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**COMMENTARY**

**COMMENTARY  
ON THE EPISTLE TO THE  
COLOSSIANS**

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## COMMENTARY ON

# THE EPISTLE TO THE COLOSSIANS.

## THE ARGUMENT

### ON THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE COLOSSIANS.

THERE were three neighboring cities in Phrygia, as made mention of by PAUL in this Epistle — LAODICEA, Hierapolis, and COLOSSE which, as *Orosius*<sup>F1</sup> informs us, were overthrown<sup>F2</sup> by an earthquake till the times of the emperor *Nero*. Accordingly, not long after this Epistle was written, three Churches of great renown perished by a mournful as well as horrible occurrence — a bright mirror truly of divine judgment, if we had but eyes to see it. The COLOSSIANS had been, not indeed by PAUL, but with fidelity and purity by EPAPHRAS and other ministers, instructed in the gospel; but immediately afterwards, Satan had, with his *tares*, crept in, (<401325> Matthew 13:25,)<sup>F3</sup> according to his usual and invariable manner, that he might there pervert the right faith.<sup>F4</sup>

Some are of opinion that there were two classes of men that endeavored to draw aside the COLOSSIANS from the purity of the gospel; — that, on the one hand, the philosophers, by disputing in reference to stars, fate, and trifles of a like nature, and that the Jews, on the other hand, by urging the observance of their ceremonies, had raised up many mists with the view of throwing Christ into the shade.<sup>F5</sup> Those, however, who are of this opinion are influenced by a conjecture of exceedingly little weight — on the ground that PAUL makes mention of *thrones*, and *powers*, and heavenly creatures. For as to their adding also the term *elements*,<sup>F6</sup> it is worse than ridiculous. As, however, it is not my intention to refute the opinions of others, I shall simply state what appears to me to be the truth, end what may be inferred by sound reasoning.

In the first place, it is abundantly evident, from PAUL'S words, that those profligates were intent upon this — that they might mix up Christ with Moses, and might retain the shadows of the law along with the gospel. Hence it is probable that they were Jews. As, however, they coloured over their fallacies with specious disguises, <sup>F7</sup> PAUL, on this account, calls it a *vain philosophy*. (<510208> Colossians 2:8) At the same time, in employing that term, he had in his eye, in my opinion, the speculations with which they amused themselves, which were subtle, it is true, but at the same time useless and profane: for they contrived a way of access to God through means of angels, and put forth many speculations of that nature, such as are contained in the books of Dionysius on the Celestial Hierarchy, <sup>F8</sup> drawn from the school of the Platonists. This, therefore, is the principal object at which he aims — to teach that all things are in Christ, and that he alone ought to be reckoned amply sufficient by the Colossians.

The order, however, which he follows is this: — After the inscription usually employed by him, he commends them, with the view of leading them to listen to him more attentively. He then, with the view of shutting up the way against all new and strange contrivances, bears testimony to the doctrine which they had previously received from EPAPHRAS. Afterwards, in entreating that the Lord would increase their faith, he intimates that something is still wanting to them, that he may pave the way for imparting to them more solid instruction. On the other hand, he extols with suitable commendations the grace of God towards them, that they may not lightly esteem it. Then follows the instruction, in which he teaches that all parts of our salvation are to be found in Christ alone, that they may not seek anything elsewhere; and he puts them in mind that it was in Christ that they had obtained every blessing that they possessed, in order that they might the more carefully make it their aim to retain him to the end. <sup>F9</sup> And, truly, even this one article were of itself perfectly sufficient to lead us to reckon this Epistle, short as it is, to be an inestimable treasure; for what is of greater importance in the whole system of heavenly doctrine than to have Christ drawn to the life, that we may distinctly behold <sup>F10</sup> his excellence, his office, and all the fruits that arise to us from it.

For in this respect especially we differ from Papists, that while we are both of us called Christians, and profess to believe in Christ, they picture to themselves one that is torn, disfigured, divested of his excellence,

denuded of his office, in fine, such as to be a spectre<sup>F11</sup> rather than Christ himself: we, on the other hand, embrace him such as he is here described by PAUL — loving and efficacious. This Epistle, therefore, to express it in one word, distinguishes the true Christ from a fictitious one<sup>F12</sup> — than which nothing better or more excellent can be desired. Towards the end of the *First Chapter* he again endeavors to secure authority for himself from the station assigned him,<sup>F13</sup> and in magnificent terms extols the dignity of the gospel.

In the *Second Chapter* he opens up more distinctly than he had done the reason which had induced him to write — that he might provide against the danger which he saw to be impending over them, while he touches, in passing, on the affection which he cherishes towards them, that they may know that their welfare is the object of his concern. From this he proceeds to exhortation, by which he applies the foregoing doctrine, as it were, to present use;<sup>F14</sup> for he bids them rest in Christ alone, and brands as vanity everything that is apart from Christ.<sup>F15</sup> He speaks particularly of circumcision, abstinence from food, and of other outward exercises — in which they mistakingly made the service of God to consist; and also of the absurd worship of angels, whom they put in Christ's room. Having made mention of circumcision, he takes occasion to notice also, in passing, what is the office, and what is the nature of ceremonies — from which he lays it down as a settled point that they have been abrogated by Christ. These things are treated of till the end of the *Second Chapter*.

In the *Third Chapter*, in opposition to those vain prescriptions, to the observance of which the false apostles were desirous to bind believers, he makes mention of those true offices of piety in which the Lord would have us employ ourselves; and he begins with the very *spring-head* — that is, mortification of the flesh and newness of life. From this he derives the *streams* — that is, particular exhortations, some of which apply to all Christians alike, while others relate more especially to particular individuals, according to the nature of their calling.

In the beginning of the *Fourth Chapter* he follows out the same subject: afterwards, having commended himself to their prayers, he shews by many tokens<sup>F16</sup> how much he loves them, and is desirous to promote their welfare.

# CHAPTER 1

## <510101> Colossians 1:1-8

1. Paul an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timotheus our brother,	1. Paulus apostolus Iesu Christi, per voluntatem Dei, et Timotheus frater,
2. To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ which are at Colosse: Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.	2. Sanctis qui sunt Colossis, et fidelibus fratribus in Christo; gratia vobis et pax a Deo et Patre nostro, et Domino Iesu Christo.
3. We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you,	3. Gratias agimus Deo et Patri Domini nostri Iesu Christi, semper pro vobis orantes,
4. Since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which ye have to all the saints;	4. Audita fide vestra, quae est in Christo Iesu, et caritate erga omnes sanctos,
5. For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel;	5. Propter spem repositam vobis in coelis, de qua prius audistis, per sermonem veritatis, nempe Evangelii,
6. Which is come unto you, as it is in all the world; and bringeth forth fruit, as it doth also in you, since the day ye heard of it, and knew the grace of God in truth:	6. Quod ad vos pervenit: quemadmodum et in universo mundo fructificat et propagatur, sicut etiam in vobis, ex quo die audistis, et cognovistis gratiam Dei in veritate.
7. As ye also learned of Epaphras our dear fellow-servant, who is for you a faithful minister of Christ;	7. Quemadmodum et didicistis ab Epaphra, dilecto converso nostro, qui est fidelis erga vos minister Christi:
8. Who also declared unto us your love in the Spirit.	8. Qui etiam nobis manifestavit caritatem vestram in Spiritu.

1. *Paul an Apostle.* I have already, in repeated instances, explained the design of such inscriptions. As, however, the COLOSSIANS had never seen

him, and on that account his authority was not as yet so firmly established among them as to make his private name<sup>F17</sup> by itself sufficient, he premises that he is an Apostle of Christ set apart by the will of God. From this it followed, that he did not act rashly in writing to persons that were not known by him, inasmuch as he was discharging an embassy with which God had intrusted him. For he was not bound to one Church merely, but his Apostleship extended to all. The term *saints* which he applies to them is more honorable, but in calling them *faithful brethren*, he allures them more willingly to listen to him. As for other things, they may be found explained in the foregoing Epistles.

**3. *We give thanks to God.*** He praises the faith and love of the Colossians, that it may encourage them the more to alacrity and constancy of perseverance. Farther, by shewing that he has a persuasion of this kind respecting them, he procures their friendly regards, that they may be the more favourably inclined and teachable for receiving his doctrine. We must always take notice that he makes use of thanksgiving in place of congratulation, by which he teaches us, that in all our joys we must readily call to remembrance the goodness of God, inasmuch as everything that is pleasant and agreeable to us is a kindness conferred by him. Besides, he admonishes us, by his example, to acknowledge with gratitude not merely those things which the Lord confers upon us, but also those things which he confers upon others.

But for what things does he give thanks to the Lord? For the *faith* and *love* of the Colossians. He acknowledges, therefore, that both are conferred by God: otherwise the gratitude were pretended. And what have we otherwise than through his liberality? If, however, even the smallest favors come to us from that source, how much more ought this same acknowledgment to be made in reference to those two gifts, in which the entire sum of our excellence consists?

*To the God and Father.*<sup>F18</sup> Understand the expression thus — *To God who is the Father of Christ.* For it is not lawful for us to acknowledge any other God than him who has manifested himself to us in his Son. And this is the only key for opening the door to us, if we are desirous to have access to the true God. For on this account, also, is he a Father to us, because he has embraced us in his only begotten Son, and in him also sets forth his paternal favor for our contemplation.

*Always for you*, Some explain it thus — We give thanks to God always for you, that is, *continually*. Others explain it to mean — *Praying always for you*. It may also be interpreted in this way, “Whenever we pray for you, we at the same time give thanks to God;” and this is the simple meaning, “We give thanks to God, and we at the same time pray.” By this he intimates, that the condition of believers is never in this world perfect, so as not to have, invariably, something wanting. For even the man who has begun admirably well, may fall short in a hundred instances every day; and we must ever be making progress while we are as yet on the way. Let us therefore bear in mind that we must rejoice in the favors that we have already received, and give thanks to God for them in such a manner, as to seek at the Same time from him perseverance and advancement.

4. *Having heard of your faith*. This was a means of stirring up his love towards them, and his concern for their welfare, when he heard it that they were distinguished by *faith* and *love*. And, unquestionably, gifts of God that are so excellent ought to have such an effect upon us as to stir us up to love them wherever they appear. He uses the expression, *faith in Christ*, that we may always bear in mind that Christ is the proper object of faith.

He employs the expression, *love towards the saints*, not with the view of excluding others, but because, in proportion as any one is joined to us in God, we ought to embrace him the more closely with special affection. True love, therefore, will extend to mankind universally, because they all are our flesh, and *created in the image of God*, (<sup><010406></sup>Genesis 4:6); but in respect of degrees, it will begin with those who are of the *household of faith*. (<sup><480610></sup>Galatians 6:10.)

5. *For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven*. For the *hope* of eternal life will never be inactive in us, so as not to produce *love* in us. For it is of necessity, that the man who is fully persuaded that a treasure of life is laid up for him in heaven will aspire thither, looking down upon this world. Meditation, however, upon the heavenly life stirs up our affections both to the worship of God, and to exercises of love. The Sophists pervert this passage for the purpose of extolling the merits of works, as if the hope of salvation depended on works. The reasoning, however, is futile. For it does not follow, that because hope stimulates us to aim at upright living, it is therefore founded upon works, inasmuch as nothing is more efficacious for

this purpose than God's unmerited goodness, which utterly overthrows all confidence in works.

There is, however, an instance of *metonymy* in the use of the term *hope*, as it is taken for the thing hoped for. For the hope that is in our hearts is the glory which we hope for in heaven. At the same time, when he says, that there is a *hope* that is *laid up for us in heaven*, he means, that believers ought to feel assured as to the promise of eternal felicity, equally as though they had already a treasure laid up<sup>F19</sup> in a particular place.

*Of which ye heard before.* As eternal salvation is a thing that surpasses the comprehension of our understanding, he therefore adds, that the assurance of it had been brought to the Colossians by means of the gospel; and at the same time he says in the outset,<sup>F20</sup> that he is not to bring forward anything new, but that he has merely in view to confirm them in the doctrine which they had previously received. Erasmus has rendered — *it the true word of the gospel*. I am also well aware that, according to the Hebrew idiom, the genitive is often made use of by Paul in place of an epithet; but the words of Paul here are more emphatic.<sup>F21</sup> For he calls the gospel, *καὶ ἐξοχήν*, (*by way of eminence,*) the *word of truth*, with the view of putting honor upon it, that they may more steadfastly and firmly adhere to the revelation which they have derived from that source. Thus the term *gospel* is introduced by way of *apposition*.<sup>F22</sup>

**6.** *As also in all the world it brings forth fruit.* This has a tendency both to confirm and to comfort the pious — to see the effect; of the gospel far and wide in gathering many to Christ. The faith of it does not, it is true, depend on its success, as though *we* should believe it on the ground that *many* believe, it. Though the whole world should fail, though heaven itself should fall, the conscience of a pious man must not waver, because God, on whom it is founded, does nevertheless remain true. This, however, does not hinder our faith from being confirmed, whenever it perceives God's excellence, which undoubtedly shews itself with more power in proportion to the number of persons that are gained over to Christ.

In addition to this, in the multitude of the believers at that time there was beheld an accomplishment of the many predictions which extend the reign of Christ from the East to the West. Is it a trivial or common aid to faith, to see accomplished before our eyes what the Prophets long since predicted as to the extending of the kingdom of Christ through all countries



of the world? What I speak of, there is no believer that does not experience in himself. Paul accordingly had it in view to encourage the Colossians the more by this statement, that, by seeing in various places the fruit and progress of the gospel, they might embrace it with more eager zeal.

Ἀξάνόμενον, which I have rendered *propagatur*, (*is propagated*,) does not occur in some copies; but, from its suiting better with the context, I did not choose to omit it. It also appears from the commentaries of the ancients that this reading was always the more generally received. <sup>F23</sup>

*Since the day ye heard it, and knew the grace.* Here he praises them on account of their docility, inasmuch as they immediately embraced sound doctrine; and he praises them on account of their constancy, inasmuch as they persevered in it. It is also with propriety that the faith of the gospel is called the *knowledge of God's grace*; for no one has ever tasted of the gospel but the man that knew himself to be reconciled to God, and took hold of the salvation that is held forth in Christ.

*In truth* means *truly* and *without pretense*; for as he had previously declared that the gospel is undoubted truth, so he now adds, that it had been purely administered by them, and that *by Epaphras*. For while all boast that they preach the gospel, and yet at the same time there are many *evil workers*, (<sup><500302></sup>Philippians 3:2,) through whose ignorance, or ambition, or avarice, its purity is adulterated, it is of great importance that faithful ministers should be distinguished from the less upright. For it is not enough to hold the term gospel, unless we know that this is the true gospel — what was preached by Paul and Epaphras. Hence Paul confirms the doctrine of Epaphras by giving it his approbation, that he may induce the Colossians to adhere to it, and may, by the same means, call them back from those profligates who endeavored to introduce strange doctrines. He at the same time dignifies Epaphras with a special distinction, that he may have more authority among them; and lastly, he presents him to the Colossians in an amiable aspect, by saying that he had borne testimony to him of their love. Paul everywhere makes it his particular aim, that he may, by his recommendation, render those who he knows serve Christ faithfully, very dear to the Churches; as, on the other hand, the ministers of Satan are wholly intent on alienating, by unfavourable representations, <sup>F24</sup> the minds of the simple from faithful pastors.

*Love in the Spirit* I take to mean, *spiritual love*, according to the view of Chrysostom, with whom, however, I do not agree in the interpretation of the preceding words. Now, *spiritual love* is of such a nature as has no view to the world, but is consecrated to the service of piety, <sup>F25</sup> and has, as it were, an internal root, while carnal friendships depend on external causes.

**<510109> Colossians 1:9-11**

<p><b>9.</b> For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding;</p>	<p><b>9.</b> Propterea nos quoque, ex quo die audivimus, non cessamus pro vobis orare, et petere ut impleamini cognitione voluntatis ipsius, in omni sapientia et prudentia <b>F26</b> spirituali:</p>
<p><b>10.</b> That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God;</p>	<p><b>10.</b> Ut ambuletis digne Deo, in omne obsequium, in omni bono opere fructificantes, et crescentes in cognitione Dei:</p>
<p><b>11.</b> Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness.</p>	<p><b>11.</b> Omni robore roborati, secundum potentiam gloriae ipsius, in omnem tolerantiam et patientiam, cum gaudio.</p>

**9. For this cause we also.** As he has previously shewn his affection for them in his thanksgivings, so he now shews it still farther in the earnestness of his prayers in their behalf. <sup>F27</sup> And, assuredly, the more that the grace of God is conspicuous in any, we ought in that proportion specially to love and esteem them, and to be concerned as to their welfare. But what does he pray for in their behalf? That they may know God more fully; by which he indirectly intimates, that something is still wanting in them, that he may prepare the way for imparting instruction to them, and may secure their attention to a fuller statement of doctrine. For those who think that they have already attained everything that is worthy of being known, despise and disdain everything farther that is presented to them. Hence he removes from the Colossians an impression of this nature, lest it should be a hinderance in the way of their cheerfully making progress, and allowing what had been begun in them to receive an additional polish. But what knowledge does he desire in their behalf? The knowledge of *the divine*

*will*, by which expression he sets aside all inventions of men, and all speculations that are at variance with the word of God. For his will is not to be sought anywhere else than in his word.

He adds — *in all wisdom*; by which he intimates that the will of God, of which he had made mention, was the only rule of right knowledge. For if any one is desirous simply to know those things which it has pleased God to reveal, that is the man who accurately knows what it is to be truly wise. If we desire anything beyond that, this will be nothing else than to be foolish, by not keeping within due bounds. By the word **συνέσεως** which we render *prudentiam*, (prudence,) I understand — that discrimination which proceeds from intelligence. Both are called *spiritual* by Paul, because they are not attained in any other way than by the guidance of the Spirit.

For the animal man does not perceive the things that are of God.  
(<sup><460214></sup> 1 Corinthians 2:14.)

So long as men are regulated by their own carnal perceptions, they have also their own wisdom, but it is of such a nature as is mere vanity, however much they may delight themselves in it. We see what sort of theology there is under the Papacy, what is contained in the books of philosophers, and what wisdom profane men hold in estimation. Let us, however, bear in mind, that the wisdom which is alone commended by Paul is comprehended in the *will of God*.

**10. That ye may walk worthy of God.** In the *first* place he teaches, what is the end of *spiritual understanding*, and for what purpose we ought to make proficiency in God's school — that we may *walk worthy of God*, that is, that it may be manifest in our life, that we have not in vain been taught by God. Whoever they may be that do not direct their endeavors towards this object, may possibly toil and labor much, but they do nothing better than wander about in endless windings, without making any progress. <sup>F28</sup> Farther, he admonishes us, that if we would *walk worthy of God*, we must above all things take heed that we regulate our whole course of life according to the will of God, renouncing our own understanding, and bidding farewell to all the inclinations of our flesh.

This also he again confirms by saying — *unto all obedience*, or, as they commonly say, *well-pleasing*. Hence if it is asked, what kind of life is *worthy of God*, let us always keep in view this definition of Paul — that it

is such a life as, leaving the opinions of men, and leaving, in short, all carnal inclination, is regulated so as to be in subjection to God alone. From this follow good works, which are the fruits that God requires from us.

*Increasing, in the knowledge of God.* He again repeats, that they have not arrived at such perfection as not to stand in need of farther increase; by which admonition he prepares them, and as it were leads them by the hand, to an eagerness for proficiency, that they may shew themselves ready to listen, and teachable. What is here said to the Colossians, let all believers take as said to themselves, and draw from this a common exhortation that we must always make progress in the doctrine of piety until death.

**11. *Strengthened with all might.*** As he has previously prayed that they might have both a sound understanding and the right use of it, so also now he prays that they may have courage and constancy. In this manner he puts them in mind of their own weakness, for he says, that they will not be strong otherwise than by the Lord's help; and not only so, but with the view of magnifying this exercise of grace the more, he adds, *according to his glorious power.* "So far from any one being able to stand, through dependence on his own strength, the power of God shews itself illustriously in helping our infirmity." Lastly, he shews in what it is that the strength of believers ought to display itself — *in all patience and long-suffering.* For they are constantly, while in this world, exercised with the cross, and a thousand temptations daily present themselves, so as to weigh them down, and they see nothing of what God has promised. They must, therefore, arm themselves with an admirable patience, that what Isaiah says may be accomplished,

In hope and in silence shall be your strength. <sup>F29</sup>  
(<sup><233015></sup> Isaiah 30:15.)

It is preferable to connect with this sentence the clause, *with joy.* For although the other reading is more commonly to be met with in the Latin versions, *this* is more in accordance with the Greek manuscripts, and, unquestionably, patience is not sustained otherwise than by alacrity of mind, and will never be maintained with fortitude by any one that is not satisfied with his condition.

**<510112> Colossians 1:12-17**

<p><b>12.</b> Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light:</p>	<p><b>12.</b> Gratias agentes Deo et Patri, F30 qui nos fecit idoneos ad participacionem hereditatis sanctorum in lumine.</p>
<p><b>13.</b> Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son;</p>	<p><b>13.</b> Qui eripuit nos ex potestate tenebrarum, et transtulit in regnum Filii sui dilecti:</p>
<p><b>14.</b> In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins:</p>	<p><b>14.</b> In quo habemus redemptionem per sanguinem eius, remissionem peccatorum:</p>
<p><b>15.</b> Who is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature:</p>	<p><b>15.</b> Qui est imago Dei invisibilis, primogenitus universae creaturae.</p>
<p><b>16.</b> For by him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by him, and for him:</p>	<p><b>16.</b> Quoniam in ipso creata sunt omnia, tum quae in coelis sunt, tum quae super terram; visibilia et invisibilia; sive throni, sive dominationes, sive principatus, sive potestates.</p>
<p><b>17.</b> And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.</p>	<p><b>17.</b> Omnia per ipsum, et in ipsum creata sunt: et ipse est ante omnia, et omnia in ipso constant.</p>

**12. *Giving thanks.*** Again he returns to thanksgiving, that he may take this opportunity of enumerating the blessings which had been conferred upon them through Christ, and thus he enters upon a full delineation of Christ. For this was the only remedy for fortifying the Colossians against all the snares, by which the false Apostles endeavored to entrap them — to understand accurately what Christ was. For how comes it that we are *carried about with so many strange doctrines*, (<581309> Hebrews 13:9) but because the excellence of Christ is not perceived by us? For Christ alone makes all other things suddenly vanish. Hence there is nothing that Satan so much endeavors to accomplish as to bring on mists with the view of obscuring Christ, because he knows, that by this means the way is opened up for every kind of falsehood. This, therefore, is the only means of

retaining, as well as restoring pure doctrine — to place Christ before the view such as he is with all his blessings, that his excellence may be truly perceived.

The question here is not as to the name. Papists in common with us acknowledge one and the same Christ; yet in the mean time how great a difference there is between us and them, inasmuch as they, after confessing Christ to be the Son of God, transfer his excellence to others, and scatter it hither and thither, and thus leave him next to empty,<sup>F31</sup> or at least rob him of a great part of his glory, so that he is called, it is true, by them the Son of God, but, nevertheless, he is not such as the Father designed he should be towards us. If, however, Papists would cordially embrace what is contained in this chapter, we would soon be perfectly agreed, but the whole of Popery would fall to the ground, for it cannot stand otherwise than through ignorance of Christ. This will undoubtedly be acknowledged by every one that will but consider the main article<sup>F32</sup> of this first chapter; for his grand object here is that we may know that Christ is the beginning, middle, and end — that it is from him that all things must be sought — that nothing is, or can be found, apart from him. Now, therefore, let the readers carefully and attentively observe in what colors Paul depicts Christ to us.

*Who hath made us meet.* He is still speaking of the *Father*, because he is the beginning, and efficient cause (as they speak) of our salvation. As the term *God* is more distinctly expressive of majesty, so the term *Father* conveys the idea of clemency and benevolent disposition. It becomes us to contemplate both as existing in God, that his majesty may inspire us with fear and reverence, and that his fatherly love may secure our full confidence. Hence it is not with our good reason that Paul has conjoined these two things, after all, you prefer the rendering which the old interpreter has followed, and which accords with some very ancient Greek manuscripts.<sup>F33</sup> At the same time there will be no inconsistency in saying, that he contents himself with the single term, *Father*. Farther, as it is necessary that his incomparable grace should be expressed by the term *Father*, so it is also not less necessary that we should, by the term *God*, be roused up to admiration of so great goodness, that he, who is God, has condescended thus far.<sup>F34</sup>

But for what kindness does he give thanks to God? For his having *made* him, and others, *meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints*. For we are born children of wrath, exiles from God's kingdom. It is God's adoption that alone *makes us meet*. Now, adoption depends on an unmerited election. The Spirit of regeneration is the seal of adoption. He adds, *in light*, that there might be a contrast — as opposed to the darkness of Satan's kingdom. <sup>F35</sup>

**13. *Who hath delivered us.*** Mark, here is the beginning of our salvation — when God delivers us from the depth of ruin into which we were plunged. For wherever his grace is not, *there* is darkness, <sup>F36</sup> as it is said in <sup><236002></sup> Isaiah 60:2

Behold darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the nations; but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee.

