

## Colossians 1:1

### THE ARGUMENT

God having a church planted in the city of Colosse, (by some since called Chone), situated at the conflux of the rivers Meander and Lycus, in the neighbourhood of Laodicea and Hierapolis, Col 4:13, in Phrygia of the lesser Asia; whether at first only by the preaching of Epaphras, one of them who was *a servant of Christ, and faithful minister*, Col 1:7 4:12; or by Paul himself, who (we learn from Luke that accompanied him) *had gone throughout Phrygia*, Ac 16:6, and again, *over all the country of Phrygia in order*, Ac 18:23, having staid for a season in Asia, where he wrought miracles, and was complained of for turning away much people from idolatry *almost throughout all Asia*, Ac 19:11,22,26; we may leave undetermined. But whoever was God's prime instrument in planting the gospel here, upon Paul's being advertised by Epaphras, (Col 1:8 Col 4:12 Phm 1:23), that weeds sprang up to choke the good seed; as he was careful for the Philippians during his imprisonment, so for the Colossians, that they might not be perverted by those Judaizing false teachers who mingled Moses with Christ, stickling for the necessity of abrogated ceremonies to salvation, Col 2:4,8, &c., varnishing their doctrines with notions of vain or abused philosophy, did seek to introduce a superstitious worship grounded on human traditions, Col 2:8,18, &c.; but, reposing all their hope of salvation in Christ alone, persevere in that doctrine they had received according to his mind, and in the practice of real holiness with heavenly affections, both personally and relatively in heart and life, craving help of God; unto whom, having blessed God for the grace wrought in them, he doth recommend them in his own and brethren's salutations, contracting as it were the matter he had more fully written to the Ephesians, that Epistle and this, as the Evangelists, explaining each other.

### Chapter Summary

Col 1:1,2 After saluting the saints at Colosse,  
Col 1:3-8 Paul testifieth his thankfulness to God for the good account he had heard of their faith and love,  
Col 1:9-14 and his continual prayers for their improvement in spiritual knowledge, right practice, and thanksgiving to God for the benefits of redemption by his Son.

Col 1:15-20 He showeth them the exalted nature and mediatorial office of Christ,  
Col 1:21,22 by whom they, who were once enemies, were now reconciled, if they continued true to the gospel,  
Col 1:23-29 whereof he Paul was made a minister to

preach to the Gentiles.

Ver. 1. Paul; he who of a persecutor was become a preacher, and that amongst the Gentiles laid aside his Hebrew name Saul and made use of this, which was more familiar amongst the Gentiles, viz. *Paul*, Ac 13:2,3,9.

*An apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God;* one of those extraordinary persons immediately deputed by the special command of our Lord himself, with sovereign authority to preach the gospel, and establish his church, which is the highest charge God ever gave to men, Mt 10:2 Lu 6:13 1Co 12:28 Ga 1:12: See Poole on "Eph 1:1". See Poole on "Eph 4:11".

*And Timotheus our brother;* he joins Timothy, as elsewhere Sosthenes, 1Co 1:1, by the title of *brother*, as being of the same faith, labouring in one and the same work, which might be more for their satisfaction.

### Colossians 1:2

Ver. 2. To the saints: See Poole on "Php 1:1".

*And faithful brethren in Christ:* See Poole on "Php 4:21".

*Which are at Colosse:* see the Argument: (See Poole on "Col 1:1".)

*Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ:* See Poole on "Eph 1:2", and See Poole on "Php 1:2".

### Colossians 1:3

Ver. 3. We give thanks to God: See Poole on "Php 1:3". He doth here take in Timothy and others, in acknowledging of God's grace to them, which might express his great good-will to them.

*And the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ;* describing God, to whom they render thanks both absolutely and relatively, as the Father of Jesus Christ,

according to both natures: See Poole on "2Co 1:3", and See Poole on "Eph 1:3".

*Praying always for you;* always when they did address themselves to God by prayer making mention of them, as he also wrote to the Philippians: See Poole on "Php 1:3,4".

#### Colossians 1:4

Ver. 4. He instanceth in principal graces, as the matter of his thanksgiving, beginning with *faith*, described and differenced from the special object of it, *Christ Jesus*, implying not a bare knowledge or assent, but a trust in him alone for salvation; so Ro 1:8. Understanding this saving grace with the consequent was wrought in them, as he heard it was in the Ephesians, and Philemon, it, was a cogent motive to engage them in solemn thankfulness to God: see on Eph 1:15, compared with Phm 1:5. He joins *love*, or charity, *to all the saints*, with faith to our Saviour, because they are in effect inseparable, there being no real embracing of Christ without loving of him, and all his members for his sake, Ga 5:6 2Ti 1:13: not as if believers were not to show love or charity to others, who are of the same nature, and so bear the image of God, for this Christ requires of them, Mt 5:44,45; but by how much the nearer any are brought to God by sanctification, by so much the more a special love is to be showed to them, as fellow citizens, of the household of God, and the household of faith, Ro 15:26, with Ga 6:10 Eph 2:19.

#### Colossians 1:5

Ver. 5. *For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven:* hope here, in this description of it, seems chiefly by a metonymy to be put for the glorious eternal salvation hoped for, Ro 8:24 Eph 1:18 which may also include that lively grace whereby we lay hold of eternal life contained in the promise, Tit 1:2. This indeed is set before believers here to encourage them to fly unto Christ for refuge, Heb 6:18, and reserved in heaven for them, 1Pe 1:4; which may well quicken in Christian love all the members of Christ in every condition; yet not with a mercenary of affection, 2Co 5:14, as if any by offices of Christian love to brethren could merit what is laid up for

those who exercise faith, love, and hope, but that God of his mere grace and undeserved love is pleased to reward such as diligently seek him, and thereby gives an exact evidence of his admirable liberality, Heb 11:6, which will abundantly weigh down those light afflictions they sustain here, 2Co 4:17.

*Whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel;* hereupon he puts them in mind of the means whereby they attained to this good hope when they first embraced the gospel, viz. by hearing, Ro 10:14, *the word of truth*, eminently, 2Co 6:7 Eph 1:13; not only because it is the word of Jesus Christ, who is *the truth, and the life*, Joh 14:6, but because the gospel (which is here put appositively) is the most excellent of all truths, surpassing all in philosophy, and the law, Joh 1:17.

### Colossians 1:6

Ver. 6. *Which is come unto you, as it is in all the world;* and passing the narrow bounds of Judea, unto all or most of the regions of the world, Col 1:23 Mt 24:14 Ac 2:5 Ro 1:8 10:18. So admirable was the progress of it east, west, north, and south, well nigh over the world as it was then known to the Greeks and Romans; whereupon the apostle might well write, Christ was *believed on in the world*, 1Ti 3:16: as Christ had said he was the light of the world, and, by a figure of part for the whole, would upon his death draw all men to him, Joh 12:32,46. Yet let not the Rhemists, or any other Romanist, think that the promulgation of the mysteries of the gospel then is any proof of the verity of the Romish religion in these latter ages, when by tyranny they impose for doctrines the traditions of men: they do not bring forth that genuine fruit which the Colossians did.

*And bringeth forth fruit;* viz. becoming the gospel, (as the Philipplians did, Php 1:27), and true repentance, Mt 3:8 13:23 Joh 15:16; and real holiness, abiding in the hearts and lives of men, and effectually working in them that believe it, Isa 55:10 Ac 5:14 Ac 6:7 12:24,16,17,20 1Th 2:13; which the practical religion of the papists generally bears no proportion to, being contrary to that.

*As it doth also in you, since the day ye heard of it;* which from the first receiving of the gospel, was found growing amongst the true converts at Colosse, though it should seem false teachers crept in to choke the good fruit with their tares.

*And knew the grace of God in truth;* however, they who had real experience of the grace of God and the excellency of the knowledge of Christ, Ps 3:8, did hold, bringing forth fruit in old age, Ps 92:14.

#### Colossians 1:7

Ver. 7. *As ye also learned of Epaphras:* to maintain the truth, it did much concern them to have a good opinion of him, who was an eminent instrument in communicating it to them, and therefore Paul doth here very opportunely commend Epaphras, in opposition to those false teachers, who likely might insinuate somewhat to his disparagement.

*Our dear fellow servant;* the respect they bare, and relation he stood in to them, being dearly beloved of him for his sincerity in promulgating the gospel; and being engaged with them in the service of the same Master, Col 4:7 Re 6:11.

*Who is for you a faithful minister of Christ;* his office, which he discharged with fidelity and affection unto them. He did with all honesty and integrity, as became one intrusted by his Master Christ, discharge what was incumbent on him for their good, Col 4:13 Joh 12:26 1Co 4:1,2 Eph 4:12 1Ti 4:6 Heb 13:17.

#### Colossians 1:8

Ver. 8. Having with kindness and delight reported to Paul and Timothy, &c., what a spiritually fervent affection, not moved by carnal considerations, but inwrought by the Spirit, Ga 5:6,22, arising from a renewed heart, 1Ti 1:5 2Ti 1:7, they had for Christ, for the gospel, the apostle, and all that did love the Lord Jesus in sincerity, Ga 6:10 1Pe 1:22,23.

#### Colossians 1:9

Ver. 9. *For this cause we also;* he doth here suggest the motive mentioned

in the precedent verses, viz. their faith and love, Col 1:4,5, and their special love to him, Col 1:8, why he and his brethren had them so much upon their hearts: See Poole on "Eph 1:15-17".

*Since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you:* it seems, from the time they were refreshed with these things they did (as he exhorts the Colossians here, Col 4:2) always upon all solemn occasions wait upon God for the Colossians' spiritual prosperity, as Paul himself did for the Philippians: See Poole on "Lu 18:1". See Poole on "Ro 12:12". See Poole on "Php 1:4". See Poole on "Php 1:9". See Poole on "1Th 5:17".

*And to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will;* and the subject matter of their instant prayer was, that they might attain to a more distinct, clear, and practical knowledge of the mind of God in Christ, and a greater measure of conformity to what he requires in the gospel, Col 1:6 Eph 5:15-17.

*In all wisdom;* in (rather than with) all necessary knowledge of the things of faith and manners, according to the prescript of the gospel: for sapience or wisdom doth properly respect the most excellent things, and such we learn most distinctly and satisfactorily from the revealed will of God, which we have in the Bible: this is that which Paul and other holy men spoke as taught of God amongst the perfect or grown Christians, in opposition both to the wisdom of man and of the world, 1Co 2:4,6, being agreeable to the will of God, Job 28:28 Pr 28:7 Joh 6:40 1Th 4:3. And with this Christian wisdom some would render the following words, in *spiritual prudence*, but if we render it *understanding*, or intelligence, it may be expounded to the same sense; for which there may be very good reason, for the philosopher doth sometimes by the Greek word mean that power or habit whereby men judge aright of things presented conducing to happiness, so as upon a due expense of circumstances to discern the good from the evil, the true from the false, and the real from the apparent: such a gift as Paul prays the Lord would give unto Timothy, 2Ti 2:7, compared with 1Co 1:5, that they might rightly distinguish between the simplicity and purity of the gospel, and those false glosses and colours that false teachers went about to sophisticate it with; not be without understanding his some who followed our Saviour, Mt 15:16 what course they should take in the practice of piety, but be able to discern the times, 1Ch 12:32, and other circumstances, Ps 39:1 50:23 Ec 5:1 Lu 8:18; for the ordering their actions aright, so as they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour

in all things, as becomes the gospel, Eph 1:8, with Php 1:10,27 Col 4:5 Tit 2:10. Ignorance then can be no mother of true devotion, nor the inventions of men acceptable service to the living God, whose will alone is the rule of his worship.

### Colossians 1:10

Ver. 10. *That ye might walk worthy of the Lord:* they prayed for the above mentioned gracious habits, that the Colossians might exercise them in a course of life as it becomes those who are effectually called by the gospel to be the sons of God, and the servants of Christ; suitable to the members of the body of Christ: See Poole on "Eph 4:1". See Poole on "Php 1:27"; compared with Ro 16:2 1Th 2:12 2Th 1:11. As the word God alone ordinary connotes the Father, so Lord doth Christ; answerable to whose wisdom, holiness, and example, Christians professing a relation to him, and expecting benefit by his purchase, should behave themselves; so that the papists cannot from this walking *worthy of the Lord* justly infer a merit of condignity, behaving ourselves as Christians being so far from any merit or desert of ours, that it is a debt, we being indispensably obliged to do so, practice being the end of our knowledge. And this cud we are to respect *unto all pleasing*, i.e. designing and endeavouring not in one thing only, or in few things, but in all things whatsoever are incumbent on us, we may find acceptance with our Lord and Master, Col 3:20 1Co 7:32 10:31 1Th 2:4 Heb 12:28; all should be great and generous, such as may best like our Lord, keeping themselves from the defilements of the age, Re 3:4.

*Being fruitful in every good work;* particularly fructifying, which in the sense may be joined with being *filled*, Col 1:8: *being fruitful* is a metaphorical expression borrowed from fruit-bearing trees, unto which godly men and real Christians are compared, Ps 1:3 Joh 15:8; and *every good work* is the fruit which these plants of the Lord, having his Spirit as the seed remaining in them, 1Jo 3:9, do bring forth of every sort from a right principle, 1Ti 1:5, according to rule warranted by God, Isa 29:13 Ga 6:16; or having a call from him, for his glory: see 2Co 9:8 Php 1:11 2Th 2:17 Heb 13:21.

*And increasing in the knowledge of God:* the Colossians were not yet perfect in knowledge, and therefore they prayed that they might go on, and grow in grace and knowledge of God and Christ, 2Pe 3:18, the best here knowing but in part, 1Co 13:9; therefore they desired these Christians, as the Philipplians, Php 3:10,12, and the Ephesians, Eph 4:13, might come to their stature: see on the texts.

## Colossians 1:11

Ver. 11. *Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power:* whereunto that they might be enabled, it was needful to pray for a power from above, for the best Christians here below are but infirm as well as imperfect, not able to perform what is required of them for doing and suffering the will of God till strengthened: See Poole on "Php 4:13", compared with Re 7:17. We have here great need of *all might*, special aids of God, to discharge difficult duties, to mortify strong corruptions, to contemn worldly allurements, to repulse frequent temptations, to bear manifold crosses, and to improve daily mercies, derived from exceeding great and mighty power; See Poole on "Eph 1:19". See Poole on "Eph 1:20". See Poole on "Eph 3:16"; an excellent glorious power, 2Co 4:7,13, needful to consummate and complete, as well as begin, the work of grace, 2Th 1:11; a great reality (and not a metaphor) to sincere converts and sound believers.

*Unto all patience;* every way to bear the things which come hard upon them or continue long. Philosophy, with all its prescriptions, is ineffectual to form the soul to true patience and contentment under sufferings, it must be given on the behalf of Christ, Php 1:29, to a believer, to suffer patiently in tongue and heart, without a prevailing mixture of passion, so that evils do not make all impression upon him, but he doth possess his soul with patience to the end.

*And long-suffering with joyfulness;* which he could not do with a becoming Christian cheerfulness, when, surcharged with a weight of troubles, he finds himself sinking, if he were not supported with the hands of Heaven, which relieve with present comfort, and raise up to believe a future reward, Mt 5:12 Ac 5:41 Ro 5:3 1Co 11:32 2Co 1:5 Heb 11:27 12:10,12 Jas 1:2,4.

## Colossians 1:12

Ver. 12. *Giving thanks unto the Father;* he passeth from petitioning, Col 1:9, to thanksgiving to God the Father, upon the consideration of his grace



manifested in his Son for our redemption. In the Ephesians, Eph 1:3,4, he began with election, here with effectual vocation; he acknowledgeth God the Father to be the object and author of what was wrought for us by his Son, and in us by his Spirit.

*Which hath made us meet;* who hath made us capable of communion with himself, or ready and fit, which implies that by nature we are unready and unfit; so that merit cannot be drawn hence, and the Rhemists have done ill, contrary to the translation of the Syriac, to translate it, made us worthy: one copy hath, who hath called us. The original word, in that we follow, seems to be an idiom of the apostle (as the learned think) borrowed from the Hebrew; we find it used only in one other text by the apostle, 2Co 3:5,6; and there he shows we are insufficient for, and incapable of, saying good things, till God do capacitate us by making us *accepted in the beloved*, Eph 1:6; we cannot understand things of the Spirit of God, nor affect God, Joh 12:39 Ro 8:5 1Co 2:14, till God do draw and capacitate us, Joh 6:44,45 Phm 2:13, and form and work us by his Spirit unto this selfsame thing, Ro 4:17 2Co 5:5.

*To be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light;* to have a part in the lot of the purchased inheritance with them that are sanctified, Ac 26:18 Eph 1:14. The apostle seems to allude to the land of Canaan, wherein a portion was assigned to every one by lot for his inheritance, that being a type of the rest which remaineth to the people of God, Heb 4:9; and this is here said to be *of the saints in light*, as allegorically connoting the joy and glory of that state and place, in opposition to the power of darkness.

### Colossians 1:13

Ver. 13. *The power of darkness*, which signifies the sadness and despair of the damned, Eph 6:12 Jude 1:8, that they who are made meet to walk in the light *as children of the light*, Eph 5:8, are eternally freed from. The word which the apostle useth to express God's delivering of believers from the power of sin and Satan is very emphatical, signifying a gratuitous freedom, where a stranger hath delivered him from slavery who did not deserve it, nor then desire it, Mr 3:27 Lu 1:74,79 Eph 2:2,5,6 Heb 2:14,15, though he was held fast as in fetters of iron. And which is more, he adds another word, *hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son;*

intimating he did not leave us as Adam was before the fall, but transport us without any precedent will of ours, by the effectual call of his insuperable grace, Joh 6:44, 1Th 2:12 1Pe 2:9, from the dominion of Satan, into that of his own Son, the Son of his love, Mt 3:17 17:5 Eph 1:6, amongst his subjects and servants, where he reigns, in his kingdom of grace, Mt 13:11, where Christ dwells in the heart by his Spirit, that is united to him by faith, Eph 3:17 Eph 4:12,13 Heb 12:22,23; and of glory indeed in our Head, Col 1:24, with Eph 2:6, by right of adoption, Ro 8:17, and hope of salvation through him promised by the omnipotent and true God, Ro 8:24 1Th 5:23,24 Tit 1:2; who may well call it *the kingdom of his dear Son*, in that he admits none into it but by the mediation of his Son, who makes his subjects willing, Ps 110:3, and received this government of his Father, Mt 28:18 Lu 22:29 Eph 1:6,7; of whose dear Son Paul hath more to say, to the comfort of his faithful subjects at Colosse, and every where.

#### Colossians 1:14

Ver. 14. *In whom;* i.e. in the person of Christ alone God-man, deputed of his Father to die for our salvation, Ac 4:12 20:28.

*We;* as we are in him, made meet, Col 1:12.

*Have redemption;* we have eternal deliverance, Heb 9:12, effected by a full ransom paid, 1Co 6:20 7:23 1Pe 1:18,19. For the freeing us indeed out of a state of sin and misery, Joh 8:36, or eternal death the wages of sin, Ro 6:23 16:20; so that by redemption here is not meant barely laying down the price, Lu 2:38, nor consummate redemption at the last, Eph 1:14 4:30, but efficacious redemption.

*Through his blood;* upon the account of Christ's offering himself an expiatory sacrifice to God, without which *is no remission*, Heb 9:22 Re 5:9; effusion of his blood, by a synecdoche, takes in his humiliation to the death of the cross, and the pains of the second death he underwent for us, Isa 53:5,6 Ac 2:24 Ga 3:13 Php 2:8.

*Even the forgiveness of sins;* plenary remission of offences is by apposition to, or follows, redemption as a necessary effect, Col 2:13 Lu 1:77 Ac 10:43, by a metonymy transferring the cause to the effect: to see

more: See Poole on "Eph 1:7".

