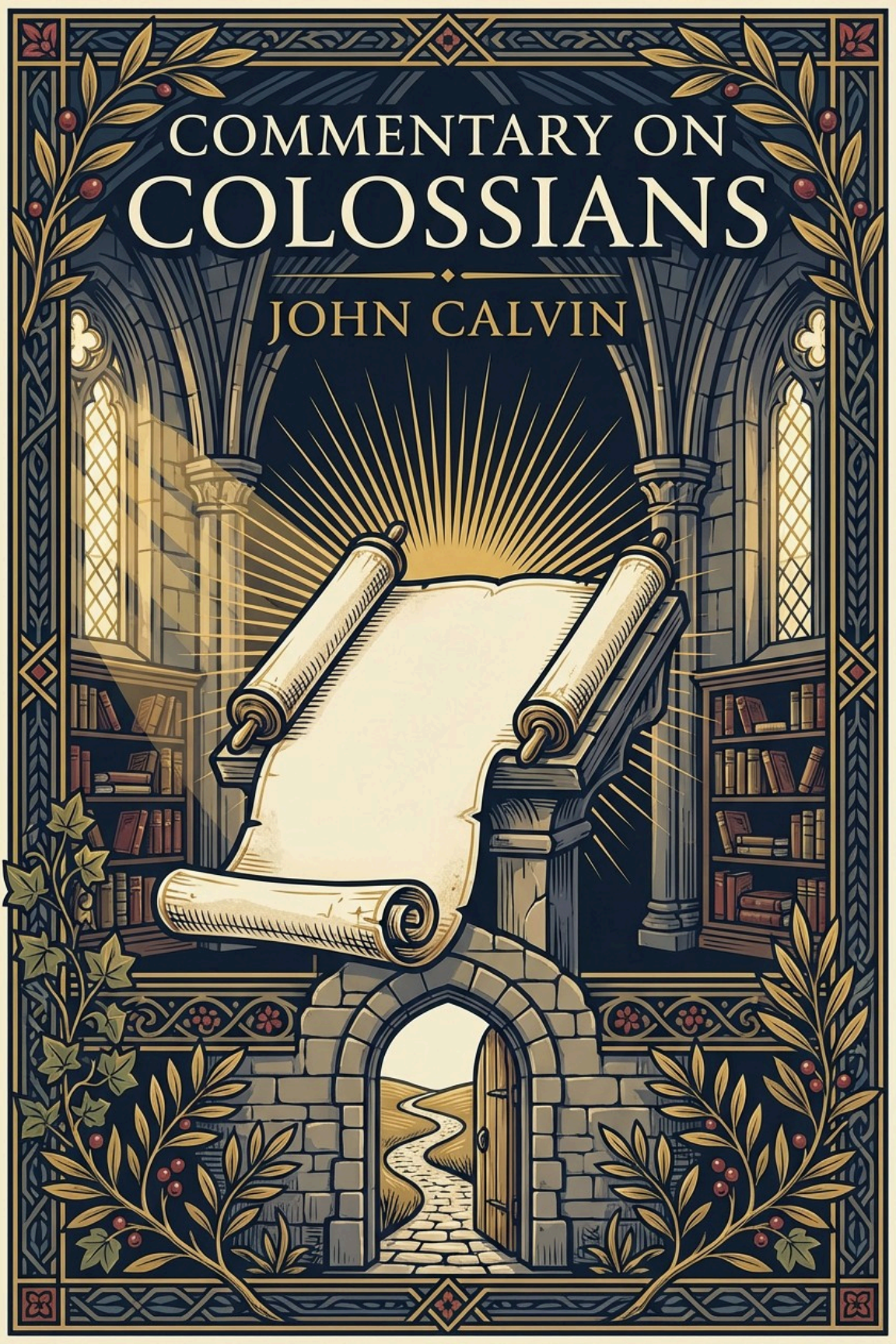


# COMMENTARY ON COLOSSIANS

JOHN CALVIN



# COMMENTARY ON COLOSSIANS

*John Calvin*



A free edition from

**CHRISTIAN READER**

*A reading & audiobook app for classic Christian literature*

## ABOUT THIS BOOK



*Commentary on Colossians* by John Calvin offers a clear, methodical exposition of the Apostle Paul's letter to the Colossian church. Written during the Reformation, it emphasizes the supremacy of Christ, the sufficiency of His work for salvation, and the dangers of false teachings that diminish His authority. Calvin combines careful attention to the biblical text with theological insight, pastoral concern, and practical application. The commentary reflects Calvin's commitment to Scripture as the final authority and remains a valuable resource for readers seeking a historically grounded, theologically rich understanding of Colossians.



## ABOUT CHRISTIAN READER



*Christian Reader* is a free reading and audiobook app for classic Christian literature, with high-quality narration available as a premium upgrade.

---

*Available on iOS and Android.*

<https://apps.apple.com/us/app/christian-reader/id6755921023>

[https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.samfrisch.christian\\_reader](https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.samfrisch.christian_reader)

---

# CONTENTS



Title Page .....	5
To the Worshipful and Reverend Fathers Master Noel... ..	6
The Argument Upon the Epistle of St. Paul to the Colo... ..	8
Chapter 1 .....	12
Chapter 2 .....	49
Chapter 3 .....	83
Chapter 4 .....	101
Sent from Rome, by Tichicus and Onesimus .....	110

## TITLE PAGE



**A** Commentary of **Master John Calvin**, upon the Epistle to the Colossians.

And translated into English by R. V.

Pray for the peace of Jerusalem, they shall prosper that love you. \_Psalm 122.6.\_

AT LONDON, **Printed by Thomas Purfoote**, and are to be sold **at his shop over against Saint Sepulcher's Church.**

TO THE WORSHIPFUL AND  
REVEREND FATHERS MASTER NOEL,  
DEAN OF PAUL'S, M. MULLINS  
ARCHDEACON OF LONDON, MASTER  
D. WALKER, ARCHDEACON OF  
ESSEX, & MASTER TOWERS  
PROFESSOR OF DIVINITY, HIS  
SINGULAR GOOD FRIENDS AND  
PATRONS, R. V. WISHETH ALL  
HEALTH



**M**any in the dedications of their travails are accustomed to set forth the praises of such persons as they do dedicate the same unto. And surely I think it not amiss if flattery be absent. For who is ignorant that **virtus laudata crescit**, praise virtue, and it shall increase. I speak not this, right worshipful and reverend fathers, to the end that I mean to do the like to you, although no man that knoweth you but he will say you worthily deserve the same: for if I should either praise your learning or diligence in your vocation which everywhere is known, or

your godly conversation which unto your nearest friends is well tried, or your liberality which all those that have need, but especially the godly poor have found and daily do find, who might justly reprehend me? But letting pass these things to the consideration of upright judges, I purpose to show, and that very briefly, what hath moved me to dedicate this present book unto your worships. You know that I received at your hands (that worthy man Master Doctor Watts being then alive, whom with reverence I remember) that living which I have: and although you sell not your benefices (as many in these days do) yet reason would that I should not remain unthankful for the same, though it were a great deal less than it is. And whereas want of ability would not suffer me to recompense otherwise your good will, yet rather than still I should continue unthankful, I chose this little commentary of that worthy father Master **Calvin** to supply that which else might be left undone: wherein I wish that my heart lay open to be viewed: then would you not more regard the thing itself, which no doubt is worthy the accepting, than the good will of him that presenteth the same unto you. Fare you well. At High Easter the first of November.

Yours to command **R. V.**

THE ARGUMENT UPON THE EPISTLE  
OF ST. PAUL TO THE COLOSSIANS BY  
MASTER CALVIN



**T**here were three Cities one near to another in **Phrygia**, of which **Paul** makes mention in this Epistle: **Laodicea**, **Hierapolis**, and **Colossae**, which **Orosius** testifies to have fallen down while **Nero** reigned, with an Earthquake. And so not long after this Epistle was written: three famous churches were destroyed with a lamentable and fearful chance. A notable spectacle forsooth of God's judgment: if we lacked not eyes. The **Colossians** indeed were first instructed in the gospel, not by **Paul**, but faithfully and purely by **Epaphras** and other ministers. But by and by Satan according to his solemn and perpetual custom, crept in with his darnel and tares, that he might overthrow the right faith there. Some think that there were two kind of men which tried to lead away the **Colossians** from the purity of the Gospel. For on the one side the Philosophers by disputing of the stars of destiny and such like trifles, on the other side the Jews by urging and enforcing their ceremonies, cast abroad many mists to overthrow Christ, but they which think so are moved thereunto by an overlight conjecture or guess. Because forsooth **Paul** makes

mention of thrones and powers and heavenly creatures. And whereas they add also the name of **Elements**, it is more than ridiculous. But because I am not purposed to confute the opinions of other, I will only speak mine own mind, and that which by sound reasons I may gather.

First of all, it appears sufficiently by the words of Paul, that the varlets practiced this, namely, to mingle Christ with Moses, and together with the Gospel to retain the shadows of the Law: whereupon it is very likely that they were Jews. And for that they painted out their crafty dealing with beautiful colors: therefore Paul calls it vain Philosophy. Although withal (in my judgment) he respected in this word the sly reasons wherewith they dallied, which indeed were sharp or subtle, but yet vain and profane. For they imagined an entrance or access to God by the Angels, and many such like revelations brought they in, as are contained in the books of Dionysius of the heavenly Hierarchy, drawn out of the school of the Platonical Philosophers. This is the principal mark whereunto he levels, that he may teach all things to have their being in Christ: and that therefore he alone is enough and enough to the Colossians. But he keeps this order. After his accustomed superscription, by praising them, he makes them the more attentive to hear him. After that, to the end he may shut up the way against all new and strange inventions, he gives a testimonial to the doctrine which afore they had received by **Epaphras**. Afterward whilst he wishes them increase of faith from the Lord, he means that as yet somewhat is wanting: that he may make a way for himself more firmly to instruct them. On the contrary part he sets forth the grace of God to them-ward with the titles to the same belonging, lest they should make small account thereof. Then follows an instruc-

tion, in which he teaches that all the parts of our salvation are planted in Christ only, that they should seek nothing elsewhere, and he mentions that they have obtained in Christ, whatsoever good things there are, to the end they may the more diligently have regard to keep him to the end. And truly even this one Chapter is utterly enough, to make us account of this Epistle, although it be but short, as of an incomparable treasure. For what is greater in all the heavenly doctrine, than to have Christ skillfully painted out: that we may see his virtue and power, his office, and all the fruits and commodities which come from him to us? For even in this one thing chiefly do we differ from the papists, that whereas we be both called Christians, and profess ourselves to believe in Christ, they devise to themselves a Christ that is torn, deformed, made void of his strength and power, spoiled of his office: to be short, such a Christ as is rather a ghost or shadow than a Christ indeed: but we embrace him as here he is described and set out by **Paul**, namely a lively and effectual Christ. Therefore, to speak it at a word, this Epistle shows the difference between the true Christ and the feigned. Than which nothing can be wished either better or more excellent. About the end of the first chapter, he seeks to win authority unto him again by means of his calling and person: and he does honorably set out the worthiness of the Gospel. In the second Chapter he opens more plainly the cause wherefore he did write: namely that he might prevent the danger which he saw to hang over their heads, where by the way he treats of his love toward them to the end they might acknowledge he had a care for their safeguard. From that he passes over to exhorting, wherewith he applies his doctrine foregoing as it were to a present use: For he also bids them settle themselves in Christ alone, and condemns it

of vanity, whatsoever it is, that is without Christ. He speaks by name of Circumcision, abstinence of meats, and other outward exercises: unto which they do overthwartly and amiss bind the service of God. He speaks also of the preposterous service of Angels whom they deputed in Christ's room. And being moved by occasion of circumcision he does also by the way touch what office and nature of ceremonies was. Whereupon he determines that they were abrogated by Christ. And with these things does he fill the end of the second chapter. In the third chapter, he sets the true duties of godliness, wherewith the Lord will have us busied, against those vain precepts to the observing whereof the false apostle would constrain the faithful. And he begins at the spring head itself, that is to say, at mortification of the flesh and newness of life: from whence he draws brooks, that is to say, particular exhortations: some, which belong to all Christians alike: and some, which privately pertain to certain persons, according to the reason and manner of their calling. In the beginning of the fourth Chapter he goes on still with the same argument: after that when he has commended himself to their prayers, he declares by many tokens how greatly he loves them, and is desirous to provide and care for their salvation.

## CHAPTER 1



¶ A COMMENTARY OF M. \*\*JOHN CALVIN\*\* UPON  
THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE COLOSSIANS, \*\*DONE  
INTO ENGLISH BY\*\* R. V.

**1** Paul an Apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy a brother. 2 To the Saints which are at Colossa, and to the faithful brethren in Christ: grace unto you, and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ. 3 We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, always praying for you. 4 Having heard of your faith which is in Christ Jesus, and love toward all Saints. 5 For the hope laid up for you in heaven, whereof you have heard before by the word of truth, that is to say, of the Gospel. 6 Which is come unto you as also in the universal World it does bring forth fruit and is increased, as in you also, from the day which you heard, and knew the grace of God in truth. 7 As also you have learned of Epaphras our beloved fellow servant, who is towards you a faithful Minister of Christ. 8 Who also has made known unto us your love in the spirit.

**Paul an Apostle.) It has been already often declared to what purpose these superscriptions do belong. Because the Colossians had never seen him: and that therefore his**

**authority was not as yet so firm amongst them that his own name alone was sufficient: he does at the beginning tell them that he was ordained the Apostle of Christ by the will of God. Whereof it followed that he did not rashly in that he wrote to them he knew not: because he did the Embassy, committed to him of God. For he was not appointed to one Church, but his Apostleship had way to all. The name of, Saints, which he attributes unto them, is more honorable: but in that he calls them faithful brethren,\*\* he does more gently allure them to hearken unto him. The rest you may seek out of the former Epistles.**

**3 We give thanks.)** He commends the faith and love of the Colossians, whereby he may the better confirm them cheerfully to go forward and to be constant. Beside that whereas he shows that he has such a persuasion of them, he wins unto him their hearts, whereby they may be the more ready and apt to receive his doctrine. Always must you mark, that in stead of gratulation or rejoicing, he uses giving thanks. Whereby he teaches, that in all rejoicing straight way the remembrance of God's goodness ought to come in mind: because it is his good gift whatsoever it is, that happens unto us joyful and happy. Moreover by his example he does admonish us, that we not only be thankful for those things which the Lord does bestow upon ourselves, but for that also which he bestows upon others. But for what things does he give thanks to the Lord? For the faith and love of the Colossians. Therefore he confesses that both of them are given of God: or else his thanksgiving were [but] feigned. And what have we but of his liberality? If so be that the very smallest things that we have, come from him, how much rather must we confess the same of these two gifts, in which

the whole sum of our excellency is planted? **To God and the Father**, Thus expound it, To God which is the Father of Christ. For it is not lawful unto us to acknowledge any other God, but him that has showed forth himself unto us in his Son. And this is the Ray which alone does open the gate unto us if we will come unto the true God. For even therefore he is a Father unto us, because he has embraced us in his only begotten Son, and in him has set forth his fatherly favor to be viewed of us. **Always for you**. Some do thus expound it, We give thanks unto God always for you, that is to say continually, And some thus, Praying for you always. It may also be thus expounded, As often as we pray for you we do withal give thanks unto God. But this is the plainer and more simple meaning, We give thanks to God, and withal we pray. Whereby he declares, that the state of the faithful is never so perfect in this world, but that at all times somewhat is amiss or wanting. For even he who has very well begun may every day revolt or fall a hundred times: and of necessity we must continually go forward, whilst as yet we be on our journey. So then must we mind joying for graces received, and for the same give God thanks, that withal we desire of him persevering and increase.

**4 Having heard our faith.**) This was a provocation both of love towards them, and of care for their salvation, when he heard that they excelled in faith and love. And certainly such force ought the excellent gifts of God to work in us, that wheresoever they appear, they should enforce us to be in love with them. He calls it faith **In Christ**, to the end we should always remember, that Christ is the proper or very mark (for the level) of faith. He puts **Charity to the Saints**, not to the end he would exclude or shut out other (therefrom), but for that as every one is near joined unto

us in God, so more nearly ought we to embrace him with a peculiar love. True love then will extend itself to all men universally, because even all men are our flesh, and are created after the Image of God: but as concerning degrees, it will begin at them that be of household of the faith.

**5 For the hope laid up for you in the heavens.)** Never will the hope of eternal life be idle in us, but will bring forth in us love. For needs must it be that he, who is certainly persuaded that the treasure of life is laid up for him in heaven, will set naught by the world, and will have a longing thither. The meditating upon the heavenly life forces our affections both to serve God and to seek after love. The sophisters abuse this testimony or place to extol the merits of works, as though the hope of salvation depended upon works: but their reason is frivolous. For it follows not, that hope is therefore grounded on works, because it pricks us up to desire to live well: whereas nothing is more effectual thereunto, than the free goodness of God, which brings all the confidence of works to naught. But there is a **Metonymy** in the word **hope**: because it is taken for the thing hoped for. For hope in our hearts is the glory which we hope for in heaven. But yet whereas he says, That we have hope laid up in heaven, he means that the faithful ought to be as sure of the promise of everlasting felicity, as if they had already a treasure laid up in a certain and sure place. **Of which you have heard before.** Because eternal salvation is a thing above the capacity of our understanding: therefore he adds, that the certainty thereof was brought unto the Colossians by the Gospel. And withal he shows them beforehand that he will bring no new thing: but only that he means this, to confirm them in that doctrine which they have already received. Erasmus has translated [it thus] **the**

**true word of the Gospel.** Neither am I ignorant, that, after the manner of the Hebrews, the Genitive case is often used in Paul in place of the Epithet or Adjective: but here the words of Paul have a greater Emphasis or force. For in the top or highest degree he names the Gospel, the **word of truth**, for honors sake: whereby they might the more surely and firmly abide in the revelation taken from it. And so the word Gospel is joined appositively.

**6 As also in the whole world it does fructify.)** This avails as well to the confirmation as to the comfort of the godly, to see far and wide the effect of the Gospel, in gathering many unto Christ. Indeed the faith thereof depends not upon the success thereof, so that therefore we should believe, because many believe. Although the whole world shrink, although heaven itself fall, yet the conscience of a godly man ought not to waver: because God notwithstanding, in whom the conscience is grounded, abides true. But this hinders not but that our faith may be helped, as often as it sees the power of God: which does so much the more mightily show forth itself, as the number is greater that is gained unto Christ. Add this too, that in the multitude of the believers at that time was seen the fulfilling of so many prophecies, which stretch out the kingdom of God from the east to the West. Is this a small matter, or a vulgar and common help unto faith, with the eyes to behold fulfilled, concerning the kingdom of Christ to be extended throughout all countries, that which the Prophets long afore had foretold? That which I say, there is none of the faithful but by experience does find it himself. Paul therefore with this sentence would more embolden the Colossians: that seeing in all places the fruit and increasing of the Gospel, they might with the more joyous zeal embrace it. [in non-Latin alphabet] which I have translated, **is**

**increased**, is not read in some copies: yet because it was somewhat fit unto the text, I would not omit it. And it appears by the Commentaries of the old Writers that this reading was always more used. **From the day that you heard and knew the grace.**) A praise of their aptness, in that they did by and by embrace wholesome doctrine: a praise of constancy, in that they did abide in the same. And properly is the faith of the Gospel called the knowledge of the grace of God: because no man at any time has tasted the Gospel but he that knew himself reconciled unto God, and took hold of salvation proffered in Christ. **In the truth**, signifies truly and without deceit. For as afore he testified, the Gospel to be the undoubted truth: so now he adds, that it was sincerely delivered unto them: and that of Epaphras. For whereas all do boast (of) the Gospel, but many are evil Workmen, by whose either ignorance, or ambition, or avarice, the purity thereof is corrupted, very requisite it is to make a difference between faithful and trusty ministers and those that are naught. Neither yet is it enough, to hold the name of the Gospel: except we know that this is the true Gospel, which is preached by Paul and Epaphras. Wherefore Paul by (giving) his voice confirms the doctrine of Epaphras: to the end he may hold them in the same, and by that means might call them back from varlets, who went about to bring in strange doctrines. And withal he sets out Epaphras himself with a notable title, whereby he may have the more authority. Finally he makes that he is the better beloved unto the Colossians, in that he says he testified unto him their love. Paul in every place is diligent in this, to make such as he knew faithfully to serve Christ, by his commendation to be most dear unto the Congregations: as on the contrary side, the ministers of Satan are wholly occupied in this, to alienate

and estrange by their sinister speeches the hearts of the simple from their faithful Pastors. **Love in the spirit.** I take for spiritual love as does Chrysostom: unto whom I consent not in that which went before. Finally spiritual love is that, which has no respect to the world: but it is consecrate to the guidance and disposition of godliness, and has as it were a root within, whereas carnal friendship depends of outward cause.

