

kingdom of God, which is the reason they gave of their means to Paul, so he could continue to advance that kingdom. In turn, he assures them that God will take care of their needs. He teaches the same principle in 2 Corinthians 9: 8-10, where he is exhorting those brethren to contribute for the relief of the needy ones in Judea. *Riches in glory*. God is the giver of all good things (James 1: 17), and He bestows the divine favors through Christ Jesus.

Verse 20. *God* and *Father* are the same person; the first refers to His eternal, self-existent and infinite power. The other to His affectionate relation to the creatures of His care. The term *for ever* actually covers as long a period as *for ever and ever*. The words are used for the sake of emphasis, and the significance is that God is worthy of endless glory. For an explanation of *amen*, see the comments at Romans 16: 24, in the first volume of the New Testament Commentary.

Verse 21. *Salute* and *greet* are from the same Greek word. It has a wide scope of meanings, but the central thought is that all Christians should manifest a friendly attitude toward others, whether it be by word of mouth on personal meeting, or by a friendly word in writing; a *saint* is the same as a Christian. The brethren that were with Paul (personally) requested him to *greet* the brethren at Philippi for them.

Verse 22. This is the same kind of salutation as in the preceding verse, but is more general in its source. It comes from the *saints* (Christians) throughout the area where Paul was located since coming to Rome, and is based upon expressions he had heard from them in various conversations. He was especially impressed with what he had heard from the group he calls *Caesar's household*. The last word is so general that it could mean either the immediate members of Caesar's family, or his servants or attendants. In any case, it means persons closely connected with the emperor of Rome. It indicates the good influence and standing Paul had, in spite of his humiliating situation.

Verse 23. This verse is a kindly wish that the *grace* (favor) of Christ would be with the brethren at Philippi. The word *amen* is explained at verse 20.

## Colossians 1

General remarks. The date and by whom the church at Colosse was planted is uncertain. I have consulted a goodly number of reference works, and nothing more definite than "perhaps" or "maybe" was found in any of them. We know it was not by Paul, for chapter 2: 1 indicates he had not even seen those brethren when he wrote this epistle. A little information about conditions in Colosse as it pertains to religion and social life, will help to understand the various passages in the epistle. The Colossians were mostly Gentiles, but some Judaistic teachers had come among them. In addition to this, some theories of philosophy had been injected among them. Smith's Bible Dictionary refers to such a condition in the following words: "The main object of the epistle is to warn the Colossians against a spirit of semi-Judaistic and semi-Oriental philosophy which was corrupting the simplicity of their belief." Summing up, a mixture of Judaism, philosophy, idolatry, and a form of extreme bodily self-denial, had to be encountered when Paul wrote this epistle.

Verse 1. An *apostle* means one who is sent by another on a mission. Paul was sent into the world by Jesus Christ on the mission of preaching the Gospel, hence he was His apostle. The entire arrangement was according to the authority of God, which caused it to be by His will. *Timotheus* is another form of Timothy; he was with Paul and joined in the salutation to the Colossian church.

Verse 2. *Saints* and *faithful* are not different people. The second term is just one description of the first. A saint is a person who has accepted the Gospel through obedience to its commands, and who has promised to continue in the service consistently. The term *faithful* is added to show that these brethren were actually making good their promised loyalty to Christ. *Grace* is the unmerited favor of God, and *peace* is that state of mind that is made possible by accepting the salvation coming from God, and bestowed upon man through the *Lord Jesus Christ*.

Verse 3. It is important to note that God is called the Father of Christ. This refutes the doctrine of Rome, and most of the denominational world, that God and Christ are one and the

same person. It is foolish to imply that a father can be his own son, or vice versa. In the beginning of the verse Paul says *we give thanks*, and in the close he says he is *praying* for the brethren. This is because there are various forms of addresses to God; thanks being offered for past favors, and prayer being requests for future ones.

Verse 4. *We heard of your faith*. According to chapter 2: 1, Paul had not seen these brethren (see "general remarks"), but had received a report of them through others. It is significant that their faith in Christ Jesus is coupled with their love for all the saints. This agrees with 1 John 3: 14; 4: 7, 8; it is morally impossible to love God and not love His children.

Verse 5. *For* is from DIA which means "on account of." It is connected with the preceding verse which asserts the love the Colossians had to all the saints. The idea is that the hope for heaven they had, was an inducement for them to act the part of true brethren in Christ by showing genuine love for them. *Heard before* refers to the fact that they had heard these great truths in the beginning of their contact with the Gospel, by the ones who brought the good news to them.

Verse 6. *World* is from a Greek word that means the people of the earth. It is sometimes limited to the people of the Roman Empire by various commentators, yet that is rather insignificant, since virtually all the civilized world was under the rule of that Empire at the time the New Testament was written. Besides, verse 23 of this chapter says the same Gospel was preached "to every creature which is under heaven." It all gives the conclusion that the commission that Christ gave the apostles in Matthew 28: 19, 20 and Mark 16: 15, 16, had been fulfilled in the time of Paul's writings: the same fact is taught in Romans 10: 18. *Bringeth forth fruit* refers to the effect that was produced by the hope given to those who believed the Gospel. *Grace of God in truth* means the favor of God is for those only who accept the truth.

Verse 7. *Epaphras* had been associated with the church at Colosse, but when this epistle was written, he was in Rome and a prisoner on behalf of the Gospel. This is indicated in Philemon 23, where Paul calls him his "fellowprisoner." *A faithful minis-*

*ter*. The last word is from DIAKONOS, and in the King James Version it is rendered deacon 3 times, minister 20, servant 7. Thayer defines it, "one who executes the commands of another, especially of a master; a servant, attendant, minister; deacon; a waiter, one who serves food and drink." It is never used to designate a preacher as a separate class, for the preachers of the New Testament church are never called "ministers" in that sense. Epaphras is called a *minister*, because he faithfully served the interests of the church at Colosse, which included his preaching of the Gospel.

