *without*-who yet continue unbelieving Gentiles or persecuting Jews.

The Church of Christ was considered an *enclosure*; a *field*, or *vineyard*, well hedged or walled. Those who were not members of it, were considered *without*; i.e. not under that especial protection and defence which the true followers of Christ had. This has been since called "The pale of the Church," from *palus*, a *stake*; or, as Dr. Johnson defines it, "A narrow piece of wood, joined above and below to a rail, to enclose grounds." As to be a Christian was essential to the salvation of the soul, so to be in the Church of Christ was essential to the being a Christian; therefore it was concluded that "there was no salvation out of the pale of the Church." Now this is true in all places where the doctrines of Christianity are preached; but when *one description* of people professing Christianity, with their own peculiar mode of worship and creed, arrogate to themselves, *exclusive of all others*, the title of THE Church; and then, on the ground of a maxim which is true in itself, but falsely understood and applied by them, assert that, as they are THE *Church*, and there is no Church besides, then you must be one of them, believe as they believe, and worship as they worship, or you will be infallibly damned; I say, when this is asserted, every man who feels he has an immortal spirit is called on to examine the pretensions of such spiritual monopolists. Now, as the Church of Christ is formed on the foundation of the *prophets* and *apostles*, Jesus Christ being the chief corner stone, the doctrines of this Christian Church must be sought for in the *sacred Scriptures*. As to *fathers*, *councils*, and human authorities of all kinds, they are, in this question, lighter than vanity; the *book of God* alone must decide. The Church, which has been so hasty to condemn all others, and, by its own *soi disant* or self-constituted authority, to make itself the determiner of the fates of men, dealing out the mansions of glory to its partisans, and the abodes of endless misery to all those who are out of its antichristian and inhuman *pale*; this Church, I say, has been brought to this standard, and proved by the Scriptures to be fallen from the faith of God's elect, and to be most awfully and dangerously corrupt; and to be *within its pale*, of all others professing Christianity, would be the most likely means of endangering the final salvation of the soul. Yet even in it many sincere and upright persons may be found, who,

in spirit and practice, belong to the true Church of Christ. Such persons are to be found of all religious persuasions, and in all sorts of Christian societies.

Redeeming the time.] See Clarke on “^{<-40516>}Ephesians 5:16”.

Verse 6. Let your speech be alway with grace, seasoned with salt] Let it be such as has a tendency to oppose and preserve from the corruption of sin. The rabbins say: “He who, in prayer, omits any word, should begin again at the beginning; for he who does not is like boiled pottage, in which there is no salt.” *Berachoth*, fol. 34, 1. Let all your conversation be such as may tend to exemplify and recommend Christianity; let it not only be *holy*, but wise, gracious, and intelligent. *A harsh method of proposing or defending* the doctrines of Christianity only serves to repel men from those doctrines, and from the way of salvation. *Salt*, from its use in preserving food from corruption, and rendering it both savoury and wholesome, has always been made the emblem of *wisdom*. The word has been also used to express in composition or conversation what is terse, comprehensive, useful, elegant, and impressive. The term *Attic salt* has been used to express some of the principal beauties of the Greek tongue; of such beauties the Gospel of Christ has an endless store. See Clarke on “^{<-40513>}Matthew 5:13”, and “^{<-40250>}Mark 9:50”.

How ye ought to answer every man.] That your discourse may be so judiciously managed, that ye may discern how to treat the prejudices and meet the objections both of *Jews* and *Gentiles*.

Verse 7. All my state shall Tychicus] See the note on ^{<-40521>}Ephesians 6:21. Tychicus well knew the apostle’s zeal and perseverance in preaching the Gospel, his sufferings on that account, his success in converting both Jews and Gentiles, and the converts which were made in Cæsar’s household; he could give these to the Colossians in ample detail, and some of them it would not have been prudent to commit to writing.

Verse 8. That he might know your estate] Instead of *ἵνα γνῶ τα περι ὑμῶν*, that HE may know YOUR affairs, ABD*FG, many others, with the *Æthiopic, Itala, Theodoret, and Damascenus*, read *ἵνα γνῶτε τα περι ἡμῶν*, that YE may know OUR affairs; which is probably the true reading. Tychicus was sent to them, not to know their affairs, but with Onesimus, to carry this epistle and make the apostle’s state known to them, and comfort

their hearts by the good news which he brought. The next verse confirms this meaning.

Verse 9. With Onesimus-who is one of you.] Onesimus was a native of some part of Phrygia, if not of Colosse itself; and being lately converted to the Christian faith by the instrumentality of the apostle, he would be able, on this account, to give them satisfactory information concerning the apostle's state, which would be doubly acceptable to them as he was their countryman. See the *Epistle to Philemon*.