9 We therefore also since the day we heard (thereof), cease not to pray for you, and to desire that you may be fulfilled with the knowledge of his will, in all wisdom and spiritual prudence: 10 That you may walk worthy of God into all obedience, bringing forth fruit in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God. 11 Strengthened with all strength, according to the power of his glory, into all long suffering, and patience with joy.

**9 We therefore also.)** As afore in his gratulation he declared his love toward them: so does he the same now in his earnest prayer for them. And certainly as in every one the grace of God is more apparent: so peculiarly ought we to embrace and reverence them, and be careful for their salvation. And what does he wish unto them? That they may know God more fully. Whereby he shows, that somewhat is as yet wanting unto them, that he may make a way for him to instruct them, and win them to hear him teach (the truth) more amply. For they that think they have obtained whatsoever is worth the knowing, do despise and disdain whatsoever else is brought them. He takes therefore this persuasion away from the Colossians, lest it should be to them a let that they should not willingly go forward, and suffer to be perfected and amended that which was begun in them. But what knowledge does he wish unto them? Forsooth the knowledge Of the will of

GOD. Wherewith he overthrows all the inventions of men and all those speculations that are contrary to the word of GOD. For the will of GOD is not to be sought elsewhere than in his Word. He joins, **in all Wisdom**, whereby he declares that that will of God whereof he made mention is the only rule of being rightly wise. For whatsoever he is that simply desires to know those things which it hath pleased God to reveal, he it is that knows what it is rightly to be wise: and if we desire further, that shall be nothing else but to be unwise as not content with the mean. By the word [⟨ in non-Latin alphabet ⟩] which I have translated, Prudence, I mean judging or discerning which springs from the understanding. Paul calls both of them spiritual: because we achieve them no otherwise but by the direction of the Spirit. For the natural man perceives not those things that are of God. **1 Corinthians 2:14**. As long as men are led by the sense of their flesh, they have indeed their own wisdom, but such (wisdom) as is mere vanity, howsoever else they flatter themselves in it. We see what manner of divinity there is in the Papacy, what the books of Philosophers contain, what wisdom it is that profane or Godless men have in price. But let us have in mind, that that wisdom alone which Paul commends and sets out, is limited in the will of God.

**10 That you walk worthily in God.** First he teaches what the end of spiritual understanding is, and to what purpose we must profit in the school of God: namely that we live worthy of God, that is, that it may appear in our life, that we have not in vain been taught of God. Whosoever they be that level not their studies to this mark, it may be that they labor and take great pains, but they do nothing but wander by-ways, and lose their labor. Moreover he admonishes, that this principally is to be done of us, if we will walk

worthy of God, that we direct the whole course of our life after the will of God, renouncing our own sense and wit, and bidding all the affections of our own flesh farewell. Which also again he confirms when he adds (these words) **into all obedience**, or (as commonly they say) **through pleasing**. Therefore if it be demanded what life it is that is worthy of GOD: this definition of Paul must always be holden, namely that that is it which leaving the rules and ordinances of men, finally leaving the wit and disposition of the whole flesh, is ordered after the obedience of God alone. From hence ensue good works: which fruits God requireth of us. **Increasing in the knowledge of God:)** He does again repeat, that they are not so far come on, but that they have need of new increasements, with which admonition he prepares them, and as it were leads them by the hand to the desire of going forward: whereby they may show themselves ready to hear and apt to be taught. And that which is here spoken unto the Colossians, let all the faithful take it as spoken unto them: and hereof let them collect this common exhortation, We must always increase in the doctrine of Godliness, even till our dying day.

**11 Strengthened with all strength.** As afore he wished unto them both sound understanding and the right use thereof: so now also he wishes unto them a heart and constancy. By this means he admonishes them of their weakness and imbecility, for that he denies they can be strong, but by the help of the Lord. Neither does he that only, but to the end he may the more amplify and set out this grace, he adds (these words) **According to his glorious power**, as if he should say, so far off is it that any man by means of his own power can stand, but that the power of God must wondrously show forth itself, by helping our infirmity. Lastly

he teaches in what thing the strength of the faithful ought to show forth itself, namely **in all patience and long suffering**. For both continually are they exercised under the cross in this world: and a thousand temptations do daily thrust in themselves to oppress them: and they see none of those things which God hath promised. They must therefore arm themselves with wonderful patience. That that saying in Isaiah **30:15** may be fulfilled, **Your strength shall be in hope and silence**, To join this piece, **With joy**, unto this sentence is better (than otherwise). For although the contrary reading is more often used with the Latins: yet the Greek copies agree rather unto the reading (which I use): and certainly patience is not retained but by joy: nor yet shall he stand with a strong courage, who has not a joyful liking of his own estate.

12 Giving thanks to God and the Father who hath made us meet to the partaking of the inheritance of the Saints in light. 13 Which hath taken us away out of the power of darkness, and hath set us over into the kingdom of his beloved Son. 14 In whom we have redemption by his blood, the forgiveness of sins. 15 Who is the Image of the invisible God, the first begotten of all creatures. 16 Because in him are created all things as well which are in heaven, as upon the earth: visible and invisible: whether (they be) thrones, or dominations, or principalities, or powers. 17 All things are created by him, and into him: and he is before all things, and all things have their being in him.

**12 Giving thanks.)** He returns again unto gratulation, that by this occasion he may reckon up the benefits wherewith they are endowed by Christ, and so he enters into a full description of Christ. For this was an only remedy for the Colossians, against all the deceits of the false Apostles wherewith they assayed them fully

to understand what Christ was. For whereof comes it that we are carried about with so many kind of doctrines, but because we do not thoroughly know the power of Christ? For Christ alone causes all other things suddenly to vanish. Therefore there is nothing that Satan so greatly toils about, as to cast mists to darken Christ: because he knows that by this means the gate is opened to all lies. This then is the only way as well to retain as to restore pure doctrine, to set Christ before the eyes what a one he is with all his goods and goodness, that his power may be truly felt and perceived. I speak not here of the (bare) name. The Papists do commonly with us confess one Christ: how much odds is there the while between us and them? Namely because they while they confess Christ to be the Son of God, by setting his power over unto others, and by plucking it hither and thither, they almost leave him naked and empty. At the least they rob him of a great part of his glory: so that he is named the Son of GOD, but yet is not (indeed) such an one as the Father would have him to us ward. And if so be that the Papists would with their heart receive those things which are contained in this chapter, we and they should by and by be at one: but the whole Papacy would fall, because it stands not but whereas Christ is not known. Whosoever shall consider and mark the state and issue of this first chapter, will out of doubt acknowledge this (to be so). For nothing else is here handled, but that we should know Christ to be the beginning, the midst, and the end: that all things are to be asked of him: that without him nothing is, nor can be found. Now therefore must **the** readers diligently and nighly mark **with** what colors Paul paints out Christ unto us. **Who hath made us fit.** As yet he speaks of **the** Father because he is the beginning and the efficient cause (as they say) of our salvation.

As the name of God does more express (his) majesty: so the name of Father (does express his) clemency and well willing affection. It is meet that we should behold both of these in God, that his majesty may strike a fear and reverence in us, and that his fatherly love may procure a confidence and a boldness in us. Therefore has Paul not in vain joined these two together: if yet the reading please you, which the Interpreter has followed, unto whom certain very old Greek copies agree. Although there will be no absurdity if we say he was content with the word **Father** (alone). Moreover as it is needful that his incomparable grace be expressed or declared under the name of **Father**: so also is it not less needful that we by the name of God should be carried into the admiration and wonderful liking of so great goodness, for that he which is God hath so far abased himself. For what benefit or good thing does he give thanks unto God? Forsooth that he hath made him and others meet to be partakers of the inheritance of Saints. For we are born the children of wrath, exiles, and banished from the kingdom of God: only it is the adoption of God, which makes us meet. And adoption depends upon the free election. The Spirit of regeneration is the seal of adoption. He adds **in light**, that it might be an Antitheton or contrary position opposite and set against the darkness of the kingdom of Satan.

**13 Which hath taken us away.** Behold the beginning of our salvation, When God takes us out of the deep pit of destruction in which we are drowned. For where his grace is absent there is darkness: as is read in Isaiah **60:2. Behold darkness shall cover the earth, and mist the people: but upon thee shall the Lord arise, and his glory shall be seen in thee.** First we ourselves are called darkness: and then all the whole world. And Satan

is the prince of darkness, under whose tyranny we are held in bondage, until we be set at liberty by the hand of Christ. Hereof gather, that the whole world, with the painted wisdom and righteousness thereof, is in the sight of God reputed nothing else but darkness: because there is no light without the kingdom of Christ. **Hath set us over into the kingdom,** This is now the beginning of our happiness, when that we are set over into the kingdom of Christ: because we pass from death into life. And this also does Paul ascribe to the grace of God: lest any man should think he could by his own force attain such a good thing. As therefore our deliverance from the bondage of sin and death is the work of God: even so is our passing over into the kingdom of Christ. He calls Christ the **Son of love**, or beloved of God the Father: because it is he alone in whom his soul delighteth as is in Matthew **17:5** and by whose means all other are beloved. For thus must we think, that we are not otherwise accepted of God but by Christ. And there is no doubt but Paul meant after a sort to note the hostile enmity and dissension that men have with God, until the love in the mediator does shine out.

**14 In whom we etcetera.** Now doth he in order discourse, that all the parts of salvation are comprehended in Christ, and that he alone, as he is of all things the beginning and end, ought to excel and to be seen above all creatures. First he saith that we have in him redemption: and the same doth he by and by interpret (to be) **remission of sins.** For these two do appositively agree together. For certainly God in that he doth forgive us our sins, delivereth us from the guiltiness or danger of eternal death. This is our liberty, this is our boasting against death: that our sins are not imputed unto us. He saith this redemption is purchased by the **blood of**

**Christ:** for by the sacrifice of his death all the sins of the world are purged. Let us remember then that this is the only price of reconciliation: and therefore it is blasphemy whatsoever it be that the Papists trifle concerning satisfactions.

**15 Which is the image etcetera.** He climbs higher, and discourses of the glory of Christ. He calls him the Image of the invisible God, whereby he declares that it is he alone, by whom God, who otherwise is invisible, is manifested unto us: according to the saying, No man hath seen God at any time, the only begotten (son) who is in the bosom of the Father he hath manifested him unto us, John **1:18**. I know after what manner the old writers are accustomed to expound (this place). For in that they were at variance and controversy with the Arians, they urge the equality that the Son hath with the Father, and the Co-essence and Consubstantiality: in the meanwhile they say nothing of that which is most principal: how the Father doth show forth himself in the Son to be known unto us. That Chrysostom, hath placed his whole refuge in the word Image, whilst he contends that the creature cannot be called the Image of the Creator: it is too weak. Yea rather he is confuted by Paul whose words are, **the man is the Image and glory of God.** 1 Corinthians **11:17**. Lest therefore we should hold anything but that which is firm, we must note, that the word Image is not meant of the essence, but hath relation unto us. For therefore is Christ the Image of God, because he causes God after a sort to be seen unto us although thereof also is gathered the co-essence and consubstantiality. For Christ should not truly and indeed represent God, except he were the essential Word of God: seeing that in this place he treats not of those things which by communicating or participating accord also to the creatures: but

he treats of the perfect wisdom, goodness, righteousness and powers of God: which to represent, no creature were of sufficiency. There shall be then in this word a forcible weapon for us against the Arians: but yet we must begin at the relation which I have spoken of, (**namely**) we must not stand in the only essence. The sum is, that God in himself, that is to say, in his naked majesty, is invisible: and that not only unto bodily eyes, but even to the minds of men also: but that he is revealed unto us in Christ alone, so that we may behold him as it were in a glass. For he doth show forth unto us in Christ, his righteousness, goodness, wisdom, strength and power, to be short himself wholly and totally. We must take heed then that we seek it not elsewhere: for whatsoever it is that shall without Christ vaunt itself by the name of God, it shall be an idol. **The first begotten of all creatures.** The reason why he is thus called follows by and by: **Because in him all things are created**, as in the third verse following he is termed the first begotten of the dead, because we all rise again by him. Then he is not therefore only the first begotten, because he went before all creatures in time, but because he was begotten of the Father for this, that by him they should be made, and he should be as it were the substance or foundation of all. The Arians dealt foolishly, who reasoned out of that, that he was therefore a creature. For it is not here touched, what he is in himself: but what he works or brings to pass in others.

**16 Visible and invisible.** The former division of heavenly and earthly things comprehended both these kinds. But because he meant to avouch this principally of Angels, he now makes mention of **invisible things**. That not only the heavenly creatures which are manifest unto the eyes, but also such as are spirits, are made

by the Son of God. And whereas follows straightway, **Whether Thrones, etcetera** it is as much as if he should say, By what name soever they be called. By thrones some understand Angels, but I think, that rather the heavenly palace of the majesty of God is [thereby] meant, which we must not dream to be such an one, as our mind or understanding may comprehend, but such an one as is meet for God himself. We see the sun and moon, and the whole ornament of the heaven: but the glory of the kingdom of God is hidden from our sense and understanding, because it is spiritual, and higher than the Heavens. To be short, let us understand by Thrones that Seat of blessed immortality, which is exempt from all change and alteration. By the other names out of doubt he means the Angels. He calls them Powers, Principalities, Dominations, or Lordships: not because they exercise any regiment which is their own, or else be endued with force and strength which properly belongs to themselves: but because they are ministers or servants to execute God's power and Domination. And it is often used, that as far as God doth extend and put forth his force and strength in his creatures: so far forth also doth he set over his names unto them. And so he alone is Lord and Father: but they also are Fathers and lords whom he vouchsafes this honor. And thereof it comes that both Angels and Judges are called Gods. Wherefore in this place also are Angels set forth with great titles, which declare, not of what force they are by themselves, or apart from God, but what God doth by them, and what functions and charge he hath committed to them. Which things must so be taken, that nothing be abated of the glory of the only God. For he doth not so communicate and impart his force and strength unto the Angels, that he should diminish himself: he doth not so work by them, that he re-

signs or sets over his power unto them: he will not have his glory so shine in them, that it may be blemished or darkened in himself. Paul doth purposely so honorably extol the dignity of the Angels, lest anybody should think, that that were a let whereby Christ himself should be exalted above them. Therefore as by way of concession or granting he usurps these names: as if he should say, all their excellency derogates and takes away nothing from Christ, although they be set out with notable titles. They that subtly after a Philosophical manner do descant in these words, to the end they may pick out of them orders of Angels, may have the fruition and use of their liking, but certainly they stray far from the mind of Paul.

**17 All things are created by him, and into him.)** By four reasons he makes the Angels subject to Christ: **(1)** That they should not darken his glory, because they were created by him. Secondly, because their creation ought to be referred unto him, as unto a legitimate end. Thirdly, that he was always before they were created. Fourthly, for that he sustains them with his strength, and preserves them in their estate. Although he affirms this not of them alone, but of the whole world also. So doth he place the Son of God in the highest seat of honor, that he may bear rule over both Angels and men, and may bring under or into frame all the Creatures in heaven and in earth.

18 And he is the head of the body of the Church, he is the beginning, the first begotten from the dead: that he may be in all things holding the principality. 19 Because it pleased (the Father) that all fullness should dwell in him. 20 And by him to reconcile all

things unto himself, by pacifying through the blood of his Cross, through him, as well those things that are upon the earth, as those things which are in heaven.

**18 The head of the body.** After that he hath generally discoursed touching the excellency of Christ, and of his high principality over all creatures: he returns again unto those things which peculiarly belong to the Church. In the word Head, some do consider many things. And truly a little after he will use the same Metaphor [I mean Head] in this sense or meaning, that as head in the body of man is in stead of a root, from whence the vital power is dispersed into all the members: so doth the life of the Church proceed from Christ, etcetera. But in this place he speaks, in my judgment, chiefly of government. He teaches then that it is Christ alone, who hath power to govern the church to whom alone, the faithful ought to have respect, of whom depends the unity of the body. The Papists while they seek to prove the tyranny of their Idol, find lacks that the Church is headless, unless the Pope as head have dominion therein. But Paul doth not yield this honor, no not to the Angels: and yet he maims not the Church of her head: for that Christ, as he challenges this title unto himself, so doth he verily and in deed exercise the office thereof. Neither am I ignorant of their cavil wherewith they wind out themselves, [which is this] The Pope is the ministerial head. But more splendid and noble is the name Head, than that it ought by any color, to be set over unto any mortal man, specially without the commandment of Christ. With more modesty behaves Gregory himself, who writes that Peter indeed was a principal member of the church, yet that he and the rest of the Apostles, were members under our head **Book 4, Epistle 92. He is the beginning.** Because this word [Greek

text] doth sometime signify, with the Greek, the end whereunto all things are referred, we might in this sense take Christ to be [Greek text], yet had I rather thus expound Paul's words, that he should be the beginning because he is the **first begotten of the dead**. For in the resurrection he is the renewing and building up of all things: and so the beginning of the second and new creation, because the first was fallen utterly by the ruin and fall of the first man. Because therefore that Christ in rising again, hath begun the kingdom of God, worthily is he called the beginning: because then we begin to be in very deed in the presence of God, when we are renewed that we may be new creatures. **First begotten of the dead**. He is so called, not only because he did first rise again, but because also he restored others unto life. As **1 Corinthians 15:20** he is called the first fruits of them that rise again. **That he may be in all things**. Thereof he concludes, that the primacy in all things accords and belongs to him. For if he be the beginner and restorer of all things, it is manifest that of right this honor is due unto him. Although this piece **In all**, may be two ways taken, **(1)** either over all creatures, **(2)** or else in every thing. But this matters not much: because simply all things are brought under his Dominion and rule.