### Colossians 1:15

Ver. 15. Having touched on the benefit of Christ's sacrifice, which implies his human nature, he doth here rise higher, to set forth the dignity of his person, (which made it satisfactory), both with respect to his Father and the creature. As to the former, he styles him his *image*, which is not to be understood of an artificial, accidental, or imperfect *image*, as that of the king on his coin, or as man was the feeble image of God, Ge 9:6 1Co 11:7 Col 3:10; for the apostle's arguing Christ's dignity to redeem, would have no force in it, if Christ were no more than a mere man; but of a natural, substantial, and perfect image: as Seth was the natural image of his father Adam, of the same substance with him, Ge 5:3; so Christ, the eternal Word, the only begotten Son of God by nature, Joh 1:1,18, (See Poole on "Php 2:6"), very God of very God, Joh 17:3,5, doth exactly resemble, perfectly and adequately represent, his Father, of whose person he is the express character, or perfect image, Heb 1:3. Yet more distinctly Christ is the image of God, either:

1. As he is the Second Person in the blessed Trinity, from an intrinsical relation to the Father, in regard of the same essence with him by eternal generation before the world was made. He being eternally in the Father, and the Father in him, Joh 14:10; so he is in respect of his Father his essential image, and in regard to us as invisible as the Father himself; no creature could be the eternal image of the Creator, as that Son of the only true God, *the living God*, was, and is, Mt 16:16 Joh 6:69, in respect of his Father.
2. As he is God-man, in whom the fulness of the Godhead dwells bodily, Col 2:9, whereby he doth infinitely exceed and surpass angels and men at first, Heb 1:5,6 2:5. The apostle in this place doth not say simply Christ the image of God, but *of the invisible God*, (considered personally), i.e. the Father; because the Father cannot be known to us but in his Son, as in an image, in which he would represent or manifest himself to be seen or known, Joh 1:14,18 Joh 14:8,9 2Co 4:4. And in this latter respect (which imports the manifestative, not essential image) is Christ the image of his invisible Father unto us; unto whom, in all his

offices and works of mediation, the attributes, affections, and excellencies of God clearly shine forth, they being otherwise incomprehensible and invisible by a creature: but Christ is the complete image of them, in a transcendent way; for as they are in him, they are incommunicable to any mere creature, and therefore he is the image of *the invisible God*, in that he makes him visible unto us. God is a pure Spirit, without body, or bodily parts, but yet was clearly manifested in Christ tabernacling amongst us, Joh 1:14 1Ti 3:16: he represents him to us in his understanding and wisdom, Pr 8:14,15; almightiness and eternity, Isa 9:6 Joh 1:1 8:58, permanency and unchangeableness, Heb 1:11,12 13:8, omnipresence and omniscency, Joh 2:24,25 13:18 Re 2:13. Not (as the Lutherans strangely imagine) that Christ is omnipotent with the omnipotency of the Divine nature, or omniscient with that omniscency, as if the manhood did instrumentally use the attributes of the Godhead; but such perfections are really inherent in and appertaining to the manhood, by virtue of its union with the Divine nature in the Second Person of the Trinity, that though they are vastly short of the attributes which are essential to the Godhead, yet they are the completest image of them, and such as no mere creature is capable of. Hence it is said, *we beheld his glory, the glory of the only begotten Son of God*, who did further represent and manifest his Father to us, in the works of creation and preservation which he did, Joh 1:3 5:19 Heb 1:10. Hence the apostle in this verse considers the dignity of Christ, with respect to the creature, adding to the forementioned intrinsic, an extrinsic royalty, *the first-born of every creature*, which a learned man would render, begotten before all the creation, or born before every creature, which is a Hebrew phrase. The Greek scholiast and several of the Greek fathers go this way; not as if the ineffable generation of Christ had any beginning, as some falsely conceived Christ to be made in time, just in the beginning before the world, by whom as an instrument all the rest were created; but the apostle doth not say he was first made, or first created; but, Col 1:17, was, or did exist, *before all things* besides; (as John Baptist said, *he was before me*, Joh 1:15); and therefore none of the rank of all them, but of another, viz. equal with his Father, whose image he was, above all that was made or created: he was not created at all, though first-born, or first-begotten, yet not first-created, (being distinguished here from created, as the cause from the effect), as it refers to him that begets, so it may to only begotten, Christ being so begotten as no other was or could be, Pr 8:22 Mic 5:2 Heb

1:5,6, even from eternity. The word *first* may either respect what follows, and so notes order in the things spoken of, he who is first being one of them, 1Co 15:47; or things going before, in which sense it denies all order or series of things in the same kind: as God is first before whom none, Isa 41:4 43:11 Re 21:6; so Christ may be said to be first-born because the only begotten Son of his Father, Joh 1:14: so the apostle may consider him here in order to establish the consideration of him as Mediator and Head of his church, Col 1:18; he speaking before, Col 1:16, of those things more generally whose creation are assigned to him, in contradistinction to those of the church or new creation, Col 1:18. Agreeably to our translation, *first-born of every creature*, ( note, here is a difference in the Greek, between first-born *of* and *for*, Col 1:18), we may consider:

1. Negatively. It is not to be understood properly for the first in order, so as to be one of them, in reference to whom he is said to be the first-born. But:
2. Positively, yet figuratively in a borrowed speech: so primacy and primogeniture may be attributed to him in regard of the creatures:
  - a) By a metonymy of the antecedent for the consequent; he who hath the privileges of enjoying and disposing of his father's goods and inheritance, is accounted the first-born, Ge 27:29 Ga 4:1; so is Christ, being Owner, Lord, and Prince of every creature, as he is God-man, or ordained to human nature, he hath the preeminence of the whole creation, and is the chief, Ps 2:7,8 Heb 1:2,6. The heir amongst the Hebrews was reckoned the prince of the family, and so amongst the Romans the heir was taken for the lord: so God said he would make David his *first-born*, Ps 89:27, compared with Job 18:13 Isa 14:30 Jer 31:9. This sovereign empire which Christ hath over all the creation, and the parts of it, is by his primogeniture, or that he is first-born, since there is left nothing that is not under him, Heb 2:8, (as Adam in this lower world, in regard of his dominion, the state of innocency, might be first-born of them created for him), for the apostle brings in the next verse as the fundamental reason of this assertion.
  - b) By a consideration of Christ in God's eternal decree and purpose, as

the common womb of him who is God-man, and all creatures; being *fore-ordained before the foundation of the world*, 1Pe 1:20, he may be looked upon as the first-born amongst those who are predestinated to be conformed to his image, Ro 8:29, with Eph 1:4,5; for upon this account he is the first-born of the first-born creatures or church, (but this, as hinted before, is considered more specially, Col 1:18), Heb 12:23, therefore the first-born of all others: and this may be one respect in which he is before them, Col 1:17, with Pr 8:22; yea, all of them of the old, as well as the new creation. The Socinians are so daringly bold as to restrain this extensive expression of *every creature*, or all the creation, to the new creation of men or the faithful only, by perverting some texts of Scripture to strain them that way; when it is plain by what follows, the Spirit of God means all created beings, either in the first or second world, Christ being the principal cause both of the one and the other; the apostle, by the general term *every creature* simply, without any additament, doth import all created things, viz. the heavens and the earth, with all that is made in them: neither angels, nor inanimate and irrational creatures, are excluded; as in the apostle's reason immediately following this expression.

### Colossians 1:16

Ver. 16. *For by him were all things created:* he proves Christ to be before and Lord over every creature, more excellent than them all, with a prerogative other princes want, for none of them is a creator of his subjects, who were not made by him or for him, as all creatures without exception were made by and for Christ. The apostle here is as cautious as may be, lest by speaking of Christ as *the firstborn of every creature*, he should seem to put him in the order of creatures, which he shows do depend upon him for their creation and preservation, since he brought them out of nothing into being, and therein doth sustain them.

*By him;* in whom they have their beings, live and move, Ac 17:28. Some render the particle *in*, rather than *by*. But they disclaim the philosophical notions about Platonic ideas, only conceive all to be made *in* Christ, as the exemplary cause, whom God had in his eternal decree set up as the pattern of all perfections, being his image, according to which it was agreed, in the

council of the Trinity, man should be made, Ge 1:26. But the most do, according to our translation, render it (as a Hebrew phrase) *by*, ( being of the same import with that in the end of the verse), or through, which is expressive of the principal efficient, not the instrumental cause, for all the things made were produced out of nothing into being immediately by him, Joh 1:3,10 Heb 1:8,10: he might well be Lord over them all, who was the first founder of them, Ac 10:36 1Co 8:6; and whatever the adversaries allege, it is plain in Scripture that *by* is used of the principal cause, Col 1:1 Ro 11:31,36 1Co 1:1 1Co 12:8,9 2Co 1:1 Ga 1:1 1Th 4:2 2Th 3:12.

*Were all things created*: creation is simply, universally, and absolutely attributed to him; for whatever subtillies some would suggest, *all things created by him* is equivalent to he created all things; compare Ps 96:5 102:25, with Isa 44:24 48:13 Jer 10:12 Ac 17:24, with Ro 11:36: (like 1Co 1:9, with 1Th 2:12).

*That are in heaven, and that are in earth*: the apostle speaks extensively of all proceeding from not being into being, both generally and distributively, agreeably to the common expression of *all things* that were made at the beginning, Ac 4:24: though in Scripture, where mention is made of the creation, heaven and earth be not always expressed, Isa 40:26 Mr 10:6 13:19 Ac 17:24 Ro 1:20 2Pe 3:4 Re 4:11; but here, where all things in heaven and earth, visible and invisible, are expressed, it is evident that heaven and earth are together comprehended.

*Visible and invisible*: these two adjuncts of visible and invisible do divide all creatures whatsoever, there being nothing made that is not one or the other.

*Whether they be*: all enumeration is particularly made of the latter, which for their excellency (if any) might seem to be exempted (by those in danger of being beguiled to the worshipping of angels) from the state and condition of being created by Jesus Christ; particularly, *thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers*; those he here names, as elsewhere, Ro 8:38 Eph 1:20,21 3:10 6:12, in the abstracts for the concretes, the invisible inhabitants of the world. I know some would have dignities in human policy to be meant, as Tit 3:1 2Pe 2:10 Jude 1:8; but it is more rational, with the generality of ancient and modern interpreters, as Col 2:15, to expound these titles of incorporeal and angelical creatures,

whether by an emphatical synonyme, angels generally, by a metonymy, being ministers of the heavenly state; or more probably, as should seem from the scope of the place, by such a subdivision of invisibles as the apostle did conceive there was, according to the properties wherein they were eminent, and the offices whereunto they were delegated of God, which he expressed disjunctively by borrowed titles from the distinctions of men in dignities and offices here below, as dukes, earls, lords, and other magistrates; the Scriptures elsewhere intimating distinctions amongst the spiritual ministers attending the commands of the heavenly Majesty upon his throne, represented shadowed by the cherubims, Ge 3:24 Ex 25:18,22 1Sa 4:4 2Sa 6:2 1Ch 28:18 Ps 80:1 Isa 37:16 Eze 1:13; denominated archangels and princes, Da 10:13,21 1Th 4:16 Jude 1:9; which imply some distinctions and orders amongst angelical beings, but what that is we know not, (whatever is disputed in the Roman schools from the spurious Denys), and therefore having no ground from Scripture, account it no better than curiosity to inquire, and rashness to determine.

*All things were created by him:* after his enumeration and distribution of things created, the apostle doth, for further confirmation, repeat the universal proposition or assumption, with a preposition expressive of the same absolute efficiency of causality that is attributed to God the Father and the Holy Ghost; all created things being made *by* him, i.e. by Christ, whose works without are undivided from those of the other Persons in the Trinity; they were all brought out of nothing into being by him, not by angels.

*And for him;* which is more fully proved from his being the final (as well as efficient) cause of them; they all had their being in respect of him or *for* him, i.e. his glory, Ro 11:36, to manifest his Divine power and infinite goodness, Joh 5:17,23 Joh 17:5; he is their end as well as founder, Re 5:13; the apostle affirms the same of him that is affirmed of the Father, Job 9:8 Pr 16:4 Isa 44:24; he made them all for his own sake. The Socinians, in derogation to Christ's Divinity, would restrain, limit, and narrow what Christ saith here in this verse to the new creation, or reparation, but against manifest reason. For:

1. The words *creature* and *creation* in the foregoing verse and this, are used absolutely, as was before suggested, and so *created* here repeated twice, and joined with the word *all*, and therefore to be understood, as



elsewhere, absolutely of the old or first creation, Mr 10:6 13:19 16:15  
Ro 1:20,25 1Co 11:9 1Ti 4:3 Heb 4:13 2Pe 3:4 Re 10:6; for when it is  
used of the second creation, or restoration, the restrictive additament of  
*new* is joined with it, Isa 65:17,18 2Co 5:17 Ga 6:15 Eph 2:15 4:24, not  
left indefinitely as here.

2. In parallel places, the making and founding of the old creation is ascribed to Christ, both negatively and positively, Joh 1:3 Heb 1:3,10; not one thing is excepted, and therefore should not be restrained to men.
3. It is most evident from the context the apostle doth in this verse discourse of creation, in contradistinction to what he speaks of afterwards in (Col 1:18,20), when he comes to treat of Christ as Head of his church, and we have no reason to charge the apostle with a useless repetition further.
4. The apostle's significant enumeration and distinction of things created, doth evidence that he understood the subject, the creation, in the most extensive and unlimited consideration of it. He reckons up material as well as immaterial things, and those in heaven, which needed no restoration, as well as those on earth, which did, being polluted with sin. Those angels who had not put off the honour of the first, did not belong to the new creation; having not divested themselves of their original integrity, they needed not to be reinvested with that they never lost: and devils cannot be ranked among new creatures, neither can wicked souls, Mt 25:41 Re 22:15; neither are there new and old orders of angels; so that the dominion Christ is here (as elsewhere) asserted as founder of, is the whole, not only the new creation, Re 5:13.

### Colossians 1:17

Ver. 17. *And he is before all things:* to obviate all exceptions to what he had said before, the apostle doth expressly assert (what was implied before) Christ's pre-existence to all the things that were created, and therefore that he himself was not made, but eternally begotten, and so did exist, and was actually before all creatures in causality, dignity, and time; which proves his eternity, (consonant to other scriptures, Pr 8:22 Isa 44:6  
Mic 5:2 Joh 1:1 17:5 Re 1:8,11,17 Re 22:13), because before all things

there was nothing but proper eternity, Ps 90:2.

And by him all things consist: then follows this further argument of Christ's excellency and perfection, that he is not only the Creator or Founder, but likewise the Supporter or Upholder, of all things whatsoever are created, yea, even of the most excellent and useful of them, who in him do live and move, Ac 17:28 Heb 1:3: he being the conservant as well as procreant cause of the heavens and earth, with all things therein, because in respect of God it is the same action which is continued in conservation and providence whielt was in creation, not breaking off the same influence which was exerted in producing them out of nothing into being, Isa 46:4 Joh 5:19.

### Colossians 1:18

Ver. 18. And he is the head of the body, the church: having spoken of Christ in reference to the creatures in general, or old creation, showing how he is the Creator, Preserver, and Governor thereof, the apostle doth here speak of him with a special reference to his church, or the new creation, whereof he shows here, (as elsewhere: See Poole on "Eph 1:22,23", with Eph 4:15, and Eph 5:23), that he is the Head and Governor, his chosen and called being the proper subjects of his special kingdom, the choice body, unto which he doth more peculiarly relate, Col 1:24, for the guiding and governing of it, he being that to it which the head is to the natural body, and more especially in the two former respects:

1. Of their union to God, which was chiefly designed and expressed in those words, who is the beginning, i.e. the first foundation or principle of their union to God, whereupon the first corner-stone of the church's happiness is laid, he being the beginning of the second creation, as of the first, Re 3:14. And:
2. Of their restoration from sin and death, being brought into that first-designed happiness, which is the great intention of that union, as appears from the following expression, the firstborn from the dead, in a special distinction from the dead, here too of the creature, Col 1:15.

The apostle doth not tautologize, but what he spoke of Christ there with

respect to the creature, he doth here speak of him with respect to his church, as 1Co 15:20,23 Re 1:5. By the particle from is implied not only that he was before the dead, but that he was numbered amongst the dead in respect of that nature wherein he was once dead; from which he was demonstrated to be first-born; his resurrection with a glorious body (Php 3:21) being a kind of new birth, whereby upon the reunion of his holy soul and body he was born from the womb of the grave, the Head in regard of the members: resurrection is called a regeneration, Mt 19:28; and as there is a gracious resurrection of the soul upon effectual calling in conversion, so there is a glorious regeneration of the body in the resurrection, Lu 20:36, in contradistinction to Lu 20:34. Christ is the first-born of these, in reference to God, Ac 26:23 1Co 15:20,23; as the first-fruits, or first ear of this blessed harvest, that was carried up into the sanctuary, and offered in due season to the eternal Father, until the rest do become ripe: and in reference to the dead, i.e. in the Lord, 1Co 15:18 1Th 4:14 Re 14:13; from whom he first rose in regard of time fully and perfectly; and of whom, in regard of dignity and dominion, Ps 89:27 Ga 4:1, he is chief, and Lord, (hath the pre-eminence, as it follows), and is first in regard of causality of those dead in him, standing in relation to him their Head, Ro 11:15, with 1Co 15:20, who shall be perfectly raised by virtue of his resurrection. And however it be said, both in the Old and New Testament, some were before raised; yet he was the cause of his own resurrection, as none others were, or can be. He properly rose, and that by his own power, Ps 110:7 Joh 10:17,18; others were and will be raised by his. In regard of the sort and kind of resurrection, he it was first which was not imperfect, as others, or Lazarus, who was raised but to return to his former state of mortality; but perfect, Christ rose to die no more, Ro 6:9 Heb 9:28. He was the first that rose as a public person, Head of his Church, the Second Adam, representing all his members, 1Co 15:21,22, who are raised together with him spiritually, virtually, and representatively, Eph 2:6 1Pe 3:21: those actually raised before in another sort were like singular ears of corn, by occasion more timely gathered for a special instance of Divine power, but Christ was the first that ever rose in the nature and quality of the first-fruits duly gathered, to sanctify and consecrate the whole harvest of the dead in him, who shall one day be raised to a conformity unto him, Php 3:21. The Socinians, from this metaphorical expression of Christ's being the first-born from the dead, and fetching in that passage where it is said: Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee, Ac 13:33, do oppose Christ's natural and eternal Sonship, but very inconsequently and absurdly; for:

1. Christ was properly the Son of God before his resurrection from the dead, he did not then receive that relation by it, as other texts clearly prove, Ps 2:7 Pr 30:4 Mic 5:2 Joh 1:1 17:5.
2. If his resurrection had been a begetting of him, then would he have begotten himself, so been Father and Son to himself, because he raised himself.

As to that other text they allege, things are sometimes said to be done then, when only manifested and declared to be done: then was Christ the first of all the dead that was born, and raised again in incorruption, declared to be the Son of God with power, Ro 1:4, according to the prophecy: q.d. This day I have manifested thee by raising of thyself to be my natural Son, whom I begat from everlasting. Be sure he hath the primacy and pre-eminence, as it follows. That in all things he might have the pre-eminence; which some expound as the end and intention of Christ the agent, that he might obtain the primacy, Ro 14:9 2Co 5:15, or hold the first place in all things; whether more generally, according with the common scope of the apostle in the precedent verses, compared with Col 2:10 Joh 5:25,29 Eph 1:22; or more specially, amongst his brethren and all the members of his mystical body, Ro 8:29, with 2Co 5:17,18; but this is not material, because all things are brought under his empire. Others, because the primacy doth belong to him by undoubted right, and that he, being Head of his church, did ultimately design to save it, and so to glorify his Father, do expound it rather as the event, consequent, and conclusion from the antecedent, which is the end of the work, so as that, or in such a sort as, he actually is declared to be the first, or he holds the primacy in the old and new creation. According to the agreement with his Father, he is such a one as not only hath all manner of privileges, that any in this or the other world do, or may be supposed to, excel in; but also with a pre-eminence, a primacy in all, above what any one hath in any thing he may glory of.

### Colossians 1:19

Ver. 19. A learned man reads it: For all fulness pleased to dwell in him. Others: He liked, or approved, that all fulness should dwell in him, bringing instances for that construction of the word it pleased.

For it pleased the Father; it is true the word Father is not in the Greek text, nor in the oriental versions, but is well understood and supplied from the context, Col 1:12, where the apostle gives thanks to the Father, and then describes his dear Son in the following verses, and here in this adds a cogent reason why he should be the Head of his church, since the Son of his love, (in whom he is well pleased, Mt 3:17), is he alone in whom he likes to dwell with all fulness or all fulness, doth will to abide.

That in him should all fulness; here is another all, and a fulness added to that all; an all for parts, a fulness for degrees; a transcendency in all, above all. It is of the Father's good pleasure that Christ, not here considered simply, as the Son of God, but respectively, as Head of his church, and Mediator, should be the subject of this all fulness, which is not directly that of his body mystical, Eph 1:23. But:

1. Originally, the fulness of the Godhead, whereby he hath an all-sufficiency of perfections for his mediatory office upon the mystical union, which none other hath or can have, Col 2:9 Joh 1:14: of which more distinctly in the next chapter.
2. Derivatively, a fulness of the Spirit and habitual grace, Lu 1:80, with Joh 1:16,33 3:34; holiness, wisdom, power, perfectly to finish his work, Joh 17:4 19:30, and other excellencies for the reconciling (as it follows) and actual influencing of his body, Ps 130:7,8 Mt 28:18 Joh 5:20 Ro 1:4 1Co 5:4; with 2Co 12:9 Eph 1:20-22 Heb 7:25,26 Re 5:6,12.

Dwell; and this all fulness doth not only lodge in him for a time, but resideth and abideth in him; it is not in him as the Divine glory was awhile in the tabernacle of Moses, and the temple of Solomon, but dwells constantly in him, not as a private person, but a universal principle; as Head of the body, (as well as reconciler), to fill up the emptiness of man with the abundant grace that perpetually resideth in him.

### Colossians 1:20

Ver. 20. Some, from the Greek, would (not have that clause we read in a parenthesis to come next the copulative and, but) have it: And by himself

he should reconcile unto himself (in or to himself) all things, (having made or obtained peace through the blood of his cross), I say, &c. But the reading of that sentence in the parenthesis after, or before the reconciliation of all things, as we do, because of the next following distribution, is not very material as to the sense of the thing, redemption, Col 1:14, or rather, the manner or means of reconciliation unto God by Christ, in whom the fulness of all Divine and human perfections was sealed for the bringing of heaven and earth together.

Having made peace through the blood of his cross: God the Father, for bringing enemies nigh unto himself in the kingdom of his dear Son, Col 1:13,19,21, was in him, 2Co 5:18,19, who having took on him the seed of Abraham, Heb 2:16, and because without shedding of blood there could be no remission, or being brought nigh, Eph 2:13 Heb 9:12,22,23, according to his Father's ordination and agreement with him for the expiation of sin, became obedient unto death, that cursed death of the cross, Isa 53:5 Ga 3:13 Php 2:8; and by that bloody sacrifice of himself, there once perfected, Heb 9:14 10:10,14, obtained peace: that by a figure being put to express his most perfect merit, as being the finishing of his obedience and passion, Col 2:14 Ro 3:25 5:10 Eph 2:16 Heb 9:12.

By him; which alone could satisfy his offended Father's demands: angels could not shed blood which was necessary to make peace and reconcile enemies; and though some false apostles might seduce to the worshipping of them, their obedience could not be meritorious.

To reconcile all things unto himself; God designing an atonement to himself. i.e. God the Father, (and, by consequence, to the whole Trinity), did it by Christ, in whom all fulness dwelling there was a proper fitness upon his Father's call, Isa 42:1,4,6, with Heb 9:1-28, for so perfect a work as to take away the enmity of those alienated from God, and to bring them into favour again. The great inquiry is about the extent of this reconciliation, because the apostle mentions all things (rather than all persons); and then, having emphatically repeated by him, viz. Christ as God-man, and none other, Ac 4:12, he adds a distribution of all things, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven. To answer which, all things may be understood, either:

1. Restrictively to the subject, the universal church of which Christ is the

Head; so he doth not mean all things whatsoever, unlimitedly, but with respect to the subject matter, as, Col 1:21, all things which being alienated from God are reconciled to him; i.e. whatsoever things are reconciled are by him reconciled, all relating to the subject matter of reconciliation, (as all made to creation, Col 1:16), all the real subjects of his kingdom, whether gathered and gone to heaven before in hope of the Messiah to come, or now and hereafter shall be gathered, Ac 15:11 Ro 3:25 Eph 3:15 Heb 11:39,40 12:23: yet this doth not altogether satisfy some, by reason of the sublimity of the apostle's word in the distribution; and ordinarily in Scripture, by things in heaven are meant the angels, whose natural seat it is, spirits of just men made perfect being advanced thither only by God's gracious vouchsafement. Or:

2. Largely, as comprehending the good angels, especially if upon the foundation of reconciliation considered strictly, we take reconciliation here more generally, (as the apostle doth in his Epistle to the Ephesians, expatiating more upon this matter there than he doth here, writing more concisely and contractedly), for recapitulation, (or analogical reconciliation), bringing all under one head, the recomposing or reuniting of creatures terrestrial or celestial, upon the atonement for sinners by Christ; so that all his subjects, those that divide the state of his kingdom, are at an agreement amongst themselves and with each other; God did so by Christ conjoin miserable men with himself, that now also the holy angels are conjoined, they come under the same Head, Christ, Col 2:10 Eph 1:22, whom they worship as at his first, so second coming, Lu 2:13,14 Heb 1:6.