All things which are done here.] FG, the *Vulgate, Itala, Jerome,* and *Bede,* add here *πραττομενα*, *what is done*, which we have supplied in *Italics* in our translation. These brethren could give an account of the transactions at Rome, relative to the apostle and Christianity, which it might not be prudent for him to commit to writing. **See Clarke on “<51007>Colossians 4:7”.** The reign of Nero. was not only cruel, but suspicious, jealous, and dangerous.

Verse 10. Aristarchus my fellow prisoner] Concerning Aristarchus, see <41929>**Acts 19:29; 20:4; 27:2;** and see the note on this latter place. Aristarchus and Epaphras are mentioned as saluters in this epistle, and in that to Philemon written at the same time; but here he is said to be a *prisoner*, and Epaphras not. In that to Philemon, Epaphras is called a *prisoner*, and Aristarchus not. One of them is wrong, though it is uncertain which; unless both were prisoners. See *Wall's Crit. Notes*. As Aristarchus had been a zealous and affectionate adherent to St. Paul, and followed him in all his journeys, ministering to him in prison, and assisting him in preaching the Gospel in Rome, he might have been imprisoned on this account. We need not suppose that both he and Epaphras were imprisoned *at* the same time; *about* the same time they might be imprisoned, but it might be so ordered by the providence of God that when Aristarchus was imprisoned Epaphras was at liberty, and while Epaphras was in prison Aristarchus was at liberty. This is a very possible and easily to be conceived case.

Marcus] See the account of this person, <41539>**Acts 15:39.** Though there had been some difference between the apostle and this *Mark*, yet from this, and <50411>**2 Timothy 4:11,** we find that they were fully reconciled, and that Mark was very useful to St. Paul in the work of the ministry.

Touching whom ye received commandments] What these were we cannot tell; it was some private communication which had been previously sent to the Colossian Church.

Verse 11. Jesus, which is called Justus] Jesus, Joshua, or Jehoshua, was his name among his countrymen the Jews; *Justus* was the name which he bore among the Greeks and Romans.

These only] That is, only Aristarchus Marcus, and Jesus Justus, who were formerly Jews or proselytes; for **οι οντες εκ περιτομης**, *they were of the circumcision*, and assisted the apostle in preaching the Gospel. There were others who did preach Christianity, but they did it from envy and strife, in order to add affliction to the apostle's bonds. It is evident, therefore, that St. Peter was not now at Rome, else he certainly would have been mentioned in this list; for we cannot suppose that he was in the list of those who preached Christ in an exceptionable way, and from impure and unholy motives: indeed, there is no evidence that St. Peter ever saw Rome. And as it cannot be *proved* that he ever was bishop or pope of that city, the *keystone* of the triumphal arch of the pope of Rome is pulled out; this building, therefore, of his *supremacy*, cannot stand.

Verse 12. Epaphras, who is one of you] A native of some part of Phrygia, and probably of Colosse itself.

A servant of Christ] A minister of the Gospel.

Labouring fervently for you] **αγωνιζομενος**. *Agonizing*; very properly expressed by our translators, *labouring fervently*.

That ye may stand perfect and complete] **ινα στητε τελειοι και πεπληρωμενοι**. That ye may stand firm, perfectly instructed, and fully persuaded of the truth of those doctrines which have been taught you as the revealed will of God: this I believe to be the meaning of the apostle.

Instead of **πεπληρωμενοι**, *complete* or *filled up*, almost all the MSS. of the Alexandrian recension, which are considered the most authentic and correct, have **πεπληροφορημενοι**, *that ye may be fully persuaded*. The word **πληροφορια** signifies such a complete persuasion of the certainty of a thing, as leaves the mind which has it neither room nor inclination to doubt; and **πληροφορεω**, the verb, has the same meaning, viz., to be thus persuaded, or to persuade thus, by demonstrative argumentation and exhibition of unquestionable facts.

This is such a persuasion as the Spirit of God, by means of the Gospel, gives to every sincere and faithful man; and from which arises the solid happiness of the genuine Christian. They who argue against it, prove, at least, that they have not got it.

Verse 13. He hath a great zeal for you] Instead of ζηλον πολυν, much zeal, ABCD**, several others, with *versions* and *fathers*, read πολυν πονον, *much labour*; they are here nearly of the same meaning, though the latter appears to be the better and genuine reading.

