

EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE COLOSSIANS.

Introduction.

1 **PAUL**, by the will of God an apostle
of Christ Jesus, and the brother
2 Timothy, to the holy and faithful
brethren in Christ at Colosse. Blessing and peace to
you from our Father, God.

3 We give thanks to the God and
Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
4 praying always for you, having heard
of your faith in Christ Jesus, and the
love which you have to all the saints:
5 because of the hope laid up in the
heavens, of which you previously
heard in the plea for the truth of the
6 gospel, which is presented to you,
and also to the whole world, and is
fruitful and growing; as also it is
among you, from the day you heard
and truly recognised the Divine gift;
7 which you learnt from our dear
fellow-servant Epaphras, who is our
8 faithful minister of Christ, and who
has told us of your spiritual love.

The Believers' Standing in Christ.

9 And consequently we, from the day
we heard of it, have never ceased
praying for you, and asking that you
may be filled with the knowledge of
His will, with all spiritual wisdom
10 and understanding; and conducting
yourselves worthy of the Lord in all
nobility, successful in every good
work, and improved by the knowledge
11 of God; being strong with all strength,
by His rectifying power, to endure
12 every hardship and trial, gladly giving
thanks to the Father, Who brought us
into the partnership of the inheritance
13 of the holy in the light; Who has deli-
vered us from the power of darkness,
and transferred us unto the Kingdom
14 of His beloved Son—in whom we have
the redemption, the release from
15 sins—who is the likeness of the un-
seen God, the Producer of all crea-
16 tion; because by him was created
everything in the heavens and upon
the earth—the seen and the un-
seen; whether thrones, sovereignties,

governments, or authorities—the
whole were created through Him and
for Him; and He Himself preceded 17
all, and the whole was established by
Him. And He is the Head of the body, 18
the church; He is the Beginning, the
Bringer-forth from the dead, so that
He may Himself be the first over all.
Because He decreed that all perfec- 19
tion should dwell in Him; and 20
through Him He will collect all again
to Himself—having made peace by
the blood of His cross, through Him
—whether upon the earth or in the
heavens.

You, however, were once alienated 21
and estranged, through your mind
being addicted to the practice of vice;
but now He has reconciled again, 22
through the death of His corporeal
body, to place you in the presence of
Himself holy, blameless, and irre-
proachable: if you remain fixed and 23
firm to the faith, and change not from
the hope of the gospel that you have
heard, which has been preached to all
creation under the heavens, of which
I, Paul, became a minister.

The Divine Call of the Apostle Affirmed.

Now I rejoice for your sakes in 24
sufferings, and I would fill up in my
body the extreme of Christ's affliction,
for the sake of His body—the church;
of which I became a minister by ap- 25
pointment given to me for you from
God, to accomplish the Divine inten-
tion, the secret hidden from the ages, 26
and from the nations, but now made
manifest to His saints by whom God 27
has decided to publish amongst the
heathen what is the wealth of that
mystery of the rectification which
Christ is to you—the hope of the
rectification—which we proclaim; 28
warning every man, and teaching
every person in a perfect philosophy,
so that we may present each one 29
perfect in Christ; to which object I
vigorously strive with His mighty
energy working in me.

Sundry Exhortations and Warnings.

2 For I wish you to know how great a struggle I have for you, and those in Laodicea, and whoever have not
 2 seen my bodily presence; so that their hearts may be consoled, united in love and all the wealth of the full conviction of reason, in comprehend-
 3 ing the secret of God, in Christ, in Whom are hidden all the treasures
 4 of wisdom and secret knowledge. I say this, indeed, so that no one may
 5 delude you by plausibility. For if I am absent by the body, yet with the spirit I am with you, rejoicing and seeing your discipline and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ.

6 Now, as you have received the Lord
 7 Jesus Christ, walk with Him, rooted and founded upon Him; and secured in the faith which you were taught, with thankfulness increasing it.

8 Look out, for fear any one should mislead you by means of the philosophy of the silly trifling of human tradition; following the guideposts of the world, and not in accordance with Christ. Because in Him resides bodily every perfection of the
 10 Divinity. And you are perfected in Him, Who is the Head of every power
 11 and authority. To Whom also you were circumcised by an unmechanical circumcision, by stripping off the animal body, in the Christian circumcision, when you were buried with
 12 Him in the baptism; by which also you were raised together, through the faith in the Divine energy which raised Him from among the dead.

The Believers Emancipation from Legalism.