As men cleave to him by faith, so the angels by vision (1Ti 3:16) look upon him their Head; yet is he not their Redeemer, Col 1:14 Eph 1:3; not partaking of their nature, they are not his members as believers are (as God is the Head of Christ, yet is not he a member of God, 1Co 11:3); Christ beareth a more special relation to them, than he doth unto these principalities and powers, Eph 5:23,30,31; however, they, being under a hypothetical possibility of falling, should seem to have need of a preventive kind of reconciliation, upon that account, if their standing is otherwise secured to them, they abiding in their purity could not be friends to impure creatures, Ge 3:24; but upon the satisfaction of their Lord, their distaste and dissatisfaction is removed, they being reduced into a corporation, under Christ, with those whom he hath reconciled, Eph 1:10.

As they, to the glory of the supreme Majesty, rejoiced when Christ came to seek these lost ones, so they are ministers to them that he hath made willing, Heb 1:14; they delight in the ministry of reconciliation, Eph 3:10 1Pe 1:12, attend the service with their brethren, (in doing their office), Re 19:10 22:9, further the work, Ac 8:26, rejoice when it takes effect, Lu 15:10, and carry those that are perfected to the place of their own residence, Lu 16:22, to their own innumerable assembly in the heavenly Jerusalem, Heb 12:22; waiting on Christ, (according to the typical representatives, Ex 25:19 26:1 1Ki 6:23,29), with those that are with him, and made like to him at his throne, Mt 22:30 Mr 12:25, where he sits as the Son of man, and the holy angels (as he saith) are continually ascending and descending upon him, Joh 1:51: he fills them, as the rest of his subjects, all in all, Eph 1:21,23; they have grace by way of participation, having it from him their Head, who hath it of himself, Joh 5:26. So that upon the matter, this reconciliation of things in heaven, seems most to accord with Eph 1:9,10, and is not much unlike that in Eph 2:13,16; that which is separately said there by his blood, Col 1:13, and by the cross, Col 1:16, is here conjoined by the blood of his cross. There is making peace in one simple word; here, (in the Greek), in a compounded one. There, that he might reconcile both unto God; here, that he might reconcile all things unto himself, i.e. God. There he speaks only of men on earth being reconciled amongst themselves, because they had also been reconciled to God; if we take in angles also under those all, we have an allowance from that forecited Eph 1:10; yea, and in favour of the larger acceptation of reconciliation here, it may be considered that the whole creation which was put into disorder and subjected unto vanity, is in earnest expectation of the fruits of this gracious reconciliation, in being brought to a perfect harmony, to the glory of him who is all in all, Ro 8:19-23, with 1Co 15:58.

### Colossians 1:21

Ver. 21. And you, that were sometime alienated: the particle and, by a Hebraism, is put for therefore, or wherefore, leading the Colossians from the doctrines he had proposed, to consider their own estrangement from God and the things that please him, before they were effectually called by the gospel, being then in such a miserable condition as others were in a state of corrupted nature. See Ps 5:9 Ro 6:19 1Co 6:11 Eph 2:1,3,11,12.

And enemies; not only in their outward deportment had they no



communion with the true God, but inwardly they hated God as an enemy, and they were hated of him as his enemies; by their willing and nilling that which was contrary to him and his pleasure, in opposing his revealed will, Joh 15:18,21 Ro 1:29,30 5:10 8:7 Jas 4:4.

In your mind by wicked works; this enmity was predominant in their mind, or cogitation, or carnal reasoning, not receiving or comprehending the things of the Spirit of God, 1Co 2:14; that leading power of their souls being darkened, Eph 4:18, there was an enmity against God, so that they neither could be subject to God's law, Ro 8:7, under the prevalency of that corrupt reasoning which was so intent upon their corrupt courses, Ge 6:5, that then they thought not of peace with God.

Yet now hath he reconciled; yet such was the unconstrained compassion of God, that now while sinners, (in a divided sense), Ro 5:10, they were actually reconciled; now, not before, not from eternity in his decree, nor meritoriously when upon the cross, 2Co 5:19: he doth not mean simply the action, of such virtue, necessary and efficacious to make reconciliation, and the appeasing of God's displeasure; but compriseth the effect of it also when it is wrought in time, 2Co 5:20, and the enmity in the subject is actually removed.

### Colossians 1:22

Ver. 22. In the body of his flesh through death; the means whereby their reconciliation to God was purchased, (which they had particularly applied by faith, Col 1:4), was the sacrifice of that fleshy (not fantastical) body which Christ had assumed, subject to the condition of an animal life, being capable of suffering and mortal, (not refined and immortal, as after his resurrection, Ro 5:10 1Co 15:44,53), 2Co 5:14 Php 2:16, with Heb 10:5,10 1Pe 2:24 1Pe 3:18. Christ's death was not only for our good, but in our stead thereby offering himself to God, he satisfied Divine justice, and his sacrifice, giving himself for us, was a sacrifice of a sweet smell to God, Eph 5:2. To present you holy and unblamable and unreprouable in his sight; before whom believers cannot make themselves to stand holy, but Christ doth upon the account of his sacrifice for them; so that through the veil of his flesh, Heb 10:19,20, God doth look upon such as having neither spot nor wrinkle, without blame or blemish: see Eph 1:4 5:27. Unto whom

Christ is made righteousness, he is also made sanctification, 1Co 1:30. Those who are washed are sanctified, 1Co 6:11. The end of reconciliation is restoration or sanctification, Lu 1:74,75 2Co 5:15 Tit 2:14 1Pe 2:24; inchoatively here, with a perfection of parts, Heb 13:21, and consummatively hereafter, with a perfection of degrees, 1Co 13:10 Eph 4:13 Php 3:11,12.

### Colossians 1:23

Ver. 23. If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled: this if doth not import the believers' continuance in faith to depend merely upon their own free-will, or a carnal doubting of being kept to salvation, 1Pe 1:5, but infers that they are then reconciled to God when they do indeed persevere in the faith; implying that by reason of the seducers amongst them all and every one might not really have that sound faith they would be thought to have. Wherefore the apostle engageth them to prove their faith, whereby only they can have peace with God, Ro 5:1, to be real, by taking care it be well founded and firm, Mt 13:23, as a house built on a sure foundation, a tree well rooted, Eph 3:17,18 Heb 13:9.

And be not moved away from the hope of the gospel; and be not as temporary believers which have no root, Lu 8:13, or as those who want anchorhold are tossed to and fro, Eph 4:14, and put off from that hope of eternal life, set before us in the gospel, which is sure and certain, Heb 6:18,19, built upon the foundation of the prophets and apostles, Eph 2:20, the sweet promises of eternal life.

Which ye have heard; not the works of vain philosophy which leave the minds of men unsettled, but the plain and solid doctrines of Christ, wherein the believers at Colosse had been instructed, Col 1:7.

And which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; and which the faithful apostles, according to the commission of Christ, had promulgated to every creature beneath the heavens, i.e. every rational creature here below, i.e. to all men, collectively, or nations in the world, as Col 1:6 Mt 28:19 Mr 16:15. Creature with the Hebrews doth eminently signify man, by an antonomasia, or a synecdeche, putting the general for a particular. In the original it is, in all the creature; and so it may be, in all

the world, (creature being sometimes used for the system of the world, Ro 8:19-21), in opposition to Judea, i.e. in those other parts of the earth which the Greeks and Romans knew to be then inhabited: under heaven, which is a pleonasm, but of the greatest emphasis, as Ac 4:12.

Whereof I Paul am made a minister; and the more to confirm them in what he had said, he adds of this gospel of reconciliation so spread, he was immediately called, Ga 1:1, and constituted to be a minister for the promulgation of it amongst the Gentiles, it being, with others, most notably committed to him, 2Co 5:19 1Ti 1:11.

### Colossians 1:24

Ver. 24. Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you; he confirms his call to the ministry of the gospel from his cheerfulness in his present sufferings, so that they should not be discenraged, being it highly contented him to witness and seal his doctrine by bearing his cross for them, Re 5:2,3 2Co 7:4; see Ph 1:14,20 2:17. The Jews hated him and persecuted him because of his communion with the Greeks and other Gentiles, which occasioned his imprisonment at Rome, Col 2:1 4:3,18 Ac 21:28,29 26:17,18 Eph 3:1; yet this did not deter him from his office, but he took pleasure in doing his duty. Ac 5:41 2Ti 2:10, gladly spending himself and being spent for their souls, 2Co 12:15, for their edification and consolation, 2Co 1:6,7 Php 1:13,14.

And fill up; and, the copulative, is used as causal; fill up, not simply, but in one's turn, implying a contradistinction between what Christ suffered for the apostle, and what the apostle suffered for Christ. Christ in his rank suffered what was necessary for my redemption; now I, in my turn, (by his gift, Php 1:29), undergo what afflictions are useful for his glory. He purchased salvation by his cross, I advance his kingdom and cause by my combats.

That which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh: one learned man renders this clause, what remains concerning the afflictions for Christ in my flesh; however, if we conceive of things distinctly, we may retain our own translation, considering Paul's filling up is either:

1. With respect to Christ; so he doth not mean what Christ suffered in his own proper person during his tabernacling here; for neither Paul nor any other penman of the New Testament doth use the term affliction, to express the sufferings of Christ whereby he appeased God's wrath and satisfied his justice: that he finished in his own person when he gave up the ghost, Joh 19:30, he perfected all completely, Col 1:14,22; nothing will be required from any believer upon that account, Ro 6:9,10 Heb 10:14; there be no remains upon that account, all was filled up by Christ himself. All can be imagined that Paul should mean in this respect, would be only from Christ's leaving an example, 1Pe 2:21: q.d. As Christ hath suffered for my salvation, so in like manner, following him, I bear his cross, suffering for his gospel and glory. Or:
2. With respect to Paul himself: the sense is, q.d. As I have borne a great part of afflictions for the name of Christ, and in his glorious communion, 2Co 1:5 Ga 6:17 2Ti 1:8,10; so in like manner I fill up the remains of them assigned to me a member of the mystical body, in conformity to the image of him who is the Head, Ro 8:18 1Pe 4:13. I do by little and little accomplish in my present sufferings (which make a part of it) the portion allotted to me in the same afflictions, which are accomplished and accomplishing in our brethren that are in the world, 1Pe 5:9, in time and degree according to God's counsel, (whereby the Head was preordained to suffer, Ac 4:28 1Pe 1:20), which apportioned to every member what share it is to bear, till it be perfectly confirmed to Christ, Php 3:10,12,21. These sufferings as Christians, 1Pe 4:13,14,16, (which the members undergo in their causes), may be said to be the afflictions of Christ:

(1.) Being for his cause and glory, the troubles they receive upon his account may be called his, the badges of his family and followers, Ga 6:17 Heb 11:26.

(2.) Because of the union between Head and members, 1Co 12:12; they being give, to the whole body, the wounds of his members are his, Ac 9:4,16, he doth sympathize with them; but as he finished his work of proper sufferings while in the flesh, so the apostle's expression intimates here, their sufferings shall not last longer than they are in the body, they need not fear any purgatory afterwards.

For his body's sake, which is the church: and while Paul suffered here, he adds another reason for the supporting and cheering of him, viz. the usefulness of his sufferings for the whole church, the mystical body of Christ, as Col 1:18; which consideration might sweeten his bitterest afflictions, not only because it was in their service, to further their faith, that he was so persecuted, but for their edification and consolation; this was the scope of his patience, Php 1:12-14, to encourage those who knew his testimony to embrace the truth, 2Ti 2:10. What the Rhemists and other papists infer hence, that the apostle satisfied for the sins of other believers by his sufferings, contributing to the church's treasury of satisfactions for temporary punishments, is altogether groundless. It is brutish to conclude, because he sustained afflictions for the edification of the church, that therefore he satisfied for the sins of the church; because he was spent for the Corinthians, that he answered for their faults, 2Co 12:15: he was not crucified for any, 1Co 1:13. To take Paul's sufferings satisfactory is to derogate from Christ's merit; none is without sin as Christ was, and as it is necessary for him that satisfieth, Pr 20:9. Christ's sacrifice became expiatory, being offered by the eternal Spirit, Heb 9:14; he having borne the sins of believers in his own natural body upon the cross, and that by himself, there needs no supplements (could any be found) from others, Joh 1:29 Heb 1:3,8 1Pe 2:24 1Jo 2:2. To conceit there is any need of human satisfactions as supplies to Christ's sufferings, is to cross the apostle's main drift here, Col 1:12-14, 20-22; he was far from satisfying for himself, Php 3:9,12, and shows that every man shall bear his own burden. Ga 6:5, however he should endeavour to honour Christ, and edify his church, 2Co 12:10.

### Colossians 1:25

Ver. 25. Whereof I am made a minister; see under what title he suffers for the church, because a minister, ( in the more general acceptation of the word), as Col 1:23, not (as one of the ancients saith) to give the price of redemption, but to preach. He looked not on his apostleship as a domination, but ministration, 2Co 5:18; and though in regard of his call he was an extraordinary apostle, yet he, (remembering his Master's injunction, Mt 20:26), no more than Peter did affect dominion or a lordship over Christ's heritage 2Co 1:24 1Pe 5:1-3, according to his singular and eminent call to be a minister and a witness, Ac 26:16. As he doth

elsewhere make mention of the minister of God, 2Co 6:4 1Th 3:2; of the New Testament, gospel, word, reconciliation, Ac 6:4 2Co 3:6 5:18,19 Eph 3:7; of Jesus Christ and of the Lord, Ro 15:8 1Co 4:1 Eph 6:20 1Ti 4:6; so he doth here, by reason of the union between the Head and the body, own himself to be constituted a minister of the church, which some, of a lower rank, like not now to be called.

According to the dispensation of God; and that by Divine vouchsafement and commandment, being called from persecution of the church to this ministry, Ac 9:15,16 1Co 4:1 2Co 5:19 Eph 1:1. Yea, and also for them at Colosse, who, being of the Gentiles, were in his commission, according to the gift of the grace of God given to him, Eph 3:7.

Which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God; fully to preach the word of God amongst them, as well as to the Romans and others, Ro 15:19, and so to fulfil the prophecy, Zec 2:11, for the calling of the Gentiles by the promulgation of the gospel amongst them, Ac 22:21 Ro 1:5 11:13 1Ti 2:7; and so fulfilling God's word, by fully expounding the whole doctrine of salvation amongst them, and promoting of it to the end of his life.

### Colossians 1:26

Ver. 26. Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations; viz. that holy secret of godliness, Col 2:2,3 4:3 Mt 13:11 Ro 16:25,26 1Co 2:7 Eph 3:3,4,6,8,9,10; see 1Ti 3:16 Re 14:6; which doth not consist in beggarly elements, Ga 4:9, or vain speculations, which these Colossians are cautioned to avoid, Col 2:8, however varnished; but is to them who are saved, the power of God, Ro 1:16 1Co 1:18,19, and the wisdom of God, 1Co 1:24, which lay hid in God before the world, 1Co 2:7 2Ti 1:9 Tit 1:2 1Pe 1:20: yea, and after God had to our first parents, and so to his people the Jews, given some glimpse of this mystery, which yet the Gentiles of several ages were ignorant of, and many of the Jews, yea, the most knowing of them did not, for many generations, know that the Gentiles without circumcision, &c. were to be admitted into the church, Ac 10:28: the prophets were very inquisitive to know the meaning of it, but yet they also were much in the dark, 1Co 2:9 1Pe 1:10,11; yea, the angels did not know this hidden mystery, till revealed by the church, Eph 1:10.

But now is made manifest to his saints; but now God that revealeth secrets, Da 2:28, hath opened his bosom counsel about this affair most

clearly, so that his glory, by those that really fear him, may be seen with open face as in a glass through Christ, Mt 13:11 Mr 4:11 Joh 8:47 15:15 Ac 16:14 1Co 2:10,16 2Co 3:18; all necessary to salvation being made conspicuous and clear to them, 1Pe 2:9.

### Colossians 1:27

Ver. 27. To whom God would make known; he refers the manifestation purely to God's good will and pleasure, as Christ himself doth, Mt 11:26,27 Lu 10:21; so in the like case, Re 9:18; that having mentioned saints, none might conceit it was for foreseen faith, but the Colossians might value their privilege, reverently receive that grace which was not given to all: in short, to restrain curiosity why God would not do it otherwise or sooner, he cuts the knots of all questions, only by signifying his sovereign pleasure, he would make it known to them; elsewhere, this mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure, Eph 1:9, which was not to be touched till he thought meet to make it known.

What is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: some refer the glory to mystery, as glorious mystery, because it lets forth Divine glory, and promiseth it to believers, Lu 2:14; others, and the most, rather to riches, and that either as its epithet, (Col 1:11), the glorious riches of this mystery, or noting the subject, for salvation of the church amongst the Gentiles, Eph 1:18 3:7,8. It is usual with the apostle to use the word riches to set forth abundance, Ro 2:4, 11:33 Eph 1:7: here, for the praise of the gospel, he would signify a very great and most abundant glory, far surpassing any former ministration, 2Co 3:8,18. In the law those riches (Eph 2:7) were not only imperfectly and obscurely discovered, but scatteredly with broken beams, as the sun in water when the water is disturbed; one attribute shining out in one work, another in another; but now the harmony of the Divine attributes in man's redemption shines out most fully, clearly, and gloriously, contracted in Christ, who is the object and revealer of the mystery by his Spirit, the glory whereof breaks forth with much more splendour amongst the Gentiles, Ro 15:7-9 1Co 2:10 2Co 3:9,18; all glory before was but a shadow to this. Col 2:17 2Co 3:18 Ga 3:1 Heb 10:1.

Which is Christ in you; which is Christ, amongst, for, or in them, i.e. who not only was preached amongst them, but whom they possessed, and who dwelt in them by faith, Eph 3:17; the revelation being accompanied with

the power of the Spirit in the translating them by his glorious power from the kingdom of darkness into his kingdom, Col 1:13 Lu 17:21 Ga 2:20 4:19 Eph 3:5,7.

The hope of glory; so is not only the object, 1Ti 1:1, but the ground of their expectation of glory, he in whom the mystery begins and ends, 1Ti 3:16; out of whom all are hopeless of being happy, Eph 2:12, and in whom all have strong consolation, Heb 6:18.

### Colossians 1:28

Ver. 28. Whom we preach: here he shows that the subject of his and other ministers' preaching was Christ, (as he had before described him), in whom alone hope of glory was to be had, Ac 4:12 1Co 2:2 Ga 5:4 1Jo 1:3.

Warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; the manner of it was by admonishing and instructing all, in all the Christian wisdom that Christ required, that they might avoid sin and do their duty. He means all collectively, not distributively; of the generals of each, not each one of those generals; excluding none from the communion of so great a benefit, having no acceptance of nations or persons, making no exception of any condition, but inviting all men to Christ, holding forth this light of the gospel to whosoever would receive it, while God did vouchsafe life and strength to them, in the most taking way, Ac 20:21,27,31 Ro 1:14-16 1Ti 3:2 2Ti 2:24 2Ti 3:16 4:2 Tit 1:9.

That we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus; and the end and aim he and others of his mind had in preaching of this matter in such a manner was the same with Christ's, Col 1:22, to put them into such an estate by their labours that they might, through Christ, appear at a throne of grace without confusion, 2Co 11:2 Php 3:12,15 Heb 5:14.

### Colossians 1:29

Ver. 29. To perform which, saith he, I earnestly endeavour and take pains to weariness, as a husbandman, 2Ti 2:6, contending as one in an agony, 1Th 5:12, by his grace which was with me (1Co 15:10) in power; not by



my own strength or wisdom to do or suffer, but by his effectual aids, enabling me for his service which might, Col 1:11 Ro 15:15-21 1Co 9:25-27 Eph 1:19,20 3:7 Php 4:13.

## Colossians 2:1

### Chapter Summary

Col 2:1-3 Paul testifieth his solicitude for the churches which had not seen him, that they might be united in love, and attain a perfect knowledge of the Christian revelation,

Col 2:4-7 not being seduced from their stedfastness in the faith,

Col 2:8 nor corrupted through philosophy and human traditions.

Col 2:9-12 He showeth that they were already complete in Christ. having attained the true circumcision figured in baptism,

Col 2:13,14 that God had quickened the with Christ, and both abolished the law of ordinances, that was against them,

Col 2:15 and also spoiled principalities and powers.

Col 2:16-23 He therefore urgeth them not to submit to legal ordinances, which were but a shadow of Christ; nor to the worship of angels, and other vain practices of human devising.

Ver. 1. For; this causal particle refers to what he had said just before in the former chapter.

*I would that ye knew what great conflict I have for you;* the certainty of which truth, for the evidence of his unfeigned affection to them, he heartily wishes they might be certified what a combat he sustained for them, by reason of that opposition he met with in his ministerial labours. This filled him with inward fears and cares, and encompassed him with outward troubles, as 2Co 11:23-30 2Ti 2:10, wherein he addressed himself to God for them by earnest prayers, as Col 4:12 2Th 1:11, desiring the assistance of their prayers, Ro 15:30 Heb 13:18: these, with his travels, writings, &c.,

might well be called a *conflict*, Php 1:30.

*And for them at Laodicea;* which he had not only for the saints at Colosse, but for their neighbours, liable also to the impression of the same or the like seducers, at Laodicea, definitely, to whom he designed this Epistle might be imparted, Col 4:16.

*And for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh;* and indefinitely, for as many Christians, especially in Phrygia, as had not seen him bodily present amongst them, or heard him preach with a lively voice; whether, because it is said he twice passed through all Phrygia, where Colosse and Laodicea were situate, Ac 16:6 18:23, he had been personally at these cities, is not determinable from the copulative here, (which possibly may be used as a particle to separate these from those who had not conversed with him), neither is it of much importance. It should seem Paul was acquainted with Philemon, (a Colossian or Laodicean), his wife and family, Phm 1:1,2.

### Colossians 2:2

Ver. 2. *That their hearts might be comforted:* whereas false teachers did endeavour to adulterate the Christian institution, the striving of the apostle's holy soul here was, as in the former chapter, Col 1:28, to this end, that they might be complete and established Christians to the last.

*Being knit together in love;* and as a proper means conductible to this good purpose, he would have them be joined or compacted together, be all of a piece, in the affection and exercise of love.

*And unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding;* and to attain to a well-grounded, powerful, evangelical faith, which he sets forth lively by an elegant increase of words, both in regard of the acts and the object of it, which is called a mystery to be believed, 1Ti 3:9, upon its being revealed. The sense of that which he heartily desires is that they might have:

1. All abundance of understanding with full satisfaction in these main principles of the gospel they are called to assent to. Signifying faith is

no blind, but a certain intelligent persuasion; to distinguish it from uncertain opinion, Joh 6:69 Ro 4:21 1Th 1:5 Heb 6:11 10:22.