In the first place, we ourselves are called darkness, and afterwards the whole world, and Satan, the Prince of darkness, <sup>F37</sup> under whose tyranny we are held captive, until we are set free by Christ's hand. <sup>F38</sup> From this you may gather that the whole world, with all its pretended wisdom and righteousness, is regarded as nothing but darkness in the sight of God, because, apart, from the kingdom of Christ, there is no light.

*Hath translated us into the kingdom.* These form already the beginnings of our blessedness — when we are *translated into the kingdom* of Christ, because we *pass from death into life*. (<sup><620314></sup> 1 John 3:14.) This, also, Paul ascribes to the grace of God, that no one may imagine that he can attain so great a blessing by his own efforts. As, then, our deliverance from the slavery of sin and death is the work of God, so also our passing into the kingdom of Christ. He calls Christ the Son of his love, or the Son that is beloved by God the Father, because it is in him alone that his soul takes pleasure, as we read in <sup><401705></sup> Matthew 17:5, and in whom all others are beloved. For we must hold it as a settled point, that we are not acceptable to God otherwise than through Christ. Nor can it be doubted, that Paul had it in view to censure indirectly the mortal enmity that exists between men and God, until love shines forth in the Mediator.

**14. *In whom we have redemption.*** He now proceeds to set forth in order, that all parts of our salvation are contained in Christ, and that he alone

ought to shine forth, and to be seen conspicuous above all creatures, inasmuch as he is the beginning and end of all things. In the *first* place, he says that we have *redemption*<sup>F39</sup> and immediately explains it as meaning the *remission of sins*; for these two things agree together by *apposition*.<sup>F40</sup> For, unquestionably, when God remits our transgressions, he exempts us from condemnation to eternal death. This is our liberty, this our glorying in the face of death — that our sins are not imputed to us. He says that this redemption was procured through the *blood of Christ*, for by the sacrifice of his death all the sins of the world have been expiated. Let us, therefore, bear in mind, that this is the sole price of reconciliation, and that all the trifling of Papists as to satisfactions is blasphemy.<sup>F41</sup>

**15.** *Who is the image of the invisible God.* He mounts up higher in discoursing as to the glory of Christ. He calls him the *image of the invisible God*, meaning by this, that it is in him alone that God, who is otherwise invisible, is manifested to us, in accordance with what is said in <430118> John 1:18,

— No man hath ever seen God: the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, hath himself manifested him to us.

I am well aware in what manner the ancients were accustomed to explain this; for having a contest to maintain with Arians, they insist upon the equality of the Son with the Father, and his (*ὁμοουσία*) *identity of essence*,<sup>F42</sup> while in the mean time they make no mention of what is the chief point — in what manner the Father makes himself known to us in Christ. As to Chrysostom's laying the whole stress of his defense on the term *image*, by contending that the creature cannot be said to be the *image* of the Creator, it is excessively weak; nay more, it is set aside by Paul in <461107> 1 Corinthians 11:7, whose words are — *The man is the IMAGE and glory of God.*

That, therefore, we may not receive anything but what is solid, let us take notice, that the term *image* is not made use of in reference to essence, but has a reference to us; for Christ is called the *image of God* on this ground — that he makes God in a manner visible to us. At the same time, we gather also from this his (*ὁμοουσία*) *identity of essence*, for Christ would not truly represent God, if he were not the essential Word of God, inasmuch as the question here is not as to those things which by communication are suitable also to creatures, but the question is as to the



perfect wisdom, goodness, righteousness, and power of God, for the representing of which no creature were competent. We shall have, therefore, in this term, a powerful weapon in opposition to the Arians, but, notwithstanding, we must begin with that reference <sup>F43</sup> that I have mentioned; we must not insist upon the essence alone. The sum is this — that God in himself, that is, in his naked majesty, is *invisible*, and that not to the eyes of the body merely, but also to the understandings of men, and that he is revealed to us in Christ alone, that we may behold him as in a mirror. For in Christ he shews us his righteousness, goodness, wisdom, power, in short, his entire self. We must, therefore, beware of seeking him elsewhere, for everything that would set itself off as a representation of God, apart from Christ, will be an idol.

*The first-born of every creature.* The reason of this appellation is immediately added — *For in him all things are created*, as he is, three verses afterwards, called the *first-begotten from the dead*, because by him we all rise again. Hence, he is not called the *first-born*, simply on the ground of his having preceded all creatures in point of time, but because he was begotten by the Father, that they might be created by him, and that he might be, as it were, the substance or foundation of all things. It was then a foolish part that the Arians acted, who argued from this that he was, consequently, a creature. For what is here treated of is, not what he is in himself, but what he accomplishes in others.

**16. *Visible and invisible.*** Both of these kinds were included in the foregoing distinction of *heavenly* and *earthly* things; but as Paul meant chiefly to make that affirmation in reference to Angels, he now makes mention of things invisible. Not only, therefore, have those heavenly creatures which are visible to our eyes, but spiritual creatures also, been created by the Son of God. What immediately follows, *whether thrones*, etc., is as though he had said — “by whatever name they are called.”

By *thrones* some understand *Angels*. I am rather, however, of opinion, that the heavenly palace of God’s majesty is meant by the term, which we are not to imagine to be such as our mind can conceive of, but such as is suitable to God himself. We see the sun and moon, and the whole adorning of heaven, but the glory of God’s kingdom is hid from our perception, because it is spiritual, and above the heavens. In fine, let us understand by

the term *thrones* that seat of blessed immortality which is exempted from all change.

By the other terms he undoubtedly describes the angels. He calls them *powers, principalities, and dominions*, not, as if they swayed any separate kingdom, or were endowed with peculiar power,<sup>F44</sup> but because they are the ministers of Divine power and dominion.<sup>F45</sup> It is customary, however, that, in so far as God manifests his power in creatures, his names are, in that proportion, transferred to them. Thus he is himself alone *Lord* and *Father*, but those are also called *lords* and *fathers* whom he dignifies with this honor. Hence it comes that angels, as well as judges, are called *gods*.<sup>F46</sup> Hence, in this passage also, angels are signalized by magnificent titles, which intimate, not what they can do of themselves, or apart from God, but what God does by them, and what functions he has assigned to them. These things it becomes us to understand in such a manner as to detract, nothing from the glory of God alone; for he does not communicate his power to angels as to lessen his own; he does not work by them in such a manner as to resign his power to them; he does not desire that his glory should shine forth in them, so as to be obscured in himself. Paul, however, designedly extols the dignity of angels in terms thus magnificent, that no one may think that it stands in the way of Christ alone having the pre-eminence over them. He makes use, therefore, of these terms, as it were by way of concession, as though he had said, that all their excellence detracts nothing from Christ,<sup>F47</sup> however honorable the titles with which they are adorned. As for those who philosophize on these terms with excessive subtlety, that they may draw from them the different orders of angels, let them regale themselves with their dainties, but they are assuredly very remote from Paul's design.

**17. *All things were created by him, and for him.*** He places angels in subjection to Christ, that they may not obscure his glory, for *four* reasons: In the *first* place, because they were *created by him*; *secondly*, because their creation ought to be viewed as having a relation *to him*, as their legitimate end; *thirdly*, because he himself existed always, prior to their creation; *fourthly*, because he sustains them by his power, and upholds them in their condition. At the same time, he does not affirm this merely as to angels, but also as to the whole world. Thus he places the Son of God in the Highest seat of honor, that he may have the *pre-eminence* over angels as

well as men, and may bring under control all creatures in heaven and in earth.

<b>&lt;510118&gt; Colossians 1:18-20</b>	
<b>18.</b> And he is the head of the body, the church; who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead; that in all things he might have the pre-eminence:	<b>18.</b> Et ipse est caput corporis Ecclesiae, ipse principium, primogenitus mortuis, ut sit in omnibus ipse primas tenens:
<b>19.</b> For it pleased the Father, that in him should all fullness dwell:	<b>19.</b> Quoniam in ipso placuit omnem plenitudinem inhabitare.
<b>20.</b> And (having made peace through the blood of his cross) by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.	<b>20.</b> Et per ipsum reconciliare omnia sibi, pacificando per sanguinem crucis eius, per ipsum, tam quae sunt super terram, quam quae sunt in coelis.

**18. *The head of the body.*** Having discoursed in a general way of Christ's excellence, and of his sovereign dominion over all creatures, he again returns to those things which relate peculiarly to the Church. Under the term *head* some consider many things to be included. And, unquestionably, he makes use afterwards, as we shall find, of the same metaphor in this sense — that as in the human body it serves as a root, from which vital energy is diffused through all the members, so the life of the Church flows out from Christ, etc. (<510219> Colossians 2:19.) Here, however, in my opinion, he speaks chiefly of government. He shews, therefore, that it is Christ that alone has authority to govern the Church, that it is he to whom alone believers ought to have an eye, and on whom alone the unity of the body depends.

Papists, with the view of supporting the tyranny of their idol, allege that the Church would be (*ἀκέφαλον*) *without a head*,<sup>F48</sup> if the Pope did not, as a head, exercise rule in it. Paul, however, does not allow this honor even to angels, and yet he does not maim the Church, by depriving her of her head; for as Christ claims for himself this title, so he truly exercises the office. I am also well aware of the cavil by which they attempt to escape — that the Pope is a ministerial head. The name, however, of *head* is too

august to be rightfully transferred to any mortal man,<sup>F49</sup> under any pretext, especially without the command of Christ. Gregory shews greater modesty, who says (in his 92nd Epistle, 4th Book) that Peter was indeed one of the chief members of the Church, but that he and the other Apostles were members under one head.

*He is the beginning.* As ἀρχὴ is sometimes made use of among the Greeks to denote the end, to which all things bear a relation, we might understand it as meaning, that Christ is in this sense (ἀρχὴ) *the end*. I prefer, however, to explain Paul's words thus — that he is the *beginning*, because he is the *first-born from the dead*; for in the resurrection there is a restoration of all things, and in this manner the commencement of the second and new creation, for the former had fallen to pieces in the ruin of the first man. As, then, Christ in rising again had made a commencement of the kingdom of God, he is on good grounds called the *beginning*; for *then* do we truly begin to have a being in the sight of God, when we are renewed, so as to be new creatures. He is called the *first-begotten from the dead*, not merely because he was the first that rose again, but because he has also restored life to others, as he is elsewhere called the *first-fruits of those that rise again*. (1 Corinthians. 15:20.)

*That he may in all things.* From this he concludes, that supremacy belongs to him in all things. For if he is the Author and Restorer of all things, it is manifest that this honor is justly due to him. At the same time the phrase *in omnibus (in all things)* may be taken in two ways — either *over all creatures*, or, *in everything*. This, however, is of no great importance, for the simple meaning is, that all things are subjected to his sway.

**19.** *Because it hath pleased the Father that in him.* With the view of confirming what he has declared respecting Christ, he now adds, that it was so arranged in the providence of God. And, unquestionably, in order that we may with reverence adore this mystery, it is necessary that we should be led back to that fountain. “This,” says he, “has been in accordance with the counsel of God, that *all fullness may dwell in him.*” Now, he means a fullness of righteousness, wisdom, power, and every blessing. For whatever God has he has conferred upon his Son, that he may be glorified in him, as is said in <sup><430520></sup> John 5:20. He shews us, however, at the same time, that we must draw from the fullness of Christ everything good that we desire for our salvation, because such is the

determination of God — not to communicate himself, or his gifts to men, otherwise than by his Son. “Christ is all things to us: apart from him we have nothing.” Hence it follows, that all that detract from Christ, or that impair his excellence, or rob him of his offices, or, in fine, take away a drop from his fullness, overturn, so far as is in their power, God’s eternal counsel.

**20.** *And by him to reconcile all things to himself.* This, also, is a magnificent commendation of Christ, that we cannot be joined to God otherwise than through him. In the first place, let us consider that our happiness consists in our cleaving to God, and that, on the other hand, there is nothing more miserable than to be alienated from him. He declares, accordingly, that we are blessed through Christ alone, inasmuch as he is the bond of our connection with God, and, on the other hand, that, apart from him, we are most miserable, because we are shut out from God.<sup>F50</sup> Let us, however, bear in mind, that what he ascribes to Christ belongs peculiarly to him, that no portion of this praise may be transferred to any other.<sup>F51</sup> Hence we must consider the contrasts to these things to be understood — that if this is Christ’s prerogative, it does not belong to others. For of set purpose he disputes against those who imagined that the angels were pacificators, through whom access to God might be opened up.

*Making peace through the blood of his cross.* He speaks of the Father, — that he has been made propitious to his creatures by the blood of Christ. Now he calls it the *blood of the cross*, inasmuch as it was the pledge and price of the making up of our peace with God, because it was poured out upon the cross. For it was necessary that the Son of God should be an expiatory victim, and endure the punishment of sin, that we might be *the righteousness of God in him*. (<470521> 2 Corinthians 5:21.) The *blood of the cross*, therefore, means the blood of the sacrifice which was offered upon the cross for appeasing the anger of God.

In adding *by him*, he did not mean to express anything new, but to express more distinctly what he had previously stated, and to impress it still more deeply on their minds — that Christ alone is the author of reconciliation, as to exclude all other means. For there is no other that has been crucified for us. Hence it is he alone, by whom and for whose sake we have God propitious to us.

*Both upon earth and in heaven.* If you are inclined to understand this as referring merely to rational creatures, it will mean, men and angels. There were, it is true, no absurdity in extending it to all without exception; but that I may not be under the necessity of philosophizing with too much subtlety, I prefer to understand it as referring to angels and men; and as to the latter, there is no difficulty as to their having need of a peace maker in the sight of God. As to angels, however, there is a question not easy of solution. For what occasion is there for reconciliation, where there is no discord or hatred? Many, influenced by this consideration, have explained the passage before us in this manner — that angels have been brought into agreement with men, and that by this means heavenly creatures have been restored to favor with earthly creatures. Another meaning, however, is conveyed by Paul's words, *that God hath reconciled to himself*. That explanation, therefore, is forced.

It remains, that we see what is the reconciliation of angels and men. I say that men have been reconciled to God, because they were previously alienated from him by sin, and because they would have had him as a Judge to their ruin, <sup>F52</sup> had not the grace of the Mediator interposed for appeasing his anger. Hence the nature of the peace making between God and men was this, that enmities have been abolished through Christ, and thus God becomes a Father instead of a Judge.

Between God and angels the state of matters is very different, for there was *there* <sup>F53</sup> no revolt, no sin, and consequently no separation. It was, however, necessary that angels, also, should be made to be at peace with God, for, being creatures, they were not beyond the risk of falling, had they not been confirmed by the grace of Christ. This, however, is of no small importance for the perpetuity of peace with God, to have a fixed standing in righteousness, so as to have no longer any fear of fall or revolt. Farther, in that very obedience which they render to God, there is not such absolute perfection as to give satisfaction to God in every respect, and without the need of pardon. And this beyond all doubt is what is meant by that statement in <sup><180418></sup> Job 4:18, *He will find iniquity in his angels*. For if it is explained as referring to the devil, what mighty thing were it? But the Spirit declares there, that the greatest purity is vile, <sup>F54</sup> if it is brought into comparison with the righteousness of God. We must, therefore, conclude, that there is not on the part of angels so much of righteousness as would suffice for their being fully joined with God. They have, therefore, need of

a peace maker, through whose grace they may wholly cleave to God. Hence it is with propriety that Paul declares, that the grace of Christ does not reside among mankind alone, and on the other hand makes it common also to angels. Nor is there any injustice done to angels, in sending them to a Mediator, that they may, through his kindness, have a well grounded peace with God.

Should any one, on the pretext of the universality of the expression,<sup>F55</sup> move a question in reference to devils, whether Christ be their peace maker also? I answer, No, not even of wicked men: though I confess that there is a difference, inasmuch as the benefit of redemption is offered to the latter, but not to the former.<sup>F56</sup> This, however, has nothing to do with Paul's words, which include nothing else than this, that it is through Christ alone, that, all creatures, who have any connection at all with God, cleave to him.

<b>&lt;510121&gt; Colossians 1:21-23</b>	
<b>21.</b> And you, that were sometime alienated, and enemies in, your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled	<b>21.</b> Et vos quum aliquando essetis alienati, et inimici cogitatione in operibus malis,
<b>22.</b> In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy, and unblameable, and unrepveable, in his sight;	<b>22.</b> Nunc reconciliavit in corpore carnis suae per mortem; ut sisteret vos sanctos et irreprehensibiles in conspectu suo:
<b>23.</b> If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister:	<b>23.</b> Si quidem permanetis fide fundati et firmi, et non dimoveamini a spe Evangelii quod audistis: quod praedicatum est apud universam creaturam, quae sub coelo est: cuius factus sum ego Paulus minister.

**21.** *And whereas ye were formerly.* The general doctrine which he had set forth he now applies particularly to them, that they may feel that they are guilty of very great ingratitude, if they allow themselves to be drawn away from Christ to new inventions. And this arrangement must be carefully observed, because the particular application of a doctrine, so to speak,

affects the mind more powerfully. Farther, he leads their views to experience, that they may recognize in themselves the benefit of that redemption of which he had made mention. “You are yourselves a sample <sup>F57</sup> of that grace which I declare to have been offered to mankind through Christ. For ye were *alienated*, that is, from God. Ye were *enemies*; now ye are received into favor: whence comes this? It is because God, being appeased by the death of Christ, has become reconciled to you.” At the same time, there is in this statement a change of person, for what he has previously declared as to the Father, he now affirms respecting Christ; for we must necessarily explain it thus, in *the body of HIS flesh*.

The term *διανοίας* (*thought*) I explain, as employed by way of amplification, as though he had said, that they were altogether, and in the whole of their mental system, *alienated from God*, that no one may imagine, after the manner of philosophers, that the alienation is merely in a particular part, as Popish theologians restrict it to the lower appetites. “Nay,” says Paul, “what made you odious to God, had taken possession of your whole mind.” In fine, he meant to intimate, that man, whatever he may be, is wholly at variance with God, and is an enemy to him. The old interpreter renders it (*sensum*) *sense*. Erasmus renders it *mentem*, (*mind*.) I have made use of the term *cogitationis*, to denote what the French call *intention*. For such is the force of the Greek word, and Paul’s meaning requires that it should be rendered so.

Farther, while the term *enemies* has a passive as well as active signification, it is well suited to us in both respects, so long as we are apart from Christ. For we are born children of wrath, and every thought of the flesh is *enmity against God*. (<450607>Romans 6:7.)

*In wicked works*. He shews from its effects the inward hatred which lies hid in the heart. For as mankind endeavor to free themselves from all blame, until they have been openly convicted, God shews them their impiety by outward works, as is more amply treated of in <450119>Romans 1:19. Farther, what is told us here as to the Colossians, is applicable to us also, for we differ nothing in respect of nature. There is only this difference, that some are called from their mother’s womb, whose malice God anticipates, so as to prevent them from breaking forth into open fruits, while others, after having wandered during a great part of their life, are brought back to the fold. We all, however, stand in need of Christ as



our peace maker, because we are the slaves of sin, and where sin is, *there* is enmity between God and men.

**22. *In the body of his flesh.*** The expression is in appearance absurd, but the *body of his flesh* means that human body, which the Son of God had in common with us. He meant, therefore, to intimate, that the Son of God had put on the same nature with us, that he took upon him this vile earthly body, subject to many infirmities, that he might be our Mediator. When he adds, *by death*, he again calls us back to sacrifice. For it was necessary that the Son of God should become man, and be a partaker of our flesh, that he might be our brother: it was necessary that he should by dying become a sacrifice, that he might make his Father propitious to us.

*That he might present us holy.* Here we have the second and principal part of our salvation — newness of life. For the entire blessing of redemption consists mainly in these two things, remission of sins, and spiritual regeneration. (<243133> Jeremiah 31:33.) What he has already spoken of was a great matter, that righteousness has been procured for us through the death of Christ, so that, our sins being remitted, we are acceptable to God. Now, however, he teaches us, that there is in addition to this another benefit equally distinguished — the gift of the Holy Spirit, by which we are renewed in the image of God. This, also, is a passage worthy of observation, as shewing that a gratuitous righteousness is not conferred upon us in Christ, without our being at the same time regenerated by the Spirit to the obedience of righteousness, as he teaches us elsewhere, that

Christ is made to us righteousness and sanctification.  
(1 Corinthians. 1:30.)

The *former* we obtain by a gratuitous acceptance; <sup>F58</sup> and the *latter* by the gift of the Holy Spirit, when we are made new creatures. There is however an inseparable connection between these two blessings of grace.

Let us, however, take notice, that this holiness is nothing more than begun in us, and is indeed every day making progress, but will not be perfected until Christ shall appear for the restoration of all things. For the Cœlestinians <sup>F59</sup> and the Pelagians in ancient times mistakingly perverted this passage, so as to shut out the gracious benefit of the remission of sins. For they conceived of a perfection in this world which could satisfy the judgment of God, so that mercy was not needed. Paul, however, does not

by any means shew us here what is accomplished in this world, but what is the end of our calling, and what blessings are brought to us by Christ.

**23. *If ye continue.*** Here we have an exhortation to perseverance, by which he admonishes them that all the grace that had been conferred upon them hitherto would be vain, unless they persevered in the purity of the gospel. And thus he intimates, that they are still only making progress, and have not yet reached the goal. For the stability of their faith was at that time exposed to danger through the stratagems of the false apostles. Now he paints in lively colors assurance of faith when he bids the Colossians be *grounded and settled* in it. For faith is not like mere opinion, which is shaken by various movements, but has a firm steadfastness, which can withstand all the machinations of hell. Hence the whole system of Popish theology will never afford even the slightest taste of true faith, which holds it as a settled point, that we must always be in doubt respecting the present state of grace, as well as respecting final perseverance. He afterwards takes notice also of a relationship <sup>F60</sup> which subsists between faith and the gospel, when he says that the Colossians will be *settled* in the faith only in the event of their not falling back from the *hope of the gospel*; that is, the hope which shines forth upon us through means of the gospel, for where the gospel is, *there* is the hope of everlasting salvation. Let us, however, bear in mind, that the sum of all is contained in Christ. Hence he enjoins it upon them here to shun all doctrines which lead away from Christ, so that the minds of men are otherwise occupied.

***Which ye have heard.*** As the false apostles themselves, who tear and rend Christ in pieces, are accustomed proudly to glory in the name of the gospel, and as it is a common artifice of Satan to trouble men's consciences under a false pretext of the gospel, that the truth of the gospel may be brought into confusion, <sup>F61</sup> Paul, on this account, expressly declares, that *that* was the genuine, <sup>F62</sup> *that* the undoubted gospel, which the Colossians had heard, namely, from Epaphras, that they might not lend an ear to doctrines at variance with it. He adds, besides, a confirmation of it, that it is the very same as was preached over the whole world. It is, I say, no ordinary confirmation when they hear that they have the whole Church agreeing with them, and that they follow no other doctrine than what the Apostles had alike taught and was everywhere received.

It is, however, a ridiculous boasting of Papists, in respect of their impugning our doctrine by this argument, that it is not preached everywhere with approbation and applause, inasmuch as we have few that assent to it. For though they should burst, they will never deprive us of this — that we at this day teach nothing but what was preached of old by Prophets and Apostles, and is obediently received by the whole band of saints. For Paul did not mean that the gospel should be approved of by the consent of all ages <sup>F63</sup> in such a way that, if it were rejected, its authority would be shaken. He had, on the contrary, an eye to that commandment of Christ,

Go, preach the gospel to every creature; (<411615> Mark 16:15;)

which commandment depends on so many predictions of the Prophets, foretelling that the kingdom of Christ would be spread over the whole world. What else then does Paul mean by these words than that the Colossians had also been watered by those *living streams*, which, *springing forth from Jerusalem*, were to flow out through the whole world? (<381408> Zechariah 14:8.)

We also do not glory in vain, or without remarkable fruit and consolation, <sup>F64</sup> that we have the same gospel, which is preached among all nations by the commandment of the Lord, which is received by all the Churches, and in the profession of which all pious persons have lived and died. It is also no common help for fortifying us against so many assaults, that we have the consent of the whole Church — such, I mean, as is worthy of so distinguished a title. We also cordially subscribe to the views of Augustine, who refutes the Donatists <sup>F65</sup> by this argument particularly, that they bring forward a gospel that is in all the Churches unheard of and unknown. This truly is said on good grounds, for if it is a true gospel that is brought forward, while not ratified by any approbation on the part of the Church, it follows, that vain and false are the many promises in which it is predicted that the preaching of the gospel will be carried through the whole world, and which declare that the *sons of God shall be gathered* from all nations and countries, etc. (<280110> Hosea 1:10-11.) But what do Papists do? Having bid farewell to Prophets and Apostles, and passing by the ancient Church, they would have their revolt from the gospel be looked upon as the consent of the universal Church. Where is the resemblance? Hence, when there is a dispute as to the consent of the Church, let us

return to the Apostles and their preaching, as Paul does here. Farther, lest any one should explain too rigidly the term denoting universality, <sup>F66</sup> Paul means simply, that it had been preached everywhere far and wide.