Laodicea, and-Hierapolis] These were both cities of Phrygia, between which Colosse, or the city of *Colassa*, was situated. See **Colossians 2:1**. The latter was called *Hierapolis*, or the *holy city*, from the multitude of its temples. Apollo, Diana, Æsculapius, and Hygeia, were all worshipped here, as appears by the coins of this city still extant.

Verse 14. Luke, the beloved physician] This is generally supposed to be the same with Luke the evangelist. See the preface to the notes on this gospel. Some, however, suppose them to be different persons; because, where it is evident that Luke the evangelist is meant, he never has more than his simple name Luke; and because the apostle is supposed to intend a different person here, he adds, ο ιατρος ο αγαπητος, the beloved physician. The word ιατρος signifies a *healer*, and must not be restricted to *physician*, in the sense in which we use that word; he was surgeon, physician, and dispenser of medicines, &c., for all these were frequently combined in the same person.

Verse 15. Salute-Nymphas, and the Church-in his house.] This person, and his whole family, which probably was very numerous, appear to have received the Gospel; and it seems that, for their benefit and that of his neighbours, he had opened his house for the worship of God. In those primitive times there were no *consecrated* places, for it was supposed that the simple setting apart of any place for the worship of God was a sufficient consecration. See of those domestic churches, **Romans 16:5**; **1 Corinthians 16:19**.

Verse 16. Cause that it be read also in the Church of the Laodiceans] That is: Let a copy be taken, and sent to them, that it may be read there also. This appears to have been a regular custom in the apostolic Church.

That ye likewise read the epistle from Laodicea] Some suppose that this was an epistle sent from Laodicea to the apostle, which he now sent by Aristarchus to the Colossians, that they might peruse it; that thereby they might see the propriety of sending a copy of his epistle to them, to the Laodicean Church. Many eminent critics are of this opinion, which appears to me to be both forced and far fetched. Others think that the Epistle to the Ephesians is the epistle in question, and that it was originally directed to them, and not to the Ephesians. **See Clarke's notes on** “^{<4010>}**Ephesians 1:1**”, &c. But others, equally learned, think that there was an epistle, different from that to the Ephesians, sent by St. Paul to the Laodiceans, which is now lost. There was an epistle under this direction in the times of Theodoret and Jerome, for both of them mention it; but the latter mentions it as apocryphal, *Legunt quidam et ad Laodicenses Epistolam, sed ab omnibus exploditur*; “Some read an Epistle to the Laodiceans, but it is exploded by all.” The seventh Œcumenic council, held in 787, states that the ancients allowed that there was an epistle with this direction, but that all the orthodox rejected it as supposititious.

An epistle *ad Laodicenses* is still extant in the Latin language, a very ancient copy of which is in the library *Sancti Albani Andegavensis*, St. Alban's of Anjou. Hutter has translated it into Greek, but his translation is of no authority. Calmet has published this epistle, with various readings from the above MS. I shall subjoin it at the end of this epistle, and give my opinion relative to its use and authenticity. A copy of this epistle stands in this place as a portion of Divine revelation in one of my own MSS. of the Vulgate.

Verse 17. Say to Archippus] Who this person was we cannot tell; there have been various conjectures concerning him; some think he was bishop, or overseer of the Church at Colosse, in the absence of Epaphras. Whatever he was, it has been supposed that he had been remiss in discharging the duties of his office; and hence this direction of the apostle, which appears here in the light of a *reprehension*. But if the same person be meant as in the Epistle to Philemon, ^{<5010>}**Philemon 1:2**, whom St. Paul calls his *fellow labourer* and *fellow soldier*, it cannot be supposed that any reproof is here intended; for, as the Epistle to the Colossians, and that to Philemon, were evidently written about the end of the year 62, Archippus could not be a fellow labourer and fellow soldier of the apostle at Rome, and yet a delinquent at Colosse at the same time. It is more likely, therefore, that the words of the apostle convey no censure, but are rather

intended to stir him up to farther diligence, and to encourage him in the work, seeing he had so much false doctrine and so many false teachers to contend with.

Verse 18. The salutation by the hand of me Paul.] The preceding part of the epistle was written by a scribe, from the mouth of the apostle: this, and what follows, was written by the hand of St. Paul himself. A similar distinction we find, ^{<4662>}**1 Corinthians 16:21**, and in ^{<5317>}**2 Thessalonians 3:17**; and this, it seems, was the means by which the apostle authenticated every epistle which he sent to the different Churches. *The salutation of Paul with mine own hand, which is the token in every epistle, so I write.*

Remember my bonds] See what proof ye have of the truth of the Gospel; I am in bonds on this account; I suffer patiently, yea, exult in the Lord Jesus, so perfectly am I upheld by the grace of the Gospel. Remember my bonds, and take courage. How eloquent were these concluding words! That such a man should be in bonds for the Gospel, was the fullest proof of the truth of the Gospel. A cunningly devised fable could not have imposed on Saul of Tarsus; he was fully satisfied of the truth of the doctrines of Christianity; he proclaimed them as truths from heaven; and for their sake cheerfully suffered the loss of all things. The bonds of such a man are a plenary proof of the truth of the doctrines for which he was bound.