Verse 8. Epaphras had been associated with the church at Colosse, and could give a first hand report of its conduct to Paul and the other brethren in Rome. *Love in the Spirit* denotes their love was spiritual because it was prompted and directed by the teaching of the Holy Spirit.

Verse 9. *For this cause* refers to the good things that Paul (and his companions) had heard about the Colossian brethren. Ever since he heard about it, the apostle had continuously prayed for them. Such good disciples are worthy of further encouragement and assistance, hence he desired that they might be filled with knowledge of the Lord's will. For all practical purposes, *wisdom* and *understanding* may be used with the same sense, but when a distinction is made by using them in one sentence, the first refers to the mind or intellect, and the second to the proper use of it in applying the truths at hand. Paul specifies that he is speaking of truths that have been revealed by the Spirit.

Verse 10. To walk worthy of the Lord means to walk in a way befitting a servant of His. *Unto all pleasing*: walk in a way pleasing to the Lord. *Being fruitful* or producing *every good work*, which consists in doing the good things required by the Gospel. *Increasing* indicates that a Christian should not be satisfied with his present degree of good works. However, his growth must be in accordance with the knowledge of God; this knowledge is to be obtained through Christ (chapter 2: 2, 3).

Verse 11. When used as distinguishing terms, *might* means strength or ability, and *power* means dominion or authority to use that ability. All authority in heaven and earth was given to Christ (Matthew 28: 18), and He gives his disciples the right to operate

under that power; this is what will *strengthen* them in the service. The special meaning of *patience* in this passage is endurance or perseverance, and *longsuffering* refers to the unresentful attitude of one's mind while under difficulties.

Verse 12. Thayer defines the original for *meet*, "to make sufficient, render fit." No human being can ever be worthy of the salvation provided by the Lord, if measured by the strict rule of justice. But He has made it possible for the faithful disciples to be "sufficient" or entitled to it through the merits of Christ. The passage in Romans 3: 24-26 should be considered in connection with our verse. It should be understood that no man will ever enter into eternal reward unless he has a right to it (Revelation 22: 14), but he may obtain that right through Jesus. *Saints in light* means those who have fashioned their lives after the light of divine truth as revealed in the Gospel.

Verse 13. *Power* means authority or rule, and *darkness* is explained by Thayer as "ignorance respecting divine things and human duties." It applies to all who have renounced their interest in things of the world and taken the proper steps to get out of such a situation. Our verse, continuing the thought in the preceding one, tells us that it is the Father who can deliver men from such a state of darkness. *Translate* signifies to move something from one place or condition into another, and Paul tells us that the disciples had been *translated* (moved) into the kingdom of his dear Son. It is impossible to move a person into anything that does not exist. Therefore, the kingdom of Christ was in existence when Paul lived, thus disproving the heresy that the kingdom is still in the future.

Verse 14. The pronoun *whom* refers to the Son, whose blood redeems men from the bondage of "darkness" as stated in the preceding verse. No man is free from the bondage of sin until something is done that can satisfy God, against whom all sin is regarded as being committed. That satisfaction can be accomplished only through the merits of the blood of Christ. When a sinner "obeys from the heart" (Romans 6: 17) the doctrine or commandments of the Gospel, he is "then made free from sin," which is what our present verse declares.

Verse 15. No man can see the face

of God and live (Exodus 33: 18-23), yet he needed to be shown how to conduct himself. The situation was met by having Christ come into the world in the nature of man, but in the form or image of God. That is why Paul calls Christ the *image of the invisible God*. *Firstborn of every creature* means that Christ existed before all other persons or things in all creation. That enabled Him to take part with the Father in the creation of the universe, and it accounts for the plural form of the pronoun (us) in Genesis 1: 26; 3: 22; 11: 7. (See also John 1: 3; Ephesians 3: 9; Hebrews 1: 2).

Verse 16. The existence of Christ before all other things in the universe (God, of course, being excepted) is still the subject under consideration. Paul is dealing thus particularly with this matter because of the pretensions of philosophy that were being injected into the Colossian community. (See the comments in "general remarks.") This verse is more specific, mentioning things both material and spiritual, and both visible (to man) and invisible.

Verse 17. *Before* is used in the sense of time or order of existence, and it denotes that Christ existed before anything else in the universe of creation. *Consist* is the same as "exist," and it means that all things were created through Him, but also they continue to be through Him. This is the same thought that is expressed in Hebrews 1: 3 which says of Christ, "and upholding all things by the word of his power."

Verse 18. The *church* is declared to be the *body*, which is taught also in Ephesians 1: 22, 23. In Ephesians 4: 4 Paul declares there is one body, so that is equivalent to saying there is one church; our present verse says Christ is the head of that one church. All of this is not only scriptural, but is logical or reasonable. A body with more than one head in nature would be a monstrosity, likewise a head with more than one body would be one. Hence it is easy to understand that since there is but one Christ (which is admitted by all professed Christians), there can be but one church recognized by the Lord. *Who is the beginning*. This is true of Christ in many respects, but here it means he is the beginning of the new creation or age of the *one body*. *Firstborn from the dead* does not mean Jesus

was the first person to die and rise again, for there are numerous cases in the Bible where it occurred before the time of Christ. It means He was the first person to come to life never to die again. (See Romans 6: 9.) The chief purpose of making Christ to be the first person to come from the dead never to die again, was that He might have the *preeminence*. That means to be above all other persons who would go through death and rise to die no more, in that He was the first to have that honor.

Verse 19. The word *fulness* means that nothing is lacking in Christ that is necessary for the spiritual welfare of mankind. *The Father* is not in the Greek text directly, but is of necessity implied. This "preeminence" of Christ was accomplished through His resurrection, and that event was made possible by the Father. (See Acts 2: 24; 10: 40; 1 Corinthians 15: 15.)