**Nineteen Because it pleased him.)** To the end it may be the more firm which he has preached touching Christ, now also he adds, that it was so established by the providence of God. And certainly if we will reverently adore this mystery, necessary it is, that we should be called back to that Well-spring. This, says he, is wrought by the counsel of God that all fullness should dwell in him. And he understands fullness of righteousness, wisdom, strength or power, and of all goodness. For whatsoever God has,

**that** has he bestowed upon his Son, that he might be glorified in him: as it is written John **5:20**. And withal he admonishes, that whatsoever goodness we require toward our salvation, it must be drawn out of the fullness of Christ: because God has thus determined, that he will no otherwise communicate or impart himself and his gifts unto men, but by his Son. It is then as much as if he should say, Christ is to us all things, and without him we have nothing. Whereof it follows, whosoever derogates ought from Christ or diminishes his power, or robs him of his offices, or to be short pilfer away a drop of his fullness, they do as much as in them lies, shake and hurtle down the eternal counsel of God.

**Twenty And by him to reconcile all things unto himself.** This also is an honourable eulogy or title of Christ, that we cannot otherwise be joined unto God but by him. First let us weigh, that our felicity or happiness is planted in this, that we cleave unto God: again, that nothing is more miserable than to be alienated or estranged from him. He pronounces then, that we are by Christ alone happy, because he is the hand that ties God and us together: again, that without him we are most miserable, because we are shut out from God. As for that which he attributes unto Christ, let us remember that it is proper unto him: so that no portion or piece of this praise must be ascribed over unto any other. Wherefore the Antithesis or contraries must be understood: if this be the prerogative of Christ, it may not appertain to others. For he manifestly disputes against those who devised Angels to be pacifiers or peacemakers, by which an entrance is made open unto God. **By pacifying through the blood of his Cross.** He speaks of the Father, for that he was made merciful and favorable to his creatures by the blood of Christ. And he calls it the blood of the

Cross, because therefore the blood of Christ was the gauge and a price of our peacemaking with God, for that it was shed upon the Cross. For the Son of God must have been a purging or cleansing sacrifice, and pass under the guiltiness or danger of sin, that we might be the righteousness of God in him. The blood of the cross then, signifies the blood of the sacrifice, which was offered upon the cross to pacify the wrath of God. While he adds, **By him**, he meant not to speak of any new thing, but to express more certainly that which already he had said, and to imprint it as yet more deeply in our hearts: namely that Christ is so the only author of reconciliation, **that** he shuts out other means whatsoever. For nobody else was crucified for us. Then is it he alone by whom and by whose grace we have God merciful unto us. **As well which are upon**. If it like you to understand reasonable creatures only, the same shall be men and Angels. Although it shall be now absurdity to extend it to all without exception. But lest I should be driven to reason the more Philosophically, it likes me that it be spoken of men and Angels, and touching these there is no great matter in it, to show and prove that they have need of a peacemaker with God, But as concerning the Angels, the question is not easy to be unfolded. For to what purpose is reconciliation, where there was no dissension or breach of love? Many being moved with this reason, have thus expounded this present place, The Angels were brought to agreement with men, and so the heavenly (creatures) were made friends with the earthy. But the words of Paul sound otherwise, (namely) **that God has reconciled unto himself**: that then is a forced solution. It remains therefore that we see what manner of reconciliation that of Angels and men is. I say that men were reconciled unto God, for that they were alienated from him

before by sin, for that they were to feel him a Judge to their destruction, unless the grace of a Mediator had come in the whilst to pacify his wrath. It was then a kind of pacifying between God and men, for that by Christ enmity was abolished and done away, and so God of a Judge is become a Father. Between God and the Angels the reason is far contrary: for among them there was no defect, no sin, and therefore no separation. But yet for two causes the Angels also ought to be set at peace with God. For seeing they were creatures, they were not without danger of falling, except they had been made sure by the grace of Christ. This is of no small weight to continue in peace for ever with God, to have a fixed and sure estate in righteousness, that they need not any more fear falling or defeating. Moreover in this self same obedience which they perform to God, there is no such exquisite perfection, that they satisfy God in every behalf, and without pardon. And to this purpose without doubt belongs this sentence in the book of Job, **He shall find iniquity in his Angels.** For if it be expounded as spoken of the Devil, what great thing is it? But the Holy Ghost does there pronounce the greatest cleanness and purity to be foul and filthy, if it be measured according to the righteousness of God. We must then determine, that there is not so much righteousness in the Angels, as is sufficient to join them fully and perfectly with God, and therefore they have need of a pacifier, by whose grace they may perpetually cleave unto God. Well therefore does Paul, who denies the grace of Christ to have residence by abiding in men only, but makes the same common unto Angels also. Neither is there any wrong done to the Angels, when they are sent away to a Mediator, that by his benefit they may have perfect and firm peace with God. If any man under the pretence of the universal note **(all)** shall

move any question touching the Devils, whether Christ be their peacemaker also, I answer that he is not neither **the** peacemaker of wicked men. Although I confess there is a difference, because unto wicked men is offered the benefit of redemption, and so is it not to the Devils. But this is nothing to Paul's words, which contain nothing else, but that it is Christ alone by whom all creatures, which have any joining at all to God, cleave unto him.

Twenty-one And you when sometime you were estranged, and enemies by cogitation in evil works. Twenty-two Now has he reconciled in the body of his flesh by death: that he might make you stand holy and unproveable in his sight. Twenty-three If so be you abide grounded and firm in faith, and be not removed from the hope of the Gospel which you have heard: which is preached among all creatures which are under heaven: of which I Paul am made a Minister.

**Twenty-one And you, when sometime.** Now does he shape unto them a general doctrine by an **Hypothesis**, that they may perceive themselves guilty of the greater unthankfulness if they suffer themselves to be led over from Christ to new devices and inventions. And this order must diligently be marked: because **the** application (if I may so say) of peculiar or special doctrine, does more nearly touch **the** quick. Afterward he calls them back to experience, **that** they might acknowledge in themselves the benefit of the redemption whereof he makes mention, as if he should say, you your selves are a document or example of **the** grace which I preach to be exhibited and set forth unto men through Christ. For **you were estranged**, namely from God. **You were enemies**, now are you received into favor. And whence cometh that? Forsooth for that God being pacified and appeased by the death of

Christ, is again friends with you. Although in this sentence is the changing of the person, for that which hitherto he has taught touching the Father, now he preaches of Christ. For so of necessity must it be expounded, because he says, in the body of his flesh. I interpret the word [Greek text] [which is translated **cogitation**] to be put to augment the matter, as if he should have said, that they were utterly and with all the whole sense of their mind estranged from God, lest any body should philosophically feign (this) estranging to be in some part, as the Popish divines restrain it to **the** inferior concupiscences. Nay rather, says Paul, because it made you hateful unto God, it occupied the whole mind. To be brief his mind was to point forth man, altogether as he is, utterly to disagree from God, and to be unto him an enemy. The old Interpreter has translated, [Greek text], **sense**, Erasmus has translated it **mind**, and I have used the word **cogitation**, for **that** which **the** Frenchmen call intent. For such is the force of the Greek word, and Paul's meaning does so require it. Furthermore **that** word **enemies**, whereas it has as well a passive as active signification, agrees with us exactly either way as long as we be without Christ. For both are we born the children of wrath, and all the cogitations of the flesh are hatred against God. **In evil works** He proves by the effects the inward hatred that lies hidden in the heart. For in that men contend to wipe themselves clean from all blame, so long till they be manifestly convinced; God even shows their impiety by their outward works: as more largely is treated Romans **1:19**. Furthermore look what we hear in this place of **the** Colossians, belongs also unto us. For in nature we differ nothing. This only odds there is, that some are called straightway from their mothers womb, whose wickedness God prevents **that** they break not forth

into manifest fruits: others after they have gone astray a good part of their life, are brought back again into the sheepfold. Yet we all have need of Christ to be a pacifier because we are the servants of sin: and whereas sin is, there is enmity between God and men.

**22 In the body of his flesh.**) A speech in kind strange and absurd: but **the body of flesh**, is as much (as if he had said) the human body which the Son of God hath common with us. His mind then was to declare that the Son of God hath put on the like nature that we have, that is to say, that he had taken on him a body that was base and lowly, earthy and endangered to many infirmities, that he might be our mediator. When he addeth **by death**, he calleth us back to the consideration of the sacrifice. For the Son of God must become man, and partaker of our flesh, that he might be our brother: by dying he must become a sacrifice, that he might pacify the Father unto us. **That he might make you stand holy.** The second principal part of our salvation, namely newness of life. For in these two members or pieces chiefly consisteth the whole power of redemption: **namely** in forgiveness of sins, and spiritual regeneration. Jeremiah **31.33**. That which already he said, was a great matter, that righteousness was purchased unto us by the death of Christ, that sin being done away, we might be acceptable unto God. But now he teacheth that another thing cometh withal that is as notable, namely the giving of the Holy Ghost, whereby we are newly fashioned after the Image of God. And it is a place worth the marking, that free righteousness is not given unto us in Christ, unless we be born anew also by the Spirit into the obedience of righteousness: as he teacheth **1 Corinthians 1.30**, that Christ is made unto us righteousness and sanctification. And we obtain righteousness by being freely accepted: but sanctifica-

tion we obtain by the gift of the Holy Ghost, while we become new man. And of both these graces there is an inseparable knot. But let us note that this holiness is but begun in us only, and that it doth daily profit and go on: but that it shall not be perfect, until Christ shall appear to the building up of all things. For naughtily and frowardly did the Celestines and Pelagians in time past abuse this place, to exclude the grace of forgiveness of sins. For they did shine a perfection in this world, which might satisfy the judgment of God, so that mercy should be superfluous and more than needs. But Paul doth not here teach what is fulfilled in this World: but what the end of our vocation is, and what good things are brought unto us by Christ.

**23 If you abide.)** An exhortation to persevere, whereby he admonisheth that it shall be in vain whatsoever grace hitherto hath been bestowed upon them, except they abide in the sincerity of the Gospel. And so he signifieth that they are as yet but in their course, and have not yet attained to the mark or goal. For even then the stability and firmness of their faith was in hazard among them by means of the subtle dealings of the false Apostles. And lively and cunningly doth he paint forth unto them the certainty of faith, when he biddeth the Colossians to be **grounded and firm** in the same. For faith is not like supposing or thinking, which is shaken with diverse and sundry motions: but it hath a firm steadfastness and constancy, which resisteth and beateth back all the engines of the devils. And therefore all the popish divinity will never give no not so much as a small taste of true faith: which holdeth as a certain and approved rule, that we must always doubt as well of the present state of grace, as that we shall persevere to the end. Afterward also he noteth the relation which is between faith and

the Gospel, where he saith that then the Colossians shall be firm in faith, if they be not made slip away from the hope of the Gospel: that is to say which shineth unto us by means of the Gospel. For where the Gospel is, there is hope of eternal salvation. But let us bear in mind that the sum of all is contained in Christ. Therefore in this place he commandeth to fly all doctrines which lead away from Christ, to the end that the minds of men may be occupied anywhere else. **Which you have heard.** Because the false Apostles also are accustomed proudly to boast the name of the Gospel, who rent and tear Christ in pieces: (and this is a cunning of Satan often used, falsely under the pretence of the Gospel to trouble the consciences, that the truth of the Gospel may be confused): therefore by name doth Paul avouch that this Gospel which the Colossians had heard, namely of Epaphras, is the natural, true, and undoubted Gospel, lest they should open their ears to contrary doctrines. He addeth moreover a confirmation, that it is the same that is preached over all the world. This is, I say, no vulgar or common confirmation, when they hear that they have the whole universal Church agreeing with them: and that they follow not any other kind of doctrine, than which the Apostles have in like manner taught, and is everywhere received. Ridiculous indeed is the boasting of the Papists, in that with this argument or reason they impugne our doctrine, because it is not allowed and ratified everywhere to be preached, (and) because we have few consenting to it. For if they would burst, they shall never take this from us, (namely) that we at this day deliver no other thing than that was preached aforetime by the Prophets and Apostles, and obediently received of the whole company of saints. Neither meant Paul that the Gospel should be approved by the consent of all times: so that

if it were rejected or refused, the authority thereof should stagger or be ready to fall. But he rather respected or considered that commandment of Christ, Mark **16.15**. Go ye, preach ye the Gospel to every creature, which dependeth of so many prophecies of the Prophets, which did denounce that the kingdom of Christ should be spread into all the world. What other thing then meant Paul by these words than that the Colossians were also watered with those living Waters, which springing from Jerusalem, should flow over all the World? We also, and that not in vain, nor without notable fruit and comfort, do boast that we have the self and same Gospel, which by the Edict and commandment of the Lord was preached amongst all peoples, which was received of all Churches, in the profession whereof have lived and died all Godly persons. Neither is the consent and agreement of the Church, which indeed is worthy so noble a Title, a vulgate and base help to defend us against so many assaults. And willingly do we subscribe unto Augustine, who with this argument principally doth confute the Donatists, for that they bring a Gospel unheard of and unknown unto all Churches, and truly it was deservedly: for if it be a true Gospel that is brought in place, and the same not approved nor ratified by any Church, it followeth that vain and false are so many promises, wherewith is foretold that the preaching of the Gospel should be carried into the whole world: and which affirm that the sons of God shall be gathered out of all peoples and countries, etc. But what do the Papists? They bidding the Prophets and Apostles farewell, and passing over the old Church, will have their defection or falling away from the Gospel be taken for the consent of the Catholic Church. What is like this? Therefore when we reason about the consent of the Church, let us return unto the Apostles

and their preaching: as Paul here doth. But lest any take too straitly the universal note [**all**]; Paul meaneth no other thing than that the Gospel was preached here and there far and wide. **Of which I am made.** He speaketh also of his own person, which was very needful. For we must always take heed, that we do not rashly thrust in ourselves into the office of teaching. Therefore doth he testify that the office was enjoined him, that he might procure unto himself right and authority. And surely he doth so join his Apostleship with their faith that they cannot refuse his doctrine, but by forsaking the Gospel which they have embraced.

24 Now rejoice I in sufferings for you, and I fulfill those things that want in the afflictions of Christ in my flesh, for his body which is the Church. 25 Whereof I am made a Minister, according to the dispensation of God, which is given me toward you, to fulfill the word of God. 26 A mystery hidden from the beginning of times and generations, which now is revealed unto his Saints. 27 Unto whom God would make known what the riches of the glory of this mystery in the Gentiles is, which is, Christ in you, the hope of glory. 28 Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may make stand every man perfect in Christ Jesus. 29 To which thing I also labour, striving according to his power, which worketh in me mightily.

**24 Now rejoice.)** Before he challenged authority unto himself by means of his calling: but now he uses prevention, lest the bands and persecutions which he sustained for the Gospel, should diminish anything of the honor of his Apostleship. For Satan even abuses these occasions also, to make the servants of God less set by. Besides that he emboldens them by his example, that they should not be afraid of persecutions: and he commends and sets

out his zeal, that he may be of the more authority. Moreover he does with no base token make known his love toward them, while he affirms that he willingly abides for their sakes the afflictions which he suffers. But some man will say, whereof arises this joy? Forsooth because he did see fruit coming thereof. As if he should say, The affliction for you is pleasant unto me: because I suffer it not in vain. As in the first Epistle to the Thessalonians, **3.6.7** he says he rejoices in all necessity and affliction, for their faith which he heard of, **I fulfill those things that are wanting:** I take the copulative to be put for the causal. For he yields a reason, why he is joyous while he suffers: **namely** because he is a partner therein with Christ, and nothing can be wished more blessed than this partnership. And he sets down a common consolation to all the godly, that in all sorrows and troubles, and specially if they abide any grief for the Gospel, they are partakers of the cross of Christ, that they may enjoy the fellowship of the blessed resurrection. Moreover he does affirm that so are fulfilled the things that are wanting in the afflictions of Christ. For as he speaks Romans **8.29.** whom God has elected, those also has he predestined, that they might be made like fashioned to that Image of Christ: to the end he might be the first begotten among the brethren. Besides that we know that the unity of the head and members is so great, that the name, of **Christ**, does sometimes comprehend the whole body. As in the first Epistle to the Corinthians chapter **12.** verse **12.** for whereas he in that place had speech concerning the Church, in the end he concludes that the matter is in Christ as it is in a man's body. As therefore Christ has once suffered in his own person, so does he daily suffer in his members: and by this means are fulfilled the passions and sufferings, which the Father by his decree and

purpose has allotted for his body [to suffer]. The second thinking hereof which ought to uphold and comfort our hearts in afflictions, [is] that it is so determined and appointed by the providence of God, that we bear a figure of Christ in bearing the cross and suffering affliction, and that the communicating, or partaking which we have with him, might stretch out itself to this point also. He adds also the third reason, namely that his sufferings are fruitful, and that not to a few only, but to the whole Church. Before he said he suffered for the Colossians. Now he avouches more, **namely** that the profit thereof reaches to the whole Church. Of which profit or fruit is said Philippians chapter **1.12**. What is more clear than this exposition, what is less forced and more plain? That Paul therefore is joyous in persecution, because he considers as elsewhere he writes, that the mortification of Christ is to be carried about in our body, that his life may be made manifest in us. Also unto Timothy, If we suffer with him: we shall also reign with him: if we die with him, we shall also live with him: our end then shall be happy and glorious. Secondly, that condition of state is not to be refused which God has ordained to his Church that the members of Christ may have an agreeable likeness and proportion with their head. Thirdly, that afflictions are willingly to be suffered, as being profitable unto all the Godly, and which do further the salvation of the Church, by setting forth the doctrine of the Gospel. But all these things set at naught and not regarded, the Papists have coined a new device, whereby they might prove their indulgences and pardons. They call Indulgences the forgiveness of sins which we have by the merits of Martyrs. For whereas they deny the forgiveness of sins to be free, but feign them to be redeemed with satisfactory works: whereas (now) satisfactions be not so many as they should

be, they call for help the blood of Martyrs, that it may avail in the sight of God to purge and cleanse with Christ's blood. And this mixture they call the Treasure of the Church: the Keys whereof afterward they commit to whom it pleases them. Neither are they ashamed to the maintenance of so cursed a blasphemy, to wrest this present place, as though Paul should here avouch his sufferings to be available to purge and wash away the sins of men. They urge the word, [ 〈 in non-Latin alphabet 〉 ], **afflictions**, as though Paul denied those things which Christ has suffered to be sufficient to the redemption of men. But there is no man that sees not, that Paul so speaks, because by the afflictions of the godly the body of the Church must be brought to her perfection, while the members are made like fashioned unto their head. And I should be afraid to be suspected to slander in rehearsing such monstrous matters, were it not that their own books be witnesses, that I charge them with nothing falsely. They urge this also, that Paul says he suffers for the Churches. It is a wonder, that none of the old Fathers once thought upon this sharp and subtle sense or exposition. For they all expound it as we do, That the saints suffer for the Church, because they confirm the faith of the Church. But the Papists gather thereof that the Saints are redeemers, because they shed their blood to wash away sins. But to the end the readers may thoroughly see their impudence and shamelessness: I grant that as well the martyrs suffered for the Church as Christ did, but after diverse ways: which I had rather express by Augustine's words than by mine own. For thus he writes in the **84.** treatise upon John, Although brethren we die for the brethren: yet no blood of a Martyr is shed for the remission of sins: which Christ has done for us. Neither has he in this point set forth unto us, what we should

follow, but for what we should rejoice. Also in the fourth Book to Bonifacius, As alone the Son of God was made the son of man that he might make us the sons of God: so also he alone took for us punishment without fault, that through him without desert we might obtain grace that was not our due. Unto which sayings, that of Leo the Bishop of Rome is like, that just have taken or received Crowns, but have not given any: and of the fortitude of the faithful are sprung examples of patience, and not gifts of righteousness. For why their deaths were singular, neither does any man pay another's debt with his end. That this sense is in Paul's words, is easily apparent by the text for he joins by and by after, that he suffers according to the dispensation committed unto him. And we know that the ministry not of redeeming, but of edifying the Church was committed unto him, and he does plainly by and by confess the same. And that is it also that that he writes to Timothy **2.** Epistle and **2.** Chapter verse **10**, that he abides all things for the elect's sake, that they may obtain salvation which is in Christ Jesus. And **2.** Corinthians **1.4.** that he suffers all things willingly for their comfort and salvation. Let the godly readers then learn to hate and detest these profane sophisters, who to the end they may smooth on a color upon their feigned devices, do so notoriously corrupt the Scriptures and falsify them.

