THE EPISTLE TO THE COLOSSIANS.

THE STRUCTURE AS A WHOLE.

| 1:1, 2. | EPISTOLARY AND SALUTATION. |
| 1:3—8. | REPORTS AND MESSAGES BY EPAPHRAS. |
| 1:9—2:7. | PAUL’S SOLICITUDE FOR THE COLOSSIANS, AND PRAYER THAT THEY MIGHT ACKNOWLEDGE THE MYSTERY. |
| 2:8—23. | DOCTRINAL CORRECTION FOR FAILURE AS TO EPHESIAN TRUTH. HAVING DIED WITH CHRIST. |
| 3:1—4:1. | DOCTRINAL CORRECTION FOR FAILURE AS TO EPHESIAN TRUTH. HAVING RISEN WITH CHRIST. |
| 4:2—6. | PAUL’S SOLICITUDE FOR THEM, AND THEIR PRAYERS ASKED CONCERNING HIS PREACHING THE MYSTERY. |
| 4:7—9. | REPORTS AND MESSAGES BY TYCHICUS AND ONESIMUS. |
| 4:10—18. | EPISTOLARY AND SALUTATION. |

INTRODUCTORY NOTES.

1. Doctrine has more place than practice in the Epistle to the Colossians. There is a marked resemblance between it and the letter to the Ephesians, a prominent element of both, as well as Philippians, being the apostle’s insistence upon the reality of our union with Christ, as having died and risen again in Him, and the necessity for “holding fast the Head” (2:19).

2. SUBJECT. Colossians, like Galatians, proclaims our freedom from the “elements”, or “rudiments”, of the world. What those elements are, is sufficiently explained by the term “ceremonialism”, the rites and ceremonies of religion as distinct from Christianity. Hence Paul’s earnest admonition against a return to such, Jewish or other, inasmuch as this is to deny our completeness and perfection in Christ. Practically, it is to say that He is not sufficient, that something more is needed to be added to Him, some ordinance is wanted to make us quite complete. But, as the apostle unfolds to us, we died with Christ, and, consequently, ordinances are of no use to dead persons. In this Epistle all practical holiness is shown to spring from the holding of true doctrine, i.e. our life is the outcome of our belief. Then, our standing being complete and perfect in Christ, we cannot grow in this standing, but we may grow in the knowledge, experience, and enjoyment of it.

3. The statement in 2:1 indicates that, at the time of writing the Epistle, Paul had not yet visited Colosae, although commentators are divided on this point. Some believe that the apostle could not have missed out the city in one or other of his missionary journeys, although no mention is made in Acts. Others, referring to 1:7, hold that Epaphras had been Paul’s deputy to bear the good news to his fellow-citizens, for he was a Colossian (4:12).

4. DATE. The Epistle was written towards the end of the apostle’s first imprisonment in Rome, about A.D. 62 (Ap. 180).

5. The Phrygian city of Colossae was only a few miles from Laodicea, the importance of which gradually increased as the other city declined. Both so entirely disappeared that only in recent times were the sites discovered, and various ruins traced, by modern explorers.

This is Page 1780 from The Companion Bible.
Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timotheus our brother,

To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ which are in Colosse: Grace and favour be to you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

We give thanks to God ... the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you,

Having heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which ye have to all the saints,

For the hope which is stored away for you in the heavens, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel;

Which is come unto you, as it is in all the world; and bringeth forth fruit [and increasing], as it doth in you also, from the day ye heard of it, and knew the grace of God in truth:

As ye ... learned of Epaphras our dear fellow-slave, who is for you a faithful minister of Christ;

Who declared also unto us your love in the spirit.

On account of their faith and love we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire in order that ye might be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding;

To walk worthily of the Lord unto all pleasing, fruit bearing in every good work, and increasing by the knowledge of God;

Strengthened with all power, according to the might of His glory, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulfulness;

Giving thanks to the Father, Which ... made us efficient for the share of the lot of the saints in the light:

Who ... rescued us from the power of the darkness, and ... brought us into the kingdom of the Son of His love:

In Whom we have redemption, even the forgiveness of sins:

Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation:

Because by Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him, and for Him:

And He is before all things, and by Him all things hold together.

And He is the head of the body, the church: Who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; in order that in all things He might become the pre-eminent One.

For it pleased God that in Him should all the fullness dwell;

And, having made peace through the blood of His cross, by Him to bring together again all things unto Himself; by Him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.

And you, that were sometime alienated [estranged from] and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now ... He brought together again.

In the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unimpeachable in His sight:

If at least ye continue in the faith founded and firm, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel [the return of the Lord], which ye ... heard, and which was preached to all creation which is under the heaven; whereof I Paul became ordained a minister;

Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is lacking of the tribulations of [the members of the Body of] Christ in my flesh for His body's sake, which is the church:

Whereof I became a minister, according to the administration of God which was given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God;
26 Even the mystery which hath been hid from the age times and from generations, but now is made revealed to His saints:

27 To whom God desired to make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ among you, the hope of the glory:

28 Whom we preach, admonishing every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; in order that we may present every man mature in Christ ...