Verse 20. *Made peace* pertains to the satisfaction which Christ gave his Father by shedding His blood on the cross. In other words, such a supreme sacrifice was enough to answer the demands of God, and that opened up the way so that the Son could bring about reconciliation between God and the forces arrayed against Him. *Or things in heaven* would necessarily be the good angels, since an angel who sins is cast out (2 Peter 2: 4). Good angels, however, have never offended God, and hence they do not need reconciliation in the strict sense of the word. But they are called upon to recognize Christ as King and spiritual Ruler through the centuries of the final dispensation. In this way they are a part of the body of Christ, and thus participate in the grand plan of reconciliation through Christ. (See Matthew 28: 18; Hebrews 1: 6; Philipians 2: 9; Revelation 5: 13.)

Verse 21. *Alienated* is from *APALLOTRIOO*, which Thayer defines, "to be shut out from one's fellowship and intimacy." Paul tells the Colossians they were once in that condition with God, but that it was caused by their own wicked works. Such a state of mind and conduct rendered them the enemies of God.

Verse 22. The condition of enmity mentioned in the preceding verse was overcome (*reconciled*) by the flesh'y body of Christ. This work of reconciliation was accomplished through death, thereby making the "supreme sacrifice" that took the place of all

those offered under the Jewish law (Hebrews 10: 1-9). This great plan made it possible for Christ to present his followers *unblameable* and *unrebukeable* in His (God's) sight. Not that men can become "as sinless as angels," but the blame will be removed by the blood of Christ, so that when they are presented to the Father, there will be nothing for which He will reprove them.

Verse 23. The blessings promised in the preceding verses are based upon an important *if*, which is that they must *continue in the faith*. This requires that they be *grounded and settled*, which means to be fixed in their determination to serve Christ, and hence are steadfast in their service to Him. Such a life will prevent them from being *moved away from the hope of the Gospel* which they had heard. The Colossians were not the only ones who had heard the Good News, for it *was preached to every creature which is under heaven*. This fact fulfilled the commission that Christ gave his apostles in Matthew 28: 19, 20 and Mark 16: 15, 16, and it is also declared to have been accomplished in Romans 10: 18. This teaching refutes those who quote the "great commission" and apply it to preachers of the Gospel in our day. No uninspired man can "preach the Gospel to every creature," for there are too many languages in the world.

Verse 24. The afflictions which Christ personally suffered were complete so that God was satisfied (Isaiah 53: 10, 11), hence this verse does not mean there was anything *behind* on His part. But Christians are expected to have fellowship with Jesus in his sufferings (Romans 8: 17; 2 Timothy 2: 12; 1 Peter 4: 1), and if Paul had shrunk from suffering for the sake of Christ, then he would have been the one to be *behind* as to his duty. But in undergoing tribulation in service to the brethren, he would be credited with doing so on behalf of Christ, since the church is His body. This great truth caused Paul to "rejoice in my sufferings for you."

Verse 25. Paul calls himself a *minister* because the word means a servant, whose duty it is to administer the affairs of his master. Such ministration is to be done according to the directions of the master. God had commissioned Paul to dispense (dispensation) His word by preaching (or

writing) it to the Colossians and to all others where opportunity appeared.

Verse 26. A *mystery* is anything unknown, regardless of whether it is complicated or simple in its form. The mystery Paul is referring to had been kept back *from ages and from generations*. Not that the Old Testament writers were entirely silent on the subject, but it was couched in prophetic passages to such extent that the New Testament preachers had to explain the subject in light of the Gospel. (See the following verse.)

Verse 27. The pronoun *whom* refers to the "saints" in the preceding verse. All Christians are saints, but the ones to whom the *mystery* was to be directly made known were the inspired preachers and writers of the New Testament. After such revelation was made known, others would also be able to understand it. That is why Paul writes in Ephesians 3: 4, "when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ." The particular part of the great mystery was that which pertained to the Gentiles, namely, that they were to be given the same privileges as the Jews. Of course this is to be enjoyed through Christ (not Moses), and it is *in you* (the Gentiles), extending to them *the hope of glory*. For centuries the Jews overlooked the predictions of the Old Testament, which pointed to the final acceptance of the Gentiles.

Verse 28. *Whom* refers to Christ who is the subject of Paul's preaching. *Warning* is from NOUTHETEO, which Thayer defines, "to admonish, warn, exhort." It has a somewhat milder meaning than it generally has, and signifies an earnest piece of advice to accept Christ (in the place of Moses), as the lawgiver who is in authority now. *Teaching every one*. It would not be of much use to exhort people to follow Christ unless they know what Christ wishes them to do, hence Paul states he is teaching them. *In all wisdom* means the instructions that the Holy Spirit would impart unto the apostle. *Perfect* means complete or rounded out in knowledge of divine things. By giving full information to them concerning the Gospel for the Gentiles (which was not fully known before), they would have their knowledge advanced as *perfect* (complete) *in Christ Jesus*.

Verse 29. *Whereunto* denotes the purpose to which Paul was laboring, as described in the preceding verse.

*Striving* is from AGONIZOMAI, and the lexicon of Thayer defines it, "To enter a contest; contend in the gymnastic games; to contend with adversaries, fight; to contend, struggle with difficulties and dangers; to endeavor with strenuous zeal, strive." Paul uses the athletic contests of his day to illustrate the struggles connected with his labors for Christ and his disciples. *His working* refers to the use that Christ was making of the apostle in the great conflict against sin. *Mightily* is from DUNAMIS, which is one of the strongest words in the Greek New Testament for power or ability. Paul uses it to indicate the help his Trainer is giving him in the contest going on in the arena of life.

## Colossians 2

Verse 1. Much of the thought in the last verse of the preceding chapter is continued in this verse. The Greek word for *conflict* means virtually the same as "striving" in the close of the preceding chapter. It refers to the great care and anxiety Paul felt for the Colossians, and he wishes that they knew about it; this feeling was extended to the brethren at Laodicea (a city near Colosse). *As many as have not seen my face in the flesh*. This clause indicates that Paul had not been personally in the presence of the Colossian brethren, hence he could not have been the one who started the church there nor at Laodicea. (See the comments under "general remarks.")