*Of which I am made.* He speaks also of himself personally, and this was very necessary, for we must always take care, that we do not rashly intrude ourselves into the office of teaching. <sup>F67</sup> He accordingly declares, that this office was appointed him, that he may secure for himself right and authority. And, indeed, he so connects his apostleship with their faith, that they may not have it in their power to reject his doctrine otherwise than by abandoning the gospel which they had embraced.

**<510124> Colossians 1:24-29**

<b>24.</b> Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church;	<b>24.</b> Nunc gaudeo in passionibus pro vobis, et adimpleo ea quae desunt afflictionibus Christi in carne mea, pro corpore eius, quod est Ecclesia:
<b>25.</b> Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfill the word of God;	<b>25.</b> Cuius factus sum minister, secundum dispensationem Dei, quae mihi data est erga vos, ad implendum sermonem Dei:
<b>26.</b> Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints:	<b>26.</b> Mystrium reconditum a saeculis et generationibus, quod nunc revelatum est sanctis eius.
<b>27.</b> To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory:	<b>27.</b> Quibus voluit Deus patefacere, quae sint divitiae gloriae mysterii huius in Gentibus, qui est Christus in vobis, spes gloriae:
<b>28.</b> Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus:	<b>28.</b> Quem nos praedicamus, admonentes omnem hominem, et docentes omnem hominem in omni sapientia, ut sistamus omnem hominem perfectum in Christo Iesu.
<b>29.</b> Whereunto I also labor, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily.	<b>29.</b> In quam rem etiam laboro, decertans secundum potentiam eius, quae operatur in me potenter.

**24. *I now rejoice.*** He has previously claimed for himself authority on the ground of his calling. Now, however, he provides against the honor of his apostleship being detracted from by the bonds and persecutions, which he endured for the sake of the gospel. For Satan, also, perversely turns these things into occasions of rendering the servants of God the more contemptible. Farther, he encourages them by his example not to be intimidated by persecutions, and he sets forth to their view his zeal, that he may have greater weight. <sup>F68</sup> Nay more, he gives proof of his affection towards them by no common pledge, when he declares that he willingly bears for their sake the afflictions which he endures. “But whence,” some one will ask, “arises this *joy*?” From his seeing the fruit that springs from it. “The affliction that I endure on your account is pleasant to me, because I do not suffer it in vain.” <sup>F69</sup> In the same manner, in his First Epistle to the Thessalonians, he says, that he *rejoiced in all necessities and afflictions*, on the ground of what he had heard as to their faith. (<520306> 1 Thessalonians 3:6, 7.)

***And fill up what is wanting.*** The particle *and* I understand as meaning *for*, for he assigns a reason why he is joyful in his sufferings, because he is in this thing a partner with Christ, and nothing happier can be desired than this partnership. <sup>F70</sup> He also brings forward a consolation common to all the pious, that in all tribulations, especially in so far as they suffer anything for the sake of the gospel, they are partakers of the cross of Christ, that they may enjoy fellowship with him in a blessed resurrection.

Nay more, he declares that there is thus *filled up what is wanting in the affliction of Christ*. For as he speaks in <450829> Romans 8:29,

Whom God elected, he also hath predestinated to be conformed to the image of Christ, that he may be the first-born among the brethren.

Farther, we know that there is so great a unity between Christ and his members, that the name of *Christ* sometimes includes the whole body, as in 1 Corinthians. 12:12, for while discoursing there respecting the Church, he comes at length to the conclusion, that in Christ the same thing holds as in the human body. As, therefore, Christ has suffered *once* in his own person, so he suffers *daily* in his members, and in this way there are *filled up* those sufferings which the Father hath appointed for his body by his decree. <sup>F71</sup> Here we have a *second* consideration, which ought to bear up our minds and comfort them in afflictions, that it is thus fixed and

determined by the providence of God, that we must be conformed to Christ in the endurance of the cross, and that the fellowship that we have with him extends to this also.

He adds, also, a *third* reason — that his sufferings are advantageous, and that not merely to a few, but to the whole Church. He had previously stated that he suffered in behalf of the Colossians, and he now declares still farther, that the advantage extends to the whole Church. This advantage has been spoken of in <sup><500112></sup>Philippians 1:12. What could be clearer, less forced, or more simple, than this exposition, that Paul is joyful in persecution, because he considers, in accordance with what he writes elsewhere, that we must

carry about with us in our body the mortification of Christ, that his life may be manifested in us? (2 Corinthians 4 10.)

He says also in Timothy, *If* we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him: if we die with him, we shall also live with him, (<sup><550211></sup>2 Timothy 2:11-12) and thus the issue will be blessed and glorious. *Farther*, he considers that we must not refuse the condition which God has appointed for his Church, that the members of Christ may have a suitable correspondence with the head; and, *thirdly*, that afflictions must be cheerfully endured, inasmuch as they are profitable to all the pious, and promote the welfare of the whole Church, by adorning the doctrine of the gospel.

Papists, however, disregarding and setting aside all these things, <sup>F72</sup> have struck out a new contrivance in order that they may establish their system of indulgences. They give the name of *indulgences* to a remission of punishments, obtained by us through the merits of the martyrs. For, as they deny that there is a gratuitous remission of sins, and allege that they are redeemed by *satisfactory* deeds, when the *satisfactions* do not fill up the right measure, they call into their help the blood of the martyrs, that it may, along with the blood of Christ, serve as an expiation in the judgment of God. And this mixture they call the *treasure of the Church* <sup>F73</sup>, the keys of which they afterwards intrust to whom they think fit. Nor are they ashamed to wrest this passage, with the view of supporting so execrable a blasphemy, as if Paul here affirmed that his sufferings are of avail for expiating the sins of men.

They urge in their support the term ὑστερήματα, (*things wanting*), as if Paul meant to say, that the sufferings which Christ has endured for the redemption of men were insufficient. There is no one, however, that does not see that Paul speaks in this manner, because it is necessary, that by the afflictions of the pious, the body of the Church should be brought to its perfection, inasmuch as the members are conformed to their head.<sup>F74</sup> I should also be afraid of being suspected of calumny in repeating things so monstrous,<sup>F75</sup> if their books did not bear witness that I impute nothing to them groundlessly. They urge, also, what Paul says, that he suffers *for* the Church. It is surprising that this refined interpretation had not occurred to any of the ancients, for they all interpret it as we do, to mean, that the saints suffer *for* the Church, inasmuch as they confirm the faith of the Church. Papists, however, gather from this that the saints are redeemers, because they shed their blood for the expiation of sins. That my readers, however, may perceive more clearly their impudence, allow that the martyrs, as well as Christ, *suffered for* the Church, but in different ways, as I am inclined to express in Augustine's words rather than in my own. For he writes thus in his 84th treatise on John: "Though we brethren die for brethren, yet there is no blood of any martyr that is poured out for the remission of sins. This Christ did for us. Nor has he in this conferred upon us matter of imitation, but ground of thanksgiving." Also, in the fourth book to Bonifacius: "As the only Son of God became the Son of man, that he might make us sons of God, so he has alone, without offense, endured punishment for us, that we may through him, without merit, obtain undeserved favor." Similar to these is the statement of Leo Bishop of Rome; "The righteous *received* crowns, did not give them; and for the fortitude of believers there have come forth *examples of patience, not gifts of righteousness*. For their deaths were for themselves, and no one by his latter end paid the debt of another."<sup>F76</sup>

Now, that this is the meaning of Paul's words is abundantly manifest from the context, for he adds, that he suffers *according to the dispensation that was given to him*. And we know that the ministry was committed to him, not of *redeeming* the Church, but of *edifying* it; and he himself immediately afterwards expressly acknowledges this. This is also what he writes to Timothy,

that he endures all things for the sake of the elect, that they may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus.

(<sup><550210></sup> 2 Timothy 2:10.)

Also, in <sup><470104></sup> 2 Corinthians 1:4, that

he willingly endures all things for their consolation and salvation.

Let, therefore, pious readers learn to hate and detest those profane sophists, who thus deliberately corrupt and adulterate the Scriptures, in order that they may give some color to their delusions.

**25. *Of which I am made a minister.*** Mark under what character he suffers for the Church — as being a *minister*, not to *give* the price of redemption, (as Augustine dexterously and piously expresses himself,) but to *proclaim* it. He calls himself, however, in this instance, a minister of the Church on a different ground from that on which he called himself elsewhere, (<sup><460401></sup> 1 Corinthians 4:1,) a *minister of God*, and a little ago, (<sup><510123></sup> Colossians 1:23,) a *minister of the gospel*. For the Apostles serve God and Christ for the advancement of the glory of both: they serve the Church, and administer the gospel itself, with a view to promote salvation. There is, therefore, a different reason for the ministry in these expressions, but the one cannot subsist without the other. He says, however, *towards you*, that they may know that his office has a connection also with them.

***To fulfill the word.*** He states the end of his ministry — that the word of God may be effectual, as it is, when it is obediently received. For this is the excellence of the gospel, that it is the

power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth.

(<sup><450116></sup> Romans 1:16.)

God, therefore, gives efficacy and influence to his word through means of the Apostles. For although preaching itself, whatever may be its issue, is the fulfilling of the word, yet it is the fruit that shews at length <sup>F77</sup> that the seed has not been sown in vain.

**26. *Hidden mystery.*** Here we have a commendation of the gospel — that it is a wonderful secret of God. It is not without good reason that Paul so frequently extols the gospel by bestowing upon it the highest commendations in his power; for he saw that it was



a stumblingblock to the Jews, and foolishness to the Greeks.

(<sup><460123></sup> 1 Corinthians 1:23.)

We see also at this day, in what hatred it is held by hypocrites, and how haughtily it is contemned by the world. Paul, accordingly, with the view of setting aside judgments so unfair and perverse, extols in magnificent terms the dignity of the gospel as often as an opportunity presents itself, and for that purpose he makes use of various arguments, according to the connection of the passage. Here he calls it a *sublime secret*, which was *hid from ages and generations*, that is, from the beginning of the world, through so many revolutions of ages. <sup>F78</sup> Now, that it is of the gospel that he speaks, is evident from <sup><451625></sup> Romans 16:25, <sup><490309></sup> Ephesians 3:9, and other similar passages.

The reason, however, why it is so called, is demanded. Some, in consequence of Paul's making express mention of the calling of the Gentiles, are of opinion, that the sole reason why it is so called is, that the Lord had, in a manner, contrary to all expectation, poured out his grace upon the Gentiles, whom he had appeared to have shut out for ever from participation in eternal life. Any one, however, that will examine the whole passage more narrowly, will perceive that this is the *third* reason, not the *only* one, in so far, I mean, as relates to the passage before us, and that other in the Romans, to which I have referred. For the *first* is — that whereas God had, previously to the advent of Christ, governed his Church under dark coverings, both of words and of ceremonies, he has suddenly shone forth in full brightness by means of the doctrine of the gospel. The *second* is — that whereas nothing was previously seen but external figures, Christ has been exhibited, bringing with him the full truth, which had lain concealed. The *third* is, what I have mentioned — that the whole world, which had up to this time been estranged from God, is called to the hope of salvation, and the same inheritance of eternal life is offered to all. An attentive consideration of these things constrains us to reverence and adore this *mystery* which Paul proclaims, however it may be held in contempt by the world, or even in derision.

*Which is now revealed.* Lest any one should turn aside to another meaning the term *mystery*, as though he were speaking of a thing that was still secret and unknown, he adds, that it has now at length been published, <sup>F79</sup> that it might be known by mankind. What, therefore, was in its own nature

secret, has been made manifest by the will of God. Hence, there is no reason why its obscurity should alarm us, after the revelation that God has made of it. He adds, however, *to the saints*, for *God's arm* has not been *revealed* to all, (<sup>231301</sup>Isaiah 13:1,) that they might understand his counsel.

**27. *To whom God was pleased to make known.*** Here he puts a bridle upon the presumption of men, that they may not allow themselves to be wise, or to inquire beyond what they ought, but may learn to rest satisfied with this one thing that it has so pleased God. For the good pleasure of God ought to be perfectly sufficient for us as a reason. This, however, is said principally for the purpose of commending the grace of God; for Paul intimates, that mankind did by no means furnish occasion for God's making them participants of this secret, when he teaches that was led to this of his own accord, and because he *was pleased* to do so. For it is customary for Paul to place the good pleasure of God in opposition to all human merits and external causes.

***What are the riches.*** We must always take notice, in what magnificent terms he speaks in extolling the dignity of the gospel. For he was well aware that the ingratitude of men is so great, that notwithstanding that this treasure is inestimable, and the grace of God in it is so distinguished, they, nevertheless, carelessly despise it, or at least think lightly of it. Hence, not resting satisfied with the term *mystery*, he adds *glory*, and that, too, not trivial or common. For *riches*, according to Paul, denote, as is well known, amplitude. <sup>F80</sup> He states particularly, that those *riches* have been manifested among the Gentiles; for what is more wonderful than that the Gentiles, who had during so many ages been sunk in death, so as to appear to be utterly ruined, are all on a sudden reckoned among the sons of God, and receive the inheritance of salvation?

***Which is Christ in you.*** What he had said as to the Gentiles generally he applies to the Colossians themselves, that they may more effectually recognize in themselves the grace of God, and may embrace it with greater reverence. He says, therefore, *which is Christ*, meaning by this, that all that secret is contained in Christ, and that all the riches of heavenly wisdom are obtained by them when they have Christ, as we shall find him stating more openly a little afterwards. He adds, *in you*, because they now possess Christ, from whom they were lately so much estranged, that nothing could

exceed it. Lastly, he calls Christ the *hope of glory*, that they may know that nothing is wanting to them for complete blessedness when they have obtained Christ. This, however, is a wonderful work of God, that in *earthen* and frail *vessels* (<sup><470407></sup> 2 Corinthians 4:7) the hope of heavenly glory resides.

**28. *Whom we preach.*** Here he applies to his own preaching everything that he has previously declared as to the wonderful and adorable secret of God; and thus he explains what he had already touched upon as to the *dispensation* which had been committed to him; for he has it in view to adorn his apostleship, and to claim authority for his doctrine: for after having extolled the gospel in the highest terms, he now adds, that it is that divine secret which he preaches. It was not, however, without good reason that he had taken notice a little before, that Christ is the sum of that secret, that they might know that nothing can be taught that has more of perfection than Christ.

The expressions that follow have also great weight. He represents himself as the teacher of all men; meaning by this, that no one is so eminent in respect of wisdom as to be entitled to exempt himself from tuition. “God has placed me in a lofty position, as a public herald of his secret, that the whole world, without exception, may learn from me.”

***In all wisdom.*** This expression is equivalent to his affirming that his doctrine is such as to conduct a man to a wisdom that is perfect, and has nothing wanting; and this is what he immediately adds, that all that shew themselves to be true disciples will become *perfect*. See the second chapter of First Corinthians. (<sup><460206></sup> 1 Corinthians 2:6.) Now, what better thing can be desired than what confers upon us the highest perfection? He again repeats, *in Christ*, that they may not desire to know anything but Christ alone. From this passage, also, we may gather a definition of true wisdom — that by which we are presented perfect in the sight of God, and that *in Christ*, and nowhere else.<sup>F81</sup>

**29. *For which thing.*** He enhances, by two circumstances, the glory of his apostleship and of his doctrine. In the *first* place, he makes mention of his aim,<sup>F82</sup> which is a token of the difficulty that he felt; for those things are for the most part the most excellent that are the most difficult. The *second* has more strength, inasmuch as he mentions that the power of God shines forth in his ministry. He does not speak, however, merely of the success

of his preaching, (though in that too the blessing of God appears,) but also of the efficacy of the Spirit, in which God manifestly shewed himself; for on good grounds he ascribes his endeavors, inasmuch as they exceeded human limits, to the power of God, which, he declares, is seen *working powerfully* in this matter.

## CHAPTER 2

### <510201> Colossians 2:1-5

<p><b>1.</b> For I would that ye knew what great conflict I have for you, and for them at Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh;</p>	<p><b>1.</b> Volo autem vos scire, quantum certamen habeam pro vobis et iis qui sunt Laodiceae, et quicumque non viderunt faciem meam in carne;</p>
<p><b>2.</b> That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ;</p>	<p><b>2.</b> Ut consolationem accipiant corda ipsorum, ubi compacti fuerint in caritate, et in omnes divitias certitudinis intelligentiae, in agnitionem mysterii Dei, et Patris, et Christi;</p>
<p><b>3.</b> In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.</p>	<p><b>3.</b> In quo sunt omnes thesauri sapientiae et intelligentiae absconditi.</p>
<p><b>4.</b> And this I say, lest any man should beguile you with enticing words.</p>	<p><b>4.</b> Hoc autem dico, ne quis vos decipiat persuasorio sermone.</p>
<p><b>5.</b> For though I be absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the spirit, joying and beholding your order, and the stedfastness of your faith in Christ.</p>	<p><b>5.</b> Nam etsi corpore sum absens, spiritu tamen sum vobiscum, gaudens et videns ordinem vestrum, et stabilitatem vestrae in Christum fidei.</p>

**1. *I would have you know.*** He declares his affection towards them, that he may have more credit and authority; for we readily believe those whom we know to be desirous of our welfare. It is also an evidence of no ordinary affection, that he was concerned about them in the midst of death, that is, when he was in danger of his life; and that he may express the more emphatically the intensity of his affection and concern, he calls it a *conflict*. I do not find fault with the rendering of Erasmus — *anxiety*; but, at the same time, the force of the Greek word is to be noticed, for *ἀγών* is made use of to denote *contention*. By the same proof he confirms his statement, that his ministry is directed to them; for whence springs so anxious a concern as to their welfare, but from this, that the Apostle of the Gentiles was under obligation to embrace in his affection and concern even those

who were unknown to him? As, however, there is commonly no love between those who are unknown to each other, he speaks slightly of the acquaintance that is contracted from sight, when he says, *as many as have not seen my face in the flesh*; for there is among the servants of God a sight different from that of the flesh, which excites love. As it is almost universally agreed that the First Epistle to Timothy was written from Laodicea, some, on this account, assign to Galatia that Laodicea of which Paul makes mention here, while the other was the metropolis of Phrygia Pacatiana.<sup>F83</sup> It seems to me, however, to be more probable that that inscription is incorrect, as will be noticed in its proper place.

**2. *That their hearts may receive consolation.*** He now intimates what he desires for them, and shews that his affection is truly apostolic; for he declares that nothing else is desired by him than that they may be united together in faith and love. He shews, accordingly, that it was by no unreasonable affection (as happens in the case of some) that he had been led to take upon himself so great a concern for the Colossians and others, but because the duty of his office required it.

The term *consolation* is taken here to denote that true quietness in which they may repose. This he declares they will at length come to enjoy in the event of their being *united in love* and faith. From this it appears where the chief good is, and in what things it consists — when mutually agreed in one faith, we are also joined together in mutual love. This, I say, is the solid joy of a pious mind — this is the blessed life. As, however, love is here commended from its effect, because it fills the mind of the pious with true joy; so, on the other hand, the cause of it is pointed out by him, when he says, in *all fullness of understanding*.<sup>F84</sup> The bond also of holy unity is the truth of God, when we embrace it with one consent; for peace and agreement with men flow forth from that fountain.

***Riches of the assurance of understanding.*** As many, contenting themselves with a slight taste, have nothing but a confused and evanescent knowledge, he makes mention expressly of the *riches of understanding*. By this phrase he means full and clear perception; and at the same time admonishes them, that according to the measure of understanding they must make progress also in love.

In the term *assurance*, he distinguishes between faith and mere opinion; for *that* man truly knows the Lord who does not vacillate or waver in

doubt, but stands fast in a firm and constant persuasion. This constancy and stability Paul frequently calls (*πληροφορίαν*) *full assurance*, (which term he makes use of here also,) and always connects it with faith, as undoubtedly it can no more be separated from it than heat or light can be from the sun. The doctrine, therefore, of the schoolmen is devilish, inasmuch as it takes away assurance, and substitutes in its place *moral conjecture*,<sup>F85</sup> as they term it.

*Is an acknowledgment of the mystery.* This clause must be read as added by way of *apposition*, for he explains what that knowledge is, of which he has made mention — that it is nothing else than the knowledge of the gospel. For the false apostles themselves endeavor to set off their impostures under the title of wisdom, but Paul retains the sons of God within the limits of the gospel exclusively, that they may desire to *know nothing else*. (<460202> 1 Corinthians 2:2.) Why he uses the term *mystery* to denote the gospel, has been already explained. Let us, however, learn from this, that the gospel can be understood by faith alone — not by reason, nor by the perspicacity of the human understanding, because otherwise it is a thing that is hid from us.

The *mystery of God* I understand in a passive signification, as meaning — that in which God is revealed, for he immediately adds — *and of the Father, and of Christ* — by which expression he means that God cannot be known otherwise than *in Christ*, as, on the other hand, the Father must necessarily be known where Christ is known. For John affirms both:

He that hath the Son, hath the Father also: he that hath not the Son,  
hath also not the Father. (<620223> 1 John 2:23.)

Hence all that think that they know anything of God apart from Christ, contrive to themselves an idol in the place of God; as also, on the other hand, that man is ignorant of Christ, who is not led by him to the Father, and who does not in him embrace God wholly. In the mean time, it is a memorable passage for proving Christ's divinity, and the unity of his essence with the Father. For having spoken previously as to the knowledge of God, he immediately applies it to the Son, as well as to the Father, whence it follows, that the Son is God equally with the Father.

**3. *In whom are all the treasures.*** The expression *in quo* (*in whom*, or *in which*) may either have a reference collectively to everything he has said as

to the *acknowledgment of the mystery*, or it may relate simply to what came immediately before, namely, *Christ*. While there is not much difference between the one or the other, I rather prefer the *latter* view, and it is the one that is more generally received. The meaning, therefore, is, that all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hid in Christ — by which he means, that we are perfect in wisdom if we truly know Christ, so that it is madness to wish to know anything besides Him. For since the Father has manifested himself wholly in Him, that man wishes to be wise apart from God, who is not contented with Christ alone. Should any one choose to interpret it as referring to the *mystery*, the meaning will be, that all the wisdom of the pious is included in the gospel, by means of which God is revealed to us in his Son.

He says, however, that the *treasures are hidden*, because they are not seen glittering with great splendor, but do rather, as it were, lie hid under the contemptible abasement and simplicity of the cross. For the *preaching of the cross* is always *foolishness to the world*, as we found stated in *Corinthians*. (<<sup>460118</sup>> 1 Corinthians 1:18.) I do not reckon that there is any great difference between *wisdom* and *understanding* in this passage, for the employment of two different terms serves only to give additional strength, as though he had said, that no knowledge, erudition, learning, wisdom, can be found elsewhere.

**4. *This I say, that no man may deceive you.*** As the contrivances of men have (as we shall afterwards see) an appearance of wisdom, the minds of the pious ought to be preoccupied with this persuasion — that the knowledge of Christ is of itself amply sufficient. And, unquestionably, this is the key that can close the door against all base errors.<sup>F86</sup> For what is the reason why mankind have involved themselves in so many wicked opinions, in so many idolatries, in so many foolish speculations, but this — that, despising the simplicity of the gospel, they have ventured to aspire higher? All the errors, accordingly, that are in Popery, must be reckoned as proceeding from this ingratitude — that, not resting satisfied with Christ alone, they have given themselves up to strange doctrines.

With propriety, therefore, does the Apostle act in writing to the Hebrews, inasmuch as, when wishing to exhort believers not to allow themselves to be led astray<sup>F87</sup> by strange or new doctrines, he first of all makes use of this foundation —



Christ yesterday, and to-day, and for ever. (<581308> Hebrews 13:8.)

By this he means, that those are out of danger who remain in Christ, but that those who are not satisfied with Christ are exposed to all fallacies and deceptions. So Paul here would have every one, that would not be *deceived*, be fortified by means of this principle — that it is not lawful for a Christian man to know anything except Christ. Everything that will be brought forward after this, let it have ever so imposing an appearance, will, nevertheless, be of no value. In fine, there will be no *persuasiveness of speech*<sup>F88</sup> that can turn aside so much as the breadth of a finger the minds of those that have devoted their understanding to Christ. It is a passage, certainly, that ought to be singularly esteemed. For as he who has taught men to know nothing except Christ, has provided against all wicked doctrines,<sup>F89</sup> so there is the same reason why we should at this day destroy the whole of Popery, which, it is manifest, is built on ignorance of Christ.