**25 Whereof I am made a Minister.** Lo, in what respect he suffers for the Church: namely because he is a minister, not to give the price of redemption (as Augustine skilfully and godlily does speak it) but to preach. Furthermore otherwise does he now call himself a Minister of the Church, than he does **1.** Corinthians **2.4.** call himself the Minister of God, and a little before [the minister] of the Gospel. For the Apostles serve God and Christ to promote

the glory of them both: they serve the Church for the salvation thereof, and minister the Gospel itself. The reason of the Ministry therefore is diverse in those kinds of speakings: but the one of them cannot stand without the other. And he says, **toward you**; that they may know that the charge thereof belongs also unto him. **To fulfill the word.** He joins the end or final cause of his ministry: that the word of God might be effectual, which is done while it is obediently received. For this is the strength of the Gospel: that it may be the power of God into salvation to every one that believes, Romans **1.16**. God therefore by his Apostles gives unto his word force and effect. For although the preaching itself, whatsoever the hap be, is the fulfilling of the word: yet the fruit at last does show, that the seed was not cast abroad in vain.

**26 A mystery hidden.** A commendation of the Gospel, that it is a wonderful secret of God. Not without cause does Paul so often extol the Gospel with as great praises as he may. For he saw it was to the Jews a stumbling block, to the Greeks foolishness **1 Corinthians 1.23**. And we also at this day do see how greatly it is hated of hypocrites, how proudly it is despised of the world. Paul therefore to the end he may overthrow so wrongful and perverse judgments, does honorably extol the dignity of the Gospel, as often as occasion suffers him, and to that purpose he uses diverse arguments according to the circumstance of the place. Here he calls it an high or lofty secret which was unknown from times and generations: that is to say from the beginning of the world by so many circuits and turns of ages. And that he speaks of the Gospel appears. Romans **16.25**. Ephesians **3.9**. and such like places. But the reason why it is so called, is demanded. Some judge, because Paul touches by name the calling of the Gentiles, that this is the only

reason why it is so called. For that the Lord, as it were unhopèd for, has pourèd out his grace upon the Gentiles, whom he seemèd to have deprived for ever of the fellowship and partaking of eternal life. But to him that looks closely upon all things, it shall appear that this is a third reason, and not the only reason: as touching this present place, and that other to the Romans, which I have cited. For the first reason is, that whereas God had governèd his Church before the coming of Christ, under obscure and dark coverings, as well of words as of ceremonies, he suddenly shines out with great clearness by the doctrine of the Gospel. The second is, that whereas before, nothing was seen but outward figures, Christ was exhibitèd bringing with him the full truth, under which he was hid-den. The third is that which I spokè of, that all the whole World which hitherto was estrangèd from God, should be callèd into the hope of salvation, and unto all should be offerèd like inheritance of eternal life. The attentive consideration of these things shall constrain us to honor and reverence this mystery which Paul preachè: although it be contemptuously regardèd of the world, or else laughèd at. **Which now is revealèd.** Lest that any man should draw this word **Mystery**, to any other meaning, as though he spokè as yet of a thing hidden in a corner, or unknown, he now at last adds that it was publishèd, to the end it should be known to men. That therefore which by the nature thereof was a secret, was by the will of God made open and manifest. Wherefore there is no cause that the obscurity or darkness thereof should frighten us, seeing God has revealèd it. He adds, **to the Saints**, because the arm of Lord is not revealèd unto all, that they may understand his counsel.

**27 Unto whom God would.** Here he bridleth the boldness of men, that they suffer not themselves to be more wise or else to search after more than they ought: but that they learn to be content with this one thing, **namely** so it pleased God. For the will of God ought to be enough, and enough unto us a cause sufficient. Yet this is principally spoken to commend the grace of God: because Paul meaneth, that men in no wise did minister cause unto God that they should be partakers of this secret, while he teacheth that of his own accord he was moved hereunto, and because he would. For it is a common thing in Paul, to set the good pleasure of God opposite and against all the merits and outward causes of men. **What the riches are.** We must always mark how highly he speaketh about extolling the dignity of the Gospel. For he knew the unthankfulness of men to be such, that they would for all this securely contemn, or at the least set little by, this inestimable treasure and far passing grace of God. And therefore not being content with the word **Mystery**, he addeth **glory**, and the same not small or common. For what was more wonderful, than that the Gentiles, who so many years were drowned in death, that they might seem almost past hope, suddenly should be reckoned among the children of God, and receive the inheritance of salvation? **Which is Christ in you,** That which in generality he had said of the Gentiles, he now applieth even to the Colossians, that they may in themselves acknowledge more effectually, and embrace with the great reverence the grace of God. He saith then, **Which is Christ;** whereby he meaneth that all that secret is contained in Christ: and that all the riches of the heavenly wisdom are obtained when we have Christ: as more plainly he will a while after affirm. He addeth, **In you:** because now they possess Christ, from whom of late they

were so estranged as nothing could be more. Lastly he calleth Christ the **hope of glory**: that they may know that they want nothing to full and perfect blessedness after that they have obtained Christ. And this is a wonderful work of God, that in earthen and frail vessels, should abide the hope of heavenly glory.

**28 Whom we preach.)** In this place doth he set over and apply to his preaching, whatsoever afore he hath uttered touching the wonderful and honorable secret of God: and so he expoundeth that which already he had touched as concerning the dispensation committed unto him. For this is his purpose that he may set forth and garnish his Apostleship, and that he may procure authority to his doctrine. For after that he had highly extolled the Gospel, now he addeth, that that which he preacheth is a divine secret. But not without cause did he of late put in, that Christ is the sum of that secret: to the end they may know that nothing can be more fully and perfectly taught than Christ. The words which follow, have also great weight. He maketh himself a teacher of all men: whereby he meaneth that none excel so highly in wisdom, that they ought to exempt themselves from taking him to be their master: as if he should say, The Lord hath appointed me in a high place a public Preacher of his secret, that all the world without exception might learn of me.

**In all wisdom**, is as much as if he should uphold his doctrine to be such, as might bring a man to firm and perfect wisdom, and such as should want nothing. And that is it which by and by he addeth, whosoever they be that show themselves true disciples, they shall be made perfect. Look the **2nd** chapter to the Corinthians **1st** Epistle. And what can we require that is better than this, that he yieldeth unto us very high perfection. He repeateth, **In Christ**,

again, that they should have no will to know anything saving Christ alone. Out of this place also may we gather a definition of true wisdom: namely as by which we are made to stand perfect in the sight of God: and that in Christ, and not elsewhere.

**27 To which thing.)** With two sentences he augmenteth the glory of his Apostleship, and his doctrine. First he maketh mention of his earnest mind: which is a token of difficulty. For such things for the most part are most excellent which are most hard and uneasy [to be achieved]. The other is more firm, **namely** in that he reckoneth the power of God, to shine forth in his ministry. But he speaketh not of the success of his preaching only, (although therein also appeareth the blessing of God) but also of the efficacy of the Holy Ghost, in which God did show himself evidently. For justly doth he ascribe his endeavors and labors, when as he surmounted the measure [or ability] of man, unto the power of God, which he affirmeth to be seen to work mightily in this behalf.

Finis.

## CHAPTER 2



**1** And I will have you know how great a contention I have for you, and them which are at Laodicea, and whosoever have not seen my face in the flesh. **2** That their hearts may receive comfort when they are knit together in love, and into all the riches of the certainty of understanding, into the knowledge of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ. **3** In whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and understanding. **4** And this say I unto you, lest any body should deceive you with persuading speech. **5** For although I am absent in body, yet in spirit am I with you, rejoicing and seeing your order, and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ.

**AND I will have you know.)** He testifies his love toward them, to the end he may have the more credit and authority. For willingly do we believe those whom we know to be careful for our salvation. Neither is it a common or vulgar sign of love for that he was careful for them in the midst of death: that is to say, when he was in hazard of his life. And to the end he may the more set forth the vehemency of his diligence and care, he calls it a Contention or Strife. I reprehend not Erasmus for that he has translated it Care or Carefulness: and yet the force of the Greek Verb is to be noted: because [ 〈 in non-Latin alphabet 〉 ] is put, whereas there is con-

tention or resisting. With the same reason he confirms, his ministry to belong unto them. For from whence came so earnest a cogitation or minding of their salvation, but because the Apostle of the Gentiles ought with love and care to embrace yea even those whom he knew not? And because commonly there is no love amongst those that are not acquainted, he abases the knowledge that is gotten by sight, when he says, **Whosoever have not seen my face in the flesh**, For among the servants of God there is another sight, than is that which is of the flesh, which wins love. Because it is almost by common consent allowed of, that the first Epistle to Timothy was written from Laodicea: therefore certain allot this Laodicea, whereof Paul makes mention, unto Galatia: whereas that other was the metropolitan or mother city of Phrygia Paratiana. But unto me it seems more likely to be true, that that is a corrupt and faulty inscription: as in his place shall be noted.

**2 That their hearts may receive comfort.** Now he declares what he wishes unto them: and he shows an affection which is truly Apostolic. For he affirms that no other thing is so dear unto him, as that they be knit together in faith and love. He shows therefore that he was moved with no preposterous desire, (as in some it happens) to take upon him so great care for the Colossians and others: but for that the manner of his office did so require. **Comfort** is taken in this place for the true quietness and tranquillity wherein they rest or repose themselves. He affirms that then at last they shall obtain the same, **if they be knit together in love** and faith. Hereby appears where **summum bonum** the chiefest felicity is to be placed, and in what things it consists: namely while we agreeing together into one faith, may be also joined together in mutual charity: this I say is the perfect joy of a Godly heart: that is

the blessed life. And as charity or love is here commended of the effect, in that it sheds true joy into the minds of the godly: so again the cause thereof is showed, where he says. **Into all fullness of understanding.** For this is the bond of holy unity, even the truth of God, while we embrace the same with one consent. For peace and concord with men flows out of that fountain. **The riches of the certainty of understanding.** Because most men being content with a small taste, have nothing but a confused and vanishing knowledge, he does by name set down the riches of understanding: by which word he means a full and pithy understanding and perceiving, and withal he admonishes, that according to the measure of understanding, we must profit and go forward in love and charity. By the word, **certainty**, he shows the difference between faith, and thinking or supposing. For he truly and in deed does know God, that wavers not or staggers not by doubting: but that abides in a steadfast and constant persuasion. Paul calls this constancy and steadfastness oft time [ 〈 in non-Latin alphabet 〉 ]: which word also he uses here in this place, and joins it continually with faith: so that certainly it can no more be plucked away from it, than heat or light can be from the Sun. Devilish then is the opinion and doctrine of the Schoolmen, for that, in taking away **certainty**, they put in place thereof a moral conjecture (as they term it). **Into the knowledge of the mystery.** This piece is to be read appositively for he expounds what that knowledge is whereof he makes mention: namely that it is no other thing but the knowledge of the Gospel. For the false Apostles also do set out their deceits with the title of wisdom. but Paul retains the Children of God within (the compass) of the Gospel alone: that they may desire to know nothing else. Why he uses the word **Mystery** for the Gospel is already

said. But hereof let us learn that the Gospel can be received, by faith alone, and not by reason, nor yet by the thorough sight of mans mind or understanding: because otherwise it is a thing hid- den from us. I interpret **Mystery of God**, passively, as in which God revealed. For straight after he joins, **And of the Father, and of Christ**, with which piece he means that God cannot be known, but in Christ, as again the Father must needs be known, where Christ is known. for John affirms both, He that has the Son has the Father also, he that has not the Son, has not the Father nei- ther. Therefore whosoever think they know any thing of God with- out Christ, they forge to themselves an Idol in stead of God. As also on the contrary side he knows not Christ, who is not brought unto him by the father, and so embraces whole God in him. It is the while a place worthy to be thought on to prove the Godhead of Christ, and that he is of one essence with God. For after he has spoken afore of the knowledge of God, he does by and by apply it as well to the Son as to the Father. whereof it follows, that the Son is God equal with the Father.

**3 In whom are**, or, **In which are**, The piece **in quo** (which may be Englished **in whom** or else **in which**) either has relation unto all that which is comprehended, touching the knowledge of the mystery; or else to that only which went next before, that is, Christ. Although there is small difference between the one and the other, yet the latter pleases me better, and is more allowed and used. The sense is then, that in Christ lie hidden all the Treasures of Wisdom and knowledge. whereby he declares that we are perfectly wise, if we know Christ truly: in so much that it is madness, to wish to know any thing saving him. For seeing that the Father has made manifest himself wholly in him: he means to be wise

without God, which is not content with Christ alone. If it like you to expound it of the Mystery, the meaning shall be, that all the wisdom of the Godly shall be included in the Gospel, whereby God is revealed unto us in his Son. And he says that the **treasures are hidden**, because they appear not out to be seen in great glittering and gallant show, but they lie as it were hidden rather under the humility and baseness of the cross, and under simplicity which is contemptible. For the preaching of the cross (as we have it to the Corinthians) is always foolishness unto the world. Between Wisdom and Understanding in this place I put no great difference, because doubling of a thing so much avails to augment the matter, as if he should have said there can be found else where no jot of knowledge, instruction, learning, or wisdom.

**4 This I say lest any body.** Because the devices and inventions of men (as afterward we shall see) have a show or kind of wisdom, the minds of the Godly must be prevented by this persuasion that the only knowledge of Christ is enough and enough. And surely this is the Key which may lock up the gate against all wicked errors. For what was the cause that men wrapped themselves in so many ungodly opinions, in so many idolatries, in so many foolish speculations, but because they despised the simplicity of the Gospel, and were bold to aspire higher? Whatsoever errors then is in the Papacy, they may thank this ungratefulness of it, that being not content with Christ alone, they gave themselves to strange doctrines. Well therefore does the Apostle to the Hebrews, while he minded to exhort the faithful that they should not suffer themselves to be carried away with strange or new doctrines, use this foundation first of all, Christ yesterday, and today, and for ever. with which word he signifies that they are out of danger who abide

in Christ and that they are laid open to all deceits and subtleties, which think not Christ sufficient. So Paul here wills, that whosoever he is that will not be deceived, must be armed with that principle, (namely) It is not lawful for a Christian man, to savor any thing but Christ. Although whatsoever shall be brought afterward have never so beautiful a color, yet nothing will be done, it shall work nothing. To be brief there shall be no likelihood nor persuading speech which shall bend but even the breadth of a finger the hearts of them who have addicted their minds to Christ. A place truly to be commended highly. for as he has prevented or stopped all wicked opinions and doctrines, who has taught men to know nothing beside Christ; so the same is the way, whereby we may at this day destroy and hurl down the whole Papacy, as that which evidently appears compact and made out of the ignorance of Christ.

**5 For although in body I am absent, yet in spirit am I with you.** Lest any man should object, that warning or admonishing were scant seasonable from a place so far distant, he says that his love toward them causes that he is present with them in spirit, and judges, as it were of the present case, what is expedient for them. And by praising the estate they presently were in, he warns them that they slide not nor bend therefrom. **Rejoicing**, says he, **and seeing**, that is to say, because I see. For the copulative has the force of a causal, which is much used of the Latines and Greeks. It is as much as if he should say, Go on as you have begun, for I know that hitherto you have held a right course, for the distance of the place hinders not that I should not see you with the eyes of my mind. **Your order and steadfastness.** He puts two things, in which consists the perfection of the Church, **namely** order amongst themselves, and faith in Christ. Signifying by order as

well consent, as, well ordered manners, and the whole discipline. He praises their faith by their constancy and steadfastness, declaring that it is a vain shadow of faith, whereas the mind wavers and alters between diverse opinions.

6 As therefore you have taken on you Christ Jesus the Lord, walk you in him. 7 Rooted in him, and built, and confirmed in faith, as you are taught, abounding in the same with thanksgiving.

**6 As.)** Unto praise he joineth exhortation, in which he teacheth that it will nothing profit them that they have once received Christ, except they abide continually in him. Furthermore in that the false Apostles allege the name of Christ, to deceive and beguile: he twice preventeth this danger while he biddeth them go forward as they had been taught, and as they had received Christ. For with these words he admonisheth, that so constantly must they stick to the doctrine which Epaphras delivered and they embraced, that they take heed to themselves for (admitting) any other doctrine and faith. As Isaiah said, chapter **30.21**. This is the way, walk in it. And truly so must we use the matter that the truth of the Gospel, after it is manifested unto us, must be unto us a brazen wall, to fend off all deceits. And with three Metaphors, doth he set out what manner constancy of faith he requireth of them. The first is in the word **Walk**. For he compareth the pure doctrine of the Gospel, as they learned it, to a certain and plain way: which whosoever keepeth, shall be out of danger of error and going awry. He exhorteth them then if they will not go out of the way, that they turn not out of the course or walk which they have begun. The second metaphor is taken of trees. For as a tree spreading his roots deep in the ground hath sustentation and defense enough to abide all the forces of winds and storms: so if any be fixed in Christ

deeply and thoroughly, as in a strong root, he can by no subtle devices of Satan be hurled down from a right state. Contrariwise if any do not groundfast his roots in Christ, he will easily be carried about with every blast of doctrine, no otherwise than a tree that is defensed with no roots, at the first blast is turned up. The third metaphor is of building. For a house which is not supported with a foundation, will quickly fall. The like happeneth to them who lean upon other shores than Christ: or else who are not strongly founded in him, but have the house of their faith as it were doubtful and hanging by means of their weakness and lightness. These two things are to be marked in the words of the Apostle: **namely** that the firmness of them who rest upon Christ must be unmovable: and their course or proceeding never a whit doubtful, or endangered unto error. And this is an excellent praise of faith by the effect. Secondly, so long must we profit in Christ, as until we have taken deep rooting in him. Whereof we may gather readily, that they do only go astray by byways and are disquieted hither and thither, that hold not Christ.

**7 And confirmed in faith.** He repeateth the selfsame without figure, which he had spoken by metaphors: namely the going forward on the way, the defencing of the root, and shoring or upholding of the foundation, to be the firmness and constancy of faith. And note, in that they were well taught, this reason was set forth unto them, to the end that safely and surely they might fasten their root in that faith which they had tried. **Abounding.** He will not only have them stand unmovable, but increase every day more and more. Whereas he addeth, **With thanksgiving,** he will always have them mindful whence faith itself cometh: that they be not puffed up with arrogancy, but rather that they repose them-

selves with fear in the gift of God. And certainly unthankfulness is very often in fault, why the light of the Gospel, as also other the graces of God are taken from us.

8 Take heed lest any rob you through Philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the elements of the world, and not after Christ. 9 Because in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. 10 And ye are fulfilled in him, who is the head of all principality and power: 11 In whom ye are also circumcised with Circumcision not made with hand by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by Circumcision I say of Christ. 12 Being buried together with him by Baptism: in whom also ye are risen by the faith of the efficacy of God, who hath raised him from the dead.