Verse 2. Paul connects the comfort of the brethren with their being knit together in love. Such a state is a great source of satisfaction, for if the disciples of Christ are thus bound together, they will be of mutual help and can meet the trials of life as a unit. David expressed this thought in Psalms 133: 1. This condition will result in the *riches of full assurance* that comes from *understanding*. Of course all of this blessed state will come only after their *acknowledgment of the mystery*. The last word refers to the mystery that is explained in chapter 1: 26. God the Father and Christ are named together because they are both concerned in the subject. The relation between the names *God* and *Father* is explained at Ephesians 4: 6.

Verse 3. *In whom* is supposed to refer to Christ, who is last named in the preceding verse. However, some

confusion might come from the marginal rendering which gives "wherein," making it apply to the *mystery* mentioned in the preceding verse. But the following verses all show that Christ is especially meant and hence the text as we have it is correct. That does not do any injustice to God, for everything He does for mankind is done through the Son. This verse is a direct denial of the theories of philosophy that were mentioned in "general remarks." Whatever wisdom and knowledge there is in the world that is worthy of the attention of man, all is found in Christ.

Verse 4. Paul is saying the present things as a warning against false teachers. To *beguile* means to deceive, and *enticing words* are those that sound well and are of a persuasive nature. These false teachers used a mixture of philosophy and Judaism in such a way as to mislead unsuspecting disciples away from the simplicity of the Gospel of Christ. Most of this chapter is written to expose both philosophy (so called) and Judaism, especially the latter.

Verse 5. The Colossian church had not yet departed from the faith, but it was in danger and the apostle is warning them. For the present, he is pleased with their excellent devotion to Christ, and wishes to have them continue in the same status. He was not in their midst bodily but was there in spirit or mind, and took joy from what he could behold through the things he had "heard" (chapter 1: 4). *Order* is from TAXIS, which Thayer defines at this place, "orderly condition." It does not mean any set routine to be followed in a mechanical order, but denotes that the church at Colosse had some system in its procedure. It is the same thought expressed in 1 Corinthians 14: 40, "Let all things be done decently and in order."

Verse 6. *As* is used in the sense of "since"—*since ye have received*, etc. Having *received* or accepted Christ as the Lord (which means Ruler), to be consistent, they should also *walk* or conduct their life *in Him*. That can be done only by doing His will.

Verse 7. *Rooted* and *stablished* have virtually the same meaning, namely, to be firmly fixed in something. In this passage it means to be established *in the faith* or in the Gospel. Of course if something has taken firm

root in a fertile spot, it will be able to produce a stalk or body above the ground. Likewise, Paul says the brethren will be able to grow or be *built up* as a stalk of righteousness in the world. And as a plant thus rooted and developed will be able to produce fruit, so the brethren would be able to *abound* (grow and produce), being thankful for the opportunity of being of service to Christ.

Verse 8. The apostle again comes to the subject of the Judaistic philosophers, who claim to have something to offer the brethren that is better than their simple belief of the Gospel. They would make them think that something of value was being lost if they did not accept the ideas of philosophy as a part of their religious life. Paul is warning them to *beware* of these false teachers. To *spoil* means to take from a man that which is his valuable possession. The simple faith of the Gospel is the most valuable thing one can possess, and if he permits the false teacher to cause him to give up that faith, he will be robbed of a costly treasure. A thief accomplishes his work with instruments adapted to his evil work, and likewise this false teacher has his instruments which are named in this verse. *Vain deceit*. The ideas offered by these philosophers were not only deceitful, but they were empty (*vain*). They were *traditions* or things handed down from man and not from Christ. *Rudiments* denotes elements and *world* means the people of the earth. These deceitful philosophies were elements produced in the minds of men and not by Jesus Christ.

Verse 9. *Godhead* is from THEOTES, which Thayer defines, "deity; Godhead," then explains it to mean, "the state of being God." *Bodily* refers to the form in which Jesus appeared while on earth, so that the entire *fulfillment* or virtue of the Deity was represented in Him. That is why Jesus said to Philip, "he that hath seen me hath seen the Father" (John 14: 9). Not that Jesus was the Father personally, but he was a full representation of God in human form.

Verse 10. Since the entire Godhead is represented by Christ, nothing of value will be lacking to those who are in Him. *Primacy* is the same as seniority or priority, and *power* means authority. He is senior because he is the "firstborn of every creature" (chapter 1: 15), and He is head of all



power or authority because it was all given to Him after his resurrection (Matthew 28: 18). If we believe the teaching of Paul in this verse, we will not clamor for things in our religious life that Christ has not authorized.

Verse 11. I have consulted several translations, and they put the word *are* in the past tense, showing it refers to a specific event of the past. The occasion when it was accomplished will be noted in the following verse. *Circumcision* means a cutting round or off, and when used figuratively it refers to the separation of a man's sins from his life by his obedience to the Gospel. It was *without hands* because while its outward form was done by a human act (see next verse), the real performance was spiritual or inward. (See Romans 6: 17.) *Circumcision of Christ* denotes that the whole transaction was accomplished by His authority.

Verse 12. The final act of the spiritual circumcision is by baptism, and men are said to be *buried with him*, that is with Christ. This phrase is used because in baptism the person is placed under the water and then raised again, thus going down and up in the form of a burial and resurrection. It is said to be with Him because he commands it, and also because he died and was buried in the tomb, from which he rose again. Such a like burial and resurrection is recognized as an act of faith in Christ and God. *Operation* means the energy or divine activity by which God raised Christ from the dead. Much has been said as to what constitutes "valid baptism," and we have some direct information in this passage. If a man believes that God raised Christ from the dead, and he is baptized in view of his faith in that act, then Paul declares that such a man has been *risen with him*, which certainly would prove that his baptism was valid. This thought is given also in Romans 10: 9.

Verse 13. All statements in this verse except the last one are figurative. Death means a separation, and as long as these people were living in their sins they were separated from God and hence were dead to Him. They likewise were uncircumcised during that time since their sins had not been cut off. To be *quickened* means to be made alive, or have the condition of death just described, reversed by obedience to the Gospel.

