

Christ the Creator

by C.H. Spurgeon

C.H. Spurgeon powerfully proclaims that Jesus Christ, the incarnate Son of God, is the Creator of all things, and that all creation—heaven, angels, earth, and humanity—was made by Him and for His glory.

Scripture: Colossians 1:16, Genesis 1:1, John 1:1-3, John 10:30, 1 John 5:7, Psalm 104:24, Hebrews 1:14, Revelation 5:12-13

Topics: "Christology", "Creation", "Heaven"

Description

In this profound sermon, C.H. Spurgeon expounds on the truth that Jesus Christ is the Creator of all things, emphasizing His divine nature and eternal sovereignty. Spurgeon explores how Heaven, angels, the earth, and humanity were all made by Christ and for His glory. He invites listeners to marvel at the centrality of Christ in creation and to anticipate the eternal joy of being united with Him. This message powerfully affirms the majesty of Christ as Lord over all.

Transcript

"All things were created by Him and for Him." Colossians 1:16.

THERE can be no mistake as to the Person concerning whom Paul is writing under the Inspiration of the Holy Spirit—it is Jesus of Nazareth, the Incarnate Son of God who was crucified on Calvary for, writing concerning the same Person in the 14th verse, the Apostle says, "In whom we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins." It is, therefore, that Savior whose blood was shed for His people's redemption who is here declared to be the Creator of all things and by whom all things consist!

The first verse of the Book of Genesis tells us that, "in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth," so someone may ask, "How do you reconcile that statement with Paul's declaration that all things were created by Christ and for Him?" No reconciliation is needed, for the two statements are identical, as Jesus is God, and "in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily." Jesus said, "I and My Father are One," and so they are! We know not how it is, but the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are distinct Personalities, yet there are not three Gods, but only one, as the Apostle John writes, "There are three that bear record in Heaven, the Father, the Word and the Holy Spirit; and these Three are One." The one God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob is the Father, Son and Spirit—Three in One and One in Three!

The subject I have to speak about is the honor and glory of the Second Person of the blessed Trinity, even our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ! But it is so vast a theme that the preacher, at the outset, confesses that

the task is too great for him to accomplish! He staggers beneath the weight of his theme which seems to him too great for the human mind to compass or for human lips adequately to express! All I can hope to do is to be lost in my subject that Jesus Christ may be

All-in-All.

The text tells us that all things were created by Christ and for Him, so we will, first, consider Paul's statement. And, secondly, we will review the rejections arising from it.

I. First, then, let us CONSIDER PAUL'S STATEMENT—"All things were created by Him and for Him." So, first of all, Heaven, itself was created by and for Christ Jesus. Then there is such a place, as well as such a state, and of that place Jesus is the center! There is such a place, for Enoch is there. "Enoch walked with God: and he was not, for God took him." God took him bodily to some place—and that place is Heaven. Elijah is also there—the horses of fire and the chariots of fire took not merely his spirit, but the entire Elijah—and he is in Heaven. Our Lord Jesus Christ, who has gone back to Heaven, went there in His own body. When He passed into the skies, He went up into the heavenly places, as well as into the heavenly state—and there He lives at the right hand of God, even the Father, enthroned in the New Jerusalem, the Holy City of God—

"See how the Conqueror mounts aloft,

And to His Father flies!

With scars of honor in His flesh,

And triumph in His eyes!

There our exalted Savior reigns,

And scatters blessings down—

His Father well rewards His pains,

And bids Him wear the crown."

God, absolutely considered as a pure Spirit, needed no such place as Heaven. God is everywhere! Long ago He asked, "Do not I fill Heaven and earth?" The idea of there being needed any celestial court or place of abode falls short of the true idea of the Omnipresent Jehovah. Neither do I suppose that it would have been necessary to have a place for angels, for the holy spirits would have been able to behold the face of God everywhere—wherever they might be, there they would see God and, consequently, no special place would have been needed to be set apart for them! But it was ordained, in the eternal purpose of God, that there should be created a race of beings who should not be pure spirits, but who should have bodies made of material substances. And it was resolved by Jesus Christ that He would become one of these beings—that He would take upon Himself their nature and would become, in fact, a Man! Now, when a spirit becomes linked with a material substance, it must have a place in which to dwell and, therefore, Heaven was created both for Christ and for His people. When the Son of Man shall come in His Glory, He will say to those on His right hand, "Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." Prepared, that is, with this view—that there might be a special central place for the display of Christ's Glory—and that all His people might be there with Him.