*To the acknowledgment:*

2. An inward consent, and vital owning, a cordial embracing of the fundamental truths of the gospel, Eph 4:13,14 Heb 6:1, in opposition to those vain speculations and traditions which deluded many. He calls this *the mystery of God*, or a Divine mystery, (no human invention), as before, Col 1:26,27; and so vindicates the dignity of faith and the excellency of the gospel, asserting it to be a mystery of God, not only as the object, but revealer of it; for the Father reveals Christ, Col 1:27 Mt 16:17 Eph 3:3, as Christ doth the Father, Mt 11:27 Joh 1:18.

Whereas it is said, *and of the Father, and of Christ*; this first *and* here needs not be rendered as a copulative, but as exegetical, or as expletive, and may be read, even, or to wit, or both, its (a learned man observes) the Greeks and Latins usually do when the copulative is to be repeated, the name of God referring commonly to the Father and the Son; as elsewhere, *God, even the Father*, Col 1:3 1Co 15:24 2Co 11:31 Eph 1:3 Php 4:20. So the former *and* here may be read; q.d. The mystery not of God, abstractedly considered; but, I would have you be united and all one, in the acknowledgment of the whole mystery of God, i.e. both of the Father and of Christ.

### Colossians 2:3

Ver. 3. *In whom*: this may relate either to the Divine mystery, wherein are in abundance all necessary doctrines to consolation and salvation stored up, respecting the foregoing verse; compare 1Co 2:7 Eph 3:3,4; in opposition to the vain show of wisdom seducers did boast of; or, (as the most ancient and modern take it), to Christ, the immediate antecedent: *in whom*, (as we render it), i.e. in Christ, considered either:

1. As the object, which being rightly known, we may have all wisdom and perfect knowledge to salvation: he speaks not here of all that Christ knoweth, he reveals not all that in the gospel to us, but what we must know of him that we may be saved. Or:

2. As the subject, because *all the treasures of wisdom in order to salvation, are not only known and found out in Christ, but also are hid*, do dwell and abide in him as the fountain, what he can give to us for our consolation and perfection.

It had been little pertinent for Paul to have said that all these deep things of God (1Co 2:10) were known to our Lord; but that they are found in him, do dwell in him, are all stored up, displayed, and set forth in him, to be seen *through the veil, that is to say his flesh*, Heb 10:20, or the infirmity of his cross. The series of the apostle's discourse, comparing Col 2:8,9, shows it to be thus understood of Christ as the subject and fountain of all saving wisdom, in opposition to the comments of human wisdom which the false doctors did boast of. Continuing the metaphor, he shows from what fund the treasures of saving knowledge may be drawn: by *treasures* intimating the excellency and abundance thereof; there was some store in the tabernacle of Moses, but very small compared to the abundance certainly to be found in Christ, all else of no worth to the excellency of the knowledge of Christ for consolation, Col 2:2 Php 3:8; things to be believed and practised are, by way of eminency, *Christian wisdom and knowledge*. The *treasures* of which, how and when hid, is to be well considered, because in our translation, and in almost all others, the Greek word we render *hid* is by trajection put next to the relative *whom*, whereas it is indeed in the original the last word in the verse, and seems to be expressive rather of what was hid before Christ than what is hid in him. For, as a learned man saith, hidden treasures, as such, seem to be like hidden music, of no regard; or like the hidden talent, Lu 19:20. It not being so easy to think that the apostle in this Epistle teaches, that the secrets which had lain hid from the wise men of the world in the ages past, now were made bare, brought into light, and made known even to babes by Christ, Col 1:26,27, with Lu 10:21; and having just before, Col 2:2, spoken of the understanding and acknowledgment of the mystery of the Father and the Son, what should the riches of glory to the knowledge of the mystery be, but the treasures of wisdom now revealed, heretofore hid, of which continuedly a little after he says that all the fulness of the Godhead dwells in him bodily, i.e. personally, not in a shadow, as it were hid in a cloud, but in flesh that may be really seen and touched? So that it should seem best to retain *hid* as it is placed in the Greek, to this sense; q.d. In Christ are, and dwell in the greatest fulness, all the treasures of wisdom, hid

under the law, which are therefore called a mystery, secret, or hidden thing from ages and generations, Col 1:26,27, now made manifest to his saints, they are now not hid in Christ, but made known amongst the Gentiles as God willed. Not then hidden riches, i.e. treasures of wisdom and knowledge of this mystery as of hid treasure, but out of Christ, and before Christ amongst the Jews: for Christ himself is that mystery Col 4:3, not hid after his appearance, but manifested, and manifesting the Father, Joh 1:18. However, if any will rather choose to read, as if in Christ were at present hid all treasures, it is to be understood, stored up, not exposed to the view of every eye, being as in a rich cabinet, not to keep them from being known to men, but rather to make them more precious and desirable. For Christ came when sent of his Father to spread this heavenly wealth. He is the Sun of righteousness, Joh 1:9: the unbelieving must thank themselves if, where he is truly preached, he be hid to them, and his arm be revealed but to a few, Isa 53:1 2Co 4:3,4: it is their own blinding that they do not savingly discern what is displayed in Christ. Wherefore both may be true in divers respects:

1. Consider the thing in itself, objectively; so treasures of wisdom are evidently laid up in Jesus Christ, and manifested upon his appearance, 1Ti 3:16 Tit 2:11. But:
2. With respect to the eyes and perceptions of men, subjectively, as naturally obscured and corrupted by sin; so natural men, or mere animal men, perceive not in Christ the riches of wisdom and knowledge which are in him as our Mediator, when they look upon him as having no beauty or comeliness for which they should desire him, Isa 53:2; he, as crucified, being to the Jews *a stumbling-block* and to the Gentiles *foolishness*, when he is to those of them who are called, *the power of God, and the wisdom of God*, 1Co 1:23,24. The Lutherans' inference hence, that omniscency agrees to Christ's human nature, is altogether inconsequent; both (as before) because the apostle's business here is not to acquaint us what Christ himself knoweth, but what is to be known by us, which may be found treasured up in him.

*Treasures* here in him not being considered absolutely, but comparatively to all the knowledge of men and angels. Yet, from a supposal of an infinite knowledge in Christ, who is God-man in one person, it followeth not that the soul of his human nature knoweth all things.

#### Colossians 2:4

Ver. 4. *And this I say;* here he suggests the ground of his insisting upon the excellent treasures of the saving knowledge of Christ, and the ample description of him.

*Lest any man should beguile you;* to this end, that he might fortify them against delusion by paralogisms, or sophistical and false reasonings, fallacious arguing, (as the word notes, Jas 1:22), under a colourable pretence and *show of wisdom*, Col 2:8,18,23. With enticing words; set off with rhetorical suasions and embellishments, intimating the prevalency of such blandishments, with fair words and good speeches to seduce the simple, if the heart were not established with grace, Ro 16:18 Eph 4:14 5:6 Heb 13:9; and therefore, esteeming the excellent knowledge of Christ, and being found in him, Php 3:8,9, they should beware of whatever, under a show of religion, is introduced to seduce them from *the simplicity that is in Christ*, 2Co 11:3.

#### Colossians 2:5

Ver. 5. *For though I be absent in in the flesh, yet am I with you in the spirit:* to prevent any surmise that his distance at Rome might take him off from minding of them at Colosse, he shows that the great affection he bare to them did oblige him to interest himself in all their concerns, (*the care of all the churches* being incumbent on him, 2Co 11:28), and therefore that his bodily confinement at Rome did not hinder his presence with them in spirit. Not that we can conclude, that by some extraordinary operation of the Holy Ghost God gave him now and then a clear prospect of what they did, as he did to Elisha of Gehazi's behavior, 2Ki 5:26; and to Ezekiel in Babylon of the secret actions of the Jews in Jerusalem; but that he was with them as with the Corinthians, 1Co 5:3, when distant in body his thoughts and affections were exercised about them.

*Joying and beholding your order;* as it follows there is moving of fears lest they should be insnared, so of joy understanding their *order*, i.e. their good estate, constitution, and consent in orderly walking and discipline,

1Co 14:10 1Th 4:1 5:14.

*And the steadfastness of your faith in Christ;* and the firmament of their faith in Christ, it being (if genuine) as firm as the firmament itself; stable as the heavens and heavenly bodies, keeping their constant stations and regular courses, and admitting nothing heterogeneous into them: all heavenly truths are as fixed stars in this orb. Seeing all grace, because Divine, hath an establishing proverty; so faith coming from the eternal mountains, all graces being connected in faith, which is a kind of firmament to them all, it comes to pass that faith, in actuating any true grace, gives a strength and further growth to every other grace.

Colossians 2:6

Ver. 6. Having cautioned them against sophistical seducers, and commended them for that order and sound faith he understood to be amongst them, he here infers an exhortation to continuance in both, especially in the latter, with respect to the person of Christ, according as he had before described him: for he doth not say: As ye have received the doctrine of Christ, or concerning Christ, but: *As ye have received Christ himself,* as Joh 1:11,12 1Jo 5:11,12, in whom is all treasured up for salvation. He adds not only *Jesus*, (who came to save his people from their sins), but *the Lord*, intimating they should not therefore suffer any rules of faith or life to be imposed upon them by any other whatsoever, but should be persuaded to abide *in him*, whom they had embraced, and order their conversation according to his mind, 1Th 4:1, knowing that he is *the way, the truth, and the life*, Joh 14:6; being led by his Spirit, and deriving virtue to go on in this orderly walk and persevere in the faith.

Colossians 2:7

Ver. 7. *Rooted and built up in him;* showing how they should abide and persevere in the faith, by continuing in him as branches do in the root, Joh 15:4, and resting upon him as a building upon the foundation, Isa 28:16 1Co 3:11 Eph 2:22.

*And stablished in the faith;* and being firm and settled in the faith, as 1Pe

5:10; he adds this, not only to clear the metaphorical expressions before, but to show that they should be growing stronger as to the internal habit, Ps 92:13,14. He repeats as it were in a parenthesis, *as ye have been taught*; upon the matter, the same with *as ye have received Christ* in the former verse; for greater caution to them, who might be apt to have itching ears, that they should not be listening to any novel doctrines, but abide in the faith of Christ.

*Abounding therein with thanksgiving*; setting down with themselves, according to the superabounding grace they had, Ro 5:20, with 1Co 4:8, to abound and increase therein, 1Co 15:58 2Pe 1:8; having herein all the saving knowledge desirable, without need of the addition of aught any other way; being thankful to God that he had revealed such a Christ, his Christ, to them, for they could not have a better or another.

### Colossians 2:8

Ver. 8. Beware: the apostle, after his exhortation, considering their danger from seducing spirits lying in wait to deceive by their sleight and craftiness, 1Ti 4:1,2, doth here reinforce and enlarge his caution he had before suggested, Col 2:4, to engage to a heedful avoidance of all seduction from Christ.

*Lest any man spoil you*; lest their souls should be made a prey, and they be carried for a spoil by those worst of robbers that beset Christ's fold, 2Co 11:20 Ga 6:13.

*Through philosophy*; either through the abuse of true philosophy in bringing the mystery of Christ under the tribunal of shallow reason, or rather through erroneous, though curious, speculations of some philosophers, as Plato, Pythagoras, Hesiod, &c. then in vogue, which the Gnostics afterwards (who, thinking themselves enriched with the notions of other heretics, would be thought the only knowing persons) dressed up Christ with, not like himself. Their philosophy being a falsely so called science or knowledge, 1Ti 6:20, whatever show of wisdom it might seem to carry along with it, Col 2:23, it was not really profitable; but a *vain deceit*, or seduction, as several take the next clause appositively, and the conjunction expositively; yet, if we consider what follows, we may



understand another general imposture, viz. superstition, seeing *vain deceit, after the tradition of men*, is so like that superstition our Saviour doth rebuke in the Pharisees, Mt 15:9, several branches of which the apostle doth afterward in this chapter dispute against, Col 2:16-23: superstition might well be called *deceit*, from the cheat it puts upon men and the notation of the Greek word, which imports a withdrawing men from the way. Christ, and from his way of worship prescribed in his word; and *vain* it is as well as a deceit, since it is empty and unprofitable, not accompanied with God's blessing, nor conducing to the pleasing of him, but the provoking of him, Ps 106:29,43. Being led by no other rule than *the tradition of men*, which is the same with the precepts of men, Mr 7:8, which God likes not, Isa 8:20 28:13 Joh 20:31 Ac 26:22 2Ti 3:15,16; he would not give place to human traditions in his house, nor to *the rudiments of the world*, ( in allusion to grammar, wherein the letters are the elements or rudiments of all literature), i.e. the ceremonies of the Mosaical law, containing a kind of elementary instruction, for that seems to be the apostle's meaning, comparing this verse with Col 2:20 and Col 2:21, and other places, Ga 3:24, these being but corporeal, *carnal*, and sensible *ordinances*, suitable to a *worldly sanctuary*. Heb 9:1,10, not to be imposed in that spiritual one which Christ hath set up, Joh 4:23,24 Ga 5:2. Whatsoever philosophical colours or Pharisaical paint they might appear in, they are *not after Christ*: we say a false picture of a man is not after the man, being not taken from or resembling his person, but clean another; such descriptions of him, as were not taken from the life and truth that was in him. And therefore he who is Head of his church, and likes not to be misshaped or misrepresented, will not accept of homage from those of his own house, in a livery that he hath not given order for, Le 10:1 Jer 7:31 2Co 5:9, how specious soever it may be in the wisdom of this world and the princes thereof, 1Co 2:6,7.

### Colossians 2:9

Ver. 9. *For*; the causal particle induceth this as an argument to enforce the caution immediately foregoing, against those who did seek to draw from Christ by philosophy, as well as urging the ceremonial law; else the apostle's reasoning were not cogent unless against both.

*In him*; it is evident that the Lord Jesus Christ himself, whom he had described and but just now named, is the subject, the person of whom he speaks, and in

whom is seated, and unto whom he attributes, what followeth, Col 1:19 Joh 1:4 1Ti 4:16. He doth not say, in his doctrine, whatever Socinians cavil, as if they would render the apostle absurd, and not to agree with himself in what he asserts of Christ's person before (as hath been showed) and after in the context. It is plain this relative *him*, respects not only Col 2:8, but Col 2:11, &c. in whom the believing Colossians are said to be *complete* as their *Head*, both in the former chapter, and soon after in this. Would it not be absurd to say, Christ's doctrine is the head of angels? We are crucified in the doctrine of Christ? Buried and quickened together with his doctrine? The hand-writing of ordinances was nailed to the cross of doctrine? Is a doctrine the head of principalities and powers? Can a doctrine be buried in baptism? &c. To silence all the earth, that they should not restrain it to Christ's doctrine only, what he asserts of his person, Paul, after Christ had been several years in heaven, put it in the present tense, *dwelleth*, not dwelt, (as 2Ti 1:5), in regard of the person eternally the same, Heb 13:8; for his argument had not been cogent, to contain Christians in the faith of Christ, and their duty to him, to have alleged, in the doctrine of Christ now in heaven hath dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily (could propriety of speech have allowed it); but from the other respect, because in their very flesh (the body of Christ, now an inhabitant of the heavens) the very Godhead, in the whole fulness thereof, personally, from the moment of his incarnation, doth yet dwell. What will not the faithful perform and work out with their utmost faith, that they may never suffer themselves to be rent from spiritual and mystical union with him, in whom they understand that even they themselves shall be also divinely filled, Col 2:10, i.e. in their measure be made *partakers of the Divine nature*, 2Pe 1:4.

*Dwelleth* imports more than a transient stay for a few minutes, or a little while, even abiding in him constantly and for ever, as dwelling most usually notes, 2Co 6:16. That which doth thus perpetually abide in his person, as denominated after the human nature, is all the fulness of the Godhead, viz. that rich and incomprehensible abundance of perfections, whereof the supreme and adorable nature is full; so that indeed there is not at all any perfection or excellency in the Divine nature but is found abiding in him. And after no common or ordinary way, but by a hypostatical or personal union of the Godhead with the manhood in Christ; which is not by way of mixture, confusion, conversion, or any other mutation; but *bodily*, to exclude that inhabitation which is only by extriniscal denomination. It being an adverb, doth denote the manner as well as the subject; wherefore when he speaks of the temple of his body, Joh 2:21, that doth not fully reach the apostle's meaning here: but it must be expounded personally, since in the Greek that which signifies with us a body, and so our English word body, is put for a person, Ro 12:1 2Co 5:10 Re 18:13: somebody or nobody, i.e. some person or no person. There is a

presence of the Godhead general, by essence and power; particular, in the prophets and apostles working miracles: gracious, in all sanctified ones; glorious, in heaven, in *light which no man can approach unto*, 1Ti 6:16; relative, in the church visible and ordinances, typically under the law, and symbolically in the sacraments: but all these dwellings, or being present in the creature, fall short of that in the text, viz. *bodily*, connoting the personal habitation of the *Deity* in, and union of it with, the humanity of Christ, so close, and strait, and intimate, that the Godhead inhabiting and the manhood inhabited make but one and the same person, even as the reasonable soul and body in man make but one man. The way of the presence of the Deity with the humanity of Christ is above all those manners of the presence of God with angels and men. The Godhead dwells in him personally, in them in regard of assistance and energy: Godhead notes the truth of it; Christ was not only partaker of the Divine nature, 2Pe 1:4, but the very Godhead dwells in him: it is not only the Divinity (as the Socinians, following the Vulgar Latin in this, would have it) but the Deity, the very nature and essence of God. Now it is observable, though in God himself Divinity and Deity be indeed the same, Ro 1:20, and may differ only from the manner of our conception and contemplation; yet here, when the enemies to Christ's Deity might by their cavilling make more use of the word Divinity, (as when the soul of man is said to be a divine thing), to insinuate as if it here noted only the Divine will exclusive to the other attributes, (which exclusion the term *all* doth significantly prevent), the apostle puts in Deity or *Godhead*. Then lest Christ might (as by the Arians) be deemed a secondary God, or (as some since) a made god, inferior to the Father, he saith *the fulness of the Godhead*, which speaks him perfect God, coequal with the Father: further, connoting a numerical sameness of essence between the Godhead of the Father and the Son, *all* the fulness of the Godhead dwelleth in him. There is not one fulness of the Father and another of the Son, but one and the same singular Godhead in both, Joh 10:30. The fulness of the manhood in Adam and Eve were not numerically the same, but the Godhead of the Father and the Son is: yet is not the manhood of Christ co-extended and commensurate with the Godhead (as some Lutherans conceit); but where the manhood is, or Christ as man is, or hath his existence, there the fulness of the Godhead dwells bodily: so that this fulness is extended as the manhood only in which it is, and not as far as the Deity in which this derivative fulness is not as in its seat, though it be all originally from it, but inherently or subjectively in Christ.

## Colossians 2:10

Ver. 10. *And ye;* ye saints and holy brethren, Col 1:2, who have received Christ, Col 2:6,7, and so are mystically united to him, in whom dwelleth all fulness (as you have heard); being in him, having one Spirit with him, as members with the head, Ro 8:1,9 Eph 1:23, *are complete;* are implete, or filled, and so mediately and causally complete from the all-fulness that is in your Head, yet not immediately and properly complete with it (as some have been apt to think). But *in him* ye have that completeness and perfection which is reckoned and made over to you and accepted for you to justification, so that *of his fulness* ye receive, *and grace for grace*, Joh 1:16 1Co 1:30 2Co 5:21 Eph 1:6 Php 3:9; derive in and from him all spiritual blessings, Eph 1:3; so that every one hath *grace sufficient*, 2Co 12:9, to do all things incumbent on him, through Christ strengthening him, Php 4:13. It is true there is here in this state no being complete or perfect actually, as to glorification, yet, virtually and seminally, that may in a sort be said of true believers not only in regard of their Head, but in regard of their certain hope of being saved in Christ, yea, and indeed as to the earnest, the seed and root of it, having already that life which shall never have an end, Joh 3:36 4:14 Ro 5:2 Eph 4:30 2Th 2:13 Heb 9:15 10:14 1Pe 1:3,4 1Jo 5:12.

*Which is the head of all principality and power:* the apostle, for consolation of the saints, and in opposition to those who did endeavour a withdrawing from Christ to the worshipping of angels. Col 2:18, doth further infer, from the personal union, the dignity of the human nature of Christ, in regard of the good angels, which are here meant by *principality and power*, by reason of their excellency by nature and grace, and their authority delegated to them by God over other creatures, Mt 24:36 2Co 11:14 1Ti 5:21. Christ having the fulness of the Godhead dwelling in him bodily, is Head unto the good angels in regard of his excellency and eminency above them, who are far below him in perfection, Eph 1:21 Heb 1:4; the best of them are *ministering spirits* and *subject to him*, and so under his authority and at his command, Mt 13:41 16:27 24:31 Eph 3:10 Heb 1:14 1Pe 3:22 Re 1:1 22:16.

## Colossians 2:11

Ver. 11. *In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands:* he removes what they who are addicted to superstition might suggest, as if there were somewhat defective to a completeness in Christ, by showing there was no need of any addition to what he required in the gospel; for that they might most plausibly urge of circumcision, as being the seal of the old covenant, and an obligation to the whole law, Ga 5:3, which some pressed as necessary to salvation, Ac 15:1,24, he here shows was altogether needless now, that they were sanctified and had the thing signified by it, the circumcision of the heart, Ro 2:28,29 Php 3:3, and were complete in Christ without it; yea, that the urging of that and other ceremonies now, was a pernicious error, tending to annihilate the cross of Christ, and overthrow the whole mystery of his grace. It is true it was appointed to the Jews, a figure of a thing absent; they therefore who retain that figure after the coming of Christ, deny that to be complete which it doth figure, and so abolish the presence of the truth; by stickling for the shadow, they let go the substance, viz. the circumcision not made by the operation of man, but of God; not with the knife of Moses, but the word of Christ, *sharper than any two-edged sword*, Heb 4:12: and if we compare this with the verse following, and Php 3:3, the apostle intimates that baptism is the same to us Christians which circumcision was to the Jews; and that is often ascribed to the external administration, that is only the internal operation of the Spirit, as Ro 6:3,4 Ga 3:27,28 Tit 3:5 1Pe 3:21. Now though there was during the shadow of it, Heb 10:1, under the Old Testament, the circumcision of the heart, as well as under the New, De 10:16 30:6 Jer 4:4; yet under the New Testament Christ the substance (who was only before in the promise) being now exhibited, having abolished the old symbol and instituted baptism in the room of it; that with the hands in the flesh, Eph 2:11, which they who *received not the promise*, i.e. the Messiah promised, used, Heb 11:39, was to be no more urged, now the benefit by the merit of his obedience unto the death of the cross, whereby he circumciseth from sin, might be enjoyed, as was signified by baptism, appointed to this end, Mt 28:19 Ac 2:38 Ro 6:3,4 Ga 3:27 1Pe 3:21.