**8 Take heed lest any.** Again it teacheth them against what poison the preservative which he gave them ought to be taken. For although that [I mean a firm faith] be a common remedy against all the deceits of the devil, as I have said: yet had it at that time a peculiar use among the Colossians, unto which it ought to be applied. Take heed, saith he, lest any rob you. He useth a very fit term. For he alludeth unto thieves, who when they cannot violently steal the whole flock, then do they by subtlety drive away some of the Cattle. So maketh he the church Christ's sheepfold, and the hurdles or closures hereof, the pure doctrine of the Gospel. Us then that are the sheep of Christ, he declareth to rest in safety, as long as we hold the unity of faith, and he maketh the false Apostles like to Thieves which carry us away from the folds. Wilt thou then be reckoned in the flock of Christ, wilt thou abide in his folds? Bend not the breadth of a nail from the purity of doctrine. For undoubtedly Christ will do the duty of a good Pastor Shepherd with shielding us, if we will hear his voice only, and refuse the voices of

others. To be brief, the **10.** chapter of John, is an exposition of this present place. **By Philosophy.** Because many have utterly thought that Paul in this place doth condemn Philosophy, it must be defined what he meaneth thereby. In my judgment he understandeth, whatsoever men do invent of their own heads, while they will have a smack of their own sense: and that not without some fair pretence or color of reason, that in show it may be probable. For there is not much ado about rejecting the inventions of men, when they have no commendation or setting out: but about them that deceive the minds with a deceitful opinion of wisdom. Or if any had rather have it spoken at a word, Philosophy is nothing else but a persuading manner of speech, which insinuateth or shouldereth in itself by fair and plausible reasons into the minds of men. Such I grant shall all the sly reasons of Philosophers be, if they put to aught of their own to the pure word of God. Therefore Philosophy shall be no other thing but a corrupting of pure doctrine, if it be mingled with Christ. But let us bear in mind that Paul under the name of Philosophy, hath only condemned all forged doctrines, which spring out of man's brain, whatsoever color or show of reason (besides) they have. That which followeth next of **vain deceit**, I do thus interpret, Beware of Philosophy, which is nothing else but a vain deceit. **After the tradition of men.** He doth more nighly show what Philosophy he misliketh: and also in two respects he reproveth it of vanity: because it is not according to Christ, but according to the rules of men, and is placed in the elements of the World. Note that he setteth Christ opposite and against both the Elements of the World, and also the Traditions of men. Whereby he meaneth, that whatsoever is forged in the brain of man, is not agreeable unto Christ, who is appointed to us an

only Teacher from the Father, to retain us in the simplicity of the Gospel. And that (simplicity) is corrupted even with a little leaven of man's traditions. He meaneth in like manner that all those doctrines are contrary unto Christ which place in the elements of the world the worshipping of God, which we know by the rule of Christ to be spiritual: which doctrines also entangle the minds of men with those trifles and toys, whereas Christ calleth us straight unto him. But what calleth he **Elements of the world?** No doubt but he calleth ceremonies so. For by and by after for an Example he bringeth forth one kind of them, namely Circumcision. And why he so calleth them, two reasons are usually brought. Some think it to be a Metaphor: so that elements are rudiments meet for Children, which bring not to perfection of doctrine. Some take them in a proper signification or meaning for outward things and such as are subject to corruption, which serve nothing to the kingdom of God. The former exposition doth more like me as also Galatians **4.3.**

**9 Because in him dwelleth.** The reason why those elements of the world, which are the traditions of men, agree not with Christ. For they are additions to supply defect or want, as they say. But in Christ is perfection, to which nothing can be added. Therefore whatsoever men mingle in of their own heads, it fighteth with the nature of Christ because it condemneth him of imperfection, and insufficiency. This argument alone is enough to confute all the feigned devices of the Papists. For to what end belong they but to make up and bring to perfection, that which is begun in Christ? But this reproach against Christ is not to be borne. They say indeed that they add nothing to Christ: because they (I mean elements) are a piece of Christianity which they have tied or patched to the Gospel. But they escape not with that kind of Cavil.

For Paul speaketh not of an imagined Christ but of a Christ preached, who hath revealed himself by a certain and sure doctrine. Furthermore where he saith that, **The fullness of the Godhead dwelleth in Christ**, he meaneth no other thing but that God wholly is found in him: so that he, longeth after a thing that is better and more excellent than God, who is not content with Christ alone. The sum is that God hath exhibited himself unto us in Christ fully and wholly. The interpreters do sundry ways expound the Adverb, **bodily**. I doubt not but that it is put unproperly, for substantially. For he setteth opposite this manifestation which we have in Christ, unto all other manifestations that ever were. For God hath often exhibited himself unto men, but that in part (only). But in Christ he wholly communicateth himself unto us. Otherwhere also he hath manifested himself, but in figures, or power and grace. But in Christ he hath essentially appeared unto us. So is fulfilled that, **1. John 2.23**. He that hath the Son, hath also the Father. For they have God truly present, and altogether have the fruition of him, who have Christ in profession.

**10 And ye are fulfilled in him.** He addeth that that perfect essence of the Godhead which is in Christ, in this respect doth avail us, that we should be also perfect in him: as if he should say, Whereas God wholly hath his abiding in Christ, therefore it is [that he hath so], that we obtaining him, may possess in him a full and sure possession. Therefore they do double injury to God, who content not themselves in Christ alone. For beside that that they derogate from the glory of God, by desiring and seeking after somewhat above his perfection: they are also unthankful, in that they seek elsewhere that which already they have in Christ. Yet Paul meaneth not, that Christ his perfection is poured over into us, but

that it is in him wherewith we may be fulfilled, so that nothing any more shall be lacking unto us. **Which is the head.** He hath again put in this piece for cause of the Angels, meaning that the Angels also shall be ours if we have Christ. But hereof afterward. But in the mean while we must think on this, that we are up and down enclosed with grates, lest our faith should step but even a little aside from Christ.

**11 In whom also ye are circumcised.** Hereof appeareth that he had controversy with the false Apostles who mingled the law with the Gospel, and by that means they made Christ as it were having two shapes or fashions. And he nameth one kind for example sake. He proveth the Mosaical circumcision not only superfluous, but also quite contrary to Christ, because it destroyeth the spiritual circumcision of Christ. For to this end was Circumcision given unto the fathers, that it might be the figure of a thing absent. They therefore that keep still the figure now that Christ is come, do deny that to be fulfilled which doth figure. Let us remember that the outward circumcision is here compared with spiritual (circumcision) no otherwise than the figure with the truth. A figure is of a thing absent. It doth then put away the presence of the very thing itself. This is it then that Paul contendeth for, because in Christ is fulfilled that which was shadowed in circumcision made with hand: (and) that now there is of the same neither profit nor use. Then he pronounceth it to be the Circumcision of Christ, which is made in the heart: and therefore that that outward circumcision is not now in any wise required: because that whereas the thing itself is extant, that shadowing sign vanisheth, as having no place but where the thing itself is away. **By putting of the body.** He calleth that mass or lump, which is compact of all vices, a Body, by a

fine Metaphor. For as we are closed about with our bodies: so also are we enwrapped on every side with a stack or heap of vices. And as the body is framed and compact of diverse members, all and singular which have their proper actions and offices: so out of that heap of corruption all sins do pour out as members and parts of the whole. There is the like manner of speech Romans **6:13**. He taketh flesh, after his manner for nature corrupted. The **body of the sins of the flesh**, then is the old man with his works. Only in the manner of speaking there is a diversity: because properly in this place he blazeth out the mass of vices, which spring from nature being corrupted. This he saith we obtain by Christ, that regeneration wholly is his benefit. He it is that circumciseth the foreskin of our heart, that is, which mortifieth all the concupiscences of the flesh, not with his hand, but by his Spirit. Therefore in him is extant and manifest the truth and very thing of the figure.

**12 Being buried with him by Baptism.** He declareth as yet more plainly the manner of spiritual circumcision, namely for that we being buried with Christ, are partakers of his death. He doth by name teach that we obtain that by Baptism that it may the better appear, that there is no use of Circumcision under the kingdom of Christ. For some might else object, Why putteth thou away Circumcision under this pretence, because the effect thereof is in Christ? Objection: was not Abraham circumcised also spiritually? And yet this hindered not but that he should add a sign to the thing? Outward Circumcision therefore is not superfluous, although the inward (Circumcision) be given by Christ. Answer: Paul preventeth such manner of objection, by making mention of Baptism. Christ, saith he, worketh in us spiritual Circumcision, that old sign which was in force under Moses not coming in place,

but Baptism. Baptism then is the sign of the thing exhibited and plainly set out which Circumcision did figure while it was absent and away. It is an argument taken of the government which God hath ordained. For they that hold still circumcision, devise a way of dispensation and government clean contrary to that which God hath appointed. In that he saith, We are buried with Christ, is more than to be crucified (with him). For burying setteth out a perpetual progress or continuance of mortification. Whereas he teacheth this is done by Baptism, as also he doth, Romans **6:4**, he speaketh as he is wont, attributing efficacy to the Sacrament, lest in vain it should signify that which is not. By Baptism then we are buried with Christ, because Christ doth therewithal effectually perform mortification which in Baptism he signifieth: that the thing may be joined with the sign. **In whom ye have also risen.** He amplifieth the grace which we obtain in Christ, which goeth far before circumcision. We are not only grafted into the death of Christ, saith he, but we rise again also in newness of life. Wherefore the more injurious are they against Christ, which assay to bring us again to Circumcision. And he addeth, **By the faith.** For verily by it we take hold of that which is offered unto us in Baptism. But what faith? (Forsooth) of his Efficacy or working. Whereby he meaneth that faith hath here foundation in the power of GOD. But because Faith roameth nor strayeth not about in a confused and (as they say) an indefinite contemplation of the power of God: he setteth out what efficacy they ought to respect, namely that wherewith he hath raised up Christ from the dead. And he taketh it as granted; because it is impossible that the faithful should be pulled away from their head, that that power which hath showed forth itself in Christ, should in like manner be proved out upon them all.

13 And ye when ye were dead by sins, and in the uncircumcision of the flesh, hath he together quickened with him, by forgiving you all your sins. 14 And having put out the handwriting in decrees which was against us, which was contrary to us, and that hath he taken out of the way being fastened to the Cross. 15 Spoiling principalities and powers hath led them along openly, triumphing over them in it.

**13 And ye when ye were dead.** That which in general wise he hath discoursed, he admonished the Colossians, to consider in themselves: which is a very effectual manner of teaching. Furthermore seeing they were Gentiles when they were converted unto Christ, he thereby warneth them how strange a thing it were to skip over from Christ to the ceremonies of Moses. **Ye were,** saith he, **dead in uncircumcision.** This word may be taken either in a proper signification or else metaphorically. If you take it properly, the sense shall be, **Uncircumcision** is a symbol or badge of estrangement from God, for where the covenant of grace is not, there is uncleanness, and thereof cometh the curse and damnation. But God hath called you from uncircumcision to himself: and therefore from death. So should he make uncircumcision not the cause of death: but a testimony and witness that they were strangers from God. And we know that men live not any otherwise, than while they cleave to their God, who alone is their life. Whereof it followeth that all the ungodly, while they seem in their own conceits to be very lively and fresh yet are they spiritually dead. By this means this place would agree with the second chapter to the Ephesians verse **11**, where it is said, You must remember that in time past when you were Gentiles, and called uncircumcision of that Circumcision which is made with hand in the flesh, at

that time you were without Christ, separated from the government of Israel, and strangers from the promises. But Metaphorically it should be an allusion to natural uncircumcision: but yet Paul should speak here of the stubbornness of man's heart against God, and of nature distained with naughty affections or motions. I rather hold the former exposition, because it agreeth better with the text. For Paul maketh mention that uncircumcision was no hindrance but that they should be partakers of the life of Christ. Whereof it followeth, that Circumcision derogateth or taketh from the grace of God, that which already they had obtained. In that he ascribeth death unto uncircumcision, he doth it not as unto the cause, but as to the badge or mark [thereof]. As he doth in that other place to the Ephesians, which I have alleged. And it is often used in the Scripture, by privation of the sign, to note the privation of the thing, as Genesis **3:22**, Lest haply Adam eat of the fruit of life, and live. For the tree did not give life: but after it was taken away it was the sign or badge of death. Paul in this place hath briefly set forth both, he saith they were dead through sins; this is the cause: for sins do separate us from God. He putteth to, **In the uncircumcision of the flesh**. This was the outward uncleanness, a testimony of spiritual death. **By forgiving you**, God indeed doth not quicken us by only forgiveness of sins: but in this place he doth peculiarly make mention thereof: because free reconciliation with God, which overthroweth righteousness of works, doth specially belong to the present cause, wherein he discourseth about abrogating and doing away of ceremonies as more largely he hath treated in the Epistle to the Galatians. For the false Apostles in establishing ceremonies, did bind the consciences with a snare, from which Christ hath loosed them.

**14 Having put out the handwriting.** Now does he hand to hand cope with the false Apostles. For this was the state of the case, Whether the keeping of ceremonies were necessary under the kingdom of Christ. But Paul contends, that ceremonies were abolished, and that he may prove it, he compares them to a handwriting, whereby God holds us as it were bound, so that we cannot deny our guiltiness or debt. Now he says we have so been delivered from guiltiness, that the handwriting also has been put out, that it should not be extant in memory. For we know that in all things while the handwriting remains the bond or Obligation is of force: but after the handwriting is razed, or torn in pieces, the debtor is free and acquitted. Whereof it follows that all they do diminish the benefit of Christ, which as yet urge ceremonies: as though we were not by him acquitted and set free. For they restore to the handwriting the force which it had, that they may still keep us endangered. This therefore is a true reason in divinity, to prove the abolishing of ceremonies: because if Christ has fully and perfectly redeemed us from guiltiness and out of danger, he ought also to take away the memorial of the Obligation, whereby the consciences may be at peace, and quiet in the sight of God. For these two are annexed and tied together. Whereas the interpreters do expound this place diversely, there is none of them does satisfy me. Some do think that Paul speaks simply of the moral Law: but untruly. For Paul is accustomed to call that portion (of the law) which is placed in ceremonies, decrees: as in the Epistle to the Ephesians, and a little after. Specially the place to the Ephesians chapter **2** verse **15** manifestly proves, that Paul in this place speaks of Ceremonies. And therefore better do they which restrain it to Ceremonies: but in this point they also are deceived, that they add not a reason why it

is called a hand-writing, or rather they allege or assign a cause that is contrary to the true cause indeed: neither yet do they aptly apply this similitude to the Text. But the (true) reason is, that all the ceremonies of Moses had with them some confession of guiltiness, which bound the followers of them as it were with a more straight band before the judgment of God. As for example, What other things were the washings, but a testimony of filth and uncleanness: As oft as any sacrifice was offered up, did not the people that stood by, behold in the same an image or representation of their own death? For when men did place in their stead a harmless beast, they confessed that they themselves deserved that death. To be brief, look how many rites or ceremonies there were, so many shows of men's guiltiness, and handwritings of obligation were there. If any object and say, that they were sacraments of the grace of God: as at this day Baptism and the Eucharist are unto us: the answer is easy. For two things are to be considered in the old ceremonies: that which was agreeable unto the time, and then that which led men unto the kingdom of Christ. Whatsoever was then done, did show forth nothing else but an obligation or binding. Grace was after a sort suspended and deferred, till the coming of Christ; not that the fathers were excluded from the same, but they had no present show thereof in their ceremonies. For they did see nothing beside the blood of beasts in sacrifices: and in their washings they did see nothing but water. Therefore as concerning the present view or show, guiltiness remained: nay rather the ceremonies themselves did seal up and sign guiltiness. After this manner also speaks the Apostle in all the Epistle to the Hebrews: because he sets Christ directly opposite and against the ceremonies. But how is it now? The Son of God by his death has not only deliv-

ered us from condemnation of death, but to the end our acquitting and discharge might be the more certain, he has abrogated and done away those ceremonies, that there should appear no remembrance or monument of Obligation or binding. This is full and perfect liberty, that Christ by his blood has wiped out not only our sins, but every handwriting that might testify that we were guilty and endangered unto God. Erasmus in his translation has disordered and confounded the text set down by Paul, while he thus places it, Which was contrary to us by decrees. Therefore hold fast, as it is true and natural, this reading which I have set down. **He has taken out of the way, Having fastened it to his Cross,** He shows the way whereby Christ has razed the handwriting. For as he fastened to his cross our curse and malediction, our sins, and pains also due to us: so has he done in like manner that bondage of the Law, and whatsoever belongs to the binding of our consciences. For being fastened to the cross he took all things upon him: and therefore he bound them, that they might have no more right and power over us.

**15 Spoiling principalities.** Without doubt he means the Devils, unto whom the Scripture signs these parts, in that they accuse us before the presence of God. But Paul says they are unarmed, so that they can bring forth nothing against us, the witness and testimony of our guiltiness being done away. And he adds this by name, whereby he may declare that the victory which he has gotten for himself and us over Satan, is deformed and blotted of the false apostles: and that we are bereft of the commodity thereof, whenever they (go about to) restore the old ceremonies. For if our liberty be the spoil, that Christ has taken away from the Devil, what do others who will bring us back into bondage, but restore

unto Satan the spoils, whereof he was clean stripped? **Triumphing over them in it.** The Greek speech will abide that we may read **In himself.** Nay rather the greater number of books have [ 〈 in non-Latin alphabet 〉 ] with an aspiration: but the circumstance of the place does altogether require, that we read it otherwise. For that which should but coldly be spoken of Christ, is aptly and freely referred to the cross. For as before he compared the cross to a noble Monument of victory, or to the pomp of a triumph, in which Christ led about his enemies: so also now does he make it like to a triumphant chariot, in which he has been seen over all the company. For although in the cross there was nothing but a curse: yet it was so swallowed up through the power of the Son of God, that after a sort it put on a new quality and nature. For no judgment seat was so honorable, no princely throne so stately, no pomp of triumph so notable, no chariot so lofty, as that gallows-tree on which Christ has subdued death, and the devil the prince of death, and therefore has utterly trodden them under his feet.

16 Therefore let no man judge you either in meat, or in drink, or in a piece of a holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbaths. 17 Which are a shadow of things to come, but the body is of Christ. 18 Let no man take from you the victory, meaning to do it in lowliness and in the service of Angels, thrusting himself into those things which he has not seen, in vain being puffed up by the mind of his flesh. 19 And not holding the Head, whereof the whole body being served or aided and knit together by joints and knittings, grows with the increase of God.

**16 Therefore let no man.** That which afore he spoke of Circumcision, he now extends to the difference of meats and days. For Circumcision was the first order or degree toward the observ-

ing of the law: and then other things followed. **To judge**, in this place signifies to make one guilty of a fault, or to lay on religion, so that we may not any longer be free. He denies it then to be in the power of men, to make us subject to the observation of rites and ceremonies which Christ by his death has taken away, and has plucked our necks from the yoke of them, that we should not suffer ourselves to be enwrapped with the laws which they make. And he does covertly set Christ opposite and against all men, lest any should so boldly and rashly extol himself, that he would assay to take away that which was given by him. **In a piece of a holiday.** Some take [ 〈 in non-Latin alphabet 〉 ] for participation or partaking. Chrysostom supposes that therefore he said a Piece, because they kept not all the festival days or holidays: neither yet did they exactly keep holiday according to the prescription and appointment of the law: which (prescription) was put out. Consider whether it may not be taken for **segregating** or **parting**. For they that make difference of days, do as it were divide one day from another. Such partition became the Jews, that they should keep holy the days commanded by parting them from others. Among Christians such dividings are ended. But some man will say, We do as yet retain some observation of days. I answer, We keep not days, as though there were any religion in holidays, or as though it were not lawful then to labor: but to have regard to policy or government and order, and not to the days. And that is it which by and by he joins.