**5. For though I am absent in body.** Lest any one should object that the admonition was unseasonable, as coming from a place so remote, he says, that his affection towards them made him be *present with them in spirit*, and judge of what is expedient for them, as though he were present. By praising, also, their present condition, he admonishes them not to fall back from it, or turn aside.

*Rejoicing*, says he, AND *seeing*, that is — “BECAUSE I see.” For *and* means *for*, as is customary among the Latins and Greeks. “Go on as you have begun, for I know that hitherto you have pursued the right course, inasmuch as distance of place does not prevent me from beholding you with the eyes of the mind.”

*Order and steadfastness.* He mentions two things, in which the perfection of the Church consists — *order* among themselves, and *faith* in Christ. By the term *order*, he means — agreement, no less than duly regulated morals, and entire discipline. He commends their *faith*, in respect of its constancy and steadfastness, meaning that it is an empty shadow of faith, when the mind wavers and vacillates between different opinions.<sup>F90</sup>

<510206> Colossians 2:6-7

6. As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him;

6. Quemadmodum igitur suscepistis Christum Iesum Dominum, in ipso ambulate:

7. Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving.

7. Radicati in ipso, et aedificati, et confirmati in fide, quemadmodum edocti estis, abundantes in ea cum gratiarum actione.

6. *As ye have received.* To commendation he adds exhortation, in which he teaches them that their having once received Christ will be of no advantage to them, unless they remain in him. Farther, as the false apostles held forth Christ's name with a view to deceive, he obviates this danger twice, by exhorting them to go on as they *had been taught*, and as they *had received Christ*. For in these words he admonishes them, that they must adhere to the doctrine which they had embraced, as delivered to them by Epaphras, with so much constancy, as to be on their guard against every other doctrine and faith, in accordance with what Isaiah said,

This is the way, walk ye in it. (Isaiah 30 21.)

And, unquestionably, we must act in such a manner, that the truth of the gospel, after it has been manifested to us, may be to us as a brazen wall<sup>F91</sup> for keeping back all impostures.<sup>F92</sup>

Now he intimates by *three* metaphors what steadfastness of faith he requires from them. The *first* is in the word *walk*. For he compares the pure doctrine of the gospel, as they had learned it, to a way that is sure, so that if any one will but keep it he will be beyond all danger of mistake. He exhorts them, accordingly, if they would not go astray, not to turn aside from the course on which they have entered.

The *second* is taken from trees. For as a tree that has struck its roots deep has a sufficiency of support for withstanding all the assaults of winds and storms, so, if any one is deeply and thoroughly fixed in Christ, as in a firm root, it will not be possible for him to be thrown down from his proper position by any machinations of Satan. On the other hand, if any one has not fixed his roots in Christ,<sup>F93</sup> he will easily be

carried about with every wind of doctrine, (<490414> Ephesians 4:14,)

just as a tree that is not supported by any root. <sup>F94</sup>

The *third* metaphor is that of a foundation, for a house that is not supported by a foundation quickly falls to ruins. The case is the same with those who lean on any other foundation than Christ, or at least are not securely founded on him, but have the building of their faith suspended, as it were, in the air, in consequence of their weakness and levity.

These two things are to be observed in the Apostle's words — that the stability of those who rely upon Christ is immovable, and their course is not at all wavering, or liable to error, (and this is an admirable commendation of faith from its effect;) and, *secondly*, that we must make progress in Christ aye and until we have taken deep root in him. From this we may readily gather, that those who do not know Christ only wander into bypaths, and are tossed about in disquietude.

**7. *And confirmed in the faith.*** He now repeats without a figure the same thing that he had expressed by metaphors, — that the prosecution of the way, the support of the root, and of the foundation, is firmness and steadfastness of faith. And observe, that this argument is set before them in consequence of their having been well instructed, in order that they may safely and confidently secure their footing in the faith with which they had been made acquainted.

***Abounding.*** He would not have them simply remain immovable, but would have them grow every day more and more. When he adds, *with thanksgiving*, he would have them always keep in mind from what source faith itself proceeds, that they may not be puffed up with presumption, but may rather with fear repose themselves in the gift of God. And, unquestionably, ingratitude is very frequently the reason why we are deprived of the light of the gospel, as well as of other divine favors.

<510208> Colossians 2:8-12

8. Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ:	8. Videte ne quis vos praedetur per philosophiam et inanem deceptionem, secundum traditionem hominum secundum elementa mundi, <sup>F95A</sup> et non secundum Christum:
9. For in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.	9. Quoniam in ipso habitat omnis plenitudo Deitatis corporaliter. <sup>F95B</sup>
10. And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power:	10. Et estis in ipso completi, qui est caput omnis principatus et potestatis,
11. In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ;	11. In quo etiam estis circumcisi circumcissione non manufacta, exuendo corpus peccatorum carnis, circumcissione, inquam, Christi.
12. Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.	12. Consepulti cum ipso per baptismum, in quo et consurrexistis per fidem efficaciae Dei, qui suscitavit illum ex mortuis.

8. *Beware lest any one plunder you.* He again instructs them as to the poison, which the antidote presented by him should be made use of to counteract. For although this, as we have stated, is a common remedy against all the impostures of the devil, <sup>F95</sup> it had, nevertheless, at that time a peculiar advantage among the Colossians, to which it required to be applied. *Beware*, says he, *lest any one plunder you.* He makes use of a very appropriate term, for he alludes to *plunderers*, who, when they cannot carry off the flock by violence, drive away some of the cattle fraudulently. Thus he makes Christ's Church a sheep-fold, and the pure doctrine of the gospel the enclosures of the fold. He intimates, accordingly, that we who are the sheep of Christ repose in safety when we hold the unity of the faith, while, on the other hand, he likens the false apostles to *plunderers* that carry us away from the folds. Would you then be reckoned as

belonging to Christ's flock? Would you remain in his folds? Do not deviate a nail's breadth from purity of doctrine. For unquestionably Christ will act the part of the *good Shepherd* by protecting us if we but *hear his voice*, and *reject those of strangers*. In short, the *tenth* chapter of John is the exposition of the passage before us.

*Through philosophy.* As many have mistakenly imagined that *philosophy* is here condemned by Paul, we must point out what he means by this term. Now, in my opinion, he means everything that men contrive of themselves when wishing to be wise through means of their own understanding, and that not without a specious pretext of reason, so as to have a plausible appearance. For there is no difficulty in rejecting those contrivances of men which have nothing to set them off, <sup>F96</sup> but in rejecting those that captivate men's minds by a false conceit of wisdom. Or should any one prefer to have it expressed in one word, *philosophy* is no thing else than a persuasive speech, which insinuates itself into the minds of men by elegant and plausible arguments. Of such a nature, I acknowledge, will all the subtleties of philosophers be, if they are inclined to add anything of their own to the pure word of God. Hence *philosophy* will be nothing else than a corruption of spiritual doctrine, if it is mixed up with Christ. Let us, however, bear in mind, that under the term *philosophy* Paul has merely condemned all spurious doctrines which come forth from man's head, whatever appearance of reason they may have. What immediately follows, as to *vain deceit*, I explain thus; "Beware of *philosophy*, which is nothing else than *vain deceit*," so that this is added by way of *apposition*. <sup>F97</sup>

*According to the tradition of men.* He points out more precisely what kind of *philosophy* he reproveth, and at the same time convicts it of vanity on a twofold account — because it is *not according to Christ*, but according to the inclinations of men; <sup>F98</sup> and because it consists in the *elements of the world*. Observe, however, that he places Christ in opposition to the *elements of the world*, equally as to the *tradition of men*, by which he intimates, that whatever is hatched in man's brain is not in accordance with Christ, who has been appointed us by the Father as our sole Teacher, that he might retain us in the simplicity of his gospel. Now, that is corrupted by even a small portion of the leaven of *human traditions*. He intimates also, that all doctrines are foreign to Christ that make the worship of God, which we know to be spiritual, according to Christ's rule, to consist in the

*elements of the world*,<sup>F99</sup> and also such as fetter the minds of men by such trifles and frivolities, while Christ calls us directly to himself.

But what is meant by the phrase — *elements of the world*?<sup>F100</sup> There can be no doubt that it means ceremonies. For he immediately afterwards adduces one instance by way of example — *circumcision*. The reason why he calls them by such a name is usually explained in two ways. Some think that it is a metaphor, so that the *elements* are the rudiments of children, which do not lead forward to mature doctrine. Others take it in its proper signification, as denoting things that are outward and are liable to corruption, which avail nothing for the kingdom of God. The former exposition I rather approve of, as also in <sup><480403></sup>Galatians 4:3.

**9. For in him dwelleth.** Here we have the reason why those *elements of the world*, which are taught by men, do not accord with Christ — because they are additions for supplying a deficiency, as they speak. Now in Christ there is a perfection, to which nothing can be added. Hence everything that mankind of themselves mix up, is at variance with Christ's nature, because it charges him with imperfection. This argument of itself will suffice for setting aside all the contrivances of Papists. For to what purpose do they tend,<sup>F101</sup> but to perfect what was commenced by Christ?<sup>F102</sup> Now this outrage upon Christ<sup>F103</sup> is not by any means to be endured. They allege, it is true, that they add nothing to Christ, inasmuch as the things that they have appended to the gospel are, as it were, a part of Christianity, but they do not effect an escape by a cavil of this kind. For Paul does not speak of an imaginary Christ, but of a Christ preached,<sup>F104</sup> who has revealed himself by express doctrine.

Further, when he says that the *fullness of the Godhead* dwells in Christ, he means simply, that God is wholly found in him, so that he who is not contented with Christ alone, desires something better and more excellent than God. The sum is this, that God has manifested himself to us fully and perfectly in Christ.

Interpreters explain in different ways the adverb *bodily*. For my part, I have no doubt that it is employed — not in a strict sense — as meaning *substantially*.<sup>F105</sup> For he places this manifestation of God, which we have in Christ, to all others that have ever been made. For God has often manifested himself to men, but it has been only in part. In Christ, on the other hand, he communicates himself to us wholly. He has also manifested

himself to us otherwise, but it is in figures, or by power and grace. In Christ, on the other hand, he has appeared to us essentially. Thus the statement of John holds good:

He that hath the Son, hath the Father also. (1 John 2 23.)

For those who possess Christ have God truly present, and enjoy Him wholly.

**10. *And ye are complete in him.*** He adds, that this perfect essence of Deity, which is in Christ, is profitable to us in this respect, that we are also perfect in him. “As to God’s dwelling wholly in Christ, it is in order that we, having obtained him, may possess in him an entire perfection.” Those, therefore, who do not rest satisfied with Christ alone, do injury to God in two ways, for besides detracting from the glory of God, by desiring something above his perfection, they are also ungrateful, inasmuch as they seek elsewhere what they already have in Christ. Paul, however, does not mean that the perfection of Christ is transfused into us, but that there are in him resources from which we may be filled, that nothing may be wanting to us.

***Who is the head.*** He has introduced this clause again on account of the angels, meaning that the angels, also, will be ours, if we have Christ. But of this afterwards. In the mean time, we must observe this, that we are hemmed in, above and below, with railings,<sup>F106</sup> that our faith may not deviate even to the slightest extent from Christ.

**11. *In whom ye also are circumcised.*** From this it appears, that he has a controversy with the false apostles, who mixed the law with the gospel, and by that means made Christ have, as it were, two faces. He specifies, however, one instance by way of example. He proves that the circumcision of Moses is not merely unnecessary, but is opposed to Christ, because it destroys the spiritual *circumcision of Christ*. For circumcision was given to the Fathers that it might be the figure of a thing that was absent: those, therefore, who retain that figure after Christ’s advent, deny the accomplishment of what it prefigures. Let us, therefore, bear in mind that outward *circumcision* is here compared with spiritual, just as a figure with the reality. The figure is of a thing that is absent: hence it puts away the presence of the reality. What Paul contends for is this — that, inasmuch as what was shadowed forth by a *circumcision made with hands*, has been

completed in Christ, there is now no fruit or advantage from it.<sup>F107</sup> Hence he says, that the circumcision which is made in the heart is the *circumcision of Christ*, and that, on this account, that which is outward is not now required, because, where the reality exists, that shadowy emblem vanishes,<sup>F108</sup> inasmuch as it has no place except in the absence of the reality.

*By the putting off of the body.* He employs the term *body*, by an elegant metaphor, to denote a mass, made up of all vices. For as we are encompassed by our bodies, so we are surrounded on all sides by an accumulation of vices. And as the body is composed of various members, each of which has its own actings and offices, so from that accumulation of corruption all sins take their rise as members of the entire body. There is a similar manner of expression in <sup><450613></sup>Romans 6:13.

He takes the term *flesh*, as he is wont, to denote corrupt nature. The *body of the sins of the flesh*, therefore, is the *old man with his deeds*; only, there is a difference in the manner of expression, for here he expresses more properly the mass of vices which proceed from corrupt nature. He says that we obtain this<sup>F109</sup> through Christ, so that unquestionably an entire regeneration is his benefit. It is he that circumcises the foreskin of our heart, or, in other words, mortifies all the lusts of the flesh, not with the *hand*, but by his Spirit. Hence there is in him the reality of the figure.

**12. Buried with him, in baptism.** He explains still more clearly the manner of spiritual circumcision — because, being *buried with Christ*, we are partakers of his death. He expressly declares that we obtain this by means of baptism, that it may be the more clearly apparent that there is no advantage from circumcision under the reign of Christ. For some one might otherwise object: “Why do you abolish circumcision on this pretext — that its accomplishment is in Christ? Was not Abraham, also, circumcised spiritually, and yet this did not hinder the adding of the sign to the reality? *Outward* circumcision, therefore, is not superfluous, although that which is *inward* is conferred by Christ.” Paul anticipates an objection of this kind, by making mention of baptism. Christ, says he, accomplishes in us spiritual circumcision, not through means of that ancient sign, which was in force under Moses, but by baptism. Baptism, therefore, is a sign of the thing that is presented to us, which while absent was prefigured by circumcision. The argument is taken from the, economy<sup>F110</sup> which God has



appointed; for those who retain circumcision contrive a mode of dispensation different from that which God has appointed.

When he says that we are *buried with Christ*, this means more than that we are *crucified* with him; for burial expresses a continued process of mortification. When he says, that this is done through means of baptism, as he says also in <sup><450604></sup>Romans 6:4, he speaks in his usual manner, ascribing efficacy to the sacrament, that it may not fruitlessly signify what does not exist. <sup>F111</sup> By baptism, therefore, we are *buried with Christ*, because Christ does at the same time accomplish efficaciously that mortification, which he there represents, that the reality may be conjoined with the sign.

*In which also ye are risen.* He magnifies the grace which we obtain in Christ, as being greatly superior to circumcision. “We are not only,” says he, “ingrafted into Christ’s death, but we also rise to newness of life:” hence the more injury is done to Christ by those who endeavor to bring us back to circumcision. He adds, *by faith*, for unquestionably it is by it that we receive what is presented to us in baptism. But what *faith*? That of his *efficacy* or *operation*, by which he means, that faith is founded upon the power of God. As, however, faith does not wander in a confused and undefined contemplation, as they speak, of divine power, he intimates what *efficacy* it ought to have in view — that by which *God raised Christ from the dead*. He takes this, however, for granted, that, inasmuch as it is impossible that believers should be severed from their head, the same power of God, which shewed itself in Christ, is diffused among them all in common.

**<510213> Colossians 2:13-15**

**13.** And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses;

**13.** Et vos, quum mortui essetis delictis et in praeputio carnis vestrae, simul vivificavit cum ipso, condonando vobis omnia peccata:

**14.** Blotting out the hand-writing of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross;

**14.** Et deleto, quod contra nos erat, chirographo in decretis, quod erat nobis contrarium, et illud sustulit e medio affixum cruci,

**15.** And, having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it.

**15.** Exspolians principatus et potestates, traduxit palam triumphans de his in illa, (vel, in se ipso.)

**13.** *And you, when ye were dead.* He admonishes the Colossians to recognize, what he had treated of in a general way, as applicable to themselves, which is by far the most effectual way of teaching. Farther, as they were Gentiles when they were converted to Christ, he takes occasion from this to shew them how absurd it is to pass over from Christ to the ceremonies of Moses. *Ye were*, says he, *dead in Uncircumcision*. This term, however, may be understood either in its proper signification, or figuratively. If you understand it in its proper sense, the meaning will be, “*Uncircumcision* is the badge of alienation from God; for where the covenant of grace is not, *there* is pollution,<sup>F12</sup> and, consequently, curse and ruin. But God has called you to himself from *uncircumcision*, and, therefore, from death.”<sup>F13</sup> In this way he would not represent *uncircumcision* as the cause of death, but as a token that they were estranged from God. We know, however, that men cannot live otherwise than by cleaving to their God, who alone is their life. Hence it follows, that all wicked persons, however they may seem to themselves to be in the highest degree lively and flourishing, are, nevertheless, spiritually dead. In this manner this passage will correspond with <sup><490211></sup> Ephesians 2:11, where it is said,

Remember that, in time past, when ye were Gentiles, and called uncircumcision, by that circumcision which is made with hands in

the flesh, ye were at that time without Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the promises.

Taking it metaphorically, there would, indeed, be an allusion to natural uncircumcision, but at the same time Paul would here be speaking of the obstinacy of the human heart, in opposition to God, and of a nature that is defiled by corrupt affections. I rather prefer the former exposition, because it corresponds better with the context; for Paul declares that uncircumcision was no hinderance in the way of their becoming partakers of Christ's life. Hence it follows, that circumcision derogated from the grace of God, which they had already obtained.

As to his ascribing death to uncircumcision, this is not as though it were the cause of it, but as being the badge of it, as also in that other passage in the Epistle to the Ephesians, which we have quoted. It is also customary in Scripture to denote deprivation of the reality by deprivation of the sign, as in <sup><010322></sup>Genesis 3:22, —

Lest peradventure Adam eat of the fruit of life, and live.

For the tree did not confer life, but its being taken away was a sign of death. <sup>F114</sup> Paul has in this place briefly expressed both. He says that these were *dead in sins*: this is the cause, for our sins alienate us from God. He adds, *in the uncircumcision of your flesh*. This was outward pollution, an evidence of spiritual death.

*By forgiving you.* God does not quicken us by the mere remission of sins, but he makes mention here of this particularly, because that free reconciliation with God, which overthrows the righteousness of works, is especially connected with the point in hand, where he treats of abrogated ceremonies, as he discourses of more at large in the Epistle to the Galatians. For the false apostles, by establishing ceremonies, bound them with a halter, from which Christ has set them free.

**14.** *Having blotted out the hand-writing which was against us.* He now contends with the false apostles in close combat. For this was the main point in question, — whether the observance of ceremonies was necessary under the reign of Christ? Now Paul contends that ceremonies have been abolished, and to prove this he compares them to a *hand-writing*, by which God holds us as it were bound, that we may not be able to deny our guilt. He now says, that we have been freed from condemnation, in such a

manner, that even the *hand-writing is blotted out*, that no remembrance of it might remain. For we know that as to debts the obligation is still in force, so long as the *hand-writing* remains; and that, on the other hand, by the erasing, or tearing of the handwriting, the debtor is set free. Hence it follows, that all those who still urge the observance of ceremonies, detract from the grace of Christ, as though absolution were not procured for us through him; for they restore to the *hand-writing* its freshness, so as to hold us still under obligation.

This, therefore, is a truly theological reason for proving the abrogation of ceremonies, because, if Christ has fully redeemed us from condemnation, he must have also effaced the remembrance of the obligation, that consciences may be pacified and tranquil in the sight of God, for these two things are conjoined. While interpreters explain this passage in various ways, there is not one of them that satisfies me. Some think that Paul speaks simply of the moral law, but there is no ground for this. For Paul is accustomed to give the name of *ordinances* to that department which consists in ceremonies, as he does in the Epistle to the Ephesians, (<490215> Ephesians 2:15,) and as we shall find he does shortly afterwards. More especially, the passage in Ephesians shews clearly, that Paul is here speaking of ceremonies.

Others, therefore, do better, in restricting it to ceremonies, but they, too, err in this respect, that they do not add the reason why it is *called hand-writing*, or rather they assign a reason different from the true one, and they do not in a proper manner apply this similitude to the context. Now, the reason is, that all the ceremonies of Moses had in them some acknowledgment of guilt, which bound those that observed them with a firmer tie, as it were, in the view of God's judgment. For example, what else were washings than an evidence of pollution? Whenever any victim was sacrificed, did not the people that stood by behold in it a representation of his death? For when persons substituted in their place an innocent animal, they confessed that they were themselves deserving of that death. In fine, in proportion as there were ceremonies belonging to it, just so many exhibitions were there of human guilt, and *hand-writings* of obligation.

Should any one object that they were sacraments of the grace of God, as Baptism and the Eucharist are to us at this day, the answer is easy. For

there are two things to be considered in the ancient ceremonies — that they were suited to the time, and that they led men forward to the kingdom of Christ. Whatever was done at that time shewed in itself nothing but obligation. Grace was in a manner suspended until the advent of Christ — not that the Fathers were excluded from it, but they had not a present manifestation of it in their ceremonies. For they saw nothing in the sacrifices but the blood of beasts, and in their washings nothing but water. Hence, as to present view, condemnation remained; nay more, the ceremonies themselves sealed the condemnation. The Apostle speaks, also, in this manner in the whole of his Epistle to the Hebrews, because he places Christ in direct opposition to ceremonies. But how is it now? The Son of God has not only by his death delivered us from the condemnation of death, but in order that absolution might be made more certain, he abrogated those ceremonies, that no remembrance of obligation might remain. This is full liberty — that Christ has by his blood not only blotted out our sins, but every *hand-writing* which might declare us to be exposed to the judgment of God. Erasmus in his version has involved in confusion the thread of Paul's discourse, by rendering it thus — “which was contrary to us by ordinances.” Retain, therefore, the rendering which I have given, as being the true and genuine one.

*Took it out of the way, fastening it to his cross.* He shews the manner in which Christ has effaced the *hand-writing*; for as he fastened to the cross our curse, our sins, and also the punishment that was due to us, so he has also fastened to it that bondage of the law, and everything that tends to bind consciences. For, on his being fastened to the cross, he took all things to himself, and even bound them upon him, that they might have no more power over us.

**15. *Spoiling principalities.*** There is no doubt that he means devils, whom Scripture represents as acting the part of accusing us before God. Paul, however, says that they are disarmed, so that they cannot bring forward anything against us, the attestation of our guilt being itself destroyed. Now, he expressly adds this with the view of shewing, that the victory of Christ, which he has procured for himself and us over Satan, is disfigured by the false apostles, and that we are deprived of the fruit of it when they restore the ancient ceremonies. For if our liberty is the spoil which Christ has rescued from the devil, what do others, who would bring us back into bondage, but restore to Satan the spoils of which he had been stript bare?

*Triumphing over them in it.* The expression in the Greek allows, it is true, of our reading — *in himself*, nay more, the greater part of the manuscripts have *ἐν αὐτῷ* with an aspirate. The connection of the passage, however, imperatively requires that we read it otherwise; for what would be meagre as applied to Christ, suits admirably as applied to the cross. For as he had previously compared the cross to a signal trophy or show of triumph, in which Christ led about his enemies, so he now also compares it to a triumphal car, in which he shewed himself conspicuously to view.<sup>F115</sup> For although in the cross there is nothing but curse, it was, nevertheless, swallowed up by the power of God in such a way, that it<sup>F116</sup> has put on, as it were, a new nature. For there is no tribunal so magnificent, no throne so stately, no show of triumph so distinguished, no chariot so elevated,<sup>F117</sup> as is the gibbet on which Christ has subdued death and the devil, the prince of death; nay more, has utterly trodden them under his feet.

<b>&lt;510216&gt; Colossians 2:16-19</b>	
<b>16.</b> Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holiday, or of the newmoon, or of the sabbath-days;	<b>16.</b> Itaque ne quis vos iudicet <sup>F118</sup> vel in cibo, vel in potu, vel in parte <sup>F119</sup> diei festi, vel neomeniae, vel sabbatorum:
<b>17.</b> Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ.	<b>17.</b> Quae sunt umbra futurorum, corpus autem Christi.
<b>18.</b> Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility, and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind;	<b>18.</b> Ne quis palmam eripiat, volens in humilitate et cultu Angelorum, (id facere,) in ea quae non vidit se ingerens, frustra inflatus a mente carnis suae,
<b>19.</b> And not holding the head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God.	<b>19.</b> Et non tenens caput, ex quo totum corpus per iuncturas et connexiones subministratum et compactum crescit increments Dei.

**16.** *Let no one therefore judge you.* What he had previously said of circumcision he now extends to the difference of meats and days. For circumcision was the first introduction to the observance of the law other things<sup>F120</sup> followed afterwards. To *judge* means here, to hold one to be

guilty of a crime, or to impose a scruple of conscience, so that we are no longer free. He says, therefore, that it is not in the power of men to make us subject to the observance of rites which Christ has by his death abolished, and exempts us from their yoke, that we may not allow ourselves to be fettered by the laws which they have imposed. He tacitly, however, places Christ in contrast with all mankind, lest any one should extol himself so daringly as to attempt to take away what he has given him.