*In putting off the body of the sins of the flesh:* hence he doth illustrate this spiritual circumcision by describing the parts of it, beginning with the mortification of the old man, corrupted nature, containing not only the

body and senses, but the soul tainted with the defilements of sin, Col 3:5 Ro 6:6 Ga 5:19-21,24 Eph 4:22. The body of sins which do mostly exert themselves in the flesh, every member and power while unregenerate being active in the committing of sin, till the new man be put on, Eph 4:24, and the dominion of it be subdued; not by any natural part which a man hath of himself for that purpose, but by the circumcision of Christ, not properly that whereby he himself was circumcised in the flesh the eighth day, but that which he hath indispensably required to have admission into his kingdom, Joh 3:3, and which he himself is the worker of, doth procure by his merit, and effect by his Spirit, which all the suasion of the sublimest philosophers, and devotion of superstitious ones, cannot do.

### Colossians 2:12

*Ver. 12. Buried with him in baptism:* he shows that in Christ they who are found have not only the thing signified, but right to the outward sign and seal, viz. baptism, in the room of circumcision abolished; the death and burial of Christ is not only the exemplar, but the cause of the death of the old man, signed and sealed in baptism: or, *by baptism into death*, Ro 6:3,4, analogically, or symbolically, or sacramentally, when the Lord, together with the external sign, conferreth his grace signified by that sign; for even then the sins of such a one are buried with Christ so as they shall appear no more, either to his eternal condemnation, or in their former dominion, Ro 6:6,9,14.

*Wherein also ye are risen with him;* in or by which baptism becoming effectual, having mortified the body of sin, like as Christ was raised from the dead, ye are quickened and raised to *newness of life*, Ro 6:4 Ga 3:27-29 Eph 4:23,24 5:14,26,27 Col 3:10,11. By virtue of Christ's resurrection, a spiritual and mystical one is produced in you, which hath a resemblance and analogy to his.

*Through the faith of the operation of God;* not of yourselves, but *through faith*, Eph 2:8, and that wrought in you by the energy or efficacy of God, Joh 6:29 Php 1:29 2:13 Heb 12:2.

*Who hath raised him from the dead;* who did exert his power in raising up Christ from the dead: compare Ro 4:24, with Eph 1:19,20. This faith is not

only wrought by God, as the circumcision without hands, but it doth respect that wonderful power of God put forth in the raising of Christ, as the subject, which he mentions by way of congruity, speaking of our resurrection, and of Christ's. And he specifieth faith rather than love or other graces which are wrought also by God, because in this grace, which is the constitutive part of the new creature, God comes in with a greater irradiation upon the soul, being it hath not one fragment or point of nature to stand upon; carnal reason and mere moral righteousness being opposite to it, whereas other graces are but as the rectifying of the passions, and setting them upon right objects.

### Colossians 2:13

Ver. 13. *And you, being dead in your sins:* he further shows they had no need of *circumcision in the flesh*, Eph 2:11, having all in Christ for justification as well as sanctification, though they (as well as the Ephesians, see Eph 2:1,5) were by nature spiritually *dead in sins*, deprived of the life of grace, and separated from the life of glory.

*And the uncircumcision of your flesh;* and having the foreskin of their flesh in paganism; which was true literally, but, considering the internal circumcision, Col 2:11, the apostle's expression here is to be expounded of the internal corruption of our nature, the uncircumcised heart, original corruption derived unto all by carnal propagation, which is predominant in the unregenerate. These being dead as to the life of grace, Mt 8:22 Joh 5:25 Ro 8:7 1Co 2:14 1Ti 5:6.

*Hath he quickened together with him;* you who were strangers from the life of God, Eph 4:18, hath he now quickened or revived to a spiritual life with him here, and hereafter to eternal life, 1Co 15:22.

*Having forgiven you all trespasses;* having freely pardoned to you (the word noting a free affection to give and forgive, 2Co 2:10 Eph 4:32) all your sins, after as well as before baptism, which is the sign and seal of it, Ps 103:3; so that the Spirit of Christ doth not only infuse a principle of grace, and implant a living and abiding seed to work out vicious habits, but God, upon the account of Christ's plenary satisfaction, doth freely remove all the guilt that binds over to eternal death, and doth not impute to

believers any of their sins in whole or in part, but treateth them as if they had committed none at all, Mt 26:28 Ac 10:43 Eph 1:7 Heb 9:15, and will remember them no more, so that when they are sought for they shall not be found, Jer 31:34 50:20 Heb 10:17. What the papists say of the fault being remitted, when the punishment may be exacted either in whole or in part, that they may have a pretence for human satisfactions, (the groundlessness of which was hinted, Col 1:24), is a mere figment of the schools, against Scripture and reason.

### Colossians 2:14

Ver. 14. *Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us:* having just before manifested God's grace in the free forgiveness of all their trespasses, he doth here adjoin the foundation and means of this remission, viz. "Wiping out the bill of decrees", as one reads; or effacing and cancelling "the handwriting that was against us, which was contrary to us in traditions", as another, pointing after chirograph or handwriting: upon the matter in the explanation there will be no difference from our reading of it. Sin, in Scripture, is frequently accounted a debt, and the acquitting, the pardoning of it, Mt 6:12 Lu 11:4 13:4: as the debtor is obliged to payment, so the sinner to punishment; only it is to be remembered, that though a private creditor may forgive his debt, yet unless the conservator of public justice do exempt an offender against the law, he is not acquitted, but is still under an obligation, bond or handwriting, having, as they under the Mosaic law, professed allegiance, Ex 24:7, which upon default was an evidence of this guilt to avenging justice. The law prescribed by the ministration of Moses was appended with many ceremonial ordinances, to the observation of all which circumcision did oblige: this obligation interpretatively was as a handwriting which did publicly testify a man's native pollution, and was a public confession of his sin and misery, as washings did testify the filth of his sins, and sacrifices, capital guilt to them who lived under it, and did not perform it; that they were accursed, Ga 3:10,19, under a *ministration of death*, 2Co 3:7,9; while by laying their hands on the sacrifices, they did as it were sign a bill or bond against themselves, whereby conscience of guilt was retained, Heb 10:2,3, and a conscience of sin renewed, so that the heart could not be stablished in any firm peace, Heb 9:9 10:1; but they did confess sin to remain, and that they did want a removal of the curse by a



better sacrifice. Upon the offering up of this, the law of commandments was blotted out, cancelled or abolished, even that *contained in ordinances*, saith the apostle elsewhere; see Eph 2:15, compared with, Col 2:16,20,21; and therefore there is no condemnation to them that are circumcised with the circumcision of Christ, being found in him, Col 2:11, with Ro 8:1 7:4.

*Which was contrary to us*; so that however the law, which was in itself holy, just, and good, through sin became in some sort contrary, or subcontrary, to us, in that it did serve to convict, and terrify with the curse for our default, Ro 7:5,9, aggravating all by its ceremonies, and shutting the gate of God's house against the Gentiles, of whose number the Colossians were, *strangers from the covenants of promise*, Eph 2:12; yet this obligation was abrogated and annulled by the death of Christ, as the apostle expresseth it with great elegancy, having not only said that the debt was wiped out, defaced by the blood of Christ being drawn over it, as they used to blot out debts or draw red lines across them; but he adds, *and took it out of the way*; taken out of the way, as the debtor's bond or obligation is, being cancelled and torn to pieces, so that there is no memorial or evidence of the debt doth remain, all matter of controversy being altogether removed. Yet, if it may be, to speak more fully and satisfactorily, he annexeth, *nailing it to his cross*; what could be more significant? Implying that Christ, by once offering himself a sacrifice on the cross, had disarmed the law, and taken away its condemning power, Ro 7:4 Ga 3:13. It being customary (as learned men say) of old, especially in Asia, to pierce cancelled obligations and antiquated writings with nails; Christ by his plenary satisfaction did not only discharge from the condemnation of the law, Ro 8:1,34, but he did effectually, with the nails with which he himself was crucified, by interpretation, fasten the handwriting of ordinances to his cross, and abolished the ceremonial law in every regard, since the substance of it was come, and that which it tended to was accomplished, in giving *himself a ransom for all*, 1Ti 2:6, to the putting away of sin, Heb 9:26, and obtaining eternal redemption, Heb 9:12.

### Colossians 2:15

Ver. 15. *And having spoiled*; some render it, seeing he hath stripped or made naked, as runners and racers used to put off their clothes.

*Principalities and powers*; hence some of the ancients read putting off his flesh (possibly by the carelessness of some scribes, writing that which signifies flesh instead of that which signifies principalities, in all the authentic copies); but besides that Christ hath not put off the human nature, only the infirmities of the flesh, 2Co 5:16 Heb 5:7, it doth not agree

with what follows. One conceits that by *principalities and powers* are meant the ceremonies of the law, because of the Divine authority they originally had; and that Christ unclothed or unveiled them, and showed them to be misty figures that were accomplished in his own person. But I see no reason thus to allegorize, for it is easy to discern the word is borrowed from conquering warriors having put to flight and disarmed their enemies, (as the word may well signify disarming, in opposition to arming, Ro 13:12 Eph 6:11,14), and signifies here, that Christ disarmed and despoiled the devil and his angels, with all the powers of darkness. We have seen that by *principalities and powers* are meant angels, Col 1:16, with Ro 8:37 Eph 1:21; and here he means evil ones, in regard of that power they exercise in this world under its present state of subjection to sin and vanity, Lu 4:6 Joh 12:31 2Co 4:4 Eph 2:2 6:12 2Ti 2:26; whom Christ came to destroy, and effectually did on his cross defeat, Lu 11:22 Joh 16:11 1Co 15:55 Heb 2:14 1Jo 3:8; delivering his subjects *from the power of darkness*, Col 1:13, according to the first promise, Ge 3:15.

*He made a show of them openly;* yea, and Christ did, as an absolute conqueror, riding as it were in his triumphal chariot, publicly show that he had vanquished Satan and all the powers of darkness, in the view of heaven and earth, Lu 10:17,18.

*Triumphing over them;* even then and there where Satan thought he should alone have had the day by the death of the innocent Jesus, was he and his adherents triumphed over by the Lord of life, to their everlasting shame and torment. What the papists would gather hence, that Christ did, in this triumphant show upon the cross, carry the souls of the patriarchs out of their Limbus, i.e. their appointment to hell, is a mere unscriptural fiction; for those that he made show of in his victorious chariot are the very same that he spoiled to their eternal ignominy and confusion.

*In it:* some render this, (as in the margin), in himself, or by himself, i.e. by his own power and virtue and not by the help of any other; the prophet saith he trod the winepress alone, and had not any of the people with him, Isa 63:3; yet it seems here better to adhere to our own translation, *in it*, considering what went before of *his cross*, that he triumphed over Satan on it or by it, because the death that he there suffered was the true and only cause of his triumphs; there he trod Satan under his feet, there he set his seed at liberty, and they who go about to bereave them of it, and bring

them into bondage, do no other than restore to Satan his spoils.

### Colossians 2:16

Ver. 16. *Let no man therefore judge you;* he infers none should be condemned: none condemns another for exercising Christian liberty; none hath power to judge and censure herein: q. d. Suffer not any one (he excepts none) to impose upon you that, as necessary in the use and practice of it, which is not *after Christ*, Col 2:8, not warranted by his law of liberty, Ro 14:3,4 Ga 5:1 Jas 1:25. Paul himself would not be imposed on, 1Co 6:12 7:23 Ga 2:5,11,14, &c.; he would not (as one of the words doth note) be domineered over by any, or suffer any to exercise authority over him, who held the Head, and owned Christ to be Lord of the conscience, and sole dictator of what way he will be served in.

*In meat, or in drink;* he therefore would not have the practice of ceremonials obtruded, instancing in some, as the difference of meats and drinks, in the use or not use of which (now after Christ had nailed those decrees to his cross) superstitious ones would, from the antiquated rites of the Jews and Pythagorean philosophers, place holiness in, and add them to the Christian institution.

*Or in respect of an holy-day, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days;* or the difference of festivals and sabbaths, whether annual, or monthly, or weekly, from the Levitical institutions.

### Colossians 2:17

Ver. 17. *Which are a shadow of things to come;* which, as they were but obscurer representations or shadowy resemblances of future benefits procured by Christ, Heb 8:5 9:11 10:1, whatever temporary glory they had from the former institution, *till the time of reformation*, Heb 9:10, yet that was done away, and they now had none, in respect of the glory that excelleth and remaineth, 2Co 3:10,11. So that this doth no way gainsay the sacraments now of Christ's own institution, which may be called figures and shadows, not of things future, of Christ not yet come, but as already exhibited, whom they manifest to the mind and faith to be present, to those

who rightly partake of them: we cannot say he condemns all distinctions of meats and drinks, viz. bread and wine in the Lord's supper; or of days; only the decrees and ordinances of Moses, or any other which the false teachers cried up, that were not after Christ.

*But the body is of Christ;* who is really the substance and antitype of all the Old Testament shadows, which have completion or accomplishment in him, Joh 1:17 Ro 10:4 Ga 4:10-12; as all the promises were in him yea and Amen, Da 9:24 2Co 1:20; all was consummated in him, Joh 19:30, who came in the place of all the shadows. He is *Lord of the sabbath*, Mt 12:8, and therefore, having broken the devil's head-plot by his propitiatory sacrifice, and entered into his rest, ceasing from his own works of redemption by price, as God did from his of creation, Heb 4:10, he did away (2Co 3:7,11) all that was typical and ceremonial of the old sabbath, (as other types of himself); keeping only that which was substantial, for a holy rest of one day in seven, and appointing that in commemoration of the Father's work and his to be, from his resurrection, observed on the first day of the week, for the edification of his church; which he honoured by his appearance amongst his apostles on that day, and that day seven-night after, which proceeded originally from his instituting of that day (to prevent dissension) for public worship in Christian assemblies. Some have observed that the Jewish doctors did foresay: That the Divine Majesty would be to Israel in a jubilee, freedom, redemption, and finisher of sabbaths: and that four sabbaths did meet together and succeed each other at the death and the resurrection of Christ, viz.

1. The sabbatical year of jubilee, Lu 4:19.
2. The high sabbath, Joh 19:31.
3. The seventh-day sabbath, when his body rested in the grave.
4. The first day of the week, when he rose a victorions conqueror of the devil, and had all put in subjection to him, unto whom all the rest did refer, and therefore they were to disappear, upon his estating his people in a rest which the law could not; whereupon his people are obliged in public adoration and praise to commemorate him on the first day of the week, or the Lord's day, to the end of the world, 1Co 16:1,2 Re 1:10.

## Colossians 2:18

Ver. 18. *Let no man beguile you of your reward:* the original compound word, peculiar in the New Testament to Paul, and that in this Epistle only, (and not very frequent in other authors), hath occasioned interpreters here to render it variously, some joining the next following word with it, and some (as we read it) to that which follows after. The simple word is, Col 3:15, read *rule*, or judge, and it may be rendered intercede. Yet Paul doth not elsewhere use this word simply or in composition where he speaks of judging and condemning, Ro 2:1; however, it is borrowed from those who were judges or umpires in their games, the apostle most likely alluding to those, who through favour or hatred determined unjustly, to the defrauding those victors of their prize or reward to whom it was due. Hence some would have the import to be agreeable to our translation; Be careful these unjust arbiters do not defraud you of gaining Christ, and *deceive you*, ( as Mt 24:4 Eph 5:6 2Th 2:3), by prescribing false lists and giving you wrong measures, and so judging against you. One renders it: Let no man deceive you with subtle argument, who pleaseth or delights himself in humility; another: Let no man take your prize; others: Let no man master it or bear rule over you at pleasure; let none take upon himself, or usurp to himself, the parts or office of a governor or umpire over you. The apostle labours to fortify the true followers of Christ against such superstitious subtle ones, who by their artifice did assume a magisterial authority (without any sure warrant from God) to impose their traditionary and invented services upon them, and determine of their state, accordingly as the papists do at this day. One learned man thinks the apostle had not used this word here, but for some notable advantage, viz. because the simple word may signify to intercede as well as to judge; it made wonderfully to his purpose in this composition, (as he uses *concision*, Php 3:2), to disparage those seducers who did, from some notions of the Platonists, labour to gain credit to that opinion that the angels were intercessors between God and man.

*In a voluntary humility, and worshipping of angels;* covering their imperious spirit by being volunteers in humility, or by a pretence of voluntary, uncommanded humility, alleging it would be presumption in them to address themselves immediately to God, and therefore they would pay a religious homage to angels, as of a middle nature between God and them, presuming they would mediate for them: an instance to express all

that invented worship, which, how specious soever it may seem to be, hath no warrant from Christ, who alone can procure acceptance of our persons and services. He expects that his disciples should assert his rights, and the liberty with which he hath made them free, against the traditions of self-willed men, and no more to solemnize for worship, than teach for doctrines, the traditions of men, Mt 15:2,6,9. We must not, under any pretext of humility, presume to know what belongs to our duty and God's service better than Christ doth, showing us that he alone is the true and living way, and we may come boldly by him, Mt 11:28 Joh 14:1,6 Eph 3:12 Heb 4:16 Heb 10:19,20. And therefore the adoring and invocating of angels as heavenly courtiers, whatever the papists out of a show of humility do argue, is not after Christ, but against him.

*Intruding into those things which he hath not seen:* yea, and for any one to assert it, and the like, is to be a bold intruder upon another's possession, a thrusting a man's self into the knowledge and determination of that which is above his reach, Ps 131:1, and he hath no ground at all for, but doth pry or wade into a secret which a man cannot know. The apostle useth a Platonic word against those who did indulge themselves out of curiosity in the opinions of the Platonists about angels, the worshippers of which, amongst those who were professed Christians in Phrygia, were so tenacious of their error that they were not rooted out after the third century, when a canon was made against them under the name of Angelici, in the council of Laodicea near Colosse.

*Vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind;* the first rise of such foolish presumption, was a being rashly puffed up with the sense of their flesh, a deluded mind moved by some carnal principle, setting out things with swelling words of vanity, wherewith in truth they have no acquaintance, and whereof they have no experience, 1Ti 1:7.

### Colossians 2:19

Ver. 19. *And not holding the Head:* here the apostle suggests, that those things he had before taxed did proceed from hence, that they let go the Lord Christ himself, Col 2:8,9, from whom all truths are to be derived, and consequently he is all truth itself, Joh 14:6; not to adhere to him is the spring of all apostacies, lie being the Head: see Eph 4:15,16.

*From which all the body;* whence is communicated and distributed such influence to the body, the church, as is necessary to all the sensations and motions thereof.

*By joints and bands having nourishment ministered;* being in all its members fitly framed together by the Spirit, Eph 2:21,22, and united by faith, Eph 3:17, hath a continual subsidy of life and vigour.

*And knit together;* and fastened together in a spiritual union, which joineth all believers to their Head, and each of them to the other in him, 1Co 10:17 12:12,20,25,27.

*Increaseth with the increase of God;* whereupon, to mutual edification in love, it groweth with a Divine growth and spiritual increase, arising from the efficacy of God, and tending to his glory; being filled with the influences of his grace, 1Co 3:6, it is established and strengthened by little and little, in light and purity, and all graces, till it attain to the measure of its perfect stature in Christ Jesus our Lord; whereas an increase in the traditions of men, and the inventions of flesh, do only blow it up with wens and imposthumes, to the disfiguring, deforming, and destroying of it.

### Colossians 2:20

Ver. 20. *Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world:* here the apostle doth further argue against all impositions of superstitious observances, obtruded as parts of Divine worship, whether in reviving those abrogated, or setting up new ones, upon supposition of their union with Christ their Head, and their being dead in him as to all beggarly elements from which he had freed them by his death, Ro 6:3,5 7:4,6 Ga 4:9,10,11, with Col 2:19; no uncommanded worship or way of worship being after Christ, Col 2:8, in whom they were *complete*, Col 2:10, being *buried with him in baptism*, Col 2:12, having nailed those ritual ordinances to his cross, as antiquated or out-dated, Col 2:14.

*Why, as though living in the world, are ye are subject to ordinances?* Why should they, who held the Head, Col 2:19, as if they lived in the old world with those *children in bondage*, Ga 4:3, before Christ came, be subject to

ceremonial observances? q.d. It is most injurious that they should impose this yoke upon you, (Ac 15:10), ye are most foolish if ye submit your necks; for God would not have a ceremonial worship which he himself instituted to be abrogated, that a new one should be invented by men. If the Head of the church like not the reviving that worship he hath laid aside, be sure he will not approve of any new one which he never appointed. The apostle is not here speaking of the magistrates' ordinances about things indifferent in their use, for the real good of the civil government, but of the way of worshipping God by religious abstinences, &c.

### Colossians 2:21

Ver. 21. Which he doth here by way of imitation, upbraiding of them, elegantly recite in the words, phrases, or sense of those imposing dogmatists, whose superstition and lust of domineering over the consciences of Christians is taxed, in the gradation which the well skilled in the Greek judge to be in the original. For though the first, and which we render *touch not*, be sometimes so rendered, yet, considering here the coincidency or tautology will, so rendered, make with the last, the sense of it, as the most judicious and learned have evidenced, seems to be, eat not, as noting they did forbid the eating, i.e. using certain meats at their ordinary meals; (against the reviving of which imposition above, Col 2:16, as will bring in a new one of like import, the apostle elsewhere expresseth himself, Ro 14:17 1Co 8:8 1Ti 4:3); obtaining which, they proceeded to forbid the not tasting, and then the not handling, or touching of them with the hand, as if that would defile. It being more not to taste than not to eat, and likewise more not to touch with the finger than not to taste. Expressing the ingenuity of such superstitious imposers, that they heap up one thing upon another to the burdening of consciences, not knowing where to make an end in their new invented external devotions and observances, which, as snares, do first bind fast, and in tract of time strangle. He speaks of these as distinct from those, Col 2:16, they being for antiquated rites which had been of God's appointment, these for innovations of man's invention, as is apparent from the last verse.

### Colossians 2:22



Ver. 22. *Which all are to perish with the using:* he adds his reasons why, under the Christian institution, acceptable worshipping of God doth not consist in such observances, both because meats, drinks, garments, &c. are designed unto the benefit of man, for the preserving of his temporal life, and are consumed in their use. They cannot, in or by themselves, either make a man holy or render him unclean, Mt 15:11 Mr 7:19 Ro 14:17 1Co 6:13 1Ti 4:3; they all come to corruption, or are consumed in doing us service, they cannot otherwise be of use; which may evince that all the benefit we receive from them doth only respect this mortal life, it not being imaginable that what perisheth in our use should be of any force to the life of our soul, which is immortal and incorruptible. And therefore to urge the reviving of antiquated ordinances, or bringing in such like new ones, is to corrupt or consume the creatures without any spiritual advantage, whereupon such impositions must needs be destructive; and because of the apostle's stronger argument, they are not after Christ, but after the precepts and decrees of men, compare Col 2:8, which is our Lord and Master's argument against the innovations of the Pharisees, Mt 15:9, agreeing with the prophet, Isa 29:13. To bring in additional of uncommanded worship, or rites and ways of it, is forbidden of God, De 12:32 Joh 14:26 16:13 Re 22:18; who (according to the purport of the second commandment) must be worshipped in a manner peculiar to him and appointed by him; and theretbre worship not appointed, i.e. not commanded, is forbidden by, him, who will accept of no homage from Christians in the business of religion, unless it be taught by him, and not by men only.