**17 Which are a shadow of things to come.)** Therefore does he set at freedom Christians from keeping them, because they were shadows at what time Christ as yet after a sort was absent. For he sets shadows opposite to revealing or manifesting: and ab-

sence or being away to exhibiting or showing forth. They then which as yet follow those shadows, do even like, as if one would consider the shape or fashion of a man by his shadow, when as he has the man himself before him to look upon. For Christ is already made apparent unto us: and so we have the fruition of him as being present. **The body**, says he, **is of Christ**, that is to say in Christ. For the substance of those things, which the ceremonies in time past did figure, is set forth unto us before our eyes in Christ: for that he contains in himself, whatsoever they signed or signified to come to pass. Therefore either he overthrows the manifest showing or manifestation of Christ, or else robs Christ of his power and virtue, and as it were makes him empty which calls back ceremonies to be used again. Therefore if any man in the world shall usurp unto himself the office of a judge in this behalf let us not obey him: seeing that Christ the lawful judge has acquitted us and set us free. For where he says **Let no man judge you**, he speaks not to the false Apostles: but he forbids the Colossians that they put their necks under an unjust yoke. Indeed of itself to abstain from swine's flesh, hurts nothing at all: but the binding to do it is pernicious and hurtful, because it makes void the grace of Christ. If any man will demand, What shall we think then of our Sacraments? I answer that they differ far from the ceremonies. For as Painters do not paint forth at the first draught the Image with lively colors or picture like, but first do draw unwrought and diffused lines out with a coal: so under the law the representation or manifesting of Christ, was unpolished and as it were of the first hand: but in our Sacraments he is beheld as set forth lively. Although Paul did fetch the matter further off: for he sets opposite the bare sight of the shadow against the firmness of the body: and

admonishes that it is the token of a doting or frantic person, to take hold of vain shadows, when he may with his hands handle the firm and solid body. Furthermore our Sacraments do so figure Christ being absent as touching sight and distance of place, that they testify that he was once exhibited and showed, and now also do offer him to be enjoyed. They are not therefore bare shadows: but rather badges and tokens of the presence of Christ. For they contain that Yea and Amen of all the promises of God, which is manifested in Christ.

**18 Lest any take from you.)** He alludes to rumors of wrestlers, unto whom the victory is on this condition appointed, if they faint not in the midst of their course, or after they have begun to wrestle. He puts them in mind then that the false Apostles go about nothing else but to take from them the victory: because they lead them away from the rightness of their course. Whereof it follows that they are to be shunned no otherwise than most contagious plagues. And the place is diligently to be marked: that all they who lead us away from the simplicity of Christ, do craftily bereave us of the reward of supernal calling. **Meaning in humility.** Something must be understood, and therefore in the Text I have put in To do it. For he shows a kind of danger, that they ought to take heed of, as if he should say, They mean to deceive you of the victory, whatsoever they are that under the color of humility and lowliness, commend unto you the service of Angels. For this they purpose, that you leaving the only mark should wander clean out of the way. I read **lowliness and the service of Angels**, joining them together. For the latter of these follows the former. As at this day the Papists, while they devise like Philosophers about worshipping of Saints, do pretend the same. For they gather their reason

from the debasing or humbling of man, therefore we must (say they) seek Mediators, that may help us. But therefore has Christ humbled and debased himself, that we may go straight unto him, although we be miserable and wretched sinners. I know that **service of Angels**, is otherwise expounded of many: namely for such service as is delivered unto men by Angels. For the Devil under this title does always set out his jugglings and deceits. The Pope at this day boasts all the trifles, wherewith he counterfeits the pure service of God, to be revelations. Even likewise in old time did the Clergy avouch to be by hand given them of the Angels, whatsoever superstitions they like lying Merchants told of or taught. And so they think that in this place are reprehended all feigned and forged services or worshippings, which are falsely commended and set forth under the Authority of Angels, but in my judgment he does rather reprehend the device or lie of serving the Angels. For which respect so diligently did he enforce himself to this even by and by after the beginning of the Epistle, that he brought the Angels under subjection, that they might not darken the brightness of Christ. To be short as he in the first Chapter made his way to take away ceremonies: so did he in like manner to take away all impediments and lets which pluck us away from Christ alone. Among which is the service of Angels. Superstitious persons have from the beginning worshipped and served Angels, that by their help they might have access unto God. The Platonical Philosophers have infected the Christian Church also with this error. For howsoever Augustine sharply inveighs against them in his tenth book of the City of God, and does greatly condemn whatsoever they reason and dispute concerning the serving of Angels: Yet we see what has come to pass. If any man confer the writings of Plato with the Popish divin-

ity, he shall find that they have drawn from Plato altogether those things which they prattle concerning the service of Angels. This is the sum, Angels must be honored, such as Plato calls Demons, [ 〈 in non-Latin alphabet 〉 ]. That is, Because of their happy or lucky intercession. This sentence he puts down in Epinomide: and confirms it in Cratylus, and many other places. And what do the Papists differ at all from the same? But they deny not (say you) the Son of God to be a Mediator. No more do they with whom Paul contends. But while they did feign that by the help and aid of Angels, they came to God, and that therefore some service must be done to them: in so doing they did place the Angels in the seat of Christ, and deck and set them out with the office of Christ. Let us then know that Paul in this place does condemn all forged and devised service and worshippings, which are given either to the Angels or to the dead, as though after Christ, or with Christ, they should be helping mediators. For even so much do we depart and withdraw ourselves from Christ, as we do set over the least portion of that which is proper and belonging to him to any other, whether the same be Angels or else men. **Thrusting in himself into these things which he has not seen.** The Verb [ 〈 in non-Latin alphabet 〉 ], the participle whereof Paul uses in this place, has sundry significations or meanings. Whereas Erasmus following Jerome has translated it, Going loftily or proudly, it would not amiss agree (with the text), if in any allowed author there were an example of this signification. For we see daily with how great boldness, and with what a majesty and pride rash headed persons do define or determine about things unknown. And surely in the present cause which Paul has in hand, there is apparent a notable doctrine. For when the Sorbonical Divines do trifle about the inter-

cession or meditation of Saints or Angels, they do as it were out of an Oracle pronounce that those that are dead know and see our necessities, because they see all things [as they say] by means of a light that respects or shines back from God upon them. And yet what is less certain? Nay rather what is more obscure doubtful and intricate? But such forsooth is their masterlike licentiousness, that boldly and without fear they avouch that which not only they themselves know not, but that which cannot be known of men. The meaning then would well agree, if that signification of the word were anything used: but simply with the Greeks it is taken for **Incedere. that is** to go or to go on it sometime signifies also to inquire or seek after. If it like you so to take it in this place, Paul then reproveth foolish curiosity, in searching after obscure and dark matters, and such things as are hidden and far above our understanding. But in my conceit I have attained the mind and meaning of Paul, and have truly and faithfully translated it, after this manner, **Thrusting himself into those things which he has not seen.** For the common signification of the Verb [ 〈 in non-Latin alphabet 〉 ] is, to enter solemnly into an inheritance, or to usurp possession, or to set in foot to a place. Therefore Budeus has thus translated this place, setting in foot, or entering on the possession of those things which he has not seen: whose authority I have followed, but I have chosen out a more proper and fit word. For in very deed such fellows break through and thrust themselves into secrets and hidden things, whereof God as yet will have no revelation or knowledge to come unto us. A place to be marked to reprove the rashness of such as enquire and search after more than they ought. **In vain puffed up by the mind of the flesh.** He calls the mind of the flesh the thorough sight of man's wit, how

great soever it be. For he sets it opposite unto spiritual wisdom which is revealed unto us from heaven: according to that saying, Flesh and blood has not revealed that unto you: Matthew chapter **16.** verse **17.** Whosoever he is therefore that leaves to his own reason, because the force of carnal wit does wholly, and thoroughly flourish in him, Paul shows that he is puffed up in vain. And surely it is but puffing and wind, whatsoever wit it be that men have of themselves. Nothing then is firm but in the word of God, and by the illumination of the Spirit. And note, that they are called puffed up, who thrust in themselves into favor under the show of humility. For it falls out (as Augustine does elegantly write to Paulinus) by wondrous means in the soul of man, that it is more puffed up and swells for false and dissembled humility, than if openly or manifestly it were proud.

**19 Not holding the head.)** In one word he condemns whatsoever is not referred to Christ. And he confirms his opinion for that all things flow and depend thereof. Therefore if any call us anywhere else than unto Christ, although otherwise he were great with heaven and earth, yet is he a vain and light person: and therefore let us be bold to bid him farewell. But mark of whom he speaks, namely of those who did not openly refuse and deny Christ, but such as not well understanding his office and power, sought out other helps of salvation and means, (as commonly they call them) and were not firmly rooted in him. **Whereof the whole body.** This he simply means, that the Church abides and stands no otherwise, than while all things are ministered unto it by Christ the head: and therefore that all the safety thereof is contained in him. The body indeed has his sinews, his beams, and joints, or knittings: but yet all these have no strength or force but

from the head, so that the whole knitting and binding of them together comes of it. What is then to be done? [Forsooth] the constitution or whole order of the body shall be right, if the head alone, which ministers unto all and singular members all that they have, may without any let have the highest place. Paul names that the Increase of God. Whereby he declares, that not every increase is allowed of God, but that which is directed unto the head. For we see that the kingdom of the Pope is not alone tall and big, but that it swells with a monstrous greatness. But seeing it is not there to be seen that Paul in this place requires in the Church: what shall we say of it, but that it is a knobby and crooked body, and a disordered and ill framed heap or pile, which will fall down upon itself?

20 If therefore you be dead with Christ, from the Elements of this World: why are decrees prescribed unto you, as though you lived in the world. 21 Eat not, taste not, handle not: 22 Which all are into corruption by the abuse itself, after the precepts and doctrines of men. 23 Which indeed have a show of wisdom in superstition, and in lowliness of the mind, and in not regarding of the body: not in any honor to the fulfilling of the flesh.

**20 If you be dead.** He said before that the decrees or ordinances were fastened to the Cross of Christ: now he uses another figure or fashion of speaking, **namely** that we are dead to them. As Galatians chapter **2.19**. he teaches that we are dead to the Law and the law in like manner is dead to us. The word Dead signifies abrogating or doing away: but when he says Dead it is more lively and effectually spoken. He says then that the Colossians have nothing to do with decrees. Why so? For that they are dead with Christ unto decrees, that is to say, after they are dead with Christ by regeneration, by his benefit they are delivered from decrees: so

that the same belong not any more at all unto them. Hereof he concludes, that they are not bound by decrees, which the false Apostles assayed to lay upon them.

**21 Eat not, taste not.**) Until this time they have translated it, **touch not**. But whereas by and by follows another word that signifies the same thing: there is none but he sees, how cold and strange a repetition it would be. Furthermore the verb [ 〈 in non-Latin alphabet 〉 ] among other things signifies with the Greeks **esitare** to pickle or eat, as I have translated it. Plutarch in the life of Caesar uses it, when he shows that his soldiers in extreme scarcity of all things, did eat such things as were not before meet to be eaten. And this order once is natural, and also very fit for the circumstance of the place. For Paul does in using and imitating their own words, paint forth, how far their waywardness is accustomed to proceed, who by their laws do entangle the consciences. Even from the beginning they are more rough than needs. Therefore they begin with forbidding not only to eat, but also to eat lightly or a little. After they have got that which they would, then go they beyond that commandment: so that afterward they pronounce it to be a great evil to taste that which they will not have eaten. At least for a man but to touch it, they make it a Purgatory matter, to deserve the pains of Purgatory. To be brief, there is no end when men have taken upon them like tyrants over other men's souls, but there are every day new laws put to the old, and many times there start up new decrees. What a plain and evident view may a man have hereof in the Papacy. Therefore excellently well does Paul who warns that men's traditions are a Labyrinth or

maze, whereby the consciences are more and more enwrapped: nay rather snares, which do so bind in the beginning, that in process of time they will at length strangle.

**22 Which all are into corruption.** With a double argument he confutes the decrees whereof he spoke: first for that they put religion in outward and frail things which belong nothing to the spiritual kingdom of God: secondly because they are of men, and not of God. He contends with the first argument also. Romans **14.17**. The kingdom of God is not in meat and drink. Also **1 Corinthians 6.13**. Meat for the belly, and the belly for meats, God will destroy both of them. And Christ in himself [says], Whatsoever enters into the mouth, defiles not a man. Matthew **15.11**. because it goes down into the belly, and is cast forth. The sum is, that the service of GOD, true godliness and the holiness of Christians consists not in meat, and drink, and apparel: which are things that pass away, are under corruption, and perish by abuse. For abuse is properly said [or meant] of such things as use corrupts or mars. Therefore naught worth are precepts or decrees touching those things which are set out to lay religion upon the consciences. But in the Papacy you shall scarce find any other holiness saving in trifling observations of corruptible things. The other confutation follows, namely that they came from men, and have not God their author or beginner. with which flash of lightning he hurls down and consumes all the traditions of men. And why? This is Paul's manner of reasoning, They do injury to Christ, and make void his death, that bring again the consciences into bondage. For whatsoever is of man's inventing, binds not the conscience.

**23 Which in deed have a show.)** It is a prevention, in which while he does yield to his adversaries that which they might allege, he does withal account it every whit as nothing. For it is as much as if he should say, that he weighs it not that they have a show of wisdom. But show is opposite or contrary to truth. For it is an appearance, (as commonly they speak it) which beguiles because of likelihood. And mark of what colors this show consists after the mind of Paul. He names three, a choice in serving or worshipping, lowliness or humility, and a neglecting of the body. Superstition with the Greeks is called [ < in non-Latin alphabet > ]: which word Paul uses here in this place. But he had respect to the etymology and natural signification of the word. For **Ethelothrescia** word for word is **voluntarius cultus**, a voluntary service, which men of their own choice or determining do appoint and choose to themselves without the commandment of GOD. Men's traditions do therefore please us, because they are agreeable to disposition: for every man in his own brain will devise and invent forms and figures of them. This is the first color. The second is lowliness, because obedience both to God and man is pretended: so that men may not refuse, no not unjust and wrongful burden. And for the most part this is in these manner of traditions, that they seem to be marvelous good exercises of lowliness. They are well liked also in the third color, because they seem to avail very much toward the mortifying of the flesh, while there is no regard had of the body. But Paul bids farewell to these shows and colors. For even that which is high before men, is often times abomination before God; moreover that is a disobedient obedience, and a perverse and sacrilegious lowliness or humility, which passes over the authority of God unto men. And the neglecting of

the body is not so much worth that it ought to be set out as a service of God. But some man will marvel why Paul took no more pains in plucking off these visors. I answer, First that he contented himself with the only word Show, and it was enough. For those principles which he had taken from the contrary part, are invisible, [namely] that the body is in Christ, and that therefore they did nothing else but mock silly poor men, in that they did set before them shadows. Moreover that the spiritual Kingdom of Christ is not occupied about frail and corruptible elements. Thirdly that by the death of Christ such observations are dead, that they should not a whit belong to us. Fourthly, that GOD is our only Lawgiver. Whatsoever may be brought on the contrary side, although it have some fair show or brightness, yet is it a vanishing and frail show. Secondly he accounted it enough to admonish the Colossians that they were not deceived with the show of vain and empty things: and it was not needful to stand longer about the disproving of them. It ought to be as commonly known as is a proverb, among all godly persons, that the service of GOD must not be measured after our thought and meaning: nor yet that any service is legitimate or lawful, for that it pleases us. This also ought to be as well known, that this is the humility and lowliness we owe to God, that we simply obey that which he bids, that we lean not to our own wisdom, etc. And that this is the bounds of lowliness toward men, that by charity every one submit himself unto others. And whereas they contend that the wantonness of the flesh is kept down by abstinence of meats, the answer is easy: we may not therefore abstain from any certain kind of meat, as being unclean, but we must sparingly eat those things which we feed of: as well that we may soberly and measurably bestow and order the gifts of God, as also that we

lie not entangled in much eating and drinking; and forget those things that belong unto God. Wherefore it was enough for him to say these were visors and shows: that the Colossians being warned might arm themselves against a false and colored pretence. So at this day the Papists lack no fair shows, wherewith they may commend and set out their laws, though partly they be ungodly and tyrannical, partly vain and trifling. But when we have yielded all unto them: yet this confutation of Paul must abide, which is enough and enough alone to discuss all their vanities, and yet I will not speak how far different they are from that so honest a show, which Paul describes. The principal holiness of the Papacy at this day is in Monkery, but what that is, I am ashamed and aggrieved to speak of, lest I should stir so foul a stink. Furthermore it is worth while here to consider, how readily, nay rather how hastily and headily man's nature and disposition is carried into feigned and devised worshippings and service. For in this place the Apostle lively and skillfully paints out the state of old Monkery: which within an hundred years after his death did so much prevail as though he had never made word of it. Therefore the heat of men was wondrous mad to superstition, which could not be bridled with so plain a lesson of God, but that it would break out, as the histories do testify. **Not in any honor.** Honor signifies regard or care, after the use of the Hebrew tongue. Honor widows: that is to say have regard of them. And Paul does dislike that, that they teach to cast away the care for the body. For as God forbids that we should out of measure cherish the body: so he commands to give it as much as is necessary. Therefore Paul Romans **13.14.** does not simply condemn care for the flesh, but such a care as serves for the lusts. Have no regard of the flesh, says he, unto lusts. What then

does Paul note to be amiss in those traditions whereof he speaks? For that they give no honor unto the body for enlarging the flesh: that is to say according to the measure of necessity. For **fulfilling** in this place, signifies a mediocrity or mean usage, which restrains itself to the bare use of nature, and so it is used as the contrary to pleasure and all superfluous delicacy. For nature is content with a few things. Therefore to deny that which nature requires to sustain the necessity of life, is no less contrary to piety, than void of humanity.

## CHAPTER 3



**1** Therefore if you have risen with Christ, seek those things that are above, where Christ is sitting on the right hand of God. 2 Think upon those things that are above, and not which are upon the earth. 3 For you be dead, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. 4 But when Christ your life shall appear, then also shall ye appear with him in glory.

**He sets against those vain** exercises which the false Apostles did urge, as though perfection were placed in them, true exercise wherewith it becomes true Christians to be occupied: which does not a little make for the cause. For while we perceive what God would have us do, we do easily afterward set nought by the inventions of men. Whilst it appeareth that that which God setteth out for us is far more high and noble, than that which men beat into our heads, we leave men, and our minds grow more and more ready and willing to follow God. Paul in this place exhorts the Colossians to the consideration and practice of a heavenly life. But what do his adversaries? They would detain them in childish rudiments. This doctrine then causes ceremonies to be more little set by. Whereof it appeareth that Paul does so exhort in this place, that he confirms his former doctrine. For in describing firm or sound Godliness and holiness of life, he directs his talk to this

point, that those vain shows of men's traditions may waste and wear away. He does withal prevent an Objection wherewith the false Apostles might burden him, What then? Had you rather that men should be idle than to give themselves to these exercises, what kind of ones soever they be? When as therefore he bids Christians to apply themselves to far more excellent studies, he cuts off occasion from this malicious surmise, nay rather he charges them with no small spite, for that with things of nought they call away, and hinder the right course of the godly.