*In respect of a festival-day.* Some understand τὸ μέρος to mean *participation*. Chrysostom, accordingly, thinks that he used the term *part*, because they did not observe all festival days, nor did they even keep holidays strictly, in accordance with the appointment of the law. This, however, is but a poor interpretation.<sup>F121</sup> Consider whether it may not be taken to mean *separation*, for those that make a distinction of days, separate, as it were, one from another. Such a mode of partition was suitable for the Jews, that they might celebrate religiously<sup>F122</sup> the days that were appointed, by separating them from others. Among Christians, however, such a division has ceased.

But some one will say, “We still keep up some observance of days.” I answer, that we do not by any means observe days, as though there were any sacredness in holidays, or as though it were not lawful to labor upon them, but that respect is paid to government and order — not to days. And this is what he immediately adds.

**17. Which are a shadow of things to come.** The reason why he frees Christians from the observance of them is, that they were *shadows* at a time when Christ was still, in a manner, absent. For he contrasts shadows with revelation, and absence with manifestation. Those, therefore, who still adhere to those *shadows*, act like one who should judge of a man’s appearance from his shadow, while in the mean time he had himself personally before his eyes. For Christ is now manifested to us, and hence we enjoy him as being present. *The body*, says he, *is of Christ*, that is, *IN Christ*. For the substance of those things which the ceremonies anciently prefigured is now presented before our eyes in Christ, inasmuch as he contains in himself everything that they marked out as future. Hence, the man that calls back the ceremonies into use, either buries the manifestation of Christ, or robs Christ of his excellence, and makes him in a manner void.

<sup>F123</sup> Accordingly, should any one of mortals assume to himself in this matter the office of judge, let us not submit to him, inasmuch as Christ, the only competent Judge, sets us free. For when he says, *Let no man judge you*, he does not address the false apostles, but prohibits the Colossians from yielding their neck to unreasonable requirements. To abstain, it is true, from swine's flesh, is in itself harmless, but the binding to do it is pernicious, because it makes void the grace of Christ.

Should any one ask, "What view, then, is to be taken of our sacraments? Do they not also represent Christ to us as absent?" I answer, that they differ widely from the ancient ceremonies. For as painters do not in the first draught bring out a likeness in vivid colors, and (εἰκονικῶς) *expressively*, but in the first instance draw rude and obscure lines with charcoal, so the representation of Christ under the law was unpolished, and was, as it were, a first sketch, but in our sacraments it is seen drawn out to the life. Paul, however, had something farther in view, for he contrasts the bare aspect of the *shadow* with the solidity of the *body*, and admonishes them, that it is the part of a madman to take hold of empty shadows, when it is in his power to handle the solid substance. Farther, while our sacraments represent Christ as absent as to view and distance of place, it is in such a manner as to testify that he has been once manifested, and they now also present him to us to be enjoyed. They are not, therefore, bare shadows, but on the contrary symbols <sup>F124</sup> of Christ's presence, for they contain that *Yea and Amen* of all the *promises of God*, (<470120> 2 Corinthians 1:20,) which has been once manifested to us in Christ.

**18.** *Let no one take from you the palm.* <sup>F125</sup> He alludes to runners, or wrestlers, to whom the *palm* was assigned, on condition of their not giving way in the middle of the course, or after the contest had been commenced. He admonishes them, therefore, that the false apostles aimed at nothing else than to snatch away from them the palm, inasmuch as they draw them aside from the rectitude of their course. Hence it follows that they must be shunned as the most injurious pests. The passage is also carefully to be marked as intimating, that all those who draw us aside from the simplicity of Christ cheat us out of the *prize of our high calling*. (<500314> Philippians 3:14.)



*Desirous in humility.* Something must be understood; hence I have, inserted in the text *id facere, (to do it.)* For he points out the kind of danger which they required to guard against. All are desirous to defraud you of the *palm*, who, under the pretext of humility, recommend to you the *worship of angels*. For their object is, that you may wander out of the way, leaving the one object of aim. I read *humility and worship of angels* conjointly, for the one follows the other, just as at this day the Papists make use of the same pretext when philosophizing as to the worship of saints. For they reason on the ground of man's abasement, <sup>F126</sup> that we must, therefore, seek for mediators to help us. But for this very reason has Christ humbled himself — that we might directly betake ourselves to him, however miserable sinners we may be.

I am aware that the *worship of angels* is by many interpreted otherwise, as meaning such as has been delivered to men by angels; for the Devil has always endeavored to set off his impostures under this title. The Pope at this day boasts, that all the trifles with which he has adulterated the pure worship of God are revelations. In like manner the Theurgians <sup>F127</sup> of old alleged that all the superstitions that they contrived were delivered over to them by angels, as if *from hand to hand*. <sup>F128</sup> They, accordingly, think that Paul here condemns all fanciful kinds of worship that are falsely set forth under the authority of angels. <sup>F129</sup> But, in my opinion, he rather condemns the contrivance as to the worshipping of angels. It is on this account that he has so carefully applied himself to this in the very commencement of the Epistle, to bring angels under subjection, lest they should obscure the splendor of Christ. <sup>F130</sup> In fine, as he had in the first chapter prepared the way for abolishing the ceremonies, so he had also for the removal of all other hinderances which draw us away from Christ alone. <sup>F131</sup> In this class is the *worship of angels*.

Superstitious persons have from the beginning worshipped angels, <sup>F132</sup> that through means of them there might be free access to God. The Platonists infected the Christian Church also with this error. For although Augustine sharply inveighs against them in his tenth book “On the City of God,” and condemns at great length all their disputations as to the worship of angels, we see nevertheless what has happened. Should any one compare the writings of Plato with Popish theology, he will find that they have drawn wholly from Plato their prattling as to the *worship of angels*. The sum is this, that we must honor angels, whom Plato calls demons, *χάριν τῆς*

εὐφήμου διαπορείας (for the sake of their auspicious intercession.)<sup>F133</sup>

He brings forward this sentiment in Epinomis, and he confirms it in Cratylus,<sup>F134</sup> and many other passages. In what respect do the Papists differ at all from this? “But,” it will be said, “they do not deny that the Son of God is Mediator.” Neither did those with whom Paul contends; but as they imagined that God must be approached by the assistance of the angels, and that, consequently, some worship must be rendered to them, so they placed angels in the seat of Christ, and honored them with Christ’s office. Let us know, then, that Paul here condemns all kinds of worship of human contrivance, which are rendered either to angels or to the dead, as though they were mediators, rendering assistance after Christ, or along with Christ.<sup>F135</sup> For just so far do we recede from Christ, when we transfer the smallest part of what belongs to him to any others, whether they be angels or men.

*Intruding into those things which he hath not seen.* The verb ἐμβατεύειν, the participle of which Paul here makes use of, has various significations. The rendering which Erasmus, after Jerome, has given to it, *walking proudly*, would not suit ill, were there an example of such a signification in any author of sufficient note. For we see every day with how much confidence and pride rash persons pronounce an opinion as to things unknown. Nay, even in the very subject of which Paul treats, there is a remarkable illustration. For when the Sorbonnic divines put forth their trifles<sup>F136</sup> respecting the intercession of saints or angels, they declare,<sup>F137</sup> as though it were from an oracle,<sup>F138</sup> that the dead<sup>F139</sup> know and behold our necessities, inasmuch as they see all things in the reflex light of God.<sup>F140</sup> And yet, what is less certain? Nay more, what is more obscure and doubtful? But such, truly, is their magisterial freedom, that they fearlessly and daringly assert what is not only not known by them, but cannot be known by men.

This meaning, therefore, would be suitable, if that signification of the term were usual. It is, however, among the Greeks taken simply as meaning to *walk*. It also sometimes means to *inquire*. Should any one choose to understand it thus in this passage, Paul will, in that case, reprove a foolish curiosity in the investigation of things that are obscure, and such as are even hid from our view and transcend it.<sup>F141</sup> It appears to me, however, that I have caught Paul’s meaning, and have rendered it faithfully in this manner — *intruding into those things which he hath not seen*. For that is

the common signification of the word ἐμβατεύειν — to enter upon an inheritance,<sup>F142</sup> or to take possession, or to set foot anywhere.

Accordingly, Budaeus renders this passage thus: — “*Setting* foot upon, or entering on the possession of those things which he has not seen.” I have followed his authority, but have selected a more suitable term. For such persons in reality break through and intrude into secret things,<sup>F143</sup> of which God would have no discovery as yet made to us. The passage ought to be carefully observed, for the purpose of reproving the rashness<sup>F144</sup> of those who inquire farther than is allowable.

*Puffed up in vain by a fleshly mind.* He employs the expression *fleshly mind* to denote the perspicuity of the human intellect, however great it may be. For he places it in contrast with that spiritual wisdom which is revealed to us from heaven in accordance with that statement —

Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee.  
(<sup><401617></sup>Matthew 16:17.)

Whoever; therefore, depends upon his own reason, inasmuch as the acuteness of the flesh is wholly at work in him,<sup>F145</sup> Paul declares him to be *puffed up in vain*. And truly all the wisdom that men have from themselves is mere wind: hence there is nothing solid except in the word of God and the illumination of the Spirit. And observe, that those are said to be *puffed up* who insinuate themselves<sup>F146</sup> under a show of humility. For it happens, as Augustine elegantly writes to Paulinus, by wonderful means, as to the soul of man, that it is more puffed up from a false humility than if it were openly proud.

**19. *Not holding the head.*** He condemns in the use of one word whatever does not bear a relation to Christ. He also confirms his statement on the ground that all things flow from him, and depend upon him. Hence, should any one call us anywhere else than to Christ, though in other respects he were big with heaven and earth, he is empty and full of wind: let us, therefore, without concern, bid him farewell. Observe, however, of whom he is speaking, namely, of those who did not openly reject or deny Christ, but, not accurately understanding his office and power, by seeking out other helps and means of salvation, (as they commonly speak,) were not firmly rooted in him.

*From whom the whole body by joints.* He simply means this, that the Church does not stand otherwise than in the event of all things being furnished to her by Christ, the *Head*, and, accordingly, that her entire safety <sup>F147</sup> consists in him. The body, it is true, has its nerves, its *joints*, and *ligaments*, but all these things derive their vigor solely from the Head, so that the whole binding of them together is from that source. What, then, must be done? The constitution of the body will be in a right state, if simply the Head, which furnishes the several members with everything that they have, is allowed, without any hinderance, to have the pre-eminence. This Paul speaks of as the *increase of God*, by which he means that it is not every increase that is approved by God, but only that which has a relation to the Head. For we see that the kingdom of the Pope is not merely tall and large, but swells out into a monstrous size. As, however, we do not there see what Paul here requires in the Church, what shall we say, but that it is a humpbacked body, and a confused mass that will fall to pieces of itself.

<b>&lt;51020&gt; Colossians 2:20-23</b>	
<b>20.</b> Wherefore, if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances,	<b>20.</b> Si igitur mortui estis cum Christo ab elementis huius mundi, quid tanquam viventibus in mundo decreta vobis perscribuntur?
<b>21.</b> (Touch not, taste not, handle not;	<b>21.</b> Ne esitaveris, ne gustaveris, ne attigeris:
<b>22.</b> Which all are to perish with the using,) after the commandments and doctrines of men?	<b>22.</b> Quae sunt omnia in corruptionem ipso abusu, secundum praecepta et doctrines hominum,
<b>23.</b> Which things have indeed a shew of wisdom in will-worship, and humility, and neglecting of the body; not in any honor to the satisfying of the flesh.	<b>23.</b> Quae speciem <sup>F148</sup> quidem habent sapientiae in superstitione, <sup>F149</sup> et humilitate animi, et neglectu corporis: <sup>F150</sup> non in honore aliquo ad expletionem carnis. <sup>F151</sup>

**20. If ye are dead.** He had previously said, that the ordinances were fastened to the cross of Christ. (<510214> Colossians 2:14.) He now employs another figure of speech — that we are *dead* to them, as he teaches us elsewhere, that we are *dead to the law*, and the law, on the other hand, to

us. (<480219> Galatians 2:19.) The term death means abrogation, <sup>F152</sup> but it is more expressive *and more emphatic*, (καὶ ἐμφατικώτερον.) He says, therefore, that the Colossians, have nothing to do with ordinances. Why? Because they have died with Christ to ordinances; that is, after they died with Christ by regeneration, they were, through his kindness, set free from ordinances, that they may not belong to them any more. Hence he concludes that they are by no means bound by the ordinances, which the false apostles endeavored to impose upon them.

**21. *Eat not, taste not.*** Hitherto this has been rendered — *Handle not*, but as another word immediately follows, which signifies the same thing, every one sees how cold and absurd were such a repetition. Farther, the verb ἄπτεισθαι is employed by the Greeks, among its other significations, in the sense of *eating*, <sup>F153</sup> in accordance with the rendering that I have given. Plutarch makes use of it in the life of Caesar, when he relates that his soldiers, in destitution of all things, *ate* animals which they had not been accustomed previously to use as food. <sup>F154</sup> And this arrangement is both in other respects natural and is also most in accordance with the connection of the passage; for Paul points out, (μιμητικῶς,) *by way of imitation*, to what length the waywardness of those who bind consciences by their laws is wont to proceed. From the very commencement they are unduly rigorous: hence he sets out with their prohibition — not simply against eating, but even against slightly partaking. After they have obtained what they wish they go beyond that command, so that they afterwards declare it to be unlawful to taste of what they do not wish should be eaten. At length they make it criminal even to *touch*. In short, when persons have once taken upon them to tyrannize over men's souls, there is no end of new laws being daily added to old ones, and new enactments starting up from time to time. How bright a mirror there is as to this in Popery! Hence Paul acts admirably well in admonishing us that human traditions are a labyrinth, in which consciences are more and more entangled; nay more, are snares, which from the beginning bind in such a way that in course of time they strangle in the end.

**22. *All which things tend to corruption.*** He sets aside, by a twofold argument, the enactments of which he has made mention — because they make religion consist in things outward and frail, which have no connection with the spiritual kingdom of God; and secondly, because they are from

men, not from God. He combats the first argument, also, in <sup><451417></sup>Romans 14:17, when he says,

The kingdom of God is not in meat and drink;

likewise in 1 Corinthians. 6 13,

Meat for the belly, and the belly for meats: God will destroy both.

Christ also himself says,

Whatever entereth into the mouth defileth not the man, because it goes down into the belly, and is cast forth.

(<sup><401511></sup>Matthew 15:11.)

The sum is this — that the worship of God, true piety, and the holiness of Christians, do not consist in drink, and food, and clothing, which are things that are transient and liable to corruption, and perish by abuse. For abuse is properly applicable to those things which are corrupted by the use of them. Hence enactments are of no value in reference to those things which tend to excite scruples of conscience. But in Popery you would scarcely find any other holiness, than what consists in little observances of corruptible things.

A *second* refutation is added <sup>F155</sup> — that they originated with men, and have not God as their Author; and by this thunderbolt he prostrates and swallows up all traditions of men. For why? This is Paul's reasoning: "Those who bring consciences into bondage do injury to Christ, and make void his death. For whatever is of human invention does not bind conscience."

**23. Which have indeed a show.** Here we have the anticipation of an objection, in which, while he concedes to his adversaries what they allege, he at the same time reckons it wholly worthless. For it is as though he had said, that he does not regard their having a *show of wisdom*. But *show* is placed in contrast with *reality*, for it is an *appearance*, as they commonly speak, which deceives by resemblance. <sup>F156</sup>

Observe, however, of what colors this *show* consists, according to Paul. He makes mention of three — self-invented worship, <sup>F157</sup> humility, and neglect of the body. Superstition among the Greeks receives the name of **ἔθελοβρησκεία** — the term which Paul here makes use of. He has,

however, an eye to the etymology of the term, for **ἐθελοβρησκεία** literally denotes a voluntary service, which men choose for themselves at their own option, without authority from God. Human traditions, therefore, are agreeable to us on this account, that they are in accordance with our understanding, for any one will find in his own brain the first outlines of them. This is the *first* pretext.

The *second* is humility, inasmuch as obedience both to God and men is pretended, so that men do not refuse even unreasonable burdens.<sup>F158</sup> And for the most part traditions of this kind are of such a nature as to appear to be admirable exercises of humility.

They allure, also, by means of a *third* pretext, inasmuch as they seem to be of the greatest avail for the mortification of the flesh, while there is no sparing of the body. Paul, however, bids farewell to those disguises, for

what is in high esteem among men is often an abomination in the sight of God. (Luke 16 15.)

Farther, *that* is a treacherous obedience, and a perverse and sacrilegious humility, which transfers to men the authority of God; and *neglect of the body* is not of so great importance, as to be worthy to be set forth to admiration as the service of God.

Some one, however, will feel astonished, that Paul does not take more pains in pulling off those masks. I answer, that he on good grounds rests contented with the simple term *show*. For the principles which he had taken as opposed to this are incontrovertible — that the body is in Christ, and that, consequently, those do nothing but impose upon miserable men, who set before them shadows. *Secondly*, the spiritual kingdom of Christ is by no means taken up with frail and corruptible elements. *Thirdly*, by the death of Christ such observances were put an end to, that we might have no connection with them; and, *fourthly*, God is our only *Lawgiver*.

(<sup><23332></sup> Isaiah 33:22.) Whatever may be brought forward on the other side, let it have ever so much splendor, is fleeting *show*.

*Secondly*, he reckoned it enough to admonish the Colossians, not to be deceived by the putting forth of empty things. There was no necessity for dwelling at greater length in reproving them. For it should be a settled point among all the pious, that the worship of God ought not to be measured according to our views; and that, consequently, any kind of

service is not lawful, simply on the ground that it is agreeable to us. This, also, ought to be a commonly received point — that we owe to God such humility as to yield obedience simply to his commands, so as not to *lean to our own understanding*, etc., (<200305> Proverbs 3:5,) — and that the limit of humility towards men is this — that each one submit himself to others in love. Now, when they contend that the wantonness of the flesh is repressed by abstinence from meats, the answer is easy — that we must not therefore abstain from any particular food as being unclean, but must eat sparingly of what we do eat of, both in order that we may soberly and temperately make use of the gifts of God, and that we may not, impeded by too much food and drink, forget those things that are God's. Hence it was enough to say that these <sup>F159</sup> were masks, that the Colossians, being warned, might be on their guard against false pretexts.

Thus, at the present day, Papists are not in want of specious pretexts, by which to set forth their own laws, however they may be — some of them impious and tyrannical, and others of them silly and trifling. When, however, we have granted them everything, there remains, nevertheless, this refutation by Paul, which is of itself more than sufficient for dispelling all their smoky vapours; <sup>F160</sup> not to say how far removed they <sup>F161</sup> are from so honorable an appearance as that which Paul describes. The principal holiness of the Papacy, <sup>F162</sup> at the present day, consists in monkhood, and of what nature that is, I am ashamed and grieved to make mention, lest I should stir up so abominable an odour. Farther, it is of importance to consider here, how prone, nay, how forward the mind of man is to artificial modes of worship. For the Apostle here graphically describes <sup>F163</sup> the state of the old system of monkhood, which came into use a hundred years after his death, as though he had never spoken a word. The zeal of men, therefore, for superstition is surpassingly mad, which could not be restrained by so plain a declaration of God from breaking forth, as historical records testify.

*Not in any honor.* *Honour* means *care*, according to the usage of the Hebrew tongue. *Honour widows*, (<540503> 1 Timothy 5:3,) that is, take care of them. Now Paul finds fault with this, that they <sup>F164</sup> teach to leave off care for the body. For as God forbids us to indulge the body unduly, so he commands that these be given it as much as is necessary for it. Hence Paul, in <451314> Romans 13:14, does not expressly condemn care for the flesh, but such as indulges lusts. *Have no care*, says he, *for the flesh, to the*



*gratifying of its lusts.* What, then, does Paul point out as faulty in those traditions of which he treats? It is that they gave no honor to the body for the *satisfying the flesh*, that is, according to the measure of necessity. For *satisfying* here means a mediocrity, which restricts itself to the simple use of nature, and thus stands in opposition to pleasure and all superfluous delicacies; for nature is content with little. Hence, to refuse what it requires for sustaining the necessity of life, is not less at variance with piety, than it is inhuman.

# CHAPTER 3

## <510301> Colossians 3:1-4

1. If ye then be risen with Christ seek those things which are above: where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.	1. Ergo si consurrexistis cum Christo, quae sursum sunt quaerite, ubi Christus est in dextera Dei sedens:
2. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.	2. Quae sursum sunt cogitate, non quae super terram.
3. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.	3. Mortui enim estis, et vita nostra abscondita est cum Christo in Deo.
4. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.	4. Ubi autem Christus apparuerit, vita vestra, tunc etiam vos cum ipso apparebitis in gloria.

To those fruitless exercises which the false apostles urged, <sup>F165</sup> as though perfection consisted in them, he opposes those true exercises in which it becomes Christians to employ themselves; and this has no, slight bearing upon the point in hand; for when we see what God would have us do, we afterwards easily despise the inventions of men. When we perceive, too, that what God recommends to us is much more lofty and excellent than what men inculcate, our alacrity of mind increases for following God, so as to disregard men. Paul here exhorts the Colossians to meditation upon the heavenly life. And what as to his opponents? They were desirous to retain their childish rudiments. This doctrine, therefore, makes the ceremonies be the more lightly esteemed. Hence it is manifest that Paul, in this passage, exhorts in such a manner as to confirm the foregoing doctrine; for, in describing solid piety and holiness of life, his aim is, that those vain *shows* of human traditions may vanish. <sup>F166</sup> At the same time, he anticipates an objection with which the false apostles might assail him. What then? “Wouldst thou rather have men be idle than addict themselves to such exercises, of whatever sort they may be?” When, therefore, he bids Christians apply themselves to exercises of a greatly superior kind, he cuts off the handle for this calumny; nay more, he loads them with no small

odium, on the ground that they impede the right course of the pious by worthless amusements. <sup>F167</sup>

1. *If ye are risen with Christ.* Ascension follows resurrection: hence, if we are the members of Christ we must ascend into heaven, because he, on being raised up from the dead, was *received up into heaven*, (<411619> Mark 16:19,) that he might draw us up with him. Now, we *seek those things which are above*, when in our minds <sup>F168</sup> we are truly sojourners in this world, and are not bound to it. The word rendered *think upon* expresses rather assiduity and intensity of aim: “Let your whole meditation be as to this: to this apply your intellect — to this your mind.” But if we ought to think of nothing but of what is heavenly, because Christ is in heaven, how much less becoming were it to seek Christ upon the earth. Let us therefore bear in mind that *that* is a true and holy *thinking* as to Christ, which forthwith bears us up into heaven, that we may there adore him, and that our minds may dwell with him.

As to the *right hand of God*, it is not confined to heaven, but fills the whole world. Paul has made mention of it here to intimate that Christ encompasses us by his power, that we may not think that distance of place is a cause of separation between us and him, and that at the same time his majesty may excite us wholly to reverence him.

2. *Not the things that are on earth.* He does not mean, as he does a little afterwards, depraved appetites, which reign in earthly men, nor even riches, or fields, or houses, nor any other things of the present life, which we must

use, as though we did not use them,  
(<460730> 1 Corinthians 7:30, 31,) <sup>F169</sup>

but is still following out his discussion as to ceremonies, which he represents as resembling entanglements which constrain us to creep upon the ground. “Christ,” says he, “calls us upwards to himself, while these draw us downwards.” For this is the winding-up and exposition of what he had lately touched upon as to the abolition of ceremonies through the death of Christ. “The ceremonies are dead to you through the death of Christ, and you to them, in order that, being raised up to heaven with Christ, you may think only of those things that are above. Leave off therefore earthly things.” I shall not contend against others who are of a

different mind; but certainly the Apostle appears to me to go on step by step, so that, in the first instance, he places traditions as to trivial matters in contrast with meditation on the heavenly life, and afterwards, as we shall see, goes a step farther.

**3. *For ye are dead.*** No one can rise again with Christ, if he has not first died with him. Hence he draws an argument from *rising again* to *dying*, as from a consequent to an antecedent,<sup>F170</sup> meaning that we must be dead to the world that we may live to Christ. Why has he taught, that we must *seek those things that are above*? It is because the life of the pious is *above*. Why does he now teach, that the things which are on earth are to be left off? Because they are dead to the world. “Death goes before that resurrection, of which I have spoken. Hence both of them must be seen in you.”