Grace be with you.] May you still possess the favour and blessing of our Lord Jesus Christ: the apostle ends, as he began, this epistle. Without the grace of Christ they could not have *become* a Church; without this grace they could not *continue* to be one.

Amen] This is omitted by the most ancient and correct MSS.

The subscriptions, as usual, are various and uncertain:—

The common GREEK text has, *To the Colossians, written from Rome by Tychicus and Onesimus.*

The Epistle to the Colossians; written at Rome, and sent by the hand of Tychicus. SYRIAC.

To the Colossians. ÆTHIOPIC.

In the *Vulgate* there is no subscription.

The end of the epistle; and it was written from Rome, and sent by the hand of Tychicus and Onesimus. Praise be to God for ever and ever; and may his mercy be upon us. AMEN. ARABIC.

Written from Athens by Tychicus, and Onesimus, and Mark, his disciples. COPTIC.

The MSS. are not less various than the *versions*:

To the Colossians.-That to the Colossians is completed; that to the Philippians begins.-That to the Colossians is finished; the First Epistle to the Thessalonians begins.-To the Colossians, from Rome.-Written to the Colossians from Rome.-Written from Rome by Tychicus, and Timotheus, and Onesimus.-Written by Paul and Timothy, and sent by Tychicus, and Onesimus.

That the epistle was written from *Rome* there is little cause to doubt: that Timothy might be the *scribe* is very probable, because it appears he was at Rome with the apostle in the same year in which this epistle was written. See ^{<5169>}**Philippians 2:19**. And that it was sent by *Tychicus* and *Onesimus*, seems evident from the 8th and 9th verses of this chapter. {^{<5108>}**Colossians 4:8,9**}

The common subscription has the consent of the greater number of the most recent and comparatively recent MSS., but this is not, in general, a proof of authenticity.

In the note on “^{<51046>}**Colossians 4:16**”, I promised to subjoin what is called the *Epistle to the Laodiceans*: I give it here from the best copies, and add a literal translation, that the curious, whether learned or unlearned, may have what some have believed to be authentic, and what has doubtless existed, in one form or other, from a very remote antiquity.

EPISTOLA PAULI APOSTOLI
AD LAODICENSES,

1. Paulus, Apostolus, non ab
hominibus, neque per hominem,
sed per Jesum Christum. Fratibus
qui estis (sunt) Laodiceæ.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE
APOSTLE TO THE
LAODICEANS.

1. Paul, an apostle, not from men,
nor by man, but by Jesus Christ, to
the brethren which are in

2. Gratia vobis et pax a Deo Patre nostro, et Domino Jesu Christo.

3. Gratias ago Christo per omnem orationem meam, quod permanentes estis, et perseverantes in operibus bonis, promissionem expectantes in die iudicii.

4. Neque disturbent (deficiunt) vos quorundam vaniloquia insimulantium veritatem (insanientium) ut vos avertant a veritate evangelii, quod a me prædicatur.

5. Et nunc faciet Deus, ut qui sunt ex me ad perfectionem veritatis evangelii sint deservientes, et benignitatem operum facientes quæ sunt salutis vitæ æternæ.

6. Et nunc palam sunt vincula mea, quæ patior in Christo; in quibus lætor et gaudeo.

7. Et hoc mihi est ad salutem perpetuam, quod (ipsum) factum est in orationibus vestris, et administrante Spiritu Sancto, sive per vitam, sive per mortem.

8. Est enim mihi vivere vita in Christo, et mori gaudium (et lucrum.)

9. Et ipse Dominus noster in vobis faciet misericordiam suam, ut eandem dilectionem habeatis; et sitis unanimes.

10. ¶ Ergo, dilectissimi, ut audistis præsentiam Domini, ita sentite (retinete) et facite in timore; (Domini;) et erit vobis vita in

Laodicea.

2. Grace be to you, and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

3. I give thanks to Christ in all my prayers, that ye continue and persevere in good works; waiting for the promise in the day of judgment.

4. Be not troubled with the vain speeches of certain who pretend to the truth, that they may draw away your hearts from the truth of the Gospel which was preached by me.