**1 If ye are risen.** Ascending follows rising again, if then we be the members of Christ, we must ascend into heaven: because that he being raised from the dead, is taken up into heaven, that he might draw us with him. And we seek those things which are above, while in our minds we are truly pilgrims in this world, and are not tied to the same. The word, **think on**, does more express a painfulness in taking care, and a vehemency: as if he should say, Meditate this wholly: apply your wit to this, apply your mind to this. But if we ought to think on nothing but that which is heavenly: for that Christ is in heaven: how much less shall it be meet to seek Christ himself on the earth? Let us remember then that this is a true thinking on Christ, and a holy, which forthwith ravishes us up into heaven, that we may worship him there, and that our minds may dwell with him. As touching that which belongs to the right hand of God, it is not shut up in heaven: but it fills the whole world. Furthermore Paul made mention thereof in this place, that he might show that Christ embraceth us by his power: lest we should think the distance of place to be a cause of separation or divorce between us and him: and that withal, his majesty might wholly ravish us into the reverencing thereof.

**2 Not which are upon earth.** He does not understand, as afterward he does, vicious desires which reign in earthly men: neither yet riches, or Fields, or houses, or whatsoever things else belonging to this present life, which we must use as though we used them not: but he follows as yet his disputation concerning ceremonies which he makes like unto trifling lets, which constrain us to creep on the ground. Christ, saith he, calls us up unto him: but those lead you downward. For it is a conclusion and an exposition of those matters which lately he touched concerning the dying of ceremonies by the death of Christ. As if he should say, Therefore are ceremonies dead to you by the death of Christ, and you unto them, that being lifted up into heaven with Christ, ye should think only upon heavenly things. Therefore let go earthly things. I will not contend against other who think otherwise: but certainly methinks the Apostle does so proceed step by step orderly, that first and foremost he sets opposite traditions touching trifling matters, unto the meditation of an heavenly life: and after that proceeds further, as we shall see.

**3 For ye be dead.)** He cannot rise again with Christ, who first has not died with him. Therefore he brings his argument, from rising again to dying, as from the consequent to the accident, signifying that we must be dead to the World, that we may live to Christ. Why has he taught that we must seek the things that are above? Because the life and conversation of the godly is above. Why does he teach that those things are now to be let pass, which are upon the earth? Because they are dead to the world. As if he should say, Death goes before that rising again which I have spoken of. Therefore both of these must be seen in you. This is worth the marking, that our life is hidden: lest we repine or complain, if

our life being under the ignominy of the Cross, and buried under manifold sorrows, differ nothing from death: but that we must patiently expect and wait for the day of revelation or appearance. And that our waiting be not painful and grievous, let us note the parcels, **In God**, and **with Christ**: which declare, that our life is out of danger, although it appear not. For even God is faithful and trusty, and therefore he will not deny that which was laid up with him, nor deceive in that he took to keep: and the society and fellowship of Christ brings yet more security and assurance. For what is more to be desired, than for our life to remain with the very well-spring of life? Wherefore there is no cause why we should be terrified, if while we look about on every side, we see life on no side. For by hope we are safe. But those things which are now seen to the eyes, are not hoped for. Neither yet does he teach that our life is hidden after the opinion of the world only, but also according to our own meaning or understanding: because this is a true and necessary experiment and trial of our hope, whiles we as compassed about with death, do seek life elsewhere than in the world.

**4 But when Christ shall appear.)** A pleasant and godly comfort, that the coming of Christ shall be the manifestation and appearance of our life. And withal he admonishes how preposterous the desire of the life to come is, if a man refuse to suffer patiently even until that day. For if our life be shut up in Christ, until he shall appear, it must needs be hidden.

5 Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth, fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence and covetousness, which is Idolatry. 6 For which the wrath of God cometh upon the children of disobedience. 7 In which you also

walked in time past, when you lived in them. 8 But now put you away also all wrath, fuming, maliciousness, cursed speaking, filthy communication out of your mouth.

**5 Mortify therefore.)** Hitherto he has spoken of the contempt of the world: now he goes farther, and entreats to an higher (kind of) Philosophy, concerning the mortification of the flesh. That this may be done the more plainly, let us note that mortification is twofold or double. The first respects those things that are about us, of which he has entreated hitherto. The other is inward: namely of the disposition and will, and of our whole nature corrupted and infected. And he reckons up certain vices, which he improperly calls members, but yet elegantly. For he imagines our nature (to be) as a mass or sow cast out of many vices. They are then our members, which stick unto us as close as it were, as burrs. He also calls them **earthly**, alluding to that which he spake, in the second verse, **namely** Not which are upon the earth,\*\* **but yet in another sense. This kind of speaking is as much as if he had said, I have warned you that earthly things are not to be regarded: yet must you travail about this that you mortify the vices which detain you in the earth. And he means that we as long as the vices of the flesh do flourish in us, are earthly: but we are made heavenly by the renewing of the Spirit. After whoredom he puts** Uncleanness, by which word he puts all kind of wantonness, wherewith lecherous men defile themselves. Unto these is added [Greek text] that is in Latin Mollities, which is Englished inordinate affection, **which comprehends all the allurements of Lechery. Although this word does otherwise signify perturbations or trouble of the mind, and intemper-**

**ate motions contrary to reason: yet to this place does well agree** mollities.\*\* Why covetousness is called the worshipping of Images, seek out of the Epistle to the Ephesians, lest I should do one thing twice.

**6 For which cometh.** I reprove not Erasmus for translating it, **is wont to come.** Yet because the present tense is in the Scripture often taken in place of the future tense, according to the manner of the Hebrew tongue: I chose rather to leave you the reading that was the mean, which might be fitted to either sense. Therefore he warns the Colossians either of the usitate judgments of God, which are daily seen: or else of the vengeance which once he has denounced to the ungodly, and which hangs over their heads: and yet shall not be manifested before the last day. Although I willingly allow that former sense and exposition, that God who is the perpetual judge of the world, is accustomed to punish the wickedness whereof he speaks. And by name he says the wrath of God shall come, or is wont to come, upon unbelievers and disobedient persons, rather than threatneth to them such a matter. For God had rather we should see his wrath in the reprobate, that feel it in ourselves. When the promises of grace are openly pronounced, every one of the godly ought no otherwise to embrace them, than as properly appointed for themselves. And so let us fear the threatenings of wrath and destruction, that that which is allotted to the reprobate, may be unto us a document or lesson. Indeed God is often said to be also angry with his Children: and sometime he does sharply chasten their sins. But in this place Paul is in hand about eternal destruction, the view or Spectacle whereof appeareth

in the only reprobates. In sum, as often as GOD threatneth he does as it were transversely set out unto us the pain, that we beholding the same in the reprobate, may be feared away from sinning.

**7 In which ye did walk.**) Erasmus did ill for that he referred it to men, translating it thus, **amongst whom**. For Paul without doubt meant it of vices: in which he says the Colossians were conversant, at what time they lived in them. For Living and Walking differ one from another, as ability to do, and doing: Living goes afore, and Walking follows. Galatians the **5**. chapter and **25**. verse, If you live in the spirit, walk also in the Spirit. By these words he declares that it is a heinous thing, if they being any longer addicted to vices, to which they are dead by Christ, are given over unto them. Look the **6**. chapter to the Romans. It is an argument taken from the privation or taking away the cause, to the privation or taking away the effect.

**8 But now. etc.** That is seeing you have ceased to live in the flesh. For this is the force and nature of mortification, that all corrupt affections are quenched in us, so that hereafter sin engenders not in us his accustomed fruits. Whereas I have translated it **fuming**, in Greek it is [Greek text], which word signifies a more hasty or heady kind of heat, than is [Greek text]. And here he reckons up kinds of vices that are contrary to the former, as you may readily see.

9 Lie not one to another, seeing you have put off the old man with his deeds. 10 And you have put on the new man which is renewed into knowledge, after the image of him which created him. 11 Where there is no Greek nor Jew, Circumcision nor uncircumcision: Barbarian, Scythian, bondman nor freeman: but Christ all things, and in all things. 12 Put on therefore as the elect of God,

holy and beloved the bowels of compassion, courtesy, humility, kindness, long suffering. 13 Forbearing one another, and forgiving if any have a controversy against another, as Christ has forgiven you, so [do] you also.

**9 Lie not.** When he forbiddeth lying, he condemneth all manner of subtlety, and all evil practices of deceit and falsehood. For I do not take it as meant of slanders only, but generally I make it contrary to sincerity and true dealing. Therefore I might more briefly thus translate it, and I cannot say whether also better, Lie not one to another. And he prosecuteth that his argument of the society or fellowship which the faithful have with the death and resurrection of Christ: but he useth other manners of speaking. The Old Man signifieth that whatsoever it is that we bring out of our mother's womb, and whatsoever we are by nature. Such put off him as are renewed by Christ. Contrariwise the new man is he which is reformed and fashioned again by the Spirit of Christ into the obedience of righteousness: or else it is nature restored into true soundness and integrity by the same Spirit. And the old man in order goeth before the new, because we are first born of Adam, after that we are born again by Christ. And as that which we have of Adam, waxeth old, and inclineth to ruin and decay: so that which we obtain by Christ, remaineth perpetually, is not frail or mortal, but rather is carried unto immortality. This place is to be marked, because out of it may be gathered a definition of regeneration or new birth. For it comprehendeth two parts, the putting off of the old man, and the building up of the new of both which parts Paul here maketh mention. And it must be marked, that the old

man is discerned and judged by his works, as the tree by the fruits. Whereof it followeth, that under the name of the old man is meant the wickedness that is bred in us.

**10 Which is renewed into knowledge.** First he showeth that newness of life consisteth in knowledge: not for that naked and simple knowledge is sufficient, but he speaketh of the illuminating of the Holy Ghost, which is lively and effectual, so that not only it doth lighten being kindled with the light of truth, but doth transform and newly fashion the whole man. And this is that which straightway he addeth, that we are renewed after the Image of God. And the Image of God hath residence in the whole soul, when not reason alone, but also the will is right. Hereof also we learn, as well what is the end and final cause of our regeneration, that is to say that we may be made like unto God, and that His glory may shine out in us: as also what the image of God is, whereof mention is made in Moses, Genesis **9.6.** namely the rightness and integrity of the whole soul, so that man doth represent the wisdom, righteousness and goodness of God as it were a looking glass. He doth speak somewhat otherwise to the Ephesians, but in the same sense: see the place chapter **4.24.** And withal Paul monisheth, that there is nothing more excellent whereunto the Colossians may aspire, because this must be our highest perfection and blessedness, (**namely**) to bear the Image of God.

**11 Where there is no Jew.** This he added of set purpose, that he might again draw away the Colossians from Ceremonies. For thus sound the words, Christian perfection needeth not a whit these outward observations. Nay rather they are things utterly contrary to it. For under the difference of **Uncircumcision** and **Circumcision**, of **Jew** and **Greek**, he comprehendeth all out-

ward things by the figure **Synecdoche**. These words which follow, namely, Barbarian, Scythian, Bondman, Freeman, are added to amplify the matter. **Christ all things, and in all things**, That is to say, Christ alone holdeth both foreship and poop, (as they say) beginning and end. Furthermore by Christ he understandeth the spiritual righteousness of Christ, which abolisheth ceremonies, as afore is seen. They are therefore in true perfection superfluous: insomuch that they ought to have no place, for else Christ were offered injury, as though it were needful to call forth these helps to supply his defect and want.

**12 Put on therefore.** As he hath reckoned up some parts of the old man, so now also doth he reckon up some parts of the new. Then, saith he, shall it appear that ye are renewed by Christ, if you shall be merciful and gentle, etc. For these are the effects and testimonies of renovation or being a new man. The exhortation then dependeth of the second member: and therefore he retaineth a metaphor in the word **put ye on**. In the first place he putteth **bowels of mercy**, by which kind of speech, he noteth an earnest and entire affection of mercy. Secondly he putteth **Courtesy** (for so it liketh me to translate [Greek word], wherewith we are made amiable and beloved). Next to this he joineth Humility: because no man will be courteous and tractable, but he who having put away pride and haughtiness of mind, hath submitted himself unto modesty, challenging nothing to himself. **Kindness** which followeth, extendeth largelier than **Courtesy**. For courtesy is principally in the countenance and speech: and kindness is also in the inward affection. But in as much as it falleth out oftentimes that we happen upon wicked persons and unthankful: patience is needful, which may nourish in us gentleness or kindness. At length he expoundeth

what he hath meant by **long suffering**: namely that with mercy we embrace one another, and forgive also when ought shall be done amiss. But because it is a hard and difficult matter, he confirmeth his doctrine by example of Christ, and teacheth that the like is required at our hands: that we, as being so oft and so exceeding faulty are notwithstanding received of Christ into favor, should show the like kindness to our neighbors, forgiving them whatsoever they have committed against us. Therefore he saith, **If any have a controversy against another**. Whereby he meaneth, that not even just revenge according to man's opinion is to be pursued **As the elect of God**. In this place I take **elect** for them that are segregate or set apart. As if he should say, God hath chosen you unto Himself on that condition, and sanctified you, and taken you into His favor, that you should be merciful, etc. He that hath not these virtues, doth in vain boast himself holy and beloved of God: in vain doth he reckon himself among the number of the faithful.

14 For all those things' sake, put on charity, which is the bond of perfection. 15 And the peace of God obtain the victory in your hearts to the which you are called also in one body, and be you thankful. 16 Let the word of Christ dwell with you abundantly in all wisdom, in teaching and warning yourselves in Psalms, Hymns, and spiritual Songs with grace, singing in your hearts to the Lord. 17 And whatsoever you shall do in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him.

**14 For all those things**. Whereas some have translated it, **Beside all those things**, in my judgment it is coldly done. It would better accord to do it thus, **Before all these things**. But I

have rather chosen the used signification of the word [Greek word]. For seeing that all those things which he hath reckoned up hitherto, do spring out of charity: he doth rightly now exhort the Colossians, that they maintain Charity among themselves, for those things' sake: that is to say that they may be merciful, kind, and easy to forgive. As if he should say, that then they should be such if they have charity. For whereas charity is missing, in vain are all those things required. And to the end he may the more set it out, he calleth it, The bond of perfection: whereby he signifieth that the whole company of all virtues are comprehended under it. For this is the very rule of the whole life and of the whole deeds, after which whatsoever is not ruled out, it is faulty and naught, whatsoever fair show otherwise it hath. That is the cause why in this place it is called the bond of perfection, because nothing in our life is well framed that is not directed unto it: but whatsoever we take in hand it is a mere scattering. But the Papists are to be laughed at, who abuse this testimony to build up justification by works. Charity, say they, is the bond of perfection, but perfection is righteousness; therefore by charity we are justified. It is answered two ways. For Paul reasoneth not here how men are made perfect before God: but how they may live perfectly among themselves. For this is the natural and true exposition of the place, **namely** that the other things shall fall out well concerning our life, if charity flourish and grow amongst us. But if it be granted that charity is righteousness, in vain and childishly do they out of that contend, that we are justified by charity: for where shall perfect charity be found? And we do not therefore say that men are justified by faith only, because to observe the Law is not righteousness: but rather, that whereas we are all transgressors of the Law and without right-

eousness of our own, we are compelled to borrow righteousness of Christ. Therefore the only righteousness by faith remaineth, because charity is in no wise perfect.

**15 And the peace of God.** He nameth that peace which God hath ordained and established among us, as shall appear by that which followeth, and that will he have to reign in our hearts. But he useth a Metaphor that is very fit. For as among wrestlers, he that hath overcome all others, carrieth away the palm or victory: so will he have the peace of God to be superior over the affections of the flesh, which carry us away oftentimes to contentions, disagreements, brawls, and privy grudges. He forbiddeth then to give the bridle to such naughty affections. But because it is a hard matter to hold them back, he also showeth a remedy: [that is] that the victory may be in the hands of the peace of God: because it must be a bridle, wherewith all the affections of the flesh may be held back. Therefore he saith in **your hearts**, because in them we feel very often great battles, whilst the flesh lusteth against the Spirit. This piece, **To which you be called**, declareth what manner of peace this is: namely an unity which Christ by His guidance and authority hath consecrated and established among us. For God hath so reconciled us unto Himself in Christ, that we should live among ourselves and be of one mind and one accord. And he addeth In one body. Whereby he signifieth that we can no otherwise accord with God, unless we agree together amongst ourselves, as members of one body. Whereas he biddeth us be thankful, I do not so much refer it to the minding of good turns, as to the mildness of manners, therefore to take away doubtfulness [in the meaning] I had rather have it thus, Be you loving, or, Show yourselves loving:

and yet I confess, if thankfulness possess our senses, it cannot be but we shall be very ready to nourish love toward one another among ourselves.

**16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you.)** He will have the doctrine of the Gospel to be well known unto them. Whereof we may gather with what spirit they are led at these days, who bitterly forbid the same to the people, and keep a seditious and ruffling stir, (saying) that no pestilence is more to be shunned, than that the common people should read the Scripture. For in very deed Paul in this place speaketh to men and women of all sorts. Neither will he have them only take a light taste of the word of Christ, but he biddeth that it dwell in them: that is to say that it have a sure seat (in them) and that largely, that they may have a desire to increase daily more and more. But because there is in many a preposterous desire or affection in learning, whilst they abuse the word of God to serve their own ambition, or else vain curiosity, or else do falsify the same by some manner of mean: therefore he joineth withal, **In all wisdom.** That we being taught thereby, may taste and savour that which we ought. Furthermore he defineth briefly this wisdom or taste, (namely) That the Colossians teach themselves. Teaching in this place is taken for profitable erudition or instructing, which availeth to edifying, as Romans **12.7.** He which teacheth (let him do it) in teaching. Also **2. Timothy 3.16,** All Scripture is profitable to teach. This is the true use of the word of Christ. Now because sometime doctrine or teaching of itself is cold: and (as he saith) while it is but only showed what is right, Virtue is praised and is full ill a cold: he doth withal put too an admonition, which is as it were a confirmation of his doctrine, and a prick to prick them forward. Neither meaneth he that the word of

Christ ought to profit only every singular person of them, so that they should teach themselves, but he requireth at their hands that they should teach and warn one another.

**In psalms and hymns.** He restraineth not the word of Christ to these specialties, but he doth rather express that all our speeches ought so greatly to be framed to edification, that even those that do serve to mirth, may savour of nothing that is vain. As if he should say, Leave unto unbelievers this foolish delight, which they take of vain and trifling sports and jests. As for your speeches not only which are grave, but also even such as be glad and merry, let them contain in them some profit. In stead of their bawdy, or at least immodest and light and joyish songs: Hymns and songs which may sound out the praise of God become you. Furthermore under these three names, he hath comprehended all kind of Songs. Which they commonly do thus distinguish, that a Psalm may be that unto which in singing some musical instrument beside the tongue is joined. A Hymn may be properly a Song of praise, whether it be sung with a loud voice or otherwise. A Song doth not only contain praises, but admonitions too, and other matters. But he will have the spiritual songs of Christians, not such as be indited of frivolous trifles, and things of naught. For this hath relation to the argument. This piece **In grace**, Chrysostom diversely expoundeth: but I take it simply, as also afterward in the **4th** chapter **6th** verse, when he saith, Let your speech be powdered with salt, in grace. That is to say, powdered with such a dexterity or handsomeness as may be gracious or acceptable, and by the commodity and profit thereof may please the hearers: that it may be contrary to scoffing or knavery or like Follies. **Singing in your hearts.** This belongeth to the affection, for as we ought to stir up

others, so also must we sing from our heart, that it be not an outward sound of the mouth only. Although it be not so to be taken, as though he bade every one sing inwardly to himself: but he will have both joined together, so that the hearts go before the tongues.