It is worthy of observation, that our *life* is said to be *hid*, that we may not murmur or complain if our life, being buried under the ignominy of the cross, and under various distresses, differs nothing from death, but may patiently wait for the day of revelation. And in order that our waiting may not be painful, let us observe those expressions, *in God*, and *with Christ*, which intimate that our life is out of danger, although it does not appear. For, in the *first* place, God is faithful, and therefore will not deny what has been *committed* to him, (<<sup>550112</sup>> 2 Timothy 1:12,) nor deceive in the guardianship which he has undertaken; and, *secondly*, the fellowship of Christ brings still greater security. For what is to be more desired by us than this — that our life remain with the very fountain of life. Hence there is no reason why we should be alarmed if, on looking around on every side, we nowhere see life. For we are

saved by hope. But those things which are already seen with our eyes are not hoped for. (<<sup>450824</sup>> Romans 8:24.)

Nor does he teach that our life is hid merely in the opinion of the world, but even as to our own view, because this is the true and necessary trial of our hope, that being encompassed, as it were, with death, we may seek life somewhere else than in the world.

**4. *But when Christ, our life, shall appear.*** Here we have a choice consolation — that the coming of Christ will be the manifestation of our life. And, at the same time, he admonishes us how unreasonable were the

disposition of the man, who should refuse to bear up<sup>F171</sup> until that day. For if our life is shut up in Christ, it must be *hid*, until he shall *appear*.

<b>&lt;510305&gt; Colossians 3:5-8</b>	
<b>5.</b> Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth: fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry:	<b>5.</b> Mortificate igitur membra vestra, quae sunt super terram, scortationem, immunditiam, mollitiam, concupiscentiam malam, et avaritiam, quae est idololatria.
<b>6.</b> For which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience.	<b>6.</b> Propter quae venit ira Dei in filios inobedientiae;
<b>7.</b> In the which ye also walked sometime, when ye lived in them.	<b>7.</b> In quibus vos quoque ambulabatis aliquando, quum viveretis in illis.
<b>8.</b> But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of our mouth.	<b>8.</b> Nunc autem deponite et vos omnia, iram, indignationem, malitiam, maledicentiam, turpiloquentiam ex ore vestro.

**5. *Mortify therefore.*** Hitherto he has been speaking of contempt of the world. He now proceeds further, and enters upon a higher philosophy, as to the *mortification of the flesh*. That this may be the better understood, let us take notice that there is a twofold *mortification*. The former relates to those things that are around us. Of this he has hitherto treated. The other is inward — that of the understanding and will, and of the whole of our corrupt nature. He makes mention of certain vices which he calls, not with strict accuracy, but at the same time elegantly, *members*. For he conceives of our nature as being, as it were, a mass made up of different vices. They are, therefore, our *members*, inasmuch as they in a manner stick close to us. He calls them also *earthly*, alluding to what he had said — *not the things that are on earth*, (<510302> Colossians 3:2,) but in a different sense. “I have admonished you, that earthly things are to be disregarded: you must, however, make it your aim to mortify those vices which detain you on the earth.” He intimates, however, that we are earthly, so long as the vices of our flesh are vigorous in us, and that we are made heavenly by the renewing of the Spirit.

After *fortification* he adds *uncleanness*, by which term he expresses all kinds of wantonness, by which lascivious persons pollute themselves. To these is added, *πάθος* that is, *lust*, which includes all the allurements of unhallowed desire. This term, it is true, denotes mental perturbations of other kinds, and disorderly motions contrary to reason; but *lust* is not an unsuitable rendering of this passage. As to the reason why *covetousness* is here spoken of as a worshipping of *images*,<sup>F172</sup> consult the Epistle to the Ephesians, that I may not say the same thing twice.

**6. *On account of which things the wrath of God cometh.*** I do not find fault with the rendering of Erasmus — *solet venire* — (*is wont to come*,) but as the present tense is often taken in Scripture instead of the future, according to the idiom of the Hebrew language, I have preferred to leave the rendering undecided, so that it might be accommodated to either meaning. He warns the Colossians, then, either of the ordinary judgments of God, which are seen daily, or of the vengeance which he has once denounced upon the wicked, and which impends over them, but will not be manifested until the last day. I willingly, however, admit the former meaning — that God, who is the perpetual Judge of the world, is accustomed to punish the crimes in question.

He says, however, expressly, that the wrath of God will come, or is wont to come, upon the unbelieving or disobedient, instead of threatening them with anything of this nature.<sup>F173</sup> For God would rather that we should see his wrath upon the reprobate, than feel it in ourselves. It is true, that when the promises of grace are set before us, every one of the pious ought to embrace them equally as though they were designed for himself particularly; but, on the other hand, let us dread the threatenings of wrath and destruction in such a manner, that those things which are suitable for the reprobate, may serve as a lesson to us. God, it is true, is often said to be angry even with his children, and sometimes chastens their sins with severity. Paul speaks here, however, of eternal destruction, of which a mirror is to be seen only in the reprobate. In short, whenever God threatens, he shews, as it were, indirectly the punishment, that, beholding it in the reprobate, we may be deterred from sinning.

**7. *In which ye walked.*** Erasmus mistakingly refers this to men, rendering it, “*inter quos*,” (“among *whom*,”) for there can be no doubt that Paul had in view the vices, in which he, says that the Colossians had walked, during

the time that they lived in them. For *living* and *walking* differ from each other, as power does from action. *Living* holds the first place: *walking* comes afterwards, as in <sup><480525></sup>Galatians 5:25,

If ye live in the SPIRIT, WALK also in the Spirit.

By these words he intimates, that it were an unseemly thing that they should addict themselves any more to the vices, to which they had died through Christ. See the sixth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans. It is an argument from a withdrawal of the cause to a withdrawal of the effect.

8. *But now* — that is, after having ceased to *live in the flesh*. For the power and nature of *mortification* are such, that all corrupt affections are extinguished in us, lest sin should afterwards produce in us its wonted fruits. What I have rendered *indignationem*, (*indignation*.) is in the Greek θυμός — a term, which denotes a more impetuous passionateness than ὀργή, (*anger*.) Here, however, he enumerates, as may easily be perceived, forms of vice that were different from those previously mentioned.

<510309> **Colossians 3:9-13**

<p><b>9.</b> Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds;</p>	<p><b>9.</b> Ne mentiamini alii diversus alios, postquam exuistis veterem hominem cum actionibus suis:</p>
<p><b>10.</b> And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him:</p>	<p><b>10.</b> Et induistis novum, qui renovatur in agnitionem, secundum imaginem eius, qui creavit eum:</p>
<p><b>11.</b> Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all.</p>	<p><b>11.</b> Ubi non est Graecus nec Judaeus, circumcisio nec praeputium, barbarus, Scythia, servus, liber: sed omnia et in omnibus Christus.</p>
<p><b>12.</b> Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering;</p>	<p><b>12.</b> Induite igitur, tanquam electi Dei sancti et dilecti, viscera miserationum, comitatem, humilitatem, mansuetudinem, tolerantiam,</p>
<p><b>13.</b> Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.</p>	<p><b>13.</b> Sufferentes vos mutuo, et condonantes si quis adversus alium litem habeat: quemadmodum Christus condonavit vobis, ita et vos.</p>

**9. *Lie not.*** When he forbids *lying*, he condemns every sort of cunning, and all base artifices of deception. For I do not understand the term as referring merely to calumnies, but I view it as contrasted in a general way with sincerity. Hence it might be allowable to render it more briefly, and I am not sure but that it might also be a better rendering, thus — *Lie not one to another*. He follows out, however, his argument as to the fellowship, which believers have in the death and resurrection of Christ, but employs other forms of expression.

The *old man* denotes — whatever we bring from our mother’s womb, and whatever we are by nature.<sup>F174</sup> It is *put off* by all that are renewed by Christ. The *new man*, on the other hand, is that which is renewed by the Spirit of Christ to the obedience of righteousness, or it is nature restored to its true integrity by the same Spirit. The *old man*, however, comes first in order, because we are first born from Adam, and afterwards are born again through Christ. And as what we have from Adam becomes old,<sup>F175</sup> and



tends towards ruin, so what we obtain through Christ remains for ever, and is not frail; but, on the contrary, tends towards immortality. This passage is worthy of notice, inasmuch as a definition of regeneration may be gathered from it. For it contains two parts — the *putting off* of the *old man*, and the *putting on* of the *new*, and of these Paul here makes mention. It is also to be noticed, that the *old man* is distinguished by his works, as a tree is by its fruits. Hence it follows, that the depravity that is innate in us is denoted by the term *old man*.

**10. Which is renewed in knowledge.** He shews in the *first* place, that newness of life consists in *knowledge* — not as though a simple and bare knowledge were sufficient, but he speaks of the illumination of the Holy Spirit, which is lively and effectual, so as not merely to enlighten the mind by kindling it up with the light of truth, but transforming the whole man. And this is what he immediately adds, that we are *renewed after the image of God*. Now, the *image of God* resides in the whole of the soul, inasmuch as it is not the reason merely that is rectified, but also the will. Hence, too, we learn, on the one hand, what is the end of our regeneration, that is, that we may be made like God, and that his glory may shine forth in us; and, on the other hand, what is the image of God, of which mention is made by Moses in <sup><010906></sup>Genesis 9:6,<sup>F176</sup> the rectitude and integrity of the whole soul, so that man reflects, like a mirror, the wisdom, righteousness, and goodness of God. He speaks somewhat differently in the Epistle to the Ephesians, but the meaning is the same. See the passage — <sup><490424></sup>Ephesians 4:24. Paul, at the same time, teaches, that there is nothing more excellent at which the Colossians can aspire, inasmuch as this is our highest perfection and blessedness to bear the image of God.

**11. Where there is neither Jew.** He has added this intentionally, that he may again draw away the Colossians from ceremonies. For the meaning of the statement is this, that Christian perfection does not stand in need of those outward observances, nay, that they are things that are altogether at variance with it. For under the distinction of *circumcision* and *uncircumcision*, of *Jew* and *Greek*, he includes, by *synecdoche*,<sup>F177</sup> all outward things. The terms that follow, *barbarian*, *Scythian*,<sup>F178</sup> *bond*, *free*, are added by way of amplification.

*Christ is all, and in all*, that is, Christ alone holds, as they say, the *pro* and the *stern* — the beginning and the end. Farther, by *Christ*, he means

the spiritual righteousness of Christ, which puts an end to ceremonies, as we have formerly seen. They are, therefore, superfluous in a state of true perfection, nay more, they ought to have no place, inasmuch as injustice would otherwise be done to Christ, as though it were necessary to call in those helps for making up his deficiencies.

**13. Put on therefore.** As he has enumerated some parts of the *old man*, so he now also enumerates some parts of the *new*. “Then,” says he, “will it appear that ye are renewed by Christ, when ye are *merciful* and *kind*. For these are the effects and evidences of renovation.” Hence the exhortation depends on the second clause, and, accordingly, he keeps up the metaphor in the word rendered *put on*.

He mentions, *first, bowels of mercy*, by which expression he means an earnest affection, with yearnings, as it were, of the *bowels*: *Secondly*, he makes mention of *kindness*, (for in this manner I have chosen to render *χρηστότητα*,) by which we make ourselves amiable. To this he adds *humility*, because no one will be kind and gentle but the man who, laying aside haughtiness, and high mindedness, brings himself down to the exercise of modesty, claiming nothing for himself.

*Gentleness* — the term which follows — has a wider acceptance than *kindness*, for *that* is chiefly in look and speech, while *this* is also in inward disposition. As, however, it frequently happens, that we come in contact with wicked and ungrateful men, there is need of patience, that it may cherish mildness in us. He at length explains what he meant by *long-suffering* — that we embrace each other indulgently, and forgive also where any offense has been given. As, however, it is a thing that is hard and difficult, he confirms this doctrine by the example of Christ, and teaches, that the same thing is required from us, that as we, who have so frequently and so grievously offended, have nevertheless been received into favor, we should manifest the same kindness towards our neighbors, by forgiving whatever offenses they have committed against us. Hence he says, *if any one have a quarrel against another*. By this he means, that even just occasions of *quarrel*, according to the views of men, ought not to be followed out.

*As the chosen of God. Elect* I take here to mean, set *apart*. “God has *chosen* you to himself, has sanctified you, and received you into his love on this condition, that ye be *merciful*, etc. To no purpose does the man

that has not these excellences boast that he is *holy*, and *beloved* of God; to no purpose does he reckon himself among the number of believers.”

**<510314> Colossians 3:14-17**

<p><b>14.</b> And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness.</p>	<p><b>14.</b> Propter omnia haec caritatem, quae est vinculum perfectionis:</p>
<p><b>15.</b> And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful.</p>	<p><b>15.</b> Et pax Dei palmam obtineat F179 in cordibus vestris, ad quam etiam estis vocati in uno corpore, et grati sitis.</p>
<p><b>16.</b> Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.</p>	<p><b>16.</b> Sermo Christi inhabiter in vobis opulente in omni sapientia, docendo et commonefaciendo vos psalmis, hymnis, et canticis spiritualibus cum gratia, canentes in cordibus vestris Domino.</p>
<p><b>17.</b> And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.</p>	<p><b>17.</b> Et quicquid feceritis sermone vel opere, omnia in nomine Domini Iesu, gratiae agentes Deo et Patri, per ipsum.</p>

**14.** *On account of all these things.* The rendering that has been given by others, “*super omnia haec,*” (*above* all these things,) instead of *insuper,* (*over and above,*) is, in my opinion, meagre. It would be more suitable to render it, *Before* all these things. I have chosen, however, the more ordinary signification of the word ἐπί. For as all the things that he has hitherto enumerated flow from *love*, he now on good grounds exhorts the Colossians to cherish *love* among themselves, for the sake of these things — that they may be merciful, gentle, ready to forgive, as though he had said, that they would be such only in the event of their having *love*. For where *love* is wanting, all these things are sought for in vain. That he may commend it the more, he calls it the *bond of perfection*, meaning by this, that the troop of all the virtues<sup>F180</sup> is comprehended under it. For this truly is the rule of our whole life, and of all our actions, so that everything that is not regulated according to it is faulty, whatever attractiveness it may otherwise possess. This is the reason why it is called here the *bond of*

*perfection*; because there is nothing in our life that is well regulated if it be not directed towards it, but everything that we attempt is mere waste.

The Papists, however, act a ridiculous part in abusing this declaration, with the view of maintaining justification by works. “*Love*,” say they, “is the *bond of perfection*: now perfection is righteousness; therefore we are justified by *love*.” The answer is twofold; for Paul here is not reasoning as to the manner in which men are made perfect in the sight of God, but as to the manner in which they may live perfectly among themselves. For the genuine exposition of the passage is this — that other things will be in a desirable state as to our life, if *love* be exercised among us. When, however, we grant that *love* is righteousness, they groundlessly and childishly take occasion from this to maintain, that we are justified by *love*, for where will perfect love be found? We, however, do not say that men are justified by faith alone, on the ground that the observance of the law is not righteousness, but rather on this ground, that as we are all transgressors of the law, we are, in consequence of our being destitute of any righteousness of our own, constrained to borrow righteousness from Christ. There remains nothing, therefore, but the righteousness of faith, because perfect love is nowhere to be found.

**15.** *And the peace of God.* He gives the name of the *peace of God* to that which God has established among us, as will appear from what follows. He would have it *reign* in our hearts. <sup>F181</sup> He employs, however, a very appropriate metaphor; for as among wrestlers, <sup>F182</sup> he who has vanquished all the others carries off the palm, so he would have the *peace of God* be superior to all carnal affections, which often hurry us on to contentions, disagreements, quarrels, secret grudges. He accordingly prohibits us from giving loose reins to corrupt affections of this kind. As, however it is difficult to restrain them, he points out also the remedy, that the *peace of God* may carry the victory, because it must be a bridle, by which carnal affections may be restrained. Hence he says, *in our hearts*; because we constantly feel *there* great conflicts, while the *flesh lusteth against the Spirit*. (<480517> Galatians 5:17.)

The clause, *to which ye are called*, intimates what manner of *peace* this is — that unity which Christ has consecrated among us under his own direction. <sup>F183</sup> For God has *reconciled us to himself* in Christ, ( 2 Corinthians. 5:18,) with this view, that we may live in entire harmony

among ourselves. He adds, *in one body*, meaning by this, that we cannot be in a state of agreement with God otherwise than by being united among ourselves as members of one body. When he bids us be *thankful*, I do not take this as referring so much to the remembrance of favors, as to sweetness of manners. Hence, with the view of removing ambiguity, I prefer to render it, “Be amiable.” At the same time I acknowledge that, if gratitude takes possession of our minds,<sup>F184</sup> we shall without fail be inclined to cherish mutual affection among ourselves.

**16. *Let the word of Christ dwell.*** He would have the doctrine of the gospel be familiarly known by them. Hence we may infer by what spirit those are actuated in the present day, who cruelly<sup>F185</sup> interdict the Christian people from making use of it, and furiously vociferate, that no pestilence is more to be dreaded, than that the reading of the Scriptures should be thrown open to the common people. For, unquestionably, Paul here addresses men and women of all ranks; nor would he simply have them take a slight taste merely of the *word of Christ*, but exhorts that it should *dwell in them*; that is, that it should have a settled abode, and that *largely*, that they may make it their aim to advance and increase more and more every day. As, however, the desire of learning is extravagant on the part of many, while they pervert the word of the Lord for their own ambition, or for vain curiosity, or in some way corrupt it, he on this account adds, *in all wisdom* — that, being instructed by it, we may be wise as we ought to be.

Farther, he gives a short definition of this wisdom — that the Colossians *teach one another*. *Teaching* is taken here to mean profitable instruction, which tends to edification, as in <sup><450707></sup>Romans 7:7 — *He that teacheth, on teaching*; also in Timothy — “All Scripture is profitable for *teaching*.” (<sup><550316></sup>2 Timothy 3:16.) This is the true use of Christ’s word. As, however, doctrine is sometimes in itself cold, and, as one says,<sup>F186</sup> when it is simply shewn what is right, virtue is praised<sup>F187</sup> and left to starve,<sup>F188</sup> he adds at the same time admonition, which is, as it were, a confirmation of doctrine and incitement to it. Nor does he mean that the *word of Christ* ought to be of benefit merely to individuals, that they may teach themselves, but he requires mutual teaching and admonition.

*Psalms, hymns.* He does not restrict the *word of Christ* to these particular departments, but rather intimates that all our communications should be adapted to edification, that even those which tend to hilarity may have no

empty savor. “*Leave* to unbelievers that foolish delight which they take from ludicrous and frivolous jests and witticisms;<sup>F189</sup> and let your communications, not merely those that are grave, but those also that are joyful and exhilarating, contain something profitable. In place of their obscene, or at least barely modest and *decent*, songs, it *becomes* you to make use of hymns and songs that sound forth God’s praise.” Farther, under these three terms he includes all kinds of songs. They are commonly distinguished in this way — that a *psalm* is that, in the singing of which some musical instrument besides the tongue is made use of: a *hymn* is properly a song of praise, whether it be sung simply with the voice or otherwise; while an *ode* contains not merely praises, but exhortations and other matters. He would have the songs of Christians, however, to be *spiritual*, not made up of frivolities and worthless trifles. For this has a connection with his argument.

The clause, *in grace*, Chrysostom explains in different ways. I, however, take it simply, as also afterwards, in <sup><510406></sup>Colossians 4:6, where he says, “Let your speech be seasoned with salt, *in grace*,” that is, by way of a dexterity that may be agreeable, and may please the hearers by its profitableness, so that it may be opposed to buffoonery and similar trifles.

*Singing in your hearts.* This relates to disposition; for as we ought to stir up others, so we ought also to sing from the heart, that there may not be merely an external sound with the mouth. At the same time, we must not understand it as though he would have every one sing inwardly to himself, but he would have both conjoined, provided the heart goes before the tongue.

**17. And whatsoever ye do.** We have already explained these things, and what goes before, in the Epistle to the Ephesians, where the same things are said almost word for word. As he had already begun to discourse in reference to different parts of the Christian life, and had simply touched upon a few precepts, it would have been too tedious a thing to follow out the rest one by one, he therefore concludes in a summary way, that life must be regulated in such a manner, that whatever we say or do may be wholly governed by the authority of Christ, and may have an eye to his glory as the mark.<sup>F190</sup> For we shall fitly comprehend under this term the two following things — that all our aims<sup>F191</sup> may set out with invocation of Christ, and may be subservient to his glory. From invocation follows

the act of blessing God, which supplies us with matter of thanksgiving. It is also to be observed, that he teaches that we must give thanks to the Father *through Christ*, as we obtain through him every good thing that God confers upon us.

<b>&lt;510318&gt; Colossians 3:18-25</b>	
<b>18.</b> Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord.	<b>18.</b> Mulieres, subditae estote propriis maritis, quemadmodum decet in Domino.
<b>19.</b> Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them.	<b>19.</b> Viri, diligite uxores, et ne amari sitis adversus illas.
<b>20.</b> Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well-pleasing unto the Lord.	<b>20.</b> Filii, obedite parentibus vestris per omnia: hoc enim placet Domino.
<b>21.</b> Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged.	<b>21.</b> Patres, ne provocetis liberos vestros, ne deiiciantur animis.
<b>22.</b> Servants obey, in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eye-service, as men-pleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God:	<b>22.</b> Servi, obedite per omnia iis, qui secundum carnem sunt domini: non exhibitis ad oculum obsequiis, tanquam hominibus placere studentes, sed in simplicitate cordis, ut qui timeatis Deum.
<b>23.</b> And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men;	<b>23.</b> Et quicquid feceritis, ex animo facite, tanquam Domino, et non hominibus:
<b>24.</b> Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ.	<b>24.</b> Scientes quod a Domino recipietis mercedem hereditatis, nam Domino Christo servitis.
<b>25.</b> But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons.	<b>25.</b> Qui autem iniuste egerit, mercedem reportabit suae iniquitatis: et non est personarum acceptio. ( <small>&lt;051017&gt;</small> Deuteronomy 10:17.)

**18. *Wives, be subject.*** Now follow particular duties, as they are called, <sup>F192</sup> which depend on the calling of individuals. In handling these it were

superfluous to take up many words, inasmuch as I have already stated in the Epistle to the Ephesians almost everything that was necessary. Here I shall only add briefly such things as are more particularly suited to an exposition of the passage before us.

He commands *wives* to be *subject*. This is clear, but what follows is of doubtful signification — *as it is fit in the Lord*. For some connect it thus — “Be subject in the Lord, as it is fit.” I, however, view it rather differently, — *As it is fit in the Lord*, that is, according to the appointment of the Lord, so that he confirms the subjection of wives by the authority of God. He requires *love* on the part of *husbands*, and *that they be not bitter*, because there is a danger lest they should abuse their authority in the way of tyranny.

**20. Children, obey your parents.** He enjoins it upon *children* to obey their parents, <sup>F193</sup> without any exception. But what if parents <sup>F194</sup> should feel disposed to constrain them to anything that is unlawful; will they in that case, too, obey without any reservation? Now it were worse than unreasonable, that the authority of men should prevail at the expense of neglecting God. I answer, that here, too, we must understand as implied what he expresses elsewhere, (<490601> Ephesians 6:1) — *in the Lord*. But for what purpose does he employ a term of universality? I answer again, that it is to shew, that obedience must be rendered not merely to just commands, but also to such as are unreasonable. <sup>F195</sup> For many make themselves compliant with the wishes of their parents only where the command is not grievous or inconvenient. But, on the other hand, this one thing ought to be considered by children — that whoever may be their parents, they have been allotted to them by the providence of God, who by his appointment makes children subject to their parents.

*In all things*, therefore, that they may not refuse anything, however difficult or disagreeable — *in all things*, that in things indifferent they may give deference to the station which their parents occupy — *in all things*, that they may not put themselves on a footing of equality with their parents, in the way of questioning and debating, or disputing, it being always understood that conscience is not to be infringed upon. <sup>F196</sup> He prohibits parents from exercising an immoderate harshness, lest their children should be so disheartened as to be incapable of receiving any



honorable training; for we see, from daily experience, the advantage of a liberal education.

**22. *Servants, be obedient.*** Anything that is stated here respecting *servants* requires no exposition, as it has been already expounded in commenting on Ephesians 6:1, with the exception of these two expressions, — *For we serve the Lord Christ*; and, *He that will act unjustly will receive the reward of his iniquity*.

By the *former* statement he means, that service is done to men in such a way that Christ at the same time holds supremacy of dominion, and is the supreme master. Here, truly, is choice consolation for all that are under subjection, inasmuch as they are informed that, while they willingly serve their masters, their services are acceptable to Christ, as though they had been rendered to him. From this, also, Paul gathers, that they will *receive* from him *a reward*, but it is the *reward of inheritance*, by which he means that the very thing that is bestowed in reward of works is freely given to us by God, for *inheritance* comes from adoption.

In the *second* clause he again comforts *servants*, by saying that, if they are oppressed by the unjust cruelty of their masters, God himself will take vengeance, and will not, on the ground that they are *servants*, overlook the injuries inflicted upon them, inasmuch as there is *no respect of persons with him*. For this consideration might diminish their courage, if they imagined that God had no regard for them, or no great regard, and that their miseries gave him no concern. Besides, it often happens that servants themselves endeavor to avenge injurious and cruel treatment. He obviates, accordingly, this evil, by admonishing them to wait patiently the judgment of God.