*With him* means with Christ, which was done when they were "buried with Him" in baptism. When all this was done, God forgave them all trespasses.

Verse 14. *Blotting out* is from a word that denotes something has been erased or canceled. However, since this refers to the Old Testament, we know it means that the enforcement of it as a religious law only was canceled, for the document is still in print and its national customs were still permitted to the Jewish Christians in Paul's day (Acts 21: 21-24). It is called *handwriting* from the fact that God wrote it with his own fingers on the stone, then authorized Moses to write it all in a book with his hand. *Against* and *contrary* literally means to be an enemy, but it is not used in that sense here, for the law of Moses should not be thought of in that light. The idea is that no one could form his religious life by that law and be under the law of Christ at the same time. (See Galatians 5: 1-4.) *Nailing it to his cross*. As long as a note or bond is in force or unsatisfied, it stands as an obligation "against" those who are under it. But when its demands have been met, it is canceled and its debtors are no longer held. Then such a document is rendered void by having a punch make a perforation through it, as a ticket is punched. This was done to the law when Jesus suffered himself to be punctured or nailed to the cross.

Verse 15. To *spoil* anything means to take away its valuables. The most valuable possession of a power or government is its authority. Jesus took that away from the law, as far as religious obligations were concerned, when He died on the cross and gave to the world another law and government. *Make a show of them openly* by being crucified in the view of the world. In this great event, though Jesus died and apparently was overcome, yet he came forth again from the dead to die no more. In so doing, Jesus triumphed over them (all other powers) *in it*. The last two words are rendered "in himself," which is correct since He was the one who triumphed.

Verse 16. The law of Moses had certain regulations concerning what they might eat and drink, and how (Leviticus 7: 10-27). It had various days that had to be observed as holy days. Among these were the new moons (2 Chronicles 31: 3; Numbers

28: 11), and all the sabbath days (Exodus 31: 13). Since that law has been replaced by the Gospel, no man should be allowed to *judge* the Christians concerning these regulations, by trying to force their observance on them.

Verse 17. The lexicon explains the original for *shadow* to mean, "an image cast by an object and representing the form of that object," and *body* is from SOMA, which the same lexicon of Thayer defines as, "the thing itself which casts the shadow." The ordinances of the Mosaic law were types or shadows of those to be given through Christ, and that is the reason He is said to be the body that casts the shadow. By insisting on the ordinances of the old law, the Judaizers were preferring the shadow of something to the thing itself.

Verse 18. *Beguide you of your reward* is from a Greek word that is used literally in reference to the athletic contests, where a judge or umpire would decide who is the winner. Thayer defines the word, "To decide as umpire against one, to declare him unworthy of the prize; to defraud of the prize of victory." As Paul uses it the meaning is, not to let the Judaizers cheat the disciples out of their reward from Christ by means of the evil things mentioned in the rest of this verse and the next. *Voluntary humility* means a pretended or self-imposed show of humility that is outward only. *Worshiping* is from THRESKEIA, which Thayer defines, "Primarily fear of the gods; religious worship, especially external, that which consists in ceremonies." It is used here in reference to some formalities that were claimed to be pleasing to the angelic hosts or beings in the unseen world, which Paul describes as an *intruding into those things which he hath not seen*. These Judaistic philosophers did all this because their *fleshly* or carnal mind had puffed them up over their imaginary importance.

Verse 19. The head of a body is that which directs its movements, hence if the body should become disconnected from the head, its performances would become disorderly (such as a fowl when its head has been severed by an ax). These deceptive teachers are likened to a body thus disconnected from its head, because they have rejected Christ who is "the head of the body." *Joints and bands* refers to the parts of the body, which must

depend upon the head for proper control. When that is done, it will result in *having nourishment ministered*, and hence will be *knit together* into a well ordered body. The grand result will be a proper development and *increase* (growth), because it will be *the increase of God*. (See Ephesians 4: 16.)

Verse 20. In his deunciation of false teachers, the apostle has reference to both Judaism and so-called philosophy in the rest of the chapter, but chiefly the former. *Rudiments of the world* means the elements or ordinances of the law that were types of the Gospel. Since Christ has released them from their obligation to the former *rudiments*, why (Paul asks) are they still subjecting themselves to them as if they were still under them.

Verse 21. Paul did not give this verse as his command, but quotes it as one of the human ordinances from which Christ has made men free. The restrictions of the law, such as *touch not, taste not, handle not*, referred to the eating and drinking of certain things. Those regulations had been lifted by the Gospel, so that trying still to fasten them upon Christians was considered as forcing upon them a human regulation.

Verse 22. *Perish with the using*. The things the Judaizers insisted that Christians should "touch not; taste not; handle not," were the articles of food and drink that were restricted by the law. Paul is reasoning that the restrictions were not made because of any bad effect such things would have on the body, for they perished with the using. That is, as articles of food, they were soon cast out of the body, leaving it unharmed. (See Mark 7: 15-19) The ordinances against them, therefore, were purely ceremonial, and when the law was canceled, the said restrictions were canceled also. After that was done, any continuance of them would be regarded as being *after the commandments and doctrines of men*. Paul taught the same idea in Philippians 3: 9, where he designates the righteousness of the law "mine own righteousness," after the law had been replaced by that of Christ.

Verse 23. *Show of wisdom* denotes that these unauthorized theories and practices have an appearance of wisdom only. This verse has special reference to the items of so-called philosophers, and the practices of people called ascetics. Such extremists be-



lieved it was a virtue to torture the body in the name of religious philosophy. *Will worship* means that which is suggested by the human will instead of by the will of God. *Humility* is the same as "voluntary humility," and it is explained at verse 18. *Neglecting of the body* is defined by Robinson as "harsh bodily discipline." *Not in any honor* denotes that these things are of no real value, and *to the satisfying of the flesh* means they are prompted by the fleshly or human notions.