### Colossians 2:23

Ver. 23. *Which things have indeed a show of wisdom:* by way of concession the apostle here grants that the precepts and doctrines of men about religious abstinences had a *show of wisdom*; and it was but a mere show, a bare pretext, a specious appearance, a fair colour of wisdom, which is of no worth, not the reality and truth of Christian wisdom, however it might beguile those that were taken more with shadows than substance, Col 2:3,4,8,17.

*In will-worship;*

1. In arbitrary superstition, or human invention, or selfwilled religion,

rather than Divine institutions; as all the ancients, and almost all the moderns, do interpret that word, it having no good, but an ill character; accounting the compound word here which we render *will-worship*, of no better import, as to the ordainers of worship, than the two simple words of which it is compounded, expressing human arbitrariness and worship, Col 2:18, (even as the apostle doth, by a compound word which signifies peace making, Col 1:20, understand the very same thing which he expressed by the two simple words of which it is compounded in another Epistle, Eph 2:15), it being rational to conceive, considering the apostle's drift in the context, that by *will-worship* he doth connote the same here, that by willing in worship he doth asunder there. For though a performing those acts of worship willingly, which God himself hath commanded, be necessary, and commendable in his willing people, Ps 110:3, and they cannot be acceptable otherwise; yet when the will of man, in contradistinction to the will of God, is considered as constitutive of that worship which is offered to God of a man's own brain and devising, without God's warrant, then that will-worship is hateful to God, and the more voluntary the more abominable. It being most just, that not in what way we will and choose, but only in that way which he willeth and chooseth, we should worship him with acceptance; which should be our greatest care, 2Co 5:9. We know, amongst men, those persons of honour that give liveries to their servants, would discard such of them as should come to attend them in new ones of their own devising, though those servants might be so foolish as to conceit those of their own devising were more expressive of their humble respects. Much more is worship of man's devising distasteful to the all-wise God, who sees through all colours, and though he loves a willing worshipper, yet he hates will-worship.

*And humility;* however it be palliated:

2. With a pretended demission of mind, or an affectation of humility, as if more self-abasement were designed in such an arbitrary way of worship; like those hypocrites in their fasts, who put on mortified looks and a neglected garb, with disguised countenances, Mt 6:16, showing themselves most submissive to the orders of their superiors in that way of man's devising.

*And neglecting of the body;* wherein the more superstitiously devout do

labour to outdo others:

3. In punishing, not sparing, neglecting, or afflicting the body; as some monks at this day in the papacy, in denying it that with which nature should be supplied.

*Not in any honour*, which a learned man thinks the apostle would have read as included in a parenthesis, as conceiving the series of his discourse requires these to be joined, viz. *neglecting of the body* as to what pertains *to the satisfying of the flesh*. So by *not in any honour*, is not here meant a sparing of the body in order to real sanctification, temperance and continence, in opposition to the dishonouring of the body by luxury, as Ro 1:26, with 1Co 6:18-20 1Th 4:4 Heb 13:4. That honour of the body the apostle doth elsewhere require, he doth here oppose to the seducers' pretended mortifications. For their religious abstinence was not from that which occasioned luxury, only from some certain sorts of meat, the use of which no way defiles the body, nor violates in any manner the holiness and honour it ought to be kept in. Others read, neglecting the body, which is in no esteem.

*To the satisfying of the flesh*; for pampering the flesh. Not in any esteem, i.e. with God, or not in any humour to God, but in a tendency only to make *provision for the flesh*, as Ro 13:14. Others take *honour* for regard; q.d. In no regard to the supplying of nature with that which is due to it. Others take honour for having a care of, 1Ti 5:3; q.d. Neglecting the body in taking no care of it, or not at all valuing the things that are requisite to the due nourishment of it: this is somewhat generally received; having no care that the body may have that which will satisfy nature. And if the last phrase, which we translate *to the satisfying of the flesh*, seem not so well to express moderate satiety, we should consider it is said in a good sense, God *filled the hungry with good things*, Lu 1:53, and Christ *filled* the multitude, Joh 6:12; yea, the use of the word in authentic Greek authors may be found to note a moderate as well as immoderate filling, i.e. in a good sense, for a satiety (or enough) that is not vicious.

Colossians 3:1

## Chapter Summary

Col 3:1-4        The apostle exhorteth to be heavenly-minded,  
Col 3:5-11     to mortify carnal lusts, and to put away all malice and ill dealing in respect of one another, as becometh Christians.  
Col 3:12-17    He recommendeth brotherly kindness, charity, and other general duties,  
Col 3:18        the relative duties of wives,  
Col 3:19        and husbands,  
Col 3:20        of children,  
Col 3:21        and parents,  
Col 3:22-25    and of servants towards their masters.

Ver. 1. *If ye then be risen with Christ:* having refuted superstitious observances placed in things earthly and perishing, and called them off from shadows to mind the substance; he doth, upon supposition of what he had asserted before, Col 2:12,13, here infer that, since they were risen again with Christ, it did behove them to set about the duties required of those in that state: not of the proper resurrection of the body, which, while here below, can only be in our Head by virtue of the mystical union, as in regard of right the members of Christ are said to *sit* with him *in heavenly places*, Eph 2:6, signified and sealed by baptism: but the metaphorical and spiritual resurrection from spiritual death, which is regeneration, Ro 6:4 Tit 3:5, wrought by the same Spirit which raised Christ, and whereby renewed Christians live in certain hope of that proper resurrection of their bodies, which Christ hath procured.

*Seek those things which are above:* hereupon he urgeth them, (in the same sense our Saviour doth command to seek his kingdom, Mt 6:33), with diligence to pursue heaven and happiness as the end, and holiness as the means to the attaining of it; to have their *conversation in heaven*, Php 3:20.

*Where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God:* while the apostle speaks of God after the manner of men, we must take heed of the gross error of the Anthropomorphites, who did imagine God to sit in heaven in the shape of a man. Some indeed, who abhor such a gross imagination, yet conceive that because more generally the heaven is God's throne, and shall be so for

ever, Jer 17:12 La 5:19 Mt 5:34, that he hath a particular throne in heaven, whereon he doth show himself specially present, as in his temple, 1Ki 22:19 Ps 11:4; and so, though Christ is set properly on the right hand of this throne, Heb 1:3 8:1 12:2 Re 3:21; but because the conception of such a particular material throne, with extension of parts and proper dimensions, may (besides other inconveniences) misguide our apprehensions, and occasion adoration to the creature, which should be terminated on God alone, who is a pure Spirit; and whereas sitting is not taken properly, since Stephen saw Christ *standing*, Ac 7:55, and is opposed to the ministration of angels, which have no bodies or bodily parts, Heb 1:13; by most it is taken metaphorically, importing that Christ hath all real power and dominion put into his hands, connoting his authority and security from his enemies, who are put under his feet, Mt 28:18 1Co 15:25, is crowned with majesty, glory, and honour, Heb 1:3 2:9, enjoying all blessedness in a most transcendent way, Ps 16:11 110:1 Ac 2:33,36; having the human nature filled with abilities to execute all when he entered into glory, Isa 16:5 Lu 22:29,30 24:26 1Co 15:43 Re 19:6; where he resides possessed of all in safety, Ac 3:21 Re 3:21. It was above whither Christ ascended by a local motion from a certain where here below into a certain where above; so that whatever the Lutherans argue from Christ's glorious ascension and session, to prove Christ's body a ubiquitary, or every where present, is inconsequent, since it is in heaven where he wills that believers should be to behold the glory that his Father hath given him, Joh 17:24: wherefore,

### Colossians 3:2

Ver. 2. *Set your affection on things above:* that the hearts of believers here might be where their treasure is, the apostle here repeats his exhortation, using another word, importing they should intensely mind things above, Ro 8:5, viz. the inheritance *reserved in heaven* for us, 1Pe 1:4, with heart and affections, together with all that Gcd hath appointed to be a furtherance to the enjoyment of it; not curiously to search the deep things of God, which cannot be found out, but to mind things above with sobriety, Ro 12:3.

*Not on things on the earth;* taking off the mind and heart from all that is opposite to heavenly things, viz. not only those human, carnal ordinances and ceremonies, Col 2:22, with Php 3:18,19, but also from the eager

pursuit of the pleasures, profits, and honours of this world, which the men of it do inordinately desire, Col 3:5, with Mt 6:33 Ga 5:24, and are carried away with, Tit 2:12 Jas 4:4 2Pe 1:4 1Jo 2:17. Christians should not be, to the neglect of things spiritual; however, they are obliged, in a due subordination, to take care of themselves and families for these things below, so far as to put them into a capacity of raising them more heavenward.

### Colossians 3:3

Ver. 3. *For ye are dead;* the apostle adds another reason why the believing Colossians should not be earthly-minded, because they were dead, not absolutely, but in a certain respect, viz. of sin, and the world.

1. In regard of that carnal, corrupted, sin-infected life, received from our first parents by carnal generation, the life of the old man, altogether depraved, the real members of Christ are dead: see Col 2:11,12,20 Ro 6:2,4,6-8,11 7:9 2Co 5:14,17 Ga 5:24.
2. In regard of the world, by communion with Christ their Head, Ps 22:15 Isa 26:19 Ga 6:14 2Ti 2:11 1Pe 4:1,2.

*And your life is hid with Christ in God;* and their spiritual life, (opposed to the life of sin), which is received by their receiving of Christ, the life they now live by faith, quickened together with Christ, Col 2:13 Joh 11:25,26 14:6 Ga 2:20 Heb 10:38 1Jo 5:11,12; this is *hid with Christ* by virtue of their union with him, as Christ is in God by union with the Father; Christ in God, and our life in Christ, Joh 17:21, because in him the the springs of our spiritual life, which in and by our regeneration, renovation, and sanctification is communicated to us; and its progress in fruitfulness till it arrive to perfection, Php 3:10,14.

### Colossians 3:4

Ver. 4. *When Christ, who is our life, shall appear;* which will be, according to the purpose and promise of God, with whom it is laid up, Col 1:5, when Christ by whom they live shall so appear that they shall be like him, 1Jo 3:2, and be taken to be with him in the heavenly inheritance, 1Pe

1:4; then their conformity to him, began here, partly in holiness and partly in sufferings, Ro 8:18, shall be completed at last in glory and felicity, Php 3:21 Heb 11:26,35.

*Then shall ye also appear with him in glory;* and then shall these adopted children be brought into glory with him, Heb 2:10, out of whose hands none shall be able to pull them, Joh 10:28; but however the world look upon them as despicable, Joh 16:2, and sometimes they are so in their own eyes, wherein ofttimes there be tears, so that they can see but as *through a glass, darkly*, Ps 31:22 1Co 13:12; but then they shall see Christ face to face, all tears shall be wiped away from their eyes, Re 7:17, and at the last day they shall shine as the sun in glory, Mt 13:43 1Co 15:43,53 2Th 1:7,10,12.

### Colossians 3:5

Ver. 5. That they might not think he, who had given check to superstitious abstinences, was for the indulging of any carnal affections, he infers here, how the exercise of truly Christian mortification was incumbent on those who were dead to sin and had their life hid in Christ. Neither is it any incongruity, that they who are in a sort already dead should be exhorted to mortification, if we do but distinctly consider of mortification, and what they are to mortify, or endeavour to make dead.

1. As to mortification; which may be considered either as to its inchoation, when, upon effectually calling, a mortal wound is by the Spirit of God given to the old man, or to the habit of sin, which will in the end or consummation be a total privation of its life, though as yet it be but partial. It is not in regard of this inchoative mortification, which was begun upon their effectual calling, that the apostle exhorts the saints at Colosse in this verse to mortify. But mortification may be considered as to its continuation, and the carrying on the life of grace, in the making dead all that is contrary to it; even the renewed person should be continually solicitous to have the old man killed outright without any reprieve. This is it that the apostle put the believing Colossians upon, not to spare any remaining ill dispositions or depraved habits of the old man; but by the assistance of the Spirit, (for it is not a natural, but spiritual work), Ro 8:13 Ga 5:24, continually to resist to the killing of it, or putting it to death: never to desist in this war.

2. As to the earthly members of it. The apostle expresseth the object of

mortification, or what they are to mortify, by their *members upon the earth*; not as if he designed to put them upon a dismembering of their bodies, or a deadening of those bodily natural parts whereby the sex is distinguished, Ro 6:13, (though, agreeably to his own practice, he would have the body kept under and brought into subjection, 1Co 9:27), but upon subduing inordinate motions and carnal concupiscences, as is evident from the particular vices following, which, taken as collected and heaped up together, may well pass under the notion of a body. He had before in this Epistle mentioned *the body of the sins of the flesh*, Col 2:11; this he might say not only metonymically, by reason such lusts do reside in the natural body and members of it, Ro 6:6,12,19; but (and that chiefly) metaphorically, the mass of corrupt nature dwelling in us is compared to a person, the *old man*, or old Adam, or body of sin, Col 3:9 Ro 6:6 7:24 Eph 4:22; and, continuing the metaphor, the parts of this corrupt body are called *members*, and our members, the whole body of the old man being made up of them, which are said to be *upon the earth*, as being inclined to earthly things and employed about them, taking occasion from sensual objects here below to get strength, unless we be continually upon our watch to abolish all that contributes to the life of the old man in the particular members; viz. *fornication*: see the parallel place, Eph 5:3, with 1Co 6:9, where he begins with this, as most turbulent, understanding by it not only the outward act, but the inward affection, which the heathens were apt to reckon no fault, though the Spirit of God in the Scripture do greatly condemn it, Mt 5:28 Ro 1:29 1Co 5:1 6:18 7:2 10:8 1Th 4:3.

*Uncleanness*: see Eph 5:3: impurity which is more unnatural, whereby they dishonour their own bodies, Ro 1:24,27 Ga 5:19 1Th 4:7 Re 17:4.

*Inordinate affection*; that passion which some render softness, or easiness to receive any impression to lust, i.e. the filthy disposition of a voluptuous, effeminate heart, delighted with lascivious objects, Ps 32:9 Ro 1:26,27 1Co 6:9, with 1Th 4:3,5.

*Evil concupiscence*; that concupiscence which in nature and measure is excessive, being an irregular appetite, and an undue motion against reason, especially against the Spirit, Ga 5:17.

*And covetousness*; and an immoderate desire after and cleaving to the



things of this world, either in propping for them, or possessing of them to the feeding of other lusts, and so estranging the heart from God, Ec 5:10 Lu 12:18; trusting in riches rather than in the living God, Job 31:24 Mt 6:24 1Ti 6:17.

*Which is idolatry;* upon which account it may pass under the title of *idolatry*, as the covetous person is an idolater; see Eph 5:5; and further he might reckon covetousness to be idolatry, because nothing was more execrable in the judgment of the Jews than idolatry was, it being ordinary with the Hebrews to note sins by the names of those most detested; as *rebellion against God by witchcraft*, 1Sa 15:23, not that it is so formally, but that the Spirit of God may show how odious an incorrigible obstinacy of mind against God is unto him. Hence, considering the odiousness of these vices, the apostle would have us not to content ourselves to cut off some branches of them, but to grub them up by the roots.

### Colossians 3:6

Ver. 6. Especially remembering how the indulging or sparing any of them will be of dreadful consequence; see Eph 5:6; for however they may by carnal men be looked upon as little faults, which God will overlook of course, yet they do certainly incur Divine displeasure, and will bring most inevitable judgments upon those unpersuadable, rebellious, and contumacious ones, who would be thought God's children and yet remain incorrigible, Mt 24:38,39 1Co 6:9 Ga 5:21.

### Colossians 3:7

Ver. 7. *In the which;* some render it, amongst whom; but, alas! They lived amongst such disobedient ones still; therefore we do better render it *in which*, i.e. sins or vices.

*Ye*, the now believing Colossians, *also walked some time;* had heretofore practised and exercised; and had not only been infected with the venom of them, in descending from polluted parents, but *lived in them*, were servants to them, Ro 6:17,19, while in a sensual course of life they were carried away with them, 1Co 12:2, before their conversion, when they did live and reign in their mortal bodies, Col 1:21 1Co 6:11 Eph 2:3,11,12 5:8.

### Colossians 3:8

Ver. 8. *But now ye also put off all these:* having minded them of their former condition under paganism in a state of sin, while they served various sensual lusts, he doth here in their present circumstances under Christianity in a state of grace, show them that, now they professed to *walk as children of light*, Ro 13:12 Eph 5:8, with 1Th 5:5,8, they were more strongly obliged to lay aside those inordinate affections which were more spiritual Eph 4:22; some of which he doth instance in, viz. *anger*; whereby he doth not mean the passion itself, Eph 4:26, with Eph 4:31, but the inordinacy of it, being a vindictive appetite to hurt another unjustly for some affront conceived to be given or occasioned by him.

*Wrath; indignation*, Ro 2:8, a sudden, hasty, and vehement commotion of the offended mind apprehending an injury, when it shows itself in the countenance in a manner and measure unbecoming a Christian, as in them who with rage thrust Christ out of the city, Lu 4:28,29, with Eph 4:31.

*Malice*; connoting both the evil habit and the vicious act: now though this word be taken oftentimes more generally, for that mischievous vitiosity and venom which runs through all the passions of the soul, reaching to all sins, 1Co 5:8 14:20; yet here it seems to be taken more specially, for a secret malignity of rooted anger and continued wrath, remembering injuries, meditating revenge, and watching for an occasion to vent it, being much the same with that which the apostle in a parallel Epistle calls bitterness, Eph 4:31, compared with other places, Ge 4:5 Ro 1:29 Tit 3:3 1Pe 2:1. After he had urged the laying aside of heart evils as the cause, he moves to the laying aside those of the tongue, viz. *blasphemy*, which in a like place we render *evil speaking*, Eph 4:31; the original word, according to the notation of it, doth signify the hurt of any one's good name, which when it respects God we do more strictly call blasphemy. When it respects our neighbour, though more largely it be so, defamation, Ro 3:8 1Co 4:13 Tit 3:2; yet more strictly, if it be done secretly, it is detraction or backbiting; more openly, reviling or slandering, Mt 15:19 Mr 7:22 1Ti 6:4.

*Filthy communication out of your mouth*: obscene discourse, dishonest talk, should not come into the Christian's mouth, Col 4:6; see on Eph 4:29

5:4: wanton, lewd, and unclean speeches should not proceed from a Christian's tongue, 1Co 15:33.

### Colossians 3:9

Ver. 9. *Lie not one to another*: here he puts them upon laying aside that vice which violates the ninth commandment, being opposite to truth in word and work: see Eph 4:25, where he doth more fully urge the putting away lying, from the same argument that follows here: a lie being no other than that voluntary expression by word or deed, which accords not with the conception of the mind and heart, on purpose to deceive those with whom we do converse; contrary to the principles of a new creature, because God, after whose image he is renewed, hates it more than any vice, since it is contrary to truth, and proceeds from the father of lies, Ps 5:6 15:2 Pr 12:22 Joh 8:44 Re 21:8,27. They who in conversation do most stomach to be told of it, are most ordinarily guilty of it. But the apostle requires Christians indeed to put away all fraud and fallacy in commerce with men and one another, (as well as converse with God), that there may be in all due circumstances a just representation of that without which is conceived within, Eph 4:15 Jas 3:14.

*Seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds*: the apostle subjoins his reason from the parts of regeneration or sanctification, viz.

1. Mortification, which he reassumes under an elegant metaphor, (intimating his solicitude to have the foregoing and the like vices to be wholly laid aside, as much as was possible in this life), borrowed from the putting off old and worn garments, which did as it were crawl with vermin; intimating that if the old man, as the cause, were put off with loathing, then those inordinate affections and actions which did proceed from it would also be removed; see on Ro 6:6,11, with Eph 4:22: if that which is born of the flesh and contrary to the Spirit, Joh 3:6, with Ga 5:17, then inordinate affections and lusts, Ga 5:24.

(To see number 2: See Poole on "Col 3:10").

## Colossians 3:10

Ver. 10. *And have put on the new man:* (To see number 1: See Poole on "Col 3:9").

2. Vivification, or renovation; this he connecteth with the former, continuing the metaphor. As in natural generation the expulsion of the old form is attended with the introduction of the new, so in spiritual regeneration, having put off the old Adam they had put on the new, i.e. Christ, not only sacramentally, Col 2:12,13 Ga 3:27, but really, being new creatures in Christ Jesus, 2Co 5:17 Eph 2:10, renewed in the inward man, Ro 7:22 2Co 4:16; See Poole on "Eph 3:16", See Poole on "Eph 4:24"; and endowed with a new frame of heart and a new spirit, Eze 11:19 Joh 3:5,6, new qualities and affections.

*Which is renewed in knowledge;* the understanding being savingly enlightened, and the will powerfully inclined by the victorious working of the Spirit, Eph 1:18-20; See Poole on "Eph 4:23", with Php 2:13 2Th 2:13,14; and brought to more than a speculative, even to a lively and effectual knowledge, 1Jo 2:3.

*After the image of him that created him;* agreeable to the impress of him that had new framed or created them in Christ Jesus, 1Co 15:49 1Pe 1:15,16, by the *renewing of the Holy Ghost*, Tit 3:5: for as the natural image of God consisted in knowledge and righteousness; so it was requisite that the spiritual image restored by grace should consist in the rectifying of the faculties of the soul, the understanding with spiritual knowledge, and the will with a spiritual inclination to embrace the things that please God; in communion with whom sanctified souls do take in hand a new course of life, and move therein, in a spiritually natural way.

## Colossians 3:11

Ver. 11. He prevents the reasoning of those, who did not neglect regeneration, and place religion in more externals, showing that in the new man, or true sanctification, and real Christianity, there was sufficient to save us, in communion with Christ, without those external observances false teachers did stickle for as necessary.

*If there there is neither Greek nor Jew;* God, in effectually calling persons into a state of regeneration, had no regard to those known distinctions then in the world, of those who were born of the Gentiles or the seed of Abraham, Mt 3:9 Joh 8:39 Ro 2:11 10:12 Ro 11:7,11,12: See Poole on "Ga 3:28".