These are His own words—"Father, I will that they, also, whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am, that they may behold My Glory." They are not merely to be as He is, but to be with Him where He is and, therefore, Heaven was created by Him and for Him—and for His people who are vitally united with Him!

O Beloved, when we get to Heaven, we shall see that everything there glows with the Glory of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ! The print of His pierced hands will be upon everything. The city of pure gold was created by Him and created for Him. The foundations of the walls of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones by Him and for Him. The jasper, sapphire, emerald, beryl and all the rest—and the gates of pearl are all for Him—all shall be to His glory! For Him each harp of gold, each palm of victory, each shout of victory, each song of adoration—all Heaven shall ring with the praises of Jesus! Heaven shall be, as it were, set with mirrors and every one of which you will be able to see a reflection of the glorious Person of Jesus Christ, even as in every dewdrop you may see the image of the sun. Everyone in Heaven will feel it to be his bliss to praise Jesus! Towards the august Throne of the Most High this anthem will triumphantly ascend, "Worthy is the Lamb who was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory and blessing!" And with the variation of which John tells us in the Revelation, "Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power be unto Him that sits upon the Throne, and unto the Lamb, forever and ever."

There will be nothing in Heaven that will be derogatory to Jesus, but everyone and everything there will be to His praise and glory! I cannot believe that any of His chosen people will be missing on the Last Great gathering Day. No David's seat will be empty there! No Thomas will be absent then! I cannot conceive of one whom He has purchased with His precious blood being lost! Not one sheep or lamb will be missing from the great Shepherd's flock in the day when they pass under the hand of Him that counts them—they shall all be there! The army of the Great Captain of our salvation shall be complete there! When the muster-roll is read, they shall all answer to their names—and all who are gathered there will owe their salvation to the Lamb who was slain! There will not be one Pharisee there to boast, "God, I thank You that I am not as other men are." There will not be one atheist there blasphemously shouting, "There is no God!" Nor one Unitarian seeking to drag Christ from the Throne that is rightly His—but all will be adoring and magnifying, and delighting to adore and magnify Him by whom and for whom Heaven itself was created—

"All the chosen of the Father, All for whom the Lamb was slain, All the Church appear together, Washed from every sinful stain!"

Next, all angels were created by Jesus and for Him. However great and strong, and swift they are, there is not one angel that ever flies from Jehovah's Throne that was not created by Christ! Read the whole verse from which our text is taken—"For by Him were all things created that are in Heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they are thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him and for Him." If there are rank upon rank of blessed spirits, "that do His commandments, hearkening unto the voice of His word," all were created by Him and for Him! Gabriel was sent to foretell Christ's coming to earth. Angels announced His birth at Bethlehem. Others of them ministered to Him in the wilderness and in Gethsemane. They watched over His empty sepulcher and joyfully

attended Him as He returned to Heaven as the victorious King of Glory! It is written that He was "seen of angels," and it must have been with awe and wonder that they gazed upon Him from the manger to the tomb! We read, also, "which things the angels desire to look into"—and there must have been many

mysteries which even their lofty intelligence could not comprehend until He explained it to them! They delight to praise and worship Him! And they help to swell the mighty chorus of adoring homage that is always ascending to Him—

"Bright angels, strike your loudest strings,

Your sweetest voices raise!

Let Heaven and all created things

Sound our Immanuels praise!" Angels were created by Christ and for Him—not merely to admire and adore Him, but actually to serve Him. Truly did the Psalmist write, "who makes His angels spirits; His ministers a flaming fire." And Paul reveals a most important part of their service when he asks, "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" We will not enter into any speculations about their battles with evil spirits on our behalf, though we believe that this is one of the many ways in which they minister for us. We cannot describe all the service that these heavenly messengers render to the Lord's own people. I remind you of how one of them killed 185,000 of Sennacherib's army in a single night! And of how the Prophet Elisha, besieged by the Syrians in Dothan, saw the mountain full of horses and chariots of fire for his protection. You will recall many other instances of angelic interposition and you know, too, how it is written, "He shall give His angels charge over You, to keep You in all Your ways. They shall bear You up in their hands, lest You dash Your foot against a stone."