29 Unto which I labour also, agonizing with all His strength, which worketh in me by my will.

2 For I desire that ye fully understand what great struggling I have on your behalf, and for them at Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh;

2 In order that their hearts might be comforted, being united in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, unto the acknowledgement of the mystery of God, and of the Father, even Christ;

3 In Whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

4 And this I say, in order that no one should deceive you with enticing words.

5 For even if I be absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the spirit, joying and beholding how orderly you are, and the stedfastness of your faith unto Christ.

6 As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him:

7 Rooted and built up in Him, and established by the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving.

8 See to it that not any one seduces you through philosophy and mere fallacy, after the tradition of men, after the commandments and doctrines of men, and not after Christ.

9 Because in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead in bodily form.

10 And ye are complete in Him, Who is the head of all principality and power:

11 In Whom ye were circumcised also with the circumcision made without hands in the heart, in putting off the body ... of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ:

12 Buried with Him in baptism [His baptism unto death], in Whom ye were raised also, and through the faith of the operation of God, Who raised Him from the dead.

13 And you, being [at that time] dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath He made alive together with Him even you, having graciously forgiven you all sins;

14 Having blotted out the written legal contract of ordinances that was against us, which was against and opposed to us, and took it out of the midst, having nailed it to the cross;

15 And having put off principalities and powers, He made a shew of them publicly, triumphing over them by the cross.

16 Let no man therefore judge you in eating and drinking, or in taking part of an holyday [feast], or of the new moon [celebration], or of the Sabbaths:

17 Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ.

18 Let no man defraud you of your prize in being a devotee to humility and religion of angels, investigating those things which He hath ... seen, vainly puffed up by the mind of his flesh [the old Adam nature],

19 And not holding fast the Head, from Whom all the body by joints and bonds having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God.

20 Wherefore if ye died with Christ from the elementary rules of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject [such as] to ordinances,

21 (Touch not; taste not; handle not;

22 Which all are for corruption with the using;) after the commandments and doctrines of men?
23 Which order of things is having indeed a reputation of wisdom in self-imposed worship, and humility, and not sparing of the body; not in any value to the satisfying of the flesh.

3 If ye then were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.

2 Mind things above, not on things on the earth.

3 For ye died, and your life has been laid up in store with Christ in God.

4 When Christ, who is our life, shall be manifested, then shall ye also be manifested with Him in glory.

5 Put to death therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, lust, evil desire, and greediness, which is idolatry:

6 Because of these things the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience:

7 In the which ye also walked some time, when ye lived in them.

8 But now ye also put away all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth.

9 Lie not to one another, having put off the old Adam nature with his practices;

10 And having put on [like a garment] the new [renewed] man, which is renewed in knowledge after the pattern of Him That created him:

11 Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian [the lowest type of barbarians], bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all.

12 Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, inward affection of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long suffering;

13 Bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a grievance against any: even as the Lord forgave you, do ye also.

14 And above all these things put on the love, which is a bond of perfect completeness.

15 And let the peace of Christ be umpire in your hearts, to the which ye were called also in one body; and be ye thankful.

16 Let the spoken and written words of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to God.

17 And whatsoever ye do in word or in work, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.

18 Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is proper in the Lord.

19 Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter toward them.

20 Children, obey your parents according to all things: for this is well pleasing to the Lord.

21 Fathers, provoke [embitter] not your children to anger, in order that not they have their spirit broken.

22 Servants, obey according to all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but in sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord:

23 And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men;

24 Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the recompense of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ.

25 But he that doeth wrong shall receive the wrong that he wronged: and there is no partiality.
4. Masters, give to your servants that which is right and equal; knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven.

2 Continue in prayer, and watch in it with thanksgiving;

3 Withal praying for us also, in order that God would open to us a door for the spoken word, to declare the mystery of Christ, for which I have been bound also:

4 In order that I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak.

5 Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time.

6 Let your speech be alway with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man.

7 All things according to me shall Tychicus make known unto you, the beloved brother, and faithfull minister and fellowservant in the Lord:

8 Whom I sent to you for the same purpose, in order that ye may know the things concerning you, and comfort your hearts;

9 With Onesimus, a faithful and beloved brother, who is one of you. They shall make known unto you all things here.

10 Aristarchus my fellowprisoner saluteth you, and Marcus, cousin to Barnabas, (touching whom ye received commandments: if he come unto you, receive him;)

11 And Joshua, which is called Justus, who are of the circumcision. These only are my fellowworkers unto the kingdom of God, which have become a comfort unto me.

12 Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ Jesus, saluteth you, always striving for you in prayers, in order that ye may stand perfect and fully persuaded in all the will of God.

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

14 Luke, the beloved physician, and Demas, greet you.

15 Salute the brethren which are in Laodicea, and Nymphas, and the church which is in his house.

16 And when this epistle is read among you, see to it that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans; and that ye likewise read the epistle from Laodicea.

17 And say to Archippus, Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfil it.

18 The salutation by my hand of Paul. Remember my bonds. Grace be with you. …