# CHAPTER 4

## <510401> Colossians 4:1-4

1. Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal; knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven.	1. Domini, quod iustum est, servis exhibete, mutuamque aequabilitatem, scientes quod vos quoque Dominum habeatis in coelis.
2. Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving;	2. Orationi instate, vigilantes in ea, cum gratiarum actione.
3. Withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds;	3. Orate simul et pro nobis, ut Deus aperiat nobis ianuam sermonis ad loquendum mysterium Christi, cuius etiam causa vinctus sum.
4. That I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak.	4. Ut manifestem illud, quemadmodum oportet me loqui.

1. *Masters, what is just.* He mentions first, *what is just*, by which term he expresses that kindness, as to which he has given injunction in the Epistle to the Ephesians. (<490608> Ephesians 6:8.) But as masters, looking down as it were from aloft, despise the condition of servants, so that they think that they are bound by no law, Paul brings them under control, <sup>F197</sup> because both are equally under subjection to the authority of God. Hence that *equity* of which he makes mention.

*And mutual equity.* Some understand it otherwise, but I have no doubt that Paul here employed *ἰσότητα* to mean analogical <sup>F198</sup> or distributive right, <sup>F199</sup> as in *Ephesians*, *τὰ αὐτὰ*, (*the same things*.) <sup>F200</sup> For masters have not their servants bound to them in such a manner as not to owe something to them in their turn, as analogical right to be in force among all ranks. <sup>F201</sup>

2. *Continue in prayer.* He returns to general exhortations, in which we must not expect an exact order, for in that case he would have begun with prayer, but Paul had not an eye to that. Farther, as to prayer, he commends here two things; *first*, assiduity; *secondly*, alacrity, or earnest intentness. For, when he says, *continue*, he exhorts to perseverance, while

he makes mention of *watching* in opposition to coldness, and listlessness.  
F202

He adds, *thanksgiving*, because God must be solicited for present necessity in such a way that, in the mean time, we do not forget favors already received. Farther, we ought not to be so importunate as to murmur, and feel offended if God does not immediately gratify our wishes, but must receive contentedly whatever he gives. Thus a twofold *giving of thanks* is necessary. As to this point something has also been said in the Epistle to the Philippians. (<500406> Philippians 4:6.)

**3. Pray also for us.** He does not say this by way of pretense, but because, being conscious to himself of his own necessity, he was earnestly desirous to be aided by their prayers, and was fully persuaded that they would be of advantage to them. Who then, in the present day, would dare to despise the intercessions of brethren, which Paul openly declares himself to stand in need of? And, unquestionably, it is not in vain that the Lord has appointed this exercise of love between us — that we pray for each other. Not only, therefore, ought each of us to pray for his brethren, but we ought also, on our part, diligently to seek help from the prayers of others, as often as occasion requires. It is, however, a childish<sup>F203</sup> argument on the part of Papists, who infer from this, that the dead must be implored<sup>F204</sup> to pray for us. For what is there here that bears any resemblance to this? Paul commends himself to the prayers of the brethren, with whom he knows that he has mutual fellowship according to the commandment of God: who will deny that this reason does not hold in the case of the dead? Leaving, therefore, such trifles, let us return to Paul.

As we have a signal example of modesty, in the circumstance that Paul calls others to his assistance, so we are also admonished, that it is a thing that is replete with the greatest difficulty, to persevere steadfastly in the defense of the gospel, and especially when danger presses. For it is not without cause that he desires that the Churches may assist him in this matter. Consider, too, at the same time, his amazing ardor of zeal. He is not solicitous as to his own safety;<sup>F205</sup> he does not ask that prayers may be poured forth by the Churches on his behalf, that he may be delivered from danger of death. He is contented with this one thing, that he may, unconquered and undaunted, persevere in a confession of the gospel; nay

more, he fearlessly makes his own life a secondary matter, as compared with the glory of Christ and the spread of the gospel.

By a *door of utterance*, however, he simply means what, in <sup><490619></sup>Ephesians 6:19, he terms the *opening of the mouth*, and what Christ calls a *mouth and wisdom*. (<sup><422115></sup>Luke 21:15.) For the expression differs nothing from the other in meaning, but merely in form, for he here intimates, by all elegant metaphor, that it is in no degree easier for us to speak confidently respecting the gospel, than to break through a door that is barred and bolted. For this is truly a divine work, as Christ himself said,

It is not ye that speak, but the Spirit  
of your Father that speaketh in you. (Matt 10:20.)

Having, therefore, set forward the difficulty, he stirs up the Colossians the more to prayer, by declaring that he cannot speak right, except in so far as his tongue is directed by the Lord. *Secondly*, he argues from the dignity <sup>F206</sup> of the matter, when he calls the gospel the *mystery of Christ*. For we must labor in a more perfunctory manner in a matter of such importance. *Thirdly*, he makes mention also of his danger.

**4. As I ought.** This clause sets forth more strongly the difficulty, for he intimates that it is no ordinary matter. In the Epistle to the Ephesians, (<sup><490620></sup>Ephesians 6:20,) he adds, ἵνα παρρησιάσωμαι, (*that I may speak boldly*,) from which it appears that he desired for himself an undaunted confidence, such as befits the majesty of the gospel. Farther, as Paul here does nothing else than desire that grace may be given him for the discharge of his office, let us bear in mind that a rule is in like manner prescribed to us, not to give way to the fury of our adversaries, but to strive even to death in the publication of the gospel. As this, however, is beyond our power, it is necessary that we should *continue in prayer*, that the Lord may not leave us destitute of the spirit of confidence.

<510405> **Colossians 4:5-9**

<b>5.</b> Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time.	<b>5.</b> Sapienter ambulate erga extraneos, tempus redimentes.
<b>6.</b> Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man.	<b>6.</b> Sermo vester semper in gratia sit sale conditus: ut sciatis quomodo oporteat vos unicuique respondere.
<b>7.</b> All my state shall Tychicus declare unto you, who is a beloved brother, and a faithful minister and fellow-servant in the Lord:	<b>7.</b> Res meas omnes patefaciet vobis Tychicus dilectus frater et fidelis minister ac conservus in Domino.
<b>8.</b> Whom I have sent unto you for the same purpose, that he might know your estate, and comfort your hearts;	<b>8.</b> Quem misi ad vos hac de causa, ut sciretis statum meum, et consolaretur corda vestra:
<b>9.</b> With Onesimus, a faithful and beloved brother, who is one of you: they shall make known unto you all things which are done here.	<b>9.</b> Cum Onesimo fideli et dilecto fratre, qui est ex vobis. Omnia patefacient vobis quae hic sunt.

**5.** *Walk wisely.* He makes mention of *those that are without*, in contrast with those that are of the *household of faith*. (<480610> Galatians 6:10.) For the Church is like a city of which all believers are the inhabitants, connected with each other by a mutual relationship, while unbelievers are strangers. But why would he have regard to be had to them, rather than to believers? There are three reasons: *first*,

lest any *stumblingblock* be put in,  
*the way of the blind*, (<031914> Leviticus 19:14.)

for nothing is more ready to occur, than that unbelievers are driven from bad to worse through our imprudence, and their minds are wounded, so that they hold religion more and more in abhorrence. *Secondly*, it is lest any occasion may be given for detracting from the honor of the gospel, and thus the name of Christ be exposed to derision, persons be rendered more hostile, and disturbances and persecutions be stirred up. *Lastly*, it is, lest, while we are mingled together, in partaking of food, and on other

occasions, we be defiled by their pollutions, and by little and little become profane.

To the same effect, also, is what follows, *redeeming the time*, that is, because intercourse with them is dangerous. For in <sup><490516></sup>Ephesians 5:16, he assigns the reason, *because the days are evil*. “Amidst so great a corruption as prevails in the world we must seize opportunities of doing good, and we must struggle against impediments.” The more, therefore, that our path is blocked up with occasions of offense, so much the more carefully must we take heed lest our feet should stumble, or we should stop short through indolence.

**6. *Your speech.*** He requires suavity of speech, such as may allure the hearers by its profitableness, for he does not merely condemn communications that are openly wicked or impious, but also such as are worthless and idle. Hence he would have them *seasoned with salt*. Profane men have their seasonings of discourse, <sup>F207</sup> but he does not speak of them; nay more, as witticisms are insinuating, and for the most part procure favor, <sup>F208</sup> he indirectly prohibits believers from the practice and familiar use of them. For he reckons as tasteless everything that does not edify. The term *grace* is employed in the same sense, so as to be opposed to talkativeness, taunts, and all sorts of trifles which are either injurious or vain. <sup>F209</sup>

*That ye may know how.* The man who has accustomed himself to caution in his communications will not fall into many absurdities, into which talkative and prating persons fall into from time to time, but, by constant practice, will acquire for himself expertness in making proper and suitable replies; as, on the other hand, it must necessarily happen, that silly talkers expose themselves to derision whenever they are interrogated as to anything; and in this they pay the just punishment of their silly talkativeness. Nor does he merely say *what*, but also *how*, and not to all indiscriminately, but to *every one*. For this is not the least important part of prudence — to have due regard to individuals. <sup>F210</sup>

**7. *My things.*** That the Colossians may know what concern he has for them, he confirms them, by giving them, in a manner, a pledge. For although he was in prison, and was in danger of his life, making care for himself a secondary matter, he consults for their interests by sending Tychicus to them. In this the singular zeal, no less than prudence of the

holy Apostle, shines forth; for it is no small matter that, while he is held prisoner, and is in the most imminent danger on account of the gospel, he, nevertheless, does not cease to employ himself in advancing the gospel, and takes care of all the Churches. Thus, the body, indeed, is under confinement, but the mind, anxious to employ itself in everything good, roams far and wide. His prudence shews itself in his sending a fit and prudent person to confirm them, as far as was necessary, and withstand the craftiness of the false apostles; and, farther, in his retaining Epaphras beside himself, until they should come to learn what and how great an agreement there was in doctrine among all true teachers, and might hear from Tychicus the same thing that they had previously learned from Epaphras. Let us carefully meditate on these examples, that they may stir us up to all imitation of the like pursuit.

He adds, *Onesimus*, that the embassy may have the more weight. It is, however, uncertain who this Onesimus was. For it can scarcely be believed that this is the slave of Philemon, inasmuch as the name of a thief and a fugitive would have been liable to reproach.<sup>F211</sup> He distinguishes both of them by honorable titles, that they may do the more good, and especially Tychicus, who was to exercise the office of an instructor.

<510410> **Colossians 4:10-13**

**10.** Aristarchus my fellow-prisoner saluteth you, and Marcus, sister's son to Barnabas; (touching whom ye received commandments: if he come unto you, receive him;)

**10.** Salutat vos Aristarchus, con-captivus meus, et Marcus, cognatus Barnabae, de quo accepistis mandata si venerit ad vos, ut suscipiatis ipsum.

**11.** And Jesus, which is called Justus, who are of the circumcision. These only are my fellow-workers unto the kingdom of God, which have been a comfort unto me.

**11.** Et Iesus qui dicitur Iustus, qui sunt ex circumcissione, hi soli co-operarii in regnum Dei, qui mihi fuerunt solatio.

**12.** Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, always laboring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God.

**12.** Salutat vos Epaphras, qui est ex vobis servus Christi, semper decertans pro vobis in precationibus, ut stetis perfecti et completi in omni voluntate Dei.

**13.** For I bear him record, that he hath a great zeal for you, and them that are in Laodicea, and them in Hierapolis.

**13.** Testimonium enim illi reddo, quod multum studium vestri habeat, et eorum qui sunt Laodiceae et Hierapoli.

**10. *Fellow-prisoner.*** From this it appears that there were others that were associated with Paul, <sup>F212</sup> after he was brought to Rome. It is also probable that his enemies exerted themselves, in the outset, to deter all pious persons from giving him help, by threatening them with the like danger, and that this for a time had the desired effect; but that afterwards some, gathering up courage, despised everything that was held out to them in the way of terror.

*That ye receive him.* Some manuscripts have *receive* in the imperative mood; but it is a mistake, for he expresses the nature of the *charge* which the Colossians had received — that it was a commendation of either Barnabas, or of Marcus. The latter is the more probable. In the Greek it is the infinitive mood, <sup>F213</sup> but it may be rendered in the way I have done. Let us, however, observe, that they were careful in furnishing attestations, that they might distinguish good men from false brethren — from pretenders, from impostors, and multitudes of vagrants. The same care is more than simply necessary at the present day, both because good teachers are coldly



received, and because credulous and foolish men lay themselves too open to be deceived by impostors.

**11. *These only are fellow-workers***, — that is, of the circumcision; for he afterwards names others, but they were of the uncircumcision. He means, therefore, that there were few Jews at Rome who shewed themselves to be helpers to the gospel, nay more, that the whole nation was opposed to Christ. At the same time, by *workers* he means those only who were endowed with gifts that were necessary for promoting the gospel. But where was Peter at that time? Unquestionably, he has either been shamefully passed over here, and not without injustice, or else those speak falsely who maintain that he was then at Rome. Farther, he calls the gospel the *kingdom of God*, for it is the scepter by which God reigns over us, and by means of it we are singled out to life eternal. <sup>F214</sup> But of this form of expression we shall treat more fully elsewhere.

**12. *Always striving***. Here we have an example of a good pastor, whom distance of place cannot induce to forget the Church, so as to prevent him from taking the care of it with him beyond the sea. We must notice, also, the strength of entreaty that is expressed in the word *striving*. For although the Apostle had it in view here to express intensity of affection, he at the same time admonishes the Colossians not to look upon the prayers of their pastor as useless, but, on the contrary, to reckon that they would afford them no small assistance. Lastly, let us infer from Paul's words, that the *perfection* of Christians is, when they *stand complete in the will of God*, that they may not suspend their scheme of life upon anything else.

<510414> **Colossians 4:14-18**

<p><b>14.</b> Luke, the beloved physician, and Demas, greet you.</p>	<p><b>14.</b> Salutatus vos Lucas medicus dilectus, et Demas.</p>
<p><b>15.</b> Salute the brethren which are in Laodicea, and Nymphas, and the church which is in his house.</p>	<p><b>15.</b> Salutate fratres qui sunt Laodiceae, et Nympham, et Ecclesiam quae est domi ipsius;</p>
<p><b>16.</b> And when this epistle is read among you, cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans; and that ye likewise read the epistle from Laodicea.</p>	<p><b>16.</b> Et quum lecta fuerit apud vos epistola, facite ut etiam in Laodicensium Ecclesia legatur: et eam quae ex Laodicea est ut vos legatis.</p>
<p><b>17.</b> And say to Archippus, Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfill it.</p>	<p><b>17.</b> Et dicite Archippo: Vide ministerium quod accepisti in Domino, ut illud impleas.</p>
<p><b>18.</b> The salutation by the hand of me Paul. Remember my bonds. Grace be with you. Amen. Written from Rome to the Colossians by Tychicus and Onesimus.</p>	<p><b>18.</b> Salutatio, mea manu Pauli. Memores estote vinculorum meorum. Gratia vobiscum. AMEN. Missa e Roma per Tychicum et Onesimum.</p>

**14.** *Luke saluteth you.* I do not agree with those who understand this to be Luke the Evangelist; for I am of opinion that he was too well known to stand in need of such a designation, and he would have been signaled by a more magnificent eulogium. He would, undoubtedly, have called him his fellow-helper, or at least his companion and participant in his conflicts. I rather conjecture that he was absent at that time, and that it is another of the same name that is called a *physician*, to distinguish him from the other. *Demas*, of whom he makes mention, is undoubtedly the person of whom he complains — that he afterwards deserted him. (<550410> 2 Timothy 4:10.)

When he speaks of the Church which was in the house of Nymphas, let us bear in mind, that, in the instance of one household, a rule is laid down as to what it becomes all Christian households to be — that they be so many little Churches. <sup>F215</sup> Let every one, therefore, know that this charge is laid upon him — that he is to train up his house in the fear of the Lord, to keep

it under a holy discipline, and, in fine, to form in it the likeness of a Church.

**16. *Let it be read in the Church of the Laodiceans.*** Hence, though it was addressed to the Colossians, it was, nevertheless, necessary that it should be profitable to others. The same view must also be taken of all the Epistles. They were indeed, in the first instance, addressed to particular Churches, but, as they contain doctrine that is always in force, and is common to all ages, it is of no importance what title they bear, for the subject matter belongs to us. It has been groundlessly supposed that the other Epistle of which he makes mention was written by Paul, and those labor under a double mistake who think that it was written by Paul to the Laodiceans. I have no doubt that it was an Epistle that had been sent to Paul, the perusal of which might be profitable to the Colossians, as neighboring towns have usually many things in common. There was, however, an exceedingly gross imposture in the circumstance that some worthless person, I know not who, had the audacity to forge, under this pretext, an Epistle, that is so insipid, <sup>F216</sup> that nothing can be conceived to be more foreign to Paul's spirit.

**17. *Say to Archippus.*** So far as I can conjecture, this Archippus was, in the mean time, discharging the office of pastor, during the absence of Epaphras; but perhaps he was not of such a disposition as to be sufficiently diligent of himself without being stirred up. Paul, accordingly, would have him be more fully encouraged by the exhortation of the whole Church. He might have admonished him in his own name individually; but he gives this charge to the Colossians that they may know that they must themselves employ incitements, <sup>F217</sup> if they see their pastor cold, and the pastor himself does not refuse to be admonished by the Church. For the ministers of the word are endowed with signal authority, but such at the same time as is not exempt from laws. Hence, it is necessary that they should shew themselves teachable if they would duly teach others. As to Paul's calling attention again <sup>F218</sup> to his *bonds*, he intimates by this that he was in no slight degree afflicted. For he was mindful of human infirmity, and without doubt he felt some twinges of it in himself, inasmuch as he was so very urgent that all pious persons, should be mindful of his distresses. It is, however, no evidence of distrust, that he calls in from all quarters the helps that were appointed him by the Lord. The subscription, *with his own hand*, means, as we have seen elsewhere, that there were even

then spurious epistles in circulation, so that it was necessary to provide against imposition. <sup>F219</sup>

**END OF THE COMMENTARY ON THE EPISTLE TO  
THE COLOSSIANS.**

# FOOTNOTES

## ARGUMENT

- <sup>fi1</sup> Orosius, (Paulus,) a “Spanish presbyter, a native of Tarragona, flourished under Arcadius and Honorius.” — Smith’s Dictionary of Greek Biography and Mythology. — Ed.
- <sup>fi2</sup> “Toutes trois furent destructes et renversees;” — “They were, all the three, destroyed and overthrown.”
- <sup>fi3</sup> “Satan y estoit entré cauteleusement avec son yuroye;” — “Satan had entered in there craftily with his tares.”
- <sup>fi4</sup> “Pour y corrompre et peruertir la vraye foy;” — “That he might there corrupt and pervert the true faith.”
- <sup>fi5</sup> “Auoyent comme fait leuer beaucoup de brouillars pour offusquer la clarte de Christ, voire pour la suffoquer;” — “Had, as it were, raised up many mists with the view of darkening Christ’s brightness; nay, more, with the view of choking it.”
- <sup>fi6</sup> “Car quant au mot d’elemens, sur lequel aussi ils fondent leur opinion;” — “For as to the word elements, on which also they found their opinion.”
- <sup>fi7</sup> “Pource qu’ils couroyent de belles couleurs leurs fallaces et tromperies, et fardoyent leur doctrine;” — “As they covered over their fallacies and deceptions with beautiful colors, and painted their doctrine.”
- <sup>fi8</sup> See CALVIN on the Corinthians, vol. 2:p. 370, n. 3.
- <sup>fi9</sup> “Et pour les faire plus songneux de la retenir iusqu’a la fin, et s’arrester tousiours en luy, il recite que par Christ ils sont entrez en participation de tout bien et benediction;” — “And with the view of making them more careful to retain him unto the end, and remain always in him, he reminds them that it is through Christ that they have begun to participate of every benefit and blessing.”
- <sup>fi10</sup> “Afin que nous puissions aiseement veoir et contempler;” — “That we may be able easily to perceive and contemplate.”

- ft11 “Tel, que c’est plustost vn phantasme qu’ vn vray Christ;” — “Such, that it is rather a phantasm than a true Christ.”
- ft12 “Imaginatif, ou faict a plaiser;” — “Imaginary, or fictitious.”
- ft13 Pour estre plus autorizé entr’ eux, il fait derechef mention de la charge qu’il auoit receuë de Dieu;” — “That he may have more authority among them, he again makes mention of the charge which he had received from God.”
- ft14 “A son propos, et a ce dont ils auoyent affaire;” — “To his subject, and to what they had to do with.”
- ft15 “Monstrant, que tout ce qui hors Christ, n’est que vanite;” — “Shewing that everything that is apart from Christ is mere vanity.”
- Ft16 “Par plusieurs signes et tesmoignages;” — “By many signs and evidences.”

## CHAPTER 1

- ft17 “Son simple et priué nom;” — “His simple and private name.”
- ft18 “A Dieu qui est le Pere. Il y auroit mot a mot, A Dieu et Pere;” — “To God who is the Father. It were literally, To God and Father.”
- ft19 “Vn tresor en seure garde;” — “A treasure in safe keeping.”
- ft20 “Il dit auant que passer plus outre;” — “He says before proceeding farther.”
- ft21 “Ont yci plus grande signifiante, et emportent plus;” — “Have here more significancy, and are more emphatic.”
- ft22 The term *apposition*, in grammar, signifies the putting of two nouns in the same case. — Ed.
- ft23 “This” (καὶ ἀνξάνόμενον) “is the reading of the Vatican and all the most ancient authorities.” — Penn. — Ed.
- ft24 “Par faux rapports et calomnies;” — “By false reports and calumnies.”
- ft25 “Mais est commencee et comme consacree a l’adueu de la pieté et cognoissance de Dieu;” — “But is commenced and, as it were, consecrated to the service of piety and the knowledge of God.”
- ft26 “Prudence, ou intelligence;” — “prudence, or understanding.”

- <sup>ft27</sup> “Comme il a ci dessus demonstré l’amour qu’il auoit enuers eux, en protestant qu’il s’esiouit de leurs auancemens, et en rend graces a Dieu, aussi le fait — il maintenant en son affection vehemente, et continuation de prier;” — “As he has already shewn the love which he cherished towards them, by declaring that he rejoices in their proficiency, and gives thanks to God for it, so he does the same now by his intense eagerness and perseverance in prayer.”
- <sup>ft28</sup> “Mais ils ne feront que tracasser çà et là, et tourner a l’entour du pot (comme on dit) sans s’auancer;” — “But they will do nothing else than hurry hither and thither, and go about the bush (as they say) without making progress.”
- <sup>ft29</sup> Lowth’s rendering of the passage is similar: “In silence, and in pious confidence, shall be your strength.” — Ed.
- <sup>ft30</sup> “*A Dieu et Pere, qui nous a faits*, ou, au Pere, qui nous a faits;” — “*To God and the Father, who hath made us*, or, to the Father, who hath made us.”
- <sup>ft31</sup> “Ils le laissent quasi vuide et inutile;” — “They leave him in a manner empty and useless.”
- <sup>ft32</sup> *Statum*. The term is commonly employed among the Latins like στάσις among the Greeks, to mean the point at issue. See Cic. Top. 25. — Ed.
- <sup>ft33</sup> It is stated by Beza, that some Greek manuscripts have τῷ Θεῷ καὶ Πατρὶ, (to God and the Father,) and that this is the reading in some copies of the Vulgate. Wiclif (1380) reads, “To God and to the Fadir.” Rheims (1582) “To God and the Father.” — Ed.
- <sup>ft34</sup> “S’est abbaissé iusques là de vouloir estre nostre Pere;” — “Has abased himself so far as to be willing to be our Father.”
- <sup>ft35</sup> “Afin qu’il y eust vne opposition entre les tenebres du royaume de Satan, et la lumiere du royaume de Dieu;” — “That there might be a contrast between the darkness of Satan’s kingdom, and the light of God’s kingdom.”
- <sup>ft36</sup> “Là il n’y a que tenebres;” — “There is nothing but darkness.”
- <sup>ft37</sup> “One of the names which the Jews gave to Satan was שחך — darkness” — Illustrated Commentary. — Ed.