### Colossians 3

Verse 1. Some translations render the first part of this verse as follows: "Since, then, ye have been risen with Christ." That is correct, for the first word is from the Greek term *ἐν* which is defined in the lexicons as a conditional term. It means a condition that something is based upon, and the condition in this case is that the Colossians had been risen with Christ. However, there is no doubt implied, for chapter 2: 12 plainly states that they had done so, and says it was when they were baptized. That act entitled them to the things mentioned in our verse. The preceding chapter shows them the folly of depending on human elements, hence they should look elsewhere for something worth having and seeking for. The instruction is to seek the things which are *above*, and the word is defined by Thayer, "in a higher place." But the apostle leaves no place for uncertainty as to where that is, for he says it is *where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God*. Baptized believers, then, have a right to these things, but they must *seek* for them. Romans 2: 7 and Revelation 22: 14 will tell us how the seeking is done.

Verse 2. *Set your affections* are from the Greek word *PHRNEO*, and Thayer defines it, "to direct one's mind to a thing, to seek or strive for." The verse is virtually the same in meaning as the preceding one.

Verse 3. Death means a separation, and when the disciples turned from a sinful life, they were separated from sin and thus died to it. The life or activity that had been devoted to a worldly practice then became devoted to Christ and so was *hid with Him*. Of course it was *in God*, because everything pertaining to righteousness and salvation, must be accomplished jointly with the Father and the Son.

Verse 4. *Christ who is our life*. To be hid with Christ gives assurance of enjoying the provisions that He has made for his faithful servants. Those provisions include eternal life; and all of the interests of Christians that have been *hid* with Him will be revealed—will come out of hiding—when Christ appears at the last day. "When that illustrious day shall rise," it will be in a halo of eternal glory, betokening victory over the sinful world.

Verse 5. In the preceding chapter Paul condemns the extremists who considered it a virtue to torture the body. In the present passage he instructs the disciples to *mortify* (put to death) certain evil things that are often practiced in the *members* or parts of the body. *Fornication*. According to Thayer's explanation of this word, it means unlawful intimacy in general, between the sexes, whether married or not. *Uncleanness* is a general term and applies to any kind of defilement whether of body or spirit. *Inordinate affection* is from *PATHOS*, which Thayer defines, "depraved passion;" it is the word for "vile affections" in Romans 1: 26. *Evil concupiscence* is a term for evil desire, and it is described by Thayer as, "desire for what is forbidden, lust." *Covetousness* is from *PLEONEXIA*, and Thayer defines it, "greedy desire to have more, covetousness, avarice." *Idolatry* is from *IDOLOLATREIA*, and its primary meaning is as the King James Version renders it. Thayer explains it at this place to mean "avarice [greed], as a worship of Mammon." The last word is derived from the Chaldean language, and means "what is trusted in," which shows us why Paul says that covetousness is (not just as bad as) *idolatry*.

Verse 6. The theory of predestination that many human creeds teach, is disproved by this verse. It shows that the wrath of God comes on people only who are guilty of the evils described in the preceding verse. Such conduct puts them in a class called *children of disobedience*. The first word is described in Thayer's lexicon as, "those who are connected with a thing by any kind of close relationship."

Verse 7. The Colossians were once living in sin but are now disciples of Christ, having been baptized into Him. The words *walked* and *lived* are used in the same sense, showing that a

man's walk is classified by the way he lives.

Verse 8. When they obeyed the Gospel they were made free from all guilt and stood pure before God. However, being in the beginning of their service to Him, they were like children and would need to make further advancement in their contest against sin. *Anger, wrath, malice*. If used alone, these words would have virtually the same meaning. When used in one sentence, they represent a growing of intensity of evil temper, finally becoming fixed in a deep feeling and evil intention called *malice*. *Blasphemy* is any kind of evil speaking, especially that which is prompted by the kind of heart just described. *Filthy communication* is foul and indecent language.

Verse 9. *The old man* is a figurative name for the kind of life the Colossians had lived, which was *put off* when they ceased such a life of sin. One of the evils they formerly committed was falsehood, which is to be replaced with truth.

Verse 10. When a person puts off one suit of apparel, it is usually for the purpose of putting on another. In like manner, after discarding their old garb of sin, the Colossians had *put on* the new one that was *renewed* (modeled) after a divine pattern like Christ who *created* or designed it.

Verse 11. This verse does not mean that the groups named cannot be in Christ, but that in Him no distinctions are made for or against any of them. When *Greek* is used in contrast with *Jew* it means a Gentile. *Circumcision* and *uncircumcision* also mean Jew and Gentile, because that rite was a distinguishing mark between the two from a national standpoint. *Barbarian* means a foreigner, and *Scythian* means a class of people considered below the average in culture and intelligence. *Bond* and *free* refer to slaves, and those not under slavery. All of these classes have equal right to be in Christ upon obedience to the Gospel, and when they comply with it, they are united as one religious group in Him.

Verse 12. What the Colossians had *put on* is mentioned in general in verse 10, and this verse gives some items of that new attire. *Elect of God* means people who have obeyed the law of God and therefore are elected or chosen by Him, and are regarded as

*holy* and *beloved*. *Bowels* is used figuratively in the New Testament, which Thayer explains as follows: "In the Greek poets the bowels were regarded as the seat of the more violent passions, but by the Hebrews as the seat of the tenderer affections." Paul partly gives the same definition by adding the rest of the words of this verse. *Humbleness* and *meekness* are about the same in meaning, and *long-suffering* denotes patience under trials and unjust treatment.

Verse 13. *Forbearing one another* is virtually the same as "longsuffering" in the preceding verse, denoting a spirit of patience with the faults of others. This will be manifested by a willingness to forgive one who has trespassed against us. *Quarrel* means complaint that one feels he has against a brother. *Even* comes from KATHOS, which Thayer defines, "according as, just as, even as." The idea is that we should be willing to follow the example of Christ in forgiving those who have offended us.