13 And you, having been dead in transgressions and the uncircumcision of your sensuality, He restored to life together with Himself, having forgiven us all those transgressions;
 14 having erased the record, with the decrees which were against us, and taking it away, He nailed it to the
 15 cross. Having stripped the powers and authorities, He exposed them publicly, leading them in triumph with
 16 Himself. Therefore let none condemn you as to food, and as to drink, nor in respect of a festival, or new moon,
 17 or Sabbaths; which were a forecast of the future; but the substance belongs
 18 to Christ. Nor let any designedly

trick your judgment into reverence and worship of the angels; resting upon what he sees, made vainly proud by his fleshly mind; and not ruled by
 19 the Head, from which all the body, through its joints and sinews arranged and invigorated, grows up with the Divine growth.

If with Christ you died from the
 20 rules of the Hebrew ritual, why, as though living under a ritual, are you being prescribed to "Handle not,
 21 taste not, touch not," what absolutely
 22 perishes in the use—in conformity with human commands and teaching? In which there is certainly a show of
 23 prudence in the repression of appetite, and meekness, and disregard of the body, yielding it no consideration by sensual gratification.

Exhortation to Practical Godliness.

If, however, you were raised with
 3 Christ, search for what is above, where Christ is seated upon the right hand of God. Think about
 2 heavenly, not earthly affairs; for you
 3 died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. So when Christ our life
 4 is manifested, then also you will be manifested in rectification together
 5 with Him. Therefore destroy these
 6 parts of yourselves upon the earth—fornication, impurity, passion, vile lust, and greed, for it is idolatry; through which the anger of God comes;
 7 among which you once walked when
 8 you lived with them. But now you re-
 9 spect the whole—rage, lust, filth, vice, slander from your mouth. Do not lie
 10 to each other. Put off the old man with his practices; and put on the new, that
 11 is renewed in knowledge—the very picture of its Creator—where no one
 12 is Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, foreigner, Scythian, slave, freeman—but Christ, the whole, and in all.

Therefore put on, as chosen of
 12 God, holy and beloved, gentle pity, kindness, quietude, mildness, forbearance; supporting one another,
 13 and forgiving mutually, if any one should have a quarrel against another; just as the Master forgave you, you should also do; but above all these—
 14 love, which is a bond of perfection. And let the peace of God preside in
 15 your hearts—for you were called to be a united body—and be thankful.

Let Christ's reason live richly in you
 16

with all wisdom. Teach and instruct yourselves with psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs; in delight singing
 17 in your hearts to God. And in all that you do in word, or in deed, do all in the Name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to the God, and Father, through Him.

18 Let the wives be obedient to their husbands, as is right in the LORD.

19 Let the husbands love their wives, and be not bitter with them. Children should obey their parents in every-
 20 thing; for that is pleasing to the LORD. Fathers, do not irritate your children, and break not their spirits.

22 Slaves, obey your bodily masters in all; not in false pretence, like flatterers, but with honesty of heart,
 23 fearing the LORD. If you do this, working from your soul as to the
 24 Lord, and not to men, you know that you will from the LORD receive the reward of the inheritance; work for
 25 the Lord Jesus Christ. For the wrong-doer, however, there will be stored up the evil which he has done;
 4 and there is no partiality. Masters, grant justice and right to your slaves; because you know that you have a Master in heaven.

2 Persevere with prayer, keeping
 3 guard in it, with thanks; praying particularly for us, so that God may open to us a door for the message, to speak the secret of Christ, to which also I am
 4 devoted; so that I may display it, as it becomes me to speak.

5 Conduct yourselves with prudence to those outside, buying the opportunity. Let your discourse at all
 6 times be seasoned with grateful salt, knowing how you ought to be distinguished from others.

Personal Matters.

7 Tychicus, the dear brother and faithful minister and fellow-servant in the Lord, will inform you about my

affairs; whom I have sent to you for 8 this very purpose—so that I may know your circumstances, and that he may console your hearts—together 9 with our faithful and beloved brother Onesimus, who belongs to you. They will tell you about everything here.

Aristarchus, my companion, sends 10 regards to you, as well as Mark, the cousin of Barnabas—about whom you have received instructions that if he should come your way you are to receive him—and Jesus, called Justus, 11 who alone of the circumcised worked with me for the Kingdom of God. They were a comfort to me.

Epaphras, a servant of Christ Jesus 12 from yourselves, sends regards to you; he strives always for you in prayer, so that you may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God. For I can witness for him that he has 13 much affection for you, as well as for those in Laodicea, and those in Hierapolis.

Demas, and Luke the beloved 14 physician, send regard to you. Give 15 regards to the brothers in Laodicea, and Nymphas, and to the congregation in his house. And when this 16 letter has been read among you, make it also to be read in the congregation at Laodicea, while you also should read that from Laodicea.¹ And say to 17 Archippus, "Take heed of the ministry that you have undertaken from the LORD, that you fulfil it."

By my own hands, the regards of 18 PAUL. Remember my bonds. Grace be with you.

(Written to the Colossians, from Rome, about 62 A.D., and sent by Tychicus and Onesimus.)

¹ That is, the Letter now named to the Ephesians.—F. F.