*Circumcision nor uncircumcision;* he works upon those who are not circumcised, as well as on those who are circumcised, now Christ is come, Ga 5:6 6:15, since which the posterity of Japheth, constituting the greater part of the Gentile church, do  *dwell in the tents of Shem*, according to Noah's prophecy, Ge 9:27, compared with Balaam's, Nu 24:24. Shem and Ham are not excluded, yet (a learned man observes) the faith of Christ from the ages of the apostles hath flourished most hitherto in Europe, and the parts of Asia where Japheth's lot lay; and as of old some of the latter might, so we know of the former many of late have passed into America. Upon the apostle's adding *Barbarian, Scythian*, without conjunction either compulative or disjunctive, some have inquired whether these two should be balanced in the like opposition with the former? And it may be said, there is no more necessity for such exactness here, than elsewhere in the like form of speech, Ro 8:39 1Co 3:22: and the most think here is an increase of the oration, understanding by *Scythian* (which is now more strictly the Tartarian) the most barbarous of the Barbarians. Yet, because the Grecians sometime accounted the world, besides themselves, (who were polished with human learning and philosophy), Barbarians, if any think there ought to be an opposition between the *Barbarian* and *Scythian*, then by *Barbarian* (i.e. in the philosophers' reckoning) may be understood the Jews; by *Scythian*, the Gentiles. So *Jew, circumcision, Barbarian*, as in a parallel, are opposed to *Gentile, uncircumcision, Scythian*. For Scythians being numerous, thereby some used to express the *nations*, ( as Symmachus translates Ge 14:9, Tidal king of the Scythians), and so reckon the whole world might be divided into the Jews and Scythians, no otherwise than into circumcised and uncircumcised.

*Bond nor free;* as to acceptance with God in Christ, the distinctions of people were abolished with their observances and polities, because, some where they were more free, having milder laws; some where they were more servile, having more severe laws, which was an indifferent thing now as to their being in Christ, concerned to submit to certain honest laws,

ordinances of magistrates, 1Pe 2:13, though not Judaic or judicial ones. In every condition, high or low, whether of service or freedom, Ac 10:34,35 1Co 7:20-22, whosoever hath put on the new man in Christ is accepted. Neither the eloquence of the philosopher nor the rudeness of him who is uncultivated, neither the liberty of the freeman nor the bondage of the slave, doth further or obstruct the work of the new creation.

*But Christ is all, and in all;* but they that are truly interested in Christ, have really put him on, they are certainly privileged with that which answers all, they are indeed the blessed with faithful Abraham, whether they be of his seed according to the flesh, yea or no, Ps 32:2 Ga 3:7-9; having *put on Christ*, Ro 13:14, they are all *complete in him*, Col 2:10. He is all things to and in all those who are renewed, both meritoriously and efficaciously, 1Co 1:30 15:10 Ga 2:20: being by faith one with him who hath all, they have all, Eph 3:17, either for their present support or their eternal happiness, Ac 4:12.

### Colossians 3:12

Ver. 12. *Put on therefore:* as he had mentioned some particular vices of the old man they were to put off, Col 3:8, he doth here infer, that they might be complete in Christ, there be particular virtues and graces of the new man they are to put on, or, being new creatures, continually to exercise themselves in.

*As the elect of God, holy and beloved;* chosen of God before all time, and effectually called in time from the rest of mankind; see Joh 15:16 Ro 8:29,30 Eph 1:4,5 2Th 2:13: saints not only by oblation, but renewed by the sanctifying Spirit, Col 1:2 1Pe 1:2; beloved with a gratuitous and special love of complacency, Joh 14:21 Ro 1:7 1Th 1:4.

*Bowels of mercies;* he would have us put on, i.e. exercise, (being sanctified by the Spirit), mercy, not simply, but according to the Hebrew phrase, *bowels of mercies*, i.e. tendernesses of compassions, resenting the miseries of our brethren, as sharing with them in their sufferings, from our very heart: see Lu 6:36 Ro 12:15 Ga 6:2 Eph 4:32 1Pe 3:8.

*Kindness;* courtesy and goodness, Ga 5:22; endeavouring to succour one

another in all offices of benignity, 2Co 6:6 1Pe 5:14.

*Humbleness of mind*; a sincere (not an affected) lowliness of spirit: See Poole on "Eph 4:2", See Poole on "Php 2:3".

*Meekness*; gentleness and mildness, receiving one another with an open heart and pleasant countenance: see Ga 5:13,23 6:1 1Th 2:7.

*Long-suffering*; patience, bearing affronts and outrages, with other vexatious afflictions, without exasperation, abiding sedate after many wrongs offered, Col 1:11 Ac 5:41 2Ti 2:10 4:2 1Pe 4:16.

### Colossians 3:13

Ver. 13. Forbearing one another; clemency towards each other, not only in undergoing affronts, but a suspending to take advantage from the infirmities of others, so as not to irritate them to passion, or to take them tripping, so as to aggravate their failings, Pr 16:32 1Co 4:12 Ga 6:2 Eph 4:2 2Th 1:4.

*And forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any*; yea, and if one hath any just complaint against another, mutually passing it by amongst ourselves: we render *forgiving one another*, that which in the Greek is forgiving ourselves; and indeed he that doth see the need he hath of pardon himself, will pass by the fault of his brother, (so ourselves here is put for *one another*), Mr 10:26 Lu 23:12.

*Even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye*; considering the exemplar cause here added as a motive to mutual forgiveness, viz. our Head the Lord Jesus Christ forgiving of us, who are bound to conform to him in forgiving others; See Poole on "Mt 6:14". See Poole on "Mt 18:32", See Poole on "Mt 18:33". See Poole on "Mr 11:25,26, See Poole on "Joh 13:14". See Poole on "Eph 4:32", See Poole on "1Pe 2:21", yea, the strong to indulge and gratify their weak brethren in smaller matters for their good, Ro 15:1-3.

## Colossians 3:14

Ver. 14. *And above all these things put on charity:* that which we render *above*, as surpassing all, some read upon, or over, and some, for all these things, viz. the graces he exhorted them to be clothed with. Both agree, that mutual Christian love or charity is the chiefest garment the new man can put on, being the livery of Christ's disciples, Joh 13:35. But in prosecuting the allegory under the former notion, there is some danger of being over fine; and therefore it may be very pertinent to understand the putting on or exercising of charity, for the performance of the other graces and exercises, this being that which sets them on work with reference to their several objects, engaging to sincerity in their actings, without which the motions of the new man are no way acceptable; this links them together, and so is in a sort, as the apostle says elsewhere, a fulfilling of the whole law, Ro 13:8,9 Ga 5:14, with Mt 22:39,40; being the subjects of this hearty and regular affection of love to God and our neighbour, are inclined by it to do good continually, and to avoid the injuring of another in any respect. Not that there is any fulfilling of the law perfectly in this state, as the papists argue impertinently from what follows of charity, that it is *the bond of perfectness*, or, by an hypallage or Hebraism, the most perfect bond, therefore we are justified by it, and so by the works of the law before God. For:

1. Love, or charity, itself is not perfect, and so the very best of the new creatures who have put it on, however they may be perfect with a perfection of integrity or parts, yet not with a perfection of maturity or degrees, absolutely, while in this life;

See Poole on "Ec 7:20". See Poole on "Ro 7:18", See Poole on "Ro 7:19". See Poole on "Ga 5:17". See Poole on "Php 3:12", See Poole on "Php 3:15". See Poole on "Jas 3:2", &c.

2. Upon supposition that charity in a new creature doth in some sort perfectly fulfil the law, from the time he is endowed with it of God's grace, and a man hath put it on; he could not by it be justified from the breach of God's law before, he being a transgressor of it in time past, 1Jo 1:8,10.
3. That perfection of which charity here is said to be the bond, doth most likely respect the integrity and unity of the members of the church,



holding the Head, being knit together in one body;

See Poole on "Col 2:2", See Poole on "Col 2:19". See Poole on "Eph 4:16": the Greek word we translate *bond* here, noting such a collection and colligation of parts whereof a body is composed; and in one Greek copy it is found written, the bond of unity. As a prevailing love to God, and to those who bear his image, for his sake, doth bind up the other graces in every regenerate soul, so it doth the true members of the body of Christ one to another, being the best means for the perfecting of them under Christ their Head, who hath upon that account expressly required mutual love amongst his followers, Joh 15:12 1Jo 3:23 4:21: and the cogent reason hereof is, (as above in Joh 4:10,11), God's loving of us; and then indeed, when we entirely love God and his children, we show our love to be the bond of perfectness in returning love to him and his; when by this reciprocal affection both ends of the band of love do meet and are knit together, we become one with God, and in him, through Christ, as one soul amongst ourselves, walking in love according to his commandment, Ac 4:32 Eph 5:2 1Th 4:9.

### Colossians 3:15

Ver. 15. *And let the peace of God;* he doth not say the peace of the world, but *the peace of God,* or, as some copies, the peace of Christ; be sure, without the mediation of Christ we can have no peace with God; he alone hath *made peace,* Col 1:20, with Col 2:14; he is *our peace,* making it with God and amongst ourselves, to whom he hath preached it, Ac 10:36 Eph 2:14-17, and whom he hath brought into the bond of it, Eph 4:3; *the Lord of peace* himself, who always gives it where it is enjoyed, Joh 14:27 2Th 3:16. It is then the peace of God through Christ; see Php 4:7,9; by faith in whom we have peace in our own hearts with God, Isa 32:17 Ro 5:1, and Ro 14:17, and with one another, Joh 17:21 Ro 15:6,7,13. That the members of Christ may live in this peace, 2Co 13:11, the apostle here enjoins, as we render the word, let it *rule in your hearts*: the Greek word (both simple here, and compound, Col 2:18) is no where else to be found in the New Testament but in this Epistle, and it may signify either to arbitrate, or to mediate: our translation and the generality of interpreters take it in the former notion, for to arbitrate, or to rule, govern, sway, or moderate by way of arbitration, as he who sat judge, or umpire, to adjudge

the reward in the agonistics. So the import of the apostle's injunction is, let it regulate, govern, superintend, or give law to the rest of the affections of the new man; let it be mistress and governess of all your motions, to keep them in due respect, and withhold them from attempting any thing disorderly, and to overstay disinclinations to the Divine pleasure or the good order of Christian community. The Arabic version is, let it be as the centre. Yet one learned man, conceiving the apostle doth here, as before, Col 2:18, glance upon the false apostles, (who would insinuate the mediation or intercession of angels), thinks because the word signifies also to mediate, intercede, or interpose, the apostle's meaning may be, let the peace of God be to you instead of all conceited angelical mediators or intercessors, which would derogate from him that made peace, Col 1:20, nailing what hindered to his cross, Col 2:14; let that preponderate with you in your hearts to overbalance any thing that can be suggested to the contrary.

*To the which also ye are called in one body;* considering the Divine vocation, or the call of God, Ro 12:18 1Co 7:15, and the condition or unity of the body into which ye are called under Christ your Head, 1Co 10:16, 12:12,13,25,26 Eph 4:4. He adds, *and be ye thankful;* be ye gracious, or amiable, of an obliging temper (as some render the word, passively); or rather, as we take it, actively, *be ye thankful*, i.e. to God and Christ, and Christians; be mindful of the benefits ye have received, giving thanks to God always for all things, Eph 5:20, and behaving yourselves as becomes the gospel.

### Colossians 3:16

Ver. 16. *Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom:* one learned man conceives Paul to have written this first clause of the verse as in a parenthesis, joining in the sense what next follows to *be ye thankful* in the foregoing verse; another would have the parenthesis to begin from Col 3:14. The thing here exhorted to, is the plentiful inhabitation of the doctrine of the Bible, more especially of the gospel, that it may take up its residence and abide in our souls, which comes from the spiritual incorporation or mixing of it with faith, Heb 4:2; without which it may enter in as a stranger, but will not abide; it may cast a ray, or shine, but is not comprehended and doth not enlighten, Joh 1:5 2Co 4:4; it may afford

some present delight, Mr 6:20, but not lasting. The apostle would have the word to be diligently searched, heartily received, and carefully observed; a child may have it in his memory, that hath it not in his heart: this indwelling of the word imports a regarding, as well as a remembering of it, Ps 1:2 Joh 5:39 20:31 Ac 17:11 2Ti 3:15-17. If all the saints at Colosse were concerned in this exhortation, the papists oppose the Spirit of God in excluding (those they call) the laity from familiarity with the Scriptures in their mother tongue, being that all Christians are; here indispensably obliged to instruct and warn themselves, (according to the original word), as well as each other mutually, see Eph 5:19. Then the use of the word, and the manner of expressing their thankfulness to God amongst themselves, is in singing to his praise *psalms, and hymns and spiritual songs*. He doth not say, *teaching and admonishing* from these, (as elsewhere, Ac 8:35 28:23), but *in* them; implying it is a peculiar ordinance of Christ for Christians to be exercised in holy singing, as Jas 5:13, with an audible voice musically, Ps 95:1,2 100:1,2 Ac 16:25, as foretold, Isa 52:8, with Ro 10:14. Some would distinguish the three words the apostle here useth from the manner of singing, as well as the matter sung; others, from the Hebrew usage of words expressed by the seventy, in the book of Psalms; yet, whoever consults the titles of the Psalms and other places of the Old Testament, they shall find the words used sometimes promiscuously; compare Jud 5:3 1Ch 16:8,9 2Ch 7:6 23:13 2Ch 29:30 Ps 39:3 45:1 47:1 48:1 65:1 105:1,2 Isa 12:2,4 42:10; or conjunctly to the same matter, Ps 30:1-12, 48:1-14, 65:1-13, 66:1-20, Ps 75:1-10, 83:1-18, 87:1-7, titles. Hereupon others stand not open any critical distinction of the three words, yet are inclined here to take *psalms* by way of eminency, Lu 24:44; or more generally, as the genus, noting any holy metre, whether composed by the prophets of old, or others since, assisted by the Spirit extraordinarily or ordinarily, Lu 24:44 Ac 16:25 1Co 14:15,26 Jas 5:13. Here for clearness' sake two modes of the psalms, viz. hymns, whereby we celebrate the excellencies of God and his benefits to man, Ps 113:1-9: Mt 26:30; and odes or songs, which word, though ordinarily in its nature and use it be more general, yet here synecdochically, in regard of the circumstances of the conjoined words, it may contain the rest of spiritual songs, of a more ample, artificial, and elaborate composure, besides hymns, Re 14:2,3 15:2,3; which may be called *spiritual* or *holy songs* from the efficient matter, or end, viz. that they proceed from the Holy Spirit, or in argument may agree and serve thereto; being convenient they be so called from the argument, as opposed to carnal, sensual, and worldly

ditties.

*Singing with grace in your hearts;* and then that this holy singing be not only harmonious and tunable to the ear, but acceptable to God, it is requisite it do proceed from a gracious spirit, or grace wrought in the heart by the Holy Spirit, and the inhabitation of the word, Isa 29:13 Mt 15:8.

*To the Lord;* to the honour of God through Christ our Lord, Lu 1:46,47 Joh 5:23 1Pe 4:11.

### Colossians 3:17

Ver. 17. *And whatsoever ye do:* here the apostle give a universal direction how in every capacity, both personal and relative, in every motion, a Christian may do all so as to find acceptance with God.

*In word or deed;* and that is in his expressions and actings, viz. comprehending his internal as well as external operations; his reasonings and resolutions within, as well as his motions without; the thoughts of his heart, as well as the words of his tongue and the works of his hand; to take (care as much as possible that all be *in the name of the Lord Jesus:* elsewhere writing the same thing, the apostle adds *Christ,* Eph 5:20. Plato could say: Not only every word, but every thought, should take its beginning from God; but he understood nothing of the Mediator, of the love of him and the Father: but Christians know, as there is salvation in no other name, Ac 4:12, so there is no acceptance of their persons and performances in any other name than in his in whom they believe, Php 2:10 Heb 10:19,20 1Jo 5:13; and therefore in all their desires they are to respect him, Joh 14:13,14 15:3,16 16:23,26; looking for his authority and warrant, Mt 18:18-20 Mr 11:9 1Jo 5:14; following his example, Mt 11:29 16:24 Joh 13:15 1Pe 2:21-24 1Jo 2:6; in all they set about, desiring strength from him, Ps 71:17 Ac 4:7,10 1Co 15:10 Php 4:13 2Ti 2:1; living by faith upon him, Ga 2:20 Heb 10:38 2Pe 1:2,3; waiting upon him, worshipping and serving of him, according to his prescription, Mic 4:5 Mt 28:19,20 Ac 2:42,43 2Ti 2:19; for his sake, Mt 19:29 24:9 Ac 9:16 Re 2:3,13 3:8; to his honour and glory, Ps 31:3 1Co 10:31 Re 4:9,11 5:12,13 11:13. Endeavouring to render hearty *thanks unto God and the Father,* i.e. to God the Father: the Syriac and Arabic do omit the conjunction

copulative; however, it is to be understood expositively of God the Father of Christ, and our Father, who doth embrace us as his children.

*By him;* by or through Christ, Eph 5:20 Heb 13:15, the only Mediator.

### Colossians 3:18

Ver. 18. The apostle, entering upon an exhortation to relative duties, begins first with that which wives owe to their husbands to whom they are married, by reason this relation is the first in nature, and the fountain whence the rest do flow, Ge 2:22 Ps 127:3 128:3 Pr 5:15,16. That which he requires is self-submission in every thing, see Eph 5:22, expressing a subjection with reverence, Eph 5:24,33 1Pe 3:1. The God of order made the woman inferior, Ge 2:18,22 3:16 1Co 11:7-9 1Ti 2:13 Tit 2:5; yet her submission is not to be servile, as that of a handmaid, but conjugal, as of a meet companion.

*As it is fit in the Lord;* suitable to God's institution, in a becoming manner, agreeable to the mind of Christ, Ac 5:29 1Pe 3:7.

### Colossians 3:19

Ver. 19. The husband's duty is *love*, which the apostle doth ever inculcate from the most obliging considerations when he speaks of this relation; see Mt 19:6 1Co 7:3, with Eph 5:25,33; to sweeten on the one hand the subjection of the wife, and to temper on the other hand the authority of the husband.

*And be not bitter against them;* who, that upon his authority he may not grow insolent, the apostle forbids him frowardness with his wife, thereby requiring a conversation with her full of sweetness and amity: wrath and bitterness is to be laid aside towards all others, Col 3:8, with Eph 4:31, much more towards his own wife, in whom he is to joy and delight, Pr 5:15,18,19 1Pe 3:7.

### Colossians 3:20

Ver. 20. By *children* he understands both males and females.

*Obey your parents;* he requires them to yield humble subjection to those that brought them forth, or have just authority over them; see Ex 20:12 Eph 6:1; paying reverence to them, Le 19:3 Heb 12:9; observing their holy and prudent prescriptions, Lu 2:51; showing piety and kindness to them in all grateful offices, 1Ti 5:4, and submitting to their parental discipline, Jer 35:6 Heb 12:9.

*In all things;* in whatsoever is agreeable to the mind of the supreme Governor, who is absolute Sovereign, Ac 4:19 5:29.

*For this is well pleasing unto the Lord;* and this upon the most cogent reason imaginable, because it is not barely pleasing, but *well pleasing*, or very acceptable, *to the Lord*, who arms parents with authority over their children, Eph 6:1-3.

### Colossians 3:21

Ver. 21. *Fathers, provoke not your children to anger:* and to moderate the parental authority, that they may exercise it Christianly, he allows not parents to do that which is in a direct tendency to irritate or move the passions of their children merely for their own pleasure, without a principal regard to God's glory, and their children's profit, Heb 12:10. Indeed, he seems here more strictly to guard fathers against mal-administration of their power in this extreme than he doth elsewhere, when writing upon the same subject, Eph 6:4, considering the original word he here puts the negative upon, to engage them to lay aside rigour in their government, (as well as unwarrantable indulgence), and that upon a very weighty reason, drawn from the end, *viz. lest they be discouraged;* lest some children, who might with a moderate hand be reduced to obedience, should be (as it were) dispirited, by the roughness of their father's discipline, and even pine away with grief, or grow desperate.

## Colossians 3:22

Ver. 22. *Servants:* the apostle knowing how hard the condition of servitude was, both under the Jews and Gentiles, lest any believers in that mean condition should disgust so strict a subjection, especially to unbelieving masters, and cast off the yoke by breaking their covenants, to the disturbance of human society, and the disparagement of the Christian institution, he takes a special care to sweeten the harshness of it to all those indefinitely whose lot it was, by recommending the duties of it to them from the consideration of the acceptableness of them to God, who of his unconstrained grace would vouchsafe to them the noblest reward.

*Obey in all things your masters according to the flesh:* wherefore Christianity requires that servants of all sorts should readily receive and cheerfully execute all the commands, (see Col 3:20), in things lawful and honest, of those of both sexes, whom God in his wise providence hath given a just authority over them *according to the flesh*; ( see also Eph 6:5); which expression is not only for distinction from the Father and Master of spirits, Heb 12:9, but for mitigation of their servitude, in that their earthly master's power reacheth only things corporeal and temporal, not the conscience and things that are eternal, which might be some comfort, that the servitude would not last long, and in the mean time they were God's free-men, 1Co 7:22, whom they might *serve with the spirit in the gospel of his Son*, Ro 1:9.

*Not with eye-service;* yet their masters after the flesh, in those civil things wherein they had power to command, were not lightly to be respected or served to the eye, or only to be observed while their eye was upon them, Eph 6:6.

*As men-pleasers;* as if regard were to be had to the pleasing of men, and not to the pleasing of God, who searcheth the heart, and by his gospel (which they should adorn) expects they should remember his eye is ever upon them, Tit 2:9 1Pe 2:18.

*But in singleness of heart, fearing God;* and expects that, in a holy awe of him, they should do all that is incumbent on them, in the sincerity of their souls, (see Eph 6:5,6), with more regard to God than man.

### Colossians 3:23

Ver. 23. Yea, courageously and cheerfully, from the very soul, not constrainedly and murmuringly, though they be froward and their commands harsh; making account it is Jesus Christ, (who hath power over soul and body, Mt 10:28), not mortal men only, or in and for themselves, whom you serve, (see Eph 6:7), have an eye unto this Sovereign Lord, in the servile office your masters on earth do employ you.

### Colossians 3:24

Ver. 24. *Knowing*, being fully persuaded of this undoubted truth, *that of the Lord*, who superintends all your services, (not for any merit of yours), Eph 6:8, the recompence which your Master in heaven hath purchased, Eph 1:14,18, shall be freely settled upon you whom he hath adopted into his family, Ro 8:17 Ga 4:7 Eph 1:5; for in those duties you Christianly perform to masters of the same mould with yourselves, he really looks upon you as his own servants, (see Eph 6:6), yea, and free-men, 1Co 7:22; so that, as Onesimus, Phm 1:10, ye may more cheerfully submit to your masters' yoke, according to the command and for the sake of Christ, who reckons what you do upon that account as done to himself, Mt 25:40, and will instate you in that eternal inheritance, to which neither you nor any mortal man had naturally any right at all.