Verse 14. *Charity* is from AGAPE, which means love that is prompted by a genuine interest in another, which is manifested by a willingness to contribute to his welfare. *Above all these things* means that love is more important than all the other things that were mentioned in the preceding verses. That agrees with 1 Corinthians 13: 13, where the last word is from the same Greek term. *Bond of perfectness* signifies that charity (or love) will make a perfect (complete) bond between brethren.

Verse 15. *Peace of God* would be that calmness of mind provided by Him. *To rule in their hearts* means for such a state of mind to predominate in their minds. Such a condition can be had only in the *one body* which is the church (Ephesians 1: 22, 23). Such a blessedness with God is enough to cause them to *be thankful*.

Verse 16. The body of this verse is the same in thought as Ephesians 5: 19; a full explanation is given at that place, which the reader should see; some additional comments will be offered here. The *word of Christ* is recorded in the New Testament, hence a knowledge of that book is necessary for it to dwell in one's mind richly and *in wisdom*. Such a knowledge will enable the disciples to *teach* and *admonish* each other. To teach means to impart instruction, and to admonish

means to insist on doing one's duty, with an intimation of danger in neglecting it. *Singing with grace* indicates that the service is prompted by the grace (favor) of God.

Verse 17. *Word or deed*. According to Luke 6: 43-45, a man's words are the fruit of his heart or thoughts. Therefore, the phrase in italics includes one's entire conduct, and the command is that it must be all *in the name* of the Lord Jesus, otherwise it will be wrong. That cannot mean that merely professing the name of Christ in connection with a thing will make it right. Matthew 7: 22; 24: 5 shows persons doing things "in the name" of the Lord, who we know were not doing right. The phrase can mean only to do all by the authority of Christ. Since His authority is known only in the New Testament, it follows that Christians have no right to any thought, word or deed, that is not authorized by that volume.

Verse 18. The relationship between God and Christians is a religious and spiritual one, yet He gives certain regulations regarding conduct of the disciples, in all of their relations and dealings with each other, in their various connections with social, political and industrial activities. The general law that should always prevail when a question is raised as to right and wrong in the cases to be mentioned soon, is stated in Acts 5: 29 as follows: "We ought to obey God rather than men." That is why our present verse instructs wives to submit themselves unto their husbands *as it is fit in the Lord*. As long as a wife can obey her husband without violating any law of the Lord, it is her duty to do so.

Verse 19. *Love* is from AGAPAO, which Thayer defines, "to have a preference for, wish well to, regard the welfare of." It does not necessarily include the "romantic sentiments," although such a feeling should exist for a woman before a man seeks to make her his wife. *Be not bitter* means for him not to show an angry or irritated feeling toward his wife in ruling over her.

Verse 20. *In all things* should be understood with the same proviso as "in the Lord" at Ephesians 6: 1. A full explanation of this subject is given in that passage which the reader should consult. As long as the commands of parents are not in conflict with the law of the Lord, children

must obey them, even though they are old enough to have obeyed the Gospel.

Verse 21. The words *to anger* are not in the primary definition given by the lexicon. *Provoke* means to irritate one's children in a way that will discourage them. It does not oppose proper disciplining of them, even though such correction may be unpleasant. It should be considered in the light of Hebrews 12: 11.

Verse 22. It was not the purpose of the Lord to interfere with the relation of master and servant, for that is a temporal one. But He gave regulations for their conduct toward each other when either or both became disciples, which frequently occurred. *Eye service* means "service performed only under the master's eye."—Thayer. *Singleness* is another name for sincerity, and such service here termed *eye service* would not be sincere, and would not be prompted by the fear or respect for God.

Verse 23. They were to serve their masters with the same sincerity that they do their service to the Lord. In truth, since He requires servants to obey their masters, such service could well be considered in a sense as having been done for the Lord.

Verse 24. *Reward of the inheritance* merely denotes the Lord will see that a faithful servant will receive his due reward. The last clause is the same as the preceding verse; Lord Christ means the anointed ruler.

Verse 25. As surely as the Lord will see that a faithful servant will receive his due reward, so He will see that an unfaithful one will be punished. *No respect of persons*. No unfaithful servant will be shown any partiality on account of some personal preference, as earthly masters sometimes do. (See the comments at Ephesians 6: 9.)

#### Colossians 4

Verse 1. Masters who become disciples were under the authority of Christ as well as were their servants, hence were given instructions as to the proper treatment to be accorded them. *Just and equal* means they should furnish their servants with such wages as their labor deserved and their needs required. Remembering that they have a Master in heaven should prevent them from being unduly severe with their own servants,

and cause them not to withhold from them their just dues.

Verse 2. To *continue in prayer* denotes a life that is devoted to God, and that makes all activities for Him the subjects of Prayer. Prayer has to do with one's attention to the Lord, and watching pertains to the care a disciple will have as to his own conduct. *Thanksgiving* is appropriate because of the consideration God gives to the faithful child of His.

Verse 3. *Withal* is defined "at the same time" by Thayer, which connects this verse with the preceding one. As they "continue" in prayer for themselves, Paul wishes them to include a prayer for him. Not for his personal benefit, but for the work of Christ in which he is engaged. He wished for a *door of utterance*, meaning an opportunity for speaking the *mystery* (Gospel) of Christ. *For which* refers to this mystery or Gospel, meaning that his *bonds* or chain was upon him because he wished to preach the Gospel, which was displeasing to so many Jews and others.

Verse 4. A mystery is anything that is not known, whether complicated or simple in its character. Paul refers to the mystery of the Gospel in the preceding verse, now in this he wishes to be able to make it *manifest* or known to those with whom the "door of utterance" would bring him into contact.

Verse 5. *Walk in wisdom*. Let the conduct be according to good judgment, considering the effect it will have upon *them that are without*, meaning the ones who are not in the church. The people of the world often have a better knowledge of how Christians should live than we realize. *Redeeming the time* means to make good use of our time, by devotion to the things that will build up a character acceptable to God.