5. And may God grant that those who are of me, may be led forward to the perfection of the truth of the Gospel, and perform the benignity of works which *become* the salvation of eternal life.

6. And now my bonds are manifest, which I suffer in Christ, and in them I rejoice and am glad.

7. And this shall turn to my perpetual salvation, by means of your prayers and the assistance of the Holy Spirit, whether they be for life or for death.

8. For my life is to live in Christ; and to die will be joyous.

9. And may our Lord himself grant you his mercy, that ye may have the same love, and be of one mind.

10. Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have heard of the coming of the Lord, so think and act in the fear

æternum:

11. Est enim Dominus qui operatur in vobis:

12. Et facite sine peccato quæcunque fæitis, (sine reatu,) et quod est optimum.

13. Dilectissimi, gaudete in Domino Jesu Christo, et cavete omnes sordes (sordidos) in omni lucro.

14. Omnes petitiones vestræ sint palam apud Deum.

15. Estote firmi in sensu Christi et quæ integra, et vera, et pudica, et casta, et justa, et amabilia sunt, facite.

16. Et quæ audistis, et accepistis, in corde retinete; et erit vobis pax.

17. Salutant vos omnes sancti.

18. Salutate omnes fratres in osculo sancto.

19. Gratia Domini nostri Jesu Christi cum spiritu vestro. Amen.

20. Et hanc facite legi Colossensibus; et eam quæ est Colossensium vobis.

Ad Laodisenses scripta fuit e Roma, per Tychieum et Onesimum.

of the Lord, and it shall be to you eternal life.

11. For it is the Lord that worketh in you.

12. Whatsoever you do, do it without sin, and do what is best.

13. Beloved, rejoice in the Lord Jesus Christ, and beware of filthy lucre.

14. Let all your prayers be manifest before God.

15. And be firm in the sentiments you have of Christ. And whatsoever is perfect, and true, and modest, and chaste, and just, and amiable, that do.

16. And whatsoever ye have heard and received retain in your hearts, and it shall tend to your peace.

17. All the saints salute you.

18. Salute all the brethren with a holy kiss.

19. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with your spirit. Amen.

20. And cause this epistle to be read to the Colossians; and that to the Colossians to be read to you.

To the Laodiceans, written from Rome, by Tychicus and Onesimus.

Such is the composition which pretends to be the *Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Laodiceans*, and of which I have endeavoured to give a literal version; though even with the assistance of the various readings of the Anjou MS., which I have included in brackets, I found this difficult, so

as to preserve any sense. Elias Hutter has published it after the Epistle to the Colossians, as if it were the genuine production of the apostle to whom it was attributed; and has taken the pains to exhibit it in twelve languages, viz.: Syriac, Hebrew, Greek, Latin, German, Bohemian, Italian, Spanish, French, English, Danish, and Polish. All, the *Latin* excepted, appear to be of his own composing. To criticise them would be lost labour; the *Greek* is too bald to be the production of any remote age, and as to the *English*, no Englishman can understand it. The editor deserves the strongest reprehension, because he has associated it with the genuine epistles of St. Paul, without a single note of its spuriousness.

As to its being a work of St. Paul, little or nothing need be said; its barrenness of meaning, poverty of style, incoherency of manner, and total want of design and object, are a sufficient refutation of its pretensions. It is said to be the work of some *heretics* of ancient times: this is very unlikely, as there is no heresy, ever broached in the Christian Church, that could derive any support from any thing found in this epistle. It is a congeries of *scraps*, very injudiciously culled, here and there, from St. Paul's epistles; without arrangement, without connection, and, as they stand here, almost without sense. It is a poor, wretched tale, in no danger of ever being denominated even a *cunningly devised fable*. It should keep no company but that of the pretended *Epistles of Paul to Seneca*, to which I have in other cases referred, and of which I have given my opinion.

Should it be asked: "Why I have introduced it here?" I answer: To satisfy the curious reader, and to show how little ground there is for the opinion of some, that this epistle is of any importance; and to prove how miserably forgery itself succeeds when it endeavours to *add to* or *corrupt* the word of God. The sacred writings are of such a *peculiar character* that it is utterly impossible to *imitate* them with any kind of success. They bear, deeply impressed, the seal of infinite wisdom—a seal which no human art can counterfeit. This is the criterion by which the spurious gospels and apocryphal writings in general have been judged and detected; and this *heavenly stamp*, under the care of Divine Providence, will continue to be their chief preservative, as long as the sun and moon shall endure.

Finished correcting for a new edition, Dec. 16th, 1831. -A. C.