- ft38 “Iusqu’a ce que nous soyons deliurez et affranchis par la puissance de Christ;” — “Until we are delivered and set free by the power of Christ.”
- ft39 “Redemption et deliurance;” — “Redemption and deliverance.”
- ft40 The following explanation of the meaning of the term apposition is furnished in a marginal note in our author’s French version: “C’est quand deux noms substantifs appartenans a vne mesme chose, sont mis ensemble sans conionction, comme par declaration l’vn et l’autre;” — “This is when two substantive nouns, relating to the same thing, are placed together without being conjoined, as if by way of explanation, the one and the other.”
- ft41 “Blasphemes execrables;” — “Execrable blasphemies.”
- ft42 See CALVIN on the Corinthians, vol. 1:p. 196, n. 1.
- ft43 “Relation et correspondance;” — “Reference and correspondence.”
- ft44 “Ayent vertu ou puissance d’eux — mesmes;” — “Have power or authority of themselves.”
- ft45 “Sont executeurs de la puissance Diuine, et ministres de sa domination;” — “Are the executors of God’s power, and ministers of his dominion.”
- ft46 See CALVIN on John, vol. 1:p. 419.
- ft47 “N’oste rien a la gloire de Christ;” — “Takes nothing from the glory of Christ.”
- ft48 See Institutes, vol. 2:p. 11.
- ft49 “Est si honorable et magnifique qu’il ne pent estre transferé a homme mortel;” — “Is so honorable and magnificent, that it cannot be transferred to a mortal man.”
- ft50 “Bannis de la compagnie de Dieu;” — “Banished from the society of God.”
- ft51 “Tant excellent soit-il;” — “However excellent he may be.”
- ft52 “A leur confusion et ruine;” — “To their confusion and ruin.”
- ft53 “En eux;” — “Among them.”
- ft54 “Que la plus grande purete qu’on pourroit trouuer, ne sera que vilenie et ordure;” — “That the greatest purity that could be found will be nothing but filth and pollution.”



- ft55 “Sous ombre de ce mot, Toutes choses;” — “Under the pretext of this word, All things.”
- ft56 “Est offert aux meschans et reprouvez, et non pas aix diables;” — “Is offered to the wicked and reprobate, but not to devils.”
- ft57 “Vn miroir;” — “A mirror.”
- ft58 “Par l’acceptation gratuite de Dieu, c’est a dire pource qu’il nous accepte et ha agreables;” — “By God’s gratuitous acceptance, that is, because he accepts of us, and regards us with favor.”
- ft59 The followers of Cœlestius, who, along with Pelagius, held views subversive of the doctrine of original sin, the necessity of divine grace, and other doctrines of a kindred character. — Ed.
- ft60 “Vne relation et correspondance mutuelle;” — “A mutual relationship and correspondance.”
- ft61 “Demeure en confus, et qu’on ne scache que c’est;” — “May remain in confusion, and it may not be known what it is.”
- ft62 “Vray et naturel;” — “True and genuine.”
- ft63 “Car Saint Paul n’a pas voulu dire que l’approbation de l’Euangile dependist du consentement de tous siecles;” — “For St. Paul did not mean to say, that the approbation of the Gospel depended on the consent of all ages.”
- ft64 “Ne sans vn fruit singulier et consolation merueilleuse;” — “Not without remarkable fruit, and wonderful consolation.”
- ft65 The *Donatists* were a sect that sprung up in Africa during the fourth century, and were, vigorously opposed by Augustine. — Ed.
- ft66 “Ce mot, *Toute*;” — “This word, *All*.”
- ft67 “De prescher et enseigner;” — “Of preaching and teaching.”
- ft68 “Et montre le grand zeile qu’il auoit, afin qu’il y ait plus de poids et autorite en ce qu’il dit;” — “And shews the great zeal that he had, that there may be greater weight and authority in what he says.”
- ft69 “M’est douce et gracieuse, pource qu’elle n’est point inutile;” — “Is sweet and agreeable to me, because it is not unprofitable.”
- ft70 “Ceste societe et conionction;” — “This fellowship and connection.”
- ft71 “It is worthy of remark, that the Apostle does not say *παθηματα*, the *passion* of Christ, but simply *θλιψεις*, the *afflictions*; such as are

common to all good men who bear a testimony against the ways and fashions of a wicked world. In these the Apostle had his share, in the passion of Christ he could have none.” — Dr. A. Clarke. — Ed.

<sup>ft72</sup> “Mais quoy? Les Papistes laissans tout ceci;” — “But what? Papists leaving all this.”

<sup>ft73</sup> See CALVIN’S *Institutes*, vol. 2:p. 237, and CALVIN on Corinthians, vol. 1:p. 68.

<sup>ft74</sup> “We are not to suppose that our Lord left any sufferings to be endured by Paul, or any one else, as the expiation of the sins or the ransom of the souls of his people. . . . The filling up spoken of by the Apostle is not the supplementing Christ’s personal sufferings, but it is the completing that share allotted to himself as one of the members of Christ, as sufferings which, from the intimacy of union between the head and the members, may be called his sufferings. Christ lived in Paul, spoke in Paul, wrought in Paul, suffered in Paul; and in a similar sense, the sufferings of every Christian for Christ are the sufferings of Christ.” — Brown’s *Expository Discourses on Peter*, vol. 3. pp. 69, 70. — Ed.

<sup>ft75</sup> “Tels blasphemes horribles;” — “Such horrible blasphemies.”

<sup>ft76</sup> The reader will find the same passage as above quoted by CALVIN in the *Institutes*, vol. 2:pp. 238, 239. See also CALVIN on the Corinthians, vol. 1:p. 69, n. 1. — Ed.

<sup>ft77</sup> “Toutefois c’est a proprement parler, le fruit qui monstre en fin;” — “Yet it is, properly speaking, the fruit that shews at last.”

<sup>ft78</sup> “D’annees et siecles;” — “Of years and ages.”

<sup>ft79</sup> “Publié et manifesté;” — “Published and manifested.”

<sup>ft80</sup> “Signifient magnificence;” — “Denote magnificence.”

<sup>ft81</sup> “Et non en autre;” — “And not in another.”

<sup>ft82</sup> “Son travaille et peine;” — “His labor and trouble.”

## CHAPTER 2

<sup>ft83</sup> After the time of Constantine the Great, “Phrygia was divided into Phrygia Pacatiana and Phrygia Salutaris. . . . Colosse was the sixth city of the first division.” — Dr. A. Clarke. — Ed.

- ft84 “*En toutes richesses de certitude d’intelligence;*” — “*In all riches of assurance of understanding.*”
- ft85 See CALVIN on the Corinthians, vol. 1:p. 112, and vol. 2:p. 397.
- ft86 “Tous erreurs et faussetez;” — “All errors and impostures.”
- ft87 “Qu’ils ne se laissent point distraire ça et là;” — “That they do not allow themselves to be distracted hither and thither.”
- ft88 *Pithanologia* — our author having here in view the Greek term made use of by Paul, *πιθανολογία*, (*persuasive speech*.) See CALVIN on 1 Corinthians, vol. 1:p. 100; also Plat. Theat. 163, A. — Ed.
- ft89 “Toutes fausses et meschantes doctrines;” — “All false and wicked doctrines.”
- ft90 “Quand l’esprit est en branle, maintenant d’une opinion, maintenant d’autre;” — “When the mind is in suspense, now of one opinion, then of another.”
- ft91 *Murus aheneus*. Our author has probably in his eye the celebrated sentiment of Horace — “*Hic murus aheneus esto — nil conscire sibi;*” — “Let this be the brazen wall — to be conscious to one’s self of no crime.” — (Hor. Ep. I. 1:60, 61.) See also Hor. Od. III. 3, 65. — Ed.
- ft92 “Toutes fallaces et astutes;” — “All fallacies and wiles.”
- ft93 “Si quelque vn n’ha la racine de son cœur plantee et fichee en Christ;” — “If any one has not the root of his heart planted and fixed in Christ.”
- ft94 “Que n’ha point les racines profondes;” — “That has not deep roots.”
- ft95A “*Selon les rudimens du monde;*” — “*according to the rudiments of the world.*”
- ft95B “*Corporellement, ou, essentiellement;*” — “*Bodily, er, essentially.*”
- ft95 Our Author evidently refers to what he had said as to the advantage to be derived from steadfastness in the faith. See p. 178. — Ed.
- ft96 “Quand elles n’ont ni monstre ni couleur;” — “When they have neither show nor appearance.”
- ft97 See p. 148, n. 2.
- ft98 “Selon les ordonnances et plaisirs des hommes;” — “According to the appoint — ments and inclinations of men.”

- fi99 “Es choses visibles de ce monde;” — “In the visible things of this world.”
- fi100 “Rudimens, ou elemens du monde;” — “Rudiments, or elements of the world.”
- fi101 “Toutes leurs inuentions;” — “All their inventions.”
- fi102 “Ce que Christ a commencé seulement;” — “What Christ has only commenced.”
- fi103 “Vn tel outrage fait au Fils de Dieu;” — “Such an outrage committed upon the Son of God.”
- fi104 “D’vn vray Christ;” — “Of a true Christ.”
- fi105 “**Σωματικῶς** signifies truly, really, in opposition to typically, figuratively. There was a symbol of the Divine presence in the Hebrew tabernacle, and in the Jewish temple; but in the body of CHRIST the Deity, with all its plenitude of attributes, dwelt really and substantially, for so the word **σωματικῶς** means.” — Dr. A. Clarke. — Ed.
- fi106 See CALVIN on the Corinthians, vol. 1:p. 474, n. 2.
- fi107 “Maintenant le fruit et l’vsage d’icelle est aneanti;” — “The fruit and advantage of it are now made void.”
- fi108 “Le signe qui la figuroit s’esuanouit comme vn ombre;” — “The sign which prefigured it vanishes like a shadow.”
- fi109 “Ce despouillement;” — “This divesture.”
- fi110 “Du gouvernement et dispensation que Dieu a ordonné en son Eglise;” — “From the government and dispensation which God has appointed in his Church.”
- fi111 “Afin que la, signification ne soit vaine, comme d’vne chose qui n’est point;” — “That the signification may not be vain, as of a thing that is not.”
- fi112 “Là il n’y a que souillure et ordure;” — “There, there is nothing but filth and pollution.”
- fi113 “Il vous a donc retirez de la mort;” — “He has, therefore, drawn you back from death.”
- fi114 See CALVIN on Genesis, vol. 1:p. 184.
- fi115 “En grande magnificence;” — “In great magnificence.”

- Ft116 “La croix;” “The cross.”
- Ft117 “Tant eminent et honorable;” — “So lofty and honourable.”
- Ft118 “*Juge, ou, condamne;*” — “*Judge, or condemn.*”
- Ft119 “*En partie, ou, en distinction, ou, de la part, ou au respect;*” “*In part, or, in distinguishing, or, of the part, or, in respect of.*”
- Ft120 “Les autres ceremonies;” — “Other rites.”
- ft121 “Mats c’est vne conjecture bien maigre;” — “But this is a very slender conjecture.”
- ft122 “Estroittement;” — “Strictly.”
- ft123 “Inutile et du tout vuide;” — “Useless and altogether void.”
- ft124 “Signes et tesmoignages;” — “Signs and evidences.”
- ft125 “The Latin, ‘seducat,’ correctly gives the intention of **καταβραβεύτω** which signifies, to cause a competitor to lose his prize, by drawing him aside from the goal, (seorsim ducendo, or seducendo.)” — Penn. — Ed.
- ft126 “Car ayans proposé l’indignite de l’homme, et presché d’humilite, de là ils concluent;” — “For having set forth man’s unworthiness, and having preached of humility, they conclude from this.”
- ft127 The Theurgians were the followers of Ammonius Saccas, who prescribed an austere discipline with the view of “refining,” as he pretended, “that faculty of the mind which receives the images of things, so as to render it capable of perceiving the demons, and of performing many marvellous things by their assistance.” See Mosheim’s, Ecclesiastical History, vol. 1:p. 174. — Ed.
- ft128 *Per manus, (from one hand to another.)* The reader will find the same proverbial expression made use of by CALVIN on the Corinthians, vol. 1:pp. 150, 373, and vol. 2:p. 9. — Ed.
- ft129 “Lesquelles on fait receuoir au poure monde sous la fausse couuerture de l’authorite des anges;” — “Which they make the world receive under the false pretext of the authority of angels.”
- ft130 “La splendeur de la maieste de Christ;” — “The splendor of Christ’s majesty.”
- ft131 “De seul vray but, qui est Christ;” — “From the only true aim, which is Christ.”

- ft132 See CALVIN'S *Institutes*, vol. 1:p. 200.
- ft133 “A cause de l'heureuse intercession qu'ils font pour les hommes;” — “On account of the blessed intercession which they make for men.”
- ft134 See CALVIN'S *Institutes*, vol. 1:p. 202.
- ft135 “Comme s'ils estoient mediateurs ou avec Christ, ou en second lieu apres Christ, pour suppleer ce qui defaut de son costé” — “As if they were mediators either with Christ, or in the second place after Christ, to supply what is wanting on his part.”
- ft136 “Mettent en auant leurs mensonges;” — “Bring forward their falsehoods.”
- ft137 “Ils prononcent et determinent comme par arrest;” — “They declare and determine as if by decree.”
- ft138 “Perinde atque ex tripode,” (*just as though it were from the tripod.*) Our author manifestly alludes to the three — footed stool on which the Priestess of Apollo at Delphi sat, while giving forth oracular responses. — Ed.
- ft139 “Les saints trespassez;” — “Departed saints.”
- ft140 “En la reuerberation de la lumiere de Dieu;” — “In the reflection of the light of God.”
- ft141 “Et surmontent toute nostre capacite;” — “And exceed all our capacity.”
- ft142 Thus ἐμβατεύειν εἰς τὴν οὐσίαν is made use of by Demosthenes, as meaning — “to *come in* to the property.” — See Dem. 1086. 19. — Ed
- ft143 “Es choses secretes et cachees;” — “Into things secret and hidden.”
- ft144 “La role outrecuidance;” — “The foolish presumption.”
- ft145 “Pource qu'il n'est gouverné que par la subtilite charnelle et naturelle;” — “Because he is regulated exclusively by carnal and natural acuteness.”
- ft146 “En la grace des hommes;” — “Into the favor of men.
- ft147 “Toute la perfection de son estre;” — “The entire perfection of her being.”
- Ft148 “Espece, ou, forme;” — “Appearance, or form.”

Ft149 “Superstition, or will-worship.”

Ft150 “En mespris du corps, ou, en ce qu’elles n’espargnent le corps;” —  
“In contempt of the body, or, inasmuch as they do not spare the  
body.”

Ft151 “Sans aucun honneur a rassasier la chair, ou, et ne ont aucun esgard au  
rassasiement d’iceluy: ou, mais ne font d’aucune estime, n’appartenans  
qu’a ce qui remplit le corps;” — “Without any honour to the satisfying  
of the flesh, or, and they have no regard to the satisfying of it, or, but  
they hold it in no esteem, not caring as to what fills the body.”

Ft152 “Et abolissement;” — “And abolishment.”

ft153 An example occurs in Homer’s *Odyssey*, (6: 60,) **σίτου θ’ ἄπτεσθον  
καὶ χάρετον**. — “Take food and rejoice.” See also *Xenoph. Mem.* 1.  
3. 7. — Ed.

ft154 “The passage referred to is as follows: — “ **Ἐβρώθη δὲ καὶ φλοιὸς  
ὡς λέγεται, καὶ ζώων ἀγεύστων πρότερον ἢ ψαντο**.” — “Even  
the bark of trees, it is said, was devoured, and they ate animals not  
previously tasted.” — Ed.

ft155 “Le second argument par lequel il refute telles ordonnances, est;” —  
“The second argument by which he sets aside such enactments, is.”

ft156 “Par similitude qu’elle ha avec la verite;” — “By the resemblance  
which it bears to the reality.”

ft157 “Le service forgé a plaisir, c’est a dire inuenté par les hommes;” —  
“Worship contrived at pleasure, that is to say, invented by men.”

ft158 “Iniques et dures a porter;” — “Unreasonable and hard to be borne.”

ft159 “Ces traditions;” — “These traditions.”

ft160 “Tous les brouillars desquels ils taschent d’esblouir les yeux au poure  
monde;” — “All the mists by which they endeavor to blind the eyes of  
the poor world.”

ft161 “Leurs traditions;” — “Their traditions.”

ft162 “La premiere et la principale honnestete et saintete de la Papatute;”  
— “The first and principal decency and sanctity of the Papacy.”

ft163 “Peind yci au vif;” — “Paints here to the life.”

ft164 “Les traditions;” — “The traditions.”

## CHAPTER 3

- ft165 “Recommandoyent estroittement;” — “Urgently recommended.”
- ft166 “S’en aillent en fumee;” — “May vanish into smoke.”
- ft167 “Par des amusemens plus que pueriles;” — “By worse than childish amuse — ments.”
- ft168 “De cœur et esprit;” — “In heart and spirit.”
- ft169 See CALVIN on the Corinthians, vol. 1. p. 257.
- ft170 “C’est a dire de ce qui suit a ce qui va deuant;” — “That is to say, from what follows to what comes before.”
- ft171 “D’endurer et attendre;” — “To endure and wait.”
- ft172 “Est appelee Idolatrie;” — “Is called Idolatry.”
- ft173 “Plustot que de menacer les Colossiens de telles choses;” — “Instead of threatening the Colossians with such things.”
- ft174 See CALVIN on the Romans, p. 224; also CALVIN on the Corinthians, vol. 1:p. 188.
- ft175 “Deuient vieil et caduque;” — “Becomes old and frail.”
- ft176 “De laquelle Moyse fait mention au Genesis 1:chap. c. 26, et 9:b. 6;” — “Of which Moses makes mention in <010126> Genesis 1:26, and 9:6.”
- ft177 Synecdoche, a figure of speech, by which a part is taken for the whole. — Ed.
- ft178 Howe supposes that Paul “may possibly refer here to a Scythian who, having an inclination to learning, betook himself to Athens, to study the principles of philosophy that were taught there. But meeting one day with a person that very insolently upbraided him on the account of his country, he gave him this smart repartee: ‘True indeed it is, my country is a reproach to me; but you, for your part, are a reproach to your country.’” — Howe’s Works, (Lond. 1822,) vol. 5:p. 497. — Ed.
- ft179 *Regne, ou, gouverne;*” — “*Reign, or, rule.*”
- Ft180 *Virtutum omnium chorum.* See *Cic.* 50:3, *Offic. c. ult.* — Ed.



- ft181 “Rule in your hearts, (βραβεύετο.) Let the peace of Christ judge, decide, and govern in your hearts, as the brabeus, or judge, does in the Olympic contests. . . . While peace rules, all is safe.” — Dr. A. Clarke. — Ed.
- ft182 “Le mot Grec signifie aucunesfois, Enclins a rendre graces, et reconnoistre les benefices que nous receuons;” — “The Greek word means sometimes — having a disposition to give thanks, and to acknowledge the favors that we receive.”
- ft183 “En son nom et autorite;” — “In his own name and authority.”
- ft184 “Si nous auons les cœurs et les sens abbreuuez de ceste affection de n’estre point ingrats;” — “If we have our hearts and minds thoroughly imbued with this disposition of being not unthankful.”
- ft185 “Si estroitement et auec si grande cruaute;” — “So strictly and with such great cruelty.”
- ft186 “Comme a dit anciennement vn poëte Latin; — “As a Latin poet has anciently said.”
- ft187 “Probitas laudatur et alget;” — “Virtue is praised and starves,” — that is, is slighted. See Juv. 1:74. — Ed.
- ft188 “Il se trouue assez de gens qui louënt vertu, mais cependant elle se morfond: c’est a dire, il n’y en a gueres qui se mettent a l’ensuyure;” — “There are persons enough who praise virtue, but in the mean time it starves; that is to say, there are scarcely any of them that set themselves to pursue it.”
- ft189 “Plaisanteries pleines de vanite et niaiserie;” — “Pleasantries full of vanity and silliness.”
- ft190 “Comme a son but principal;” — “As to its chief aim.”
- ft191 “Toutes nos œuures et entreprinses;” — “All our works and enterprises.”
- ft192 “Les enseignemens concernans le deuoir particulier d’vn chacun;” — “Instructions relating to the particular duty of each individual.”
- ft193 “Leurs peres et meres;” — “Their fathers and mothers.”
- ft194 “Les peres ou les meres;” — “Fathers or mothers.”
- ft195 “C’est a dire, fascheux et rigoureux;” — “That is to say, grievous and rigorous.”

ft196 “Ou entrant en dispute avec eux, comme compagnon a compagnon, ainsi qu’on dit. Toutesfois, que ce soit tant que faire se pourra sans offenser Dieu;” — “Or entering into dispute with them, as associate with associate, as they say. At the same time, let it be only in so far as it can be done without offending God.”

## CHAPTER 4

ft197 “Et rabbaïsse leur presumption;” — “And beats down their presumption.”

ft198 Our author, has here in view a definition of Aristotle, quoted by him when commenting on <sup><470813></sup>2 Corinthians 8:13. See CALVIN on the Corinthians, vol. 2:p. 294. — Ed.

ft199 “C’est a dire, qui est réglé et compassé selon la circonstance, qualité, ou vocation des personnes;” — “That is to say, which is regulated and proportioned according to the circumstances, station, or calling of individuals.”

Ft200 “Comme aux Ephesiens il a vsé de ce mot, Le mesme, ou Le semblable, en ceste signification, comme il a este là touché;” — “As in the Ephesians he has made use of this word, the same, or the like, in this sense, as he has there noticed.”

Ft201 “Comme il y a vn droict mutuel, réglé selon la consideration de l’office et vocation d’vn chacun, lequel droict doit auoir lieu entre tous estats;” — “As there is a mutual right, regulated according to a consideration of the office and calling of each individual, which right ought to have a place among all ranks.”

Ft202 “Ou façon d’y proceder laschement, et comme par acquit;” — “Or a way of acting in it listlessly, and as a mere form.”

ft203 “Plus que puerile;” — “Worse than childish.”

Ft204 “Qu’il nous faut implorer l’aide des saincts trespassez;” — “That we must implore the aid of departed saints.”

Ft205 “Il ne se soucie point d’estre sauué des mains de ses ennemis;” — “He does not feel anxiety to be saved from the hands of his enemies.”

Ft206 “La dignite et l’excellence;” — “The dignity and excellence.”

- Ft207** Sales. The term is frequently employed by classical writers to denote witticisms. See Cic. Fam. 9:15; Juv. 9:11; Hor. Ep. 2:2, 60. — Ed.
- Ft208** “Et que par ce moyen il seroit a craindre que les fideles ne s’y addonassent;” — “And as on this account it was to be feared that believers would addict themselves to this.”
- Ft209** “Ou s’en vont en fumees;” — “Or vanish into smoke.”
- Ft210** “Car c’est des principales parties de vraye prudence, de scauoir discerner les personnes pour parler aux vns et aux autres comme il est de besoin;” — “For it is one of the chief departments of true prudence, to know how to discriminate as to individuals, in speaking to one and to another, as there may be occasion.”
- Ft211** Paley, in his *Horae Paulinae*, finds the statement here made respecting Onesimus, “who is one of you,” one of the many undesigned coincidences which he adduces in that admirable treatise, in evidence of the credibility of the New Testament. The train of his reasoning in this instance may be briefly stated thus — that while it appears from the Epistle to Philemon, that Onesimus was the servant or slave of Philemon, it is not stated in that Epistle to what city Philemon belonged; but that it appears from the Epistle, (Philem. 1, 2,) that he was of the same place, whatever that place was, with an eminent Christian, named Archippus, whom we find saluted by name amongst the Colossian Christians; while the expression made use of by Paul here respecting Onesimus, “who is one of you,” clearly marks him out as being of the same city, viz., Colosse. — Ed.
- Ft212** “D’autres furent mis prisonniers avec saint Paul;” — “Some others were made prisoners along with St. Paul.”
- ft213** Excipite **δέξασθε**, vel **δέξασθαι**, ut excipiatis, si conjungas cum **ἐλάβετε**, ut habet Syrus interpres, ut exprimatur quod fuerit illud mandatum;” — “Receive ye, **δέξασθε**, or **δέξασθαι**, that ye may receive, if you connect it with **ἐλάβετε**, (ye received,) as the Syrian interpreter has it, so as to express what the charge was.” — Beza. — Ed.
- ft214** “Nous sommes receus a la vie eternelle;” — “We are received to life eternal.”
- ft215** See CALVIN on the Corinthians, vol. 2:p. 78.

- ft<sup>216</sup> “Contrefaire et mettre en auant vne lettre comme escrite par saint Paul aux Laodiciens, voire si sotté et badine;” — “To forge and put forward a letter as if written by St. Paul to the Laodiceans, and that too so foolish and silly.”
- ft<sup>217</sup> “Qu’eux — mesmes aussi doyuent faire des remonstrances et inciter leur pasteur;” — “That they must themselves employ remonstrances and stir up their pastor.”
- ft<sup>218</sup> Paul had previously made mention of his bonds, in the 3d verse of the chapter. — Ed.
- ft<sup>219</sup> “Que des lors on faisoit courir des epistres a faux titre, et sous le nom des seruiteurs de Dieu: a laquelle meschancete il leur estoit force de remedier par quelque moyen;” — “That even then they put into circulation epistles under a false title, and in the name of the servants of God: to which wickedness he was under the necessity of employing a remedy by some means.”