Verse 6. The instructions in the preceding verse have special reference to the bodily conduct of disciples, and the present one pertains to their language in conversation with others. *Grace* is from CHARIS, and it is used in the New Testament with reference to both the Lord's dealings with man, and to the dealings of men with each other. When used in the latter sense, it is defined by Thayer as follows: "Sweetness, charm, loveliness; goodwill, lovingkindness, favor." Salt has the quality of preserving that with

which it comes into contact, and also of rendering it more agreeable to the taste. Our verse means that by proper talk with people on the outside of the church, disciples may be true to the Gospel teaching, and yet not give unnecessary offense. Such a rule or attitude towards others will show that a disciple *knows how to answer every man*, and thus his good influence may be preserved as *with salt*.

Verse 7. Thayer says Tychicus was "an Asiatic Christian, friend and companion of the apostle Paul." Funk and Wagnalls New Standard Bible Dictionary gives the same information, with additional notes that he carried the epistle of Paul to the Ephesians, and the same would apply to the present letter. It should be kept in mind that all Paul's epistles were sent by messengers, since there were no postal arrangements for carrying private letters such as exist in our times. When delivering the epistle to the Colossians, Paul expected Tychicus to give information as to the personal circumstances that his work in the Gospel had caused.

Verse 8. *Same purpose* refers to the subject of welfare mentioned in the preceding verse. Tychicus was to inform the Colossians of the state of Paul, and he wished also to learn that of them. *Comfort your hearts*. Thayer defines the Greek for the first word, "to encourage, strengthen." In spite of the restricted situation surrounding the apostle, there was much in which to rejoice, because of the great amount of good that he was doing for the Gospel's sake.

Verse 9. Onesimus was the runaway slave of Philemon (Philemon 10-16) who got in company with Paul in Rome and was persuaded to obey the Gospel. His master being a resident of Colosse, he was sent back there with Tychicus as the epistle of Paul was sent to the church in that city. *Who is one of you* pertains both to his being a resident of the city, and also a brother in Christ. He was expected to join with Tychicus in reporting on the state of Paul.

Verse 10. A number of brethren were in Rome when Paul composed this epistle, and many of them joined in sending friendly greetings to the Colossians. *Aristarchus* was a citizen of Thessalonica (Acts 27: 2), who became a traveling companion of the apostle (Acts 19: 29; 20: 4). He be-

came a fellow-laborer with Paul (Philemon 24), and because of his zeal in the work he was finally taken captive by the authorities and made his fellow-prisoner as our verse states. *Marcus* is another form for Mark, who was in Rome, having been restored to the confidence of the apostle (2 Timothy 4: 11). *Sister's son* is from *ANEPSIOS*, which Thayer defines, "a cousin." The Englishman's Greek New Testament renders the phrase, "Mark, the cousin of Barnabas." *Ye received commandments*. We are not told what those orders were, but the necessary inference is that they pertained to the attitude that was to be shown toward Mark. That accounts for the instruction to *receive him* if he came to Colosse.

Verse 11. This *Jesus* is distinguished from others of the same name by giving us his surname; *called* [surnamed] *Justus*. *Of the circumcision* means they were Jews converted to the Gospel. *These only* refers to the Jewish Christians mentioned in this and the preceding verse. They were the only ones of that nationality who were *fellow-workers* with Paul, and who thus had been a comfort to him. Certain Gentile converts also co-operated with him, some of whom have been already mentioned, and others will be named later in this chapter.

Verse 12. *Epaphras* had been associated with the church at Colosse, but when this epistle was written, he was in Rome and a prisoner on behalf of the Gospel. This is indicated in Philemon 23, where Paul calls him his "fellow-prisoner." He joined in sending salutations to the Colossian brethren. *Laboring . . . in prayers* for the "home congregation" was a natural thing because of his personal interest in those brethren. *Perfect* and *complete* mean about the same if used separately in various places. In the present use of the words, the former means to be fully developed, and the latter shows why; that it is because they would be fully supplied with necessary spiritual principles.

Verse 13. Laodicea and Hierapolis were cities not far from Colosse, and Epaphras had expressed a fervent interest in the disciples at those places.

Verse 14. Luke was a physician by profession, but became a devoted companion of Paul, both in his travels and also in his tribulations at Rome. He

is also the writer of the Gospel record bearing his name in the heading, and of the book of Acts (Luke 1: 3; Acts 1: 1). Demas was yet in Rome and devoted to the apostle also at the time this letter was written; he deserted him afterward (2 Timothy 4: 10).

Verse 15. The salutations of this verse are general as a whole, but Paul makes some specifications. Laodicea is mentioned in verse 13, and Nymphas was a disciple in that city. The original for *house* sometimes means "the inmates of a house, the family." This disciple had a group of others in his house who composed the church in that city, and Paul sends greetings to it through the Colossian brethren.

Verse 16. Laodicea was not far from Colosse, and Paul directed the brethren to read this epistle among themselves first, then pass it on to the brethren at Laodicea to be read by them. There is some uncertainty as to what epistle is meant that was to come from Laodicea, but whatever it was, the brethren at Colosse were instructed to read it. The common conditions in these two churches were such as to make the two epistles appropriate for both.

Verse 17. *Archippus* is described by Thayer as, "a certain Christian at Colosse." He was a teacher in the church there, and Paul sends this exhortation to him to be expressed by the brethren on behalf of the apostle. *The ministry* means the service of teaching that the Lord had delivered to him.

Verse 18. Paul occasionally did the writing of his epistles (Galatians 6: 11), but as a rule he dictated them to someone else, then signed his name to them which made them authentic. *Remember my bonds*. This was not written to obtain sympathy, for the apostle was not the kind of disciple to complain. The reference was for the benefit of the brethren, to stimulate their zeal on behalf of the Gospel.

## 1 Thessalonians 1

Verse 1. The planting of the church in Thessalonica is recorded in Acts 17th chapter, and soon afterward Paul wrote this epistle to it. According to Thayer, Silvanus is another form of the name for Silas, who was chosen to travel with Paul in his second journey (Acts 15: 40). When they reached