### Colossians 3:25

Ver. 25. *But he that doeth wrong*; but if the reward will not engage to a right discharge of these relative duties, the injurious person, *whether he be bond or free*, Eph 6:8, an inferior servant or a domineering master, who doth violate the rules of right, agreeing with the law natural and eternal, *shall receive for the wrong which he hath done*; shall have the just recompence of that injury, whereby he wrongs his correlate; the penalty apportioned to his fault, Ro 2:6 2Co 5:10 2Pe 2:13.

*And there is no respect of persons*; from the impartiality of Divine justice, *there is no respect of persons with God*, Ro 2:11, or with Christ, in the



place parallel to this, Eph 6:9, who is so righteous a Judge that he is not swayed by the outward circumstances and qualifications of men, whether potent or poor, Le 19:15 Job 34:19: he seeth not as man seeth, he looketh not on the outward appearance, but on the heart, 1Sa 16:7: in the distribution of justice, he will put no difference between the mightiest monarch and the most enslaved peasant; the purloining servant, and oppressing master shall certainly receive answerable to their doings from his impartial hand: the mean one who is at present abused without relief, and the great one who doth tyrannize without control, shall one day have right, and be reckoned with by *the righteous Judge*, 2Ti 4:8, who will show to all the world that he will honour those that honour him, and lightly esteem those that despise him, 1Sa 2:30, and that he is the avenger of all those that are wronged, 1Th 4:6 2Th 1:6.

## Colossians 4:1

### Chapter Summary

Col 4:1           The duty of masters towards their servants.  
Col 4:2-4        A general exhortation to perseverance in prayer,  
Col 4:5           discreet conduct,  
Col 4:6           and well-ordered speech.  
Col 4:7-9        The apostle commendeth Tychicus and Onesimus, by whom he sent this Epistle,  
Col 4:10-18     and concludeth with divers salutations, and a blessing.

Ver. 1. That this verse doth refer to the foregoing chapter, and that it was unadvisedly divided from it, is generally agreed.

*Masters:* having put servants upon their duty, he doth here engage all those who have a just right over servants to mind their own duty toward those under their command.

*Give unto your servants that which is just;* though your extract or estate hath advanced you above them in human society, yet you have the same nature and infirmities that they have, and (as in the foregoing verse) must

appear with them before the same Judge and rewarder at the same tribunal. And the apostle doth elsewhere, Eph 6:9, require of masters in their superior relation, what he doth of servants in their inferior one, to *do the same things*, i.e. not the particular offices of their servants, but, according to general rules of right reason, that which, by the law of God, nature, and nations, is common to and incumbent on all relatives, Ro 13:7,8 Ga 5:13 Eph 6:9. As he doth here require masters to do their servants right, give to them that which is their due for soul and body, Ge 18:19 Ex 12:44; with respect to work, that it be neither too much nor too little, Pr 12:10 29:21; to food, that it be convenient for nourishment, not luxury, Pr 27:27 31:15 Lu 12:42 15:17; wages, Ex 2:21 Jas 5:4; and recompence, De 15:13.

*And equal*; ye are likewise to give them that which is equal, or equitable, as well as just, which implies you should not be cruel to them, or discourage them; as you expect they should serve you with good will, so you should govern them wisely, and be good and gentle to them, Ps 101:2 1Pe 2:18, who are faithful, allowing them seasonable rest and refreshment, De 15:14, not despising their prudent answers, Job 31:13,14, but showing them favour in sickness as well as in health, 2Ki 5:5,6 Pr 14:35 Mt 8:6.

*Knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven*; and that upon this weighty reason, intimated before, that he above, whom you serve, will treat you as you do them; this you may be assured of, Eph 6:8,9. If you expect favour at his hands, when he comes to distribute rewards and punishments, show it now to your inferiors, who will then appear as your fellow servants, when you must give an account of your stewardship, Mt 24:49-51, with Lu 16:2.

#### Colossians 4:2

Ver. 2. *Continue in prayer*; persevere or hold on strongly in prayer with fervency: we are apt to grow sluggish and indisposed, and therefore have need of quickening to this duty, Lu 18:1 Eph 6:18.

*And watch in the same*; endeavouring to keep the heart in all fit seasons unto this, as a help to the precedent and subsequent duties, Ps 5:3 Mr 13:33, &c.; Ac 12:12 Ro 12:12 1Th 5:17 Jas 5:16 Re 3:2.

*With thanksgiving;* with acknowledgment of thanks for what we have already received, Ps 116:12,13 1Th 5:18.

#### Colossians 4:3

Ver. 3. *Withal praying also for us;* not only putting up petitions for themselves, but also interceding for Paul, and others with him, especially Timothy, mentioned in the salutation, Col 1:1,7 Ro 15:30 2Co 1:11 Php 1:19 2Th 3:1 Phm 1:22.

*That God would open unto us a door of utterance;* that God would vouchsafe to us freedom of speech: See Poole on "Eph 6:19".

*To speak the mystery of Christ;* effectually to preach the mystery of Christ: see Col 1:26,27 2:2 Mt 13:11 1Co 16:9 Eph 1:9.

*For which I am also in bonds: for which I am an ambassador in bonds,* or, in a chain, Eph 6:20; i.e. with the soldier that kept him in his own hired dwelling, Ac 28:16,20,30,31.

#### Colossians 4:4

Ver. 4. That I may manifest, or open and clear, it in due circumstances, as becomes an able minister of Christ, Ro 1:15 1Co 2:4 1Co 9:16 with 2Ti 2:15 4:2.

#### Colossians 4:5

Ver. 5. *Walk in wisdom;* let your course of life be managed with all Christian prudence, that you may not any way disparage the Christian institution, 2Sa 12:14 Ro 2:23,24, with 1Ti 6:4; with your innocency *be wise as serpents*, Mt 10:16; see Eph 5:15: yet, while you become all things to all to gain some, 1Co 9:20-23, you must take heed of such a compliance, whereby you may wound your consciences, Ex 34:15 Eph 5:11; and, on the other side, of such a contempt of them without just cause as may provoke them to persecute you. Paul was wary in his reasoning

with those who were not Christians, and would have others to be so, Ac 17:24,25, &c., with 1Co 5:12,13; not denying any of them what is due to them by Divine and human rights, Mt 22:21 Ro 13:7 1Pe 2:13.

*Toward them that are without;* considering they are not of the household of faith, Ga 6:10, as you profess to be, you should be more circumspect, that you do not give occasion of offence to them, 1Ti 5:14, as well as take care you be not infected with their practices, 1Co 5:6, but endeavour to adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things, Tit 2:10.

*Redeeming the time;* showing your prudence, say some learned men, in gaining time by honest craft, to secure you from spiritual dangers to your souls, or divert those who have power from persecutions: taking the expression proverbially. And for that purpose cite a passage in the prophet from the Septuagint, Da 2:8. Others, and the most, import of the original words, take time for opportunity, or the fitness it hath for some good; and the participle we render *redeeming*, to import either morally, (not physically, which is impossible), a recalling or recovery of time past that is lost, by a double diligence in employing what remains; or a buying up the present time, i.e. parting with any thing for the improvement of it to our spiritual advantage; or a buying it out, i.e. a rescuing it, as it were, out of the hands of Satan and the world, which by distracting cares and tempting pleasures do occasion often the misspending of it: see Eph 6:16.

#### Colossians 4:6

Ver. 6. *Let your speech be alway with grace:* because discourse is the tenderest part of our converse with men, especially those without, and ought to be managed with the greatest circumspection, upon occasions in every fit season, in imitation of Christ, who entertained those that did converse with him with gracious words, Lu 4:22, you should endeavour so to speak when called, that the hearers may conceive your discourse doth proceed from a gracious spirit, or grace in the heart, Col 3:16, teaching your mouth, Pr 15:23,24, *with meekness of wisdom*, Jas 3:13, using knowledge aright, Pr 15:2, being in its tendency gracious, Ec 10:12; not ungrateful, (as tinctured with gall or venom), but ministering grace to the hearers, Eph 4:29.

*Seasoned with salt;* even as meat duly powdered with salt (Mt 5:13) becomes acceptable to the discerning palate, so to the ear that trieth speech, fitly spoken words (Pr 25:11) are of a grateful savour, cleansed from corruption, Job 33:3 Mr 9:50.

*That ye may know how ye ought to answer every man;* to this purpose chiefly in the main points of Christianity, that in a gospel becoming manner, you may be able to give *a reason of the hope that is in you* (to those that ask you) *with meekness and fear*, Mt 7:6 1Pe 3:15, courteousness and sincerity, Eph 4:25, free from those evils of speech he had before enjoined them in this Epistle to put away, Col 3:8.

#### Colossians 4:7

Ver. 7. *All my state shall Tychicus declare unto you:* the apostle drawing to a conclusion, that he at so great distance might certify them of his love to them, and care for them, doth here acquaint them that with this Epistle he was sending two persons of integrity, for their satisfaction and his, viz. Tychicus, an Asiatic, their countryman and his fellow traveller, Ac 20:4, whom he sometimes sent to others, 2Ti 4:12 Tit 3:12, who would give them to understand what circumstances he was in, and all his affairs: see Eph 6:21,22.

*Who is a beloved brother;* whom he recommends to them as being a good man, a brother, as Timothy, Col 1:1, and Epaphroditus, Php 2:25, beloved of the people.

*And a faithful minister;* and whom he had experimentally found to be a faithful deacon, in the larger acceptance, or *minister*, i.e. of Jesus Christ, and his messenger.

*And fellow servant in the Lord;* and owned as his colleague, or *fellow servant in the Lord*, that they might more kindly receive him.

#### Colossians 4:8

Ver. 8. *Whom I have sent unto you for the same purpose;* who was Paul's

messenger to them, as to let them know how it was with Paul, so to this end:

1. *That he might know your estate;* that he might clearly understand, how their matters stood, (as Eph 6:22), especially with respect to spirituals, Col 2:1,5.
2. *And comfort your hearts;* and cheer up their spirits, (as Eph 6:22), that under the temptations of Satan, and tyranny of persecutors abroad or at home, they might not be discouraged, 2Co 4:17.

### Colossians 4:9

Ver. 9. *With Onesimus,* whom he adjoins to Tychicus. Some, because of his following commendation, think him to be another person different from the fugitive servant of Philemon; but the most, comparing the description here with the circumstances in the Epistle to Philemon, Col 4:10,16, &c., conclude him to be the very same, taking Philemon for a Colossian.

*A faithful and beloved brother, who is one of you;* there, as here, being expressly called a *beloved brother*, yea, and, which may answer to faithful, Paul's spiritual son, who (whatever he had been) would be profitable and a benefit to Philemon, whom Paul would have to receive him as his own bowels. And that which might commend him to the Colossians was, that he was one of that city, or the same birth with themselves.

*They shall make known unto you all things which are done here;* these two persons of credit (upon the apostle's testimony) in their different circumstances, might, as joint witnesses, give them a full and certain account how things went with the church, and particularly with Paul, now a prisoner at Rome.

### Colossians 4:10

Ver. 10. *Aristarchus my fellow prisoner saluteth you:* here he doth wish prosperity to them, Lu 10:5, in the name of others, beginning with those of the circumcision, viz.

*Aristarchus, a Macedonian of Thessalonica*, who had been his fellow traveller, Ac 19:29 20:4 27:2; yea, and now his fellow prisoner, and fellow labourer, Phm 1:24.

*And Marcus, sister's son to Barnabas*; and John Mark, who was nephew to Barnabas, Ac 12:12 13:13; and having sometime displeased Paul by his departure and accompanying his uncle Barnabas, Ac 15:37,39, yet afterwards repented, and was reconciled to Paul, 2Ti 4:11 Phm 1:24; being profitable to him tbr the ministry as an evangelist.

*Touching whom ye received commandments: if he come unto you, receive him:* concerning this same Mark, Paul had given orders to them, as well as to other churches, (who otherwise, likely, might be prejudiced against him for leaving Paul and his company in Pamphylia, Ac 13:13), that if he came amongst them, they should entertain him kindly, who as Peter's spiritual son, 1Pe 5:13, did elsewhere also salute those who were scattered. Some conceive from the *commandments* here they had *received*, that Barnabas had written to the Colossians in commendation of his cousin Mark.

### Colossians 4:11

Ver. 11. *And Jesus, which is called Justus, who are of the circumcision*; a third person of those who had been Jews mentioned in this salutation, is Jesus, surnamed Justus, (probably from his just conversation), whether the same with him mentioned in Luke's history of the Acts, Ac 28:7, is not evident. The Greeks use Jesus for the Hebrew Joshua, Heb 4:8, it being common with them to more than one. However, the Christians, since the resurrection of Christ, out of reverence to their Lord and Master, (who is God as well as man), have forborne to call their children by the name of Jesus.

*These only are my fellow workers unto the kingdom of God*; these three alone, i.e. of the Jews, (as for Timothy, his father was a Greek or Gentile, Ac 16:1,3, and others were Gentiles, Ac 28:28), were assistant to hint at Rome (where it seems Peter was not) in expounding and preaching the gospel, enlarging the kingdom of grace in converting of souls, Mt 4:23 Mr 4:11.

*Which have been a comfort unto me; the carrying on of which work did administer matter of great consolation to him in his bonds.*

#### Colossians 4:12

Ver. 12. *Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you:* after he had given them the good wishes of some of the Jews, he doth here give the like from some of the Gentiles, beginning with Epaphras, whom he had before commended, Col 1:7,8, and doth here recommend him as born and bred amongst them, devoted to their service, in being the servant of Christ, as Paul, separated to the preaching of the gospel, Ro 1:1, yea, a fellow prisoner with the apostle upon that account, Phm 1:23.

*Always labouring fervently for you in prayers;* and, as it became such a one, faithful in his office, not diverted by distance of place or length of time, was night and day contending zealously with prayers to God for their spiritual, temporal, and eternal welfare, as Ro 15:30.

*That ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God;* that they might attain a sufficient perfection in all that which God would have them reach to: See Poole on "Col 1:28,29". See Poole on "Php 3:15". The distance between Colosse and Philippi, &c. render it improbable, whatever a learned man conceits, that Epaphras should be the same with Epaphroditus.

#### Colossians 4:13

Ver. 13. *For I bear him record, that he hath a great zeal for you;* for, saith the apostle, though I am not privy to his secret prayers, yet I can bear him witness, and do give him mine own testimony, that he hath a most ardent and special affection for you Christians at Colosse.

*And them that are in Laodicea, and them in Hierapolis;* yea, and for those also in your neighbour cities; see the arguement, and Col 2:1; viz. Laodicea, the last of the seven churches, to whom excellent epistles were written, recorded by John the divine, Re 1:11 3:14; and Hierapolis, or the holy city, about six miles distant from the former, say geographers.



#### Colossians 4:14

Ver. 14. *Luke, the beloved physician;* whether this Luke was the same with him that penned the Gospel and the Acts, because the apostle here gives him no higher a commendation, some doubt. But others, and the most, conclude that as Matthew from a publican became an apostle, and others from fishers of fishes, fishers of men, so Luke from a physician of the body became a physician of souls, and that this was the very person who was Paul's perpetual and individual companion in his travels, 2Ti 4:11 Phm 1:24; considering from his style he was an excellent Grecian, (very fit for a physician), and made use of proper medical terms, Ac 15:39 17:16: and here the apostle calls him *beloved*, as he had done Tychicus, Col 4:7, and elsewhere his fellow labourer, who only of those that were not prisoners stuck to him, 2Ti 4:11. Some think it to be Luke whose praises are celebrated in the gospel, or evangelical churches, 2Co 8:18; others would have that to be Barnabas, or some other: his practising of physic was no more inconsistent with being an evangelist than Paul's tent-making with being an apostle, 2Th 3:8.

*And Demas, greet you;* he adds a third in this salutation from others, and that is Demas, who hitherto did persevere, and that as one of his fellow labourers, Phm 1:24; though it should seem, afterwards, when the persecution grew hotter, he did for some worldly respect leave Paul, and depart unto Thessalonica, 2Ti 4:10.

#### Colossians 4:15

Ver. 15. *Salute the brethren which are in Laodicea;* having saluted the Colossians, in the names of others, circumcised and uncircumcised, he desires them in his own name to salute the Christians in the church at Laodicea.

*And Nymphas;* and some pious man called Nymphas, probably living either in the country near the city of Laodicea, or some eminent Christian of chief note in the city. The masculine article adjoined shows this person to be a male, and not a female, as some have inconsiderately reckoned.

*And the church which is in his house;* and the company of believers, either

of his own family or neighbourhood, who did, under his protection or inspection, meet to worship God according to his appointment, Ro 16:1,5 1Co 16:15,19.

#### Colossians 4:16

Ver. 16. *And when this epistle is read among you:* the apostle takes it for granted, that, when this Epistle came to their hands, it would be publicly read in a solemn assembly of the church, or brethren, convened to that purpose, as elsewhere usual. For indeed he doth strictly enjoin and adjure the Thessalonians, under the penalty of the Lord's displeasure, that the Epistle or letter which he wrote unto them should be read unto all the brethren, 1Th 5:27: it being an indispensable duty of Christ's disciples, to search the Scriptures, Joh 5:39, and there solemnly to read them in the assembly for the edification of all ministers and people, old and young, De 17:19 Ps 1:2 119:9 Mr 13:37 Ac 13:15 17:11,12 18:26-28 Ro 15:4 1Ti 4:13,15.

*Cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans:* hence (as it follows) the apostle (who it is likely had not an opportunity at Rome to have a copy of it transcribed) chargeth them at Colosse, to see or take care after the reading of this same Epistle amongst themselves, that, a copy of it being prepared for that purpose, it might, as from him, be also solemnly read or rehearsed in a public assembly of the Christians at Laodicea.

*And that ye likewise read the epistle from Laodicea;* and he further chargeth those to whom he wrote at Colosse, that they should take care that the Epistle (as we rightly with the generality of ancients and moderns render it) from Laodicea, be read amongst them. The Ethiopic version (as we have it thence in the Latin) reads, send it to Laodicea, that the Laodiceans also may read it, in the house or congregation of Christians there. The Vulgar Latin, that ye likewise may read the Laodicean Epistle, or the Epistle of the Laodiceans. Whence some of old and of late would have it thought, that St. Paul wrote a distinct Epistle to the Laodiceans. In favour of this opinion, some bad man, out of this Epistle to the Colossians, and that to the Ephesians, patched up and forged a short, but gross and trifling, Epistle, and fathered it on the apostle, though very dissonant from his character and style; whereupon it hath been rejected as spurious and apocryphal by the learned fathers, and the second council of Nice; and since by the learned on all hands, except some few of the papists, and except quakers, who printed a translation of it, and plead for it. Some papists urge this, to argue that the church gives the Scripture authority

amongst Christians. But though she is bound to preserve the books of Divine authority, it doth not belong to her to authenticate them, or prescribe them as the rule of faith; that were no less than to outrage the majesty of the Author. Others allege it, as being lost, and thereupon would infer the canon of Holy Scriptures to be defective. But supposing, yet not granting, that Paul had written an Epistle to the Laodiceans, which had not come down to us, it were altogether inconsequent that the canon of Scriptures we have doth not contain all things necessary to salvation. Some, still harping on the Vulgar translation of the Laodicean Epistle, (though that in common speech might argue they wrote it rather than received it), would fancy that it was the Epistle Paul wrote to the Ephesians; but Tertullian did brand the impostor Marctan for changing the title of Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians. Others conceit it may be understood of Paul's Epistle to Philemon, whom Paul calls his fellow labourer, likely exercising his ministry in the neighbour city of Laodicea, which was sent by Onesimus, and for the sake of Onesimus, who was a Colossian, was to be read at Colosse. Others, because Luke is mentioned, Col 4:14, that it was an Epistle of his to the Laodiceans; but of that there is no evidence. Neither is it probable that Paul would in this Epistle to the Colossians have saluted the Laodiceans, had he written a distinct Epistle to them. Wherefore it is most rational to understand it, not of an Epistle of Paul written to the Laodiceans, but as our Bibles, according to an authentic copy, have, with the Greek fathers, faithfully translated and represented it, written *from Laodicea*. Some conjecture it to be the First Epistle of John, which they conceive was written from the city of Laodicea. Others think it was the First Epistle to Timothy, from the inscription or subscription of a long time put at the end of it, as if written from Laodicea. But against that it may be excepted, there is no mention of Pacatiana, in the writers of the first age, but only in after-times, dividing the Roman empire into provinces; and some say this was first mentioned in the ecclesiastical records in the fifth synod at Constantinople. Further, there be several passages in the Epistle itself do intimate that it was written from some place in Macedonia, if we consult Col 1:3, with Col 3:14 4:13, not from Laodicea. Some think it to be meant of the Epistle from Laodicea, wherein they would answer the Colossians; how probably I determine not. Wherefore it is most probable, that the Epistle was written from Laodicea, to Paul at Rome; either by the church there, or some of her officers, which (likely he in straits of time enclosed, and) he would have read, as helpful to the edification of the Colossians, for the better clearing of some passages in this Epistle to them, wherein he had obviated such errors as he might hear seducers were attempting to disseminate amongst them.

#### Colossians 4:17

Ver. 17. He also enjoins them to advise or advertise *Archippus*, whom he doth elsewhere call his *fellow soldier*, i.e. minister in the gospel, Phm 1:2,

on his and Timothy's behalf, to see to, or be mindful of, the nature of that excellent ministry he had undertaken, Ro 11:13 Eph 3:7 1Ti 4:6; yea, and to be more heedful, Ac 20:28,29 1Pe 5:1,2, considering the authority of the Lord Jesus, in whose name he had been called to it, and intrusted with it, Mt 9:38 Php 1:17 1Ti 5:1,21; having been colleague to Epaphras, or in his absence newly received into this sacred charge, to encourage him to a faithful discharge of his duty therein, to fill up all the parts of his office, and leave none of them unperformed: see Col 1:25 1Co 9:16,17 1Ti 4:16, with 2Ti 4:5.

### Colossians 4:18

Ver. 18. *The salutation by the hand of me Paul:* the apostle having them on his heart, and here (as elsewhere) likely having used an amanuensis to pen the body of his Epistle, to prevent fraud and forgery he doth subscribe his salutation and apostolical benediction with his own hand, which was well known, Ro 16:22 1Co 16:21 Ga 6:11 2Th 2:2 3:17 Phm 1:19.

*Remember my bonds;* importuning them to be very mindful of his imprisonment in their prayers, Col 4:3 Heb 13:3, imitating his constancy and patience if called to suffer; see Php 1:14; his sufferings being an excellent seal to the truth of his gospel, and his ardent affection to them and other Gentiles, for whose sake he was in bonds.

*Grace be with you;* then earnestly praying that the special grace and favour of God the Father in the Lord Jesus Christ might be ever present with them: see Ro 16:24 1Co 16:23,24 Php 4:23. In testimony of the reality of his desire, and assurance to be heard, he concludes (as elsewhere) with *Amen*.

(Written from Rome to the Colossians by Tychicus and Onesimus.)