**17 And whatsoever you do.)** These words and that which goeth before, I have already expounded in the Epistle to the Ephesians, where is the same almost word for word. Because he had now begun to discourse of the parts of a Christian life, and had touched only a few precepts: and that it was too long by piecemeal to run through the rest: therefore in a gross sum he concludeth, that our life is so to be ordered, that whatsoever we say or do, it may be all ruled by the guidance of Christ, and may have respect to his glory, as to the mark. For we shall fitly comprehend both these in this word: namely that all our studies and endeavors have their beginning at invocating or calling upon Christ, and sue to his glory. Out of invocation followeth the blessing of God: which ministereth matter and occasion of thanksgiving unto us. And it is to be noted that he teacheth that thanks must be given to the Father by Christ, as by him we obtain whatsoever good it is that God bestoweth upon us.

18 Wives be subject to your own husbands, as is comely in the Lord. 19 Husbands love your wives: and be not bitter against them. 20 Children obey your parents in all things, for this pleaseth the Lord. 21 Fathers provoke not your Children, lest they be dismayed. 22 Servants obey in all points those which according to the flesh are your Masters: not with giving obedience before their eyes, as seeking to please men, but in simplicity of the heart, as you which fear God. 23 And whatsoever you shall do, do it from the heart, as unto the Lord, and not unto men: 24 Knowing that of the Lord you

shall receive a reward of inheritance, for ye serve the Lord Christ.  
 25 But he that shall do unjustly, shall bear the reward of his iniquity: and there is no accepting of persons.

**18 Wives, etc.)** Now follow particular duties, as they call them, which depend of every one's vocation: in handling of which it were superfluous to bestow many words: because I have already in the Epistle to the Ephesians spoken almost as much as was needful. Yet in this place I will briefly add such things as are properly agreeable to the opening of the present place. He commandeth women that they be subject. This is plain: but that which followeth is doubtful, [that is] **as is comely in the Lord**. For some do thus construe it, **Be ye subject in the Lord as is comely**. Yet I do rather otherwise construe it, [that is] **As is comely in the Lord**, that is, according to the institution of the Lord: that he may confirm the subjection of women by the authority of the Lord. Of the husbands he requireth love, and that they be not bitter: because it is dangerous lest they abuse their authority and rule in becoming tyrants.

**20 Children obey your Fathers and mothers.)** He enjoineth unto Children that they obey their parents without exception. But what if their Parents would drive them to do anything that is unlawful: shall they then without choice or regard obey them also? But surely it were more than heinous, setting God at naught, that the authority of men should prevail. I answer, that here also must be understood, that which is expressed, Ephesians **6.1**. namely in the Lord. But to what purpose is the universal note, All things? I answer again, that he might show, that they must obey not only their right and just commandments, but also such as are wrong and unjust. For many do so forsooth show themselves

obedient to their parents, if it be not a burden or disprofitable unto them. But children ought to remember this one thing, whatsoever Parents they be that they have, that yet they happened unto them by the providence of God, who hath by his ordinance made subject the children unto their Parents. **In all things** then is, that they refuse nothing, although the same be hard or grievous: In all things, [is] that in things indifferent they yield to their person: In all things, is that in seeking what belongeth to themselves, and in debating or being at variance, they take not upon them that which is their right: but yet all this must be always as far as religion will permit. He forbiddeth unto parents overmuch sharpness, lest so the children be feared away from abiding any liberal or convenient correction. For we see by daily experience, of what force natural and kind education is.

**22 Servants obey.** Whatsoever is here read concerning servants, needeth no exposition: because it is already opened Ephesians **6.1.** except these two things, **for you serve the Lord Christ, And, he that shall do unjustly, shall receive the reward of unjust dealing,** By the former sentence he meaneth thus, that they must so serve men, that Christ nevertheless must hold the sovereignty in the Lord, and that he may be the head Lord. An excellent comfort truly to all that are in subjection, whilst, for that they willingly serve their masters, they hear their obedience as acceptable to Christ, as though it were done unto him, whereof also Paul gathereth that they shall receive a reward of him: even the reward of inheritance. Whereby he signifieth that the selfsame thing that is repaid for works, is freely given us of God: for the inheritance is by adoption. In the latter sentence he doth again comfort servants, for that, if they be oppressed with the

unjust cruelty of their masters, God himself will revenge it, neither yet will he pass over such injuries as are done to them, because they be servants: seeing that with him there is no respect of persons. For this cogitation or thought might kill their hearts, if they thought that there were none or no great reckoning made of them in the sight of God, or else that their miseries were not regarded. Moreover it happeneth often that servants themselves will begin to take upon them the revenging of evil and uncourteous handling. He therefore preventeth this evil, when he admonisheth that they must tarry for the judgment of God with forbearing.

## CHAPTER 4



**1** Masters give to your Servants that which is right, and mutual uprightness, knowing that you also have a master in heaven. 2 Be instant in prayer, watching in the same, with thanksgiving. 3 Pray you in like manner for us, that God may open unto us the gate of speech to speak the mystery of Christ, for whose also cause I am a prisoner. 4 That I may make it apparent, even as I ought to speak.

**Masters give to your. etc.** He\*\* puts, that which is just, **in the first place, by which he means that humanity whereof he gave commandment Ephesians 6.8. But for because that the state of Servants is viewed of masters as it were from aloft, so that they think themselves to be bound by no Law: Paul brings them into course and order: because both of them alike are under the empire and commandment of God, and hereof comes this equality or rightness whereof he makes mention.** And mutual or like equability,\*\* or indifference. Some do otherwise expound it: but I doubt not but Paul in this place put [ 〈 in non-Latin alphabet 〉 ] for right that is answerable from one party to another, or that which one party gives to another: as to the Ephesians he used [ 〈 in non-Latin alphabet 〉 ]. For masters have not so their servants under them, but

that they in like manner owe some duty unto them: as convenient and proportionable right and equal dealing ought to be in force among all sorts of persons.

**2 Be instant in prayer.** He returns to general exhortations, in which we may not look for an exact and strict order: for if we did, he should begin with prayer: but Paul has not greatly respected that [**namely** order]. Furthermore in this place he sets out two things in prayer, first continuance or often use thereof, after that readiness or an earnest intent. For when he says, Be instant, he exhorts to perseverance. He sets **Watching** opposite unto coldness and carelessness. He puts to **thanksgiving**, because that in such wise God is to be prayed to for our present necessity, that in the meanwhile we forget not those benefits which we have already received. Moreover we ought not to be so importunate, that we repine and be displeased, if straightway God fulfill not our desires and prayers, but with patient minds to receive whatsoever he shall give. So there is two manner of thanksgiving necessary. Of which point something has been also said Philippians **4.6**.

**3 Pray you in like manner for us.** He does not counterfeit this: but because he knew his own necessity, he did in earnest wish to be helped with their prayers, and he was persuaded that the same would do him good. Who now dare then set light by the intercessions of the brethren, of which Paul confesses himself to have need? And certainly the Lord has not in vain ordained this exercise of charity among us, that one of us should pray for another. Therefore every one ought, not only to pray for the brethren, but interchangeably also to desire aid earnestly of other folks' prayers also, as oft as the matter so requires. But childish is the argument or reason of the Papists, who gather thereof that the dead

are to be called upon, that they may pray for us. For wherein is it like? Paul commends himself to the prayers of the brethren, with whom he knew that by the commandment of God he had mutual communication, but who will not say that this reason (of mutual communicating) ceases in the dead? Therefore letting pass such follies, let us return to Paul. As we have in Paul a notable example of modesty, in that he calls unto others to aid and assist him, so also are we admonished that it is a matter full of great difficulty, constantly to abide in the defense of the Gospel, specially when danger does urge. And not without cause does he desire the Churches in this cause to aid him. And withal consider his ardent zeal how marvelous it is. He is not careful for his own safeguard, he desires not that prayers be poured forth by the Churches for himself, that he may be delivered from the danger of death. He is content with this one thing, if he abide invincible and unfearful in the profession of the Gospel. So securely and unfearfully does he prefer the glory of Christ, and the spreading abroad of the Gospel before his own life. But by the **gate of speech**, he plainly means that which he calls Ephesians **6.19**. the opening of his mouth: and that which Christ calls Mouth and Wisdom. For this manner of speaking differs nothing at all from that former in meaning, but only in fashion. For with an elegant Metaphor has he in this place showed plainly, that it is never a whit more easy for us, to speak boldly touching the Gospel, than to break through a gate that is shut and barred. For this is truly the work of God, as also Christ did say, It is not you that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you: **Matthew 10.10**. Having therefore set forth the difficulty thereof, he pricks forth the Colossians the more to pray, when he testifies that he cannot otherwise speak rightly, except his

tongue be directed of the Lord. Secondly he draws his argument from the worthiness of the things, when he calls the Gospel the **mystery of Christ**. Neither must we slightly labor or take pains in so great a matter. Thirdly he makes mention also of his danger.

**4 As I ought.** This piece augments the difficulty: for he means that it is not a vulgar or common thing. To the Ephesians he adds, **that I may boldly behave myself**. Whereof appears that he wished to himself an unfeared boldness and confidence, such as becomes the majesty of the Gospel. Furthermore whereas Paul does nothing here, but that he wishes grace to be given him to fulfill his office: let us remember that it is a rule in like manner prescribed unto us, that we give not place to the fury of the adversaries, but that we labor and strive even to the death to set forth the Gospel. And because that is above our ability and power, it is meet that we be instant in prayers, that the Lord leave us not destitute of the Spirit of boldness.

5 Walk wisely toward them that are without, redeeming the time. 6 Let your speech always be in grace powdered with salt: that you may know how you ought to answer to every man. 7 Tychicus a beloved brother and a faithful minister and a fellow servant in the Lord, shall make known unto you all mine affairs. 8 Whom I have sent unto you for this cause, that you might know mine estate, and that your hearts might be comforted. 9 With Onesimus a faithful and beloved brother, which is of you. All things shall be made known unto you which are here (done).

**5 Walk wisely.** He sets them without, or foreigners, opposite to them that are of the household of faith. For the Church is like a City, whose inhabitants are all faithful, knit together with a mutual kindred or neighborhood among themselves: and foreigners are

the unbelievers. But why will Paul have these respected before the faithful? There are three causes. First that to the blind there be no stumbling block laid. Because nothing is more ready than for unbelievers by our unwariness to be made worse, and to have their minds wounded, so that they daily more and more abhor religion. Secondly that there be no cause and occasion given them to slander the Gospel, and so the name of Christ be laid forth to be mocked, they are made worse, and turmoils and persecutions raised. Lastly that while we keep company with them at meat and other affairs, we be not stained with their spots, and by a little and a little wax profane and holy. To which purpose belongs that which follows, **Redeeming the time.** Because the conversation of such is dangerous, for Ephesians **5.16.** he shows the reason, because the days are evil: as if he should say, In so great corruption of the world the occasion of well doing must be taken, and we must strive with those things that are hindrances. Therefore with how many the more stumbling blocks our way is enclosed, so much the more attentively must we beware that our feet stumble not, or that we through sloth sit not still idly.

**6 Let your speech.** He requires pleasantness of speech, which may by the commodity thereof allure the hearers. For he does not condemn only such speeches as are apparently wicked or ungodly, but also such as are of no account or idle. Therefore he bids that they be powdered with salt. Profane persons have their salts or witty sayings and conceits, but he speaks not of them: nay rather because pleasant and witty conceits are plausible, and for the most part win favor, he declares after a sort the faithful from the use and custom of them. For he counts it unsavory, whatsoever it be that edifies not. In the same sense is the word **grace**, put:

that it may be contrary to scoffing, and all kind of fables and toys which either hurt or else are vain. **That you may know how,** He that has accustomed himself unto circumspect speeches, shall not fall into many absurdities and inconveniences, into which those that are full of words, and babblers many times do fall: but by continual use he will get himself knowledge how to answer well and directly. As again it must needs be that blab tongue fellows do set out and offer themselves to be mocked and laughed at as oft as they be asked a question of any thing, wherein they suffer just punishment for their foolish babbling. Neither does he say only What, but also How (we must speak): nor yet to all indifferently, but to every (and singular) person. For this is not the worst point of prudence and skill, to have a consideration of every one.

**9 Mine affairs.** To the end the Colossians may know what great care he has over them, he does confirm and assure them as it were with a pledge given. For whereas he was in prison, and in hazard of his life, without having regard of himself, he sees to them, by sending Tychicus unto them. Wherein appears as well the singular zeal of the holy Apostle, as his prudence and wit. For this is no small matter, that whilst he is held prisoner, and is in extreme peril for the Gospel, yet he ceases not but gives his diligence to promote and set forward the Gospel, and has a care for all Churches. So his body indeed is shut in prison, but his heart which is careful, to do as much as may be, spreads itself far and wide. It is prudence and wit, in that he sends a meet and discreet person that may confirm and establish them as much as is needful and that may resist and withstand the wiliness of the false Apostles: moreover for that he keeps still with him Epaphras, until they shall try what and how great a consent in doctrine were among all the true

teachers: and that they shall have heard the same of Tychicus that before they had learned of Epaphras. Let us diligently consider of these examples, that they may stir us to the imitating of the like study and zeal. He puts in Onesimus also, to the end the message may have the more weight. Although it be uncertain who this Onesimus was. For it is scant credible, that this is that Servant of Philemon, because the name of a Thief and a runaway had been in hazard reproach and misliking. He sets them both out with honest titles, that they may do the more good among them: and Tychicus specially who was to use the office of teaching.

10 Aristarchus my prison fellow salutes you, and so does Mark the Cousin of Barnabas: concerning whom you have received commandments if he come unto you, that you receive him. 11 And Jesus which is called Justus, who are of the Circumcision, these alone were workers with me into the kingdom of God, who were to me a comfort. 12 Epaphras salutes you, which is of you a servant of Christ, always striving for you in prayers: that you may stand perfect and fulfilled in all the will of God. 12 For I bear him witness, that he has great care over you, and over them who are at Laodicea and Hierapolis.

**10 My prison fellow.** Hereby appears, that other came to Paul, after he was brought to Rome. And it is credible that his enemies at the first earnestly labored, to fear away by punishing them as they did him, all the godly from helping him, and that this prevailed for a time: but afterward some, taking heart unto them, not to have regarded whatsoever terror was laid before them. **That you receive him.** Some books have, Receive him, in the imperative mood: but wrong for he expresses that kind of commandment which the Colossians had received: namely that it was the com-

mendation of either Barnabas or Mark: which latter is more probable. In the Greek it is the infinitive mood, but yet it must be so resolved as I have done it. And let us mark that they were diligent in giving testimony: that they might discern good men from false brethren, from drones, from deceivers, and many that were stragglers and wanderers about. Which diligence and care is at these days more than necessary: either for because virtuous teachers have cold entertainment: or else for that foolish persons and such as are light of belief or over liberal bent and endangered to deceivers.

**11 These alone were workers.** That is of them which were circumcised: for he names others afterward, but those uncircumcised. He means then that there were few Jews at Rome which showed themselves helpers to the Gospel: but rather that the whole nation was adversary to Christ. Although by Workers he understands them only which excelled in necessary gifts to further the Gospel. But where was Peter at the time? Surely either he was shamefully passed over here, and not without injury: or else they fable that hold he was then at Rome. Furthermore he calls the gospel **the kingdom of God.** for it is even the scepter whereby God reigns over us, and by it we have the adoption into life everlasting. But of this more is spoken in another place.

**12 Always striving.)** An example of a good Pastor, who by means of distance of place does in no wise forget the Church, but carries the care thereof with him over the sea. And note the force of the prayer, which is expressed in the word, Striving. For although in this place Paul meant to note the vehemency of affection, yet withal he admonishes the Colossians, that they account not the prayers of their Pastor to be in vain: but rather that they

account them to be no small help to them. Lastly let us gather out of Paul's words, that this is the perfection of Christians, while they stand fulfilled and in the will of God: lest that they build their purpose of life upon any other thing else.

14 Luke the beloved Physician salutes you, and so does Demas. 14 Salute the Brethren which are at Laodicea, and Nymphas, and the Church which is at his house. 16 And when the Epistle shall also be read among you, cause that it be also read in the Church of the Laodiceans: and that you read that Epistle which is from Laodicea. 17 And say you to Archippus, Look to the Ministry which you have received in the Lord, that you fulfill it. 18 The salutation of Paul with my own hand. Be mindful of my bonds. Grace be with you, **Amen.**

## SENT FROM ROME, BY TICHICUS AND ONESIMUS



**1** <sup>4</sup> **Luke salutes you.**) I am not of their minds, who think this to be Luke the Evangelist, for I judge he was better known than that there needed such a kind of showing: and he should have been set forth with a more worshipful title: certainly he would have called him either his fellow helper, or at the least his faithful and trusty companion, and partner of his contentions and business. I rather conjecture that he was then away, and this other to be discerned from him by the name of a Physician. Although I contend not about it as being a certainty: but I do only bring conjectures. This Demas of which he makes mention, is the same without doubt whom he complains afterward to have forsaken him, 2 Timothy 4:10. When he speaks of the household Church of Nymphas, let us remember that in one household is prescribed of what fashion it beseems all the householders of Christians to be: namely that they be so many small Churches. Wherefore let every man know, that this charge is laid upon him, that he instruct his house in the fear of the Lord, that he keep it under holy discipline, to be short, that in the same he fashion an Image or representation of the Church.

16 **Let it be read [in the] Church of the Laodiceans.** This Epistle howsoever it was entitled to the Colossians, yet ought it to profit other. The like must we think of all the Epistles. They were indeed written once to certain Churches by name: but because they contain a perpetual doctrine, and that which is common to all ages: it makes no matter what title they have. For the argument and matter belongs to us. The other Epistle whereof also he makes mention, they have thought, though untruly, to have been written by Paul. They are twice deceived who have thought Paul to have written to the Laodiceans. I doubt not but that it was an Epistle sent to Paul, the reading whereof might be profitable to the Colossians: as Cities are accustomed which are near one to the other to have many things common between them. And it was too gross a deceit, that, I know not what Varlet, under this pretense, durst suborn and counterfeit so unsavory an Epistle, that nothing could be devised more contrary to the spirit of Paul [than it].

17 **Say ye to Archippus.** As near as I can guess, this Archippus supplied the room of the Pastor, whilst Epaphras was away. It may happen he was not such an one, as of himself was strong enough, except he were pricked forth. Therefore Paul's will is that he be heartened on to do the better at the motion of the whole Church. He might have warned him in his own name: but he enjoins the Colossians to do it, to the end they may know that they ought to prick their Pastor forward also, if they see him to be cold, and the Pastor himself may not refuse to be admonished of the Church. For the Ministers of the Word are endued with high power, but yet such as is not loose from Laws. And therefore it is necessary that they show themselves apt to learn, if they will teach others well. In that Paul does again set forth his bands he declares

thereby that he is not lightly or a little grieved. For he was mindful of human infirmity: and without doubt he felt in himself certain prickings thereof, when he so greatly desired that all the godly should be mindful of his trouble. But this is [no] sign of distrustfulness, when he does require on all sides the aids and helps that by the Lord are appointed him. The subscribing of his hand, as elsewhere is seen, declares that even then there flew abroad forged Epistles, in so much that it was but need to stop and prevent false dealing.

## THANKS FOR READING



If you spotted a typo or have feedback, the email is **[sam@goodsoilapps.com](mailto:sam@goodsoilapps.com)** — or use the in-app feedback form in *Christian Reader*.