As for the fallen angels who rebelled against God and who have sunk forever into hopeless alienation from Him— even these were created by Christ and for Him! And though they hate Him, they shall be compelled to obey Him and to acknowledge that He is Lord over all! Even their malice against the people of God shall only draw out His love toward them and manifest His vigilance, wisdom and power on their behalf. In the wilderness the Son of Man met "the prince of the power of the air" in mortal conflict. Evil stood there endowed with all the attributes it could desire to have upon its side—evil ancient with long and varied experience, evil backed up by a powerful angelic intellect, evil with ferocious malice glaring in its eyes—evil with diabolic cunning tempting the Son of God to sin! There, too, stood the Prince of Life—alone, yet undaunted—the Incarnation of holiness and love! Three times they wrestled, foot to foot, but the tempter had to retire beaten. And when he came again, hoping to take the Son of God and Son of Man at a disadvantage in Gethsemane—when He was full of anguish and was shortly to die in still greater agony on the Cross—it was again a desperate struggle, but the Master flung him to the ground! Our Samson tore the old roaring lion as if he had been a kid, and left him prostrate and defeated, while He passed on to complete the great work of His people's redemption and to conquer all the powers of darkness before He gave up the ghost! Glory be to Jesus! He has gotten Glory to Himself out of the devil and all his angels!

And even Hell, itself, terrible as it is, was created by Christ as a necessary part of the moral government of the universe so that sin might not go unpunished. Even there Christ reigns! His Sovereignty is supreme down to its lowest depths. He has the keys of Hell and of death—and when the appointed time comes, He will send an angel with the key of the bottomless pit and bid him lay hold on "the dragon, that old serpent, which is the devil and Satan," and bind him for a thousand years and cast him into the bottomless pit. And then, after the Millennium, and Satan has been again loosed for a little season, he shall be "cast into the Lake of Fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophets are—and shall be tormented day and

night forever and ever." Christ is King even over that dark sad part of His domains! And amidst all the confusion and tumult of the Pit, His enemies shall "confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the Glory of God the Father."

The verse from which our text is taken also reminds us that this world was created by Christ and for Christ. "By Him were all things created, that are in Heaven, and that are in earth." John tells us, "in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him: and without Him was not anything made that was made." The eternal Logos was the Creator of this lower world as well as of the realms on high! There is neither hill nor valley, sparkling fountain nor foaming sea which He has not made.

"The sea is His and He made it: and His hands formed the dry land." Truly is He the Creator of this earth! It was formed for Him as well as by Him!

It was especially made to be the place of residence for His people, the place on which they would fall through sin and the place on which they would be restored through the redemption accomplished there by Christ Jesus on the Cross of Calvary. This world was created by Christ as the place where He, Himself, would live and labor—and suffer and die. He would be laid as a Baby in an earthly manger. As a Boy and a Man He would walk through the streets and lanes of this world! He would fare as human beings fared and suffer as the dwellers upon the earth suffered, though never through any sin of His own. I might truly say that the whole world was created for Calvary. "Why leap you, you high hills?" That little mound outside Jerusalem's gate explains your very existence! The world itself was created that Christ might die on Calvary! This earth was to be a sort of stage upon which Christ was to take the principal part in the greatest drama that the whole universe has ever witnessed! The world was made by Him and for Him—and it will remain until His great purpose of love and mercy is fully accomplished!

We must not forget that even the lower orders of Creation were made by Christ and for Him. They were needed by man—and man was necessary to the completeness of Christ's plan of Salvation—so the lower forms of creatures are links in the chain that could not be spared. There is a wonderful sympathy between the various portions of Creation, as the Apostle Paul tells us, "for we know that the whole creation groans and travails in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves, also, which have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body." Treat all creatures kindly, then, as far as you can, for the great Creator's sake. I would not have a sparrow needlessly killed, nor even a worm trod on that might be spared. My Lord and Master made them all—and when I look at them, I see traces of His wonderful wisdom and power! And when I see how bountifully He provides for them, I note the tokens of His goodness and care. He opens His hands and satisfies the desire of every living thing! There is not a little bird that picks up a seed by the roadside that was not created by Christ and for Him! And, perhaps, answers its end better than some of you who lift your brows to yonder Heaven only to defy your Maker! There is not an animal upon the common, nor a lion in the forest, nor a fish in the sea, nor a fowl in the air that was not made by Him—and that does not in some way promote His Glory!

And to come to ourselves, men were created by Christ and for Him. Perhaps the Creator resolved to manifest His power and skill in a new order of created beings. He had made pure spirits and He had made material substances. He had created various forms of life rising from the vegetable to the animal. But He resolved that there should be a spirit created that would be affiliated with materialism and that this spirit should, in the end, when it had passed through all its graduations, become the most wonderful creature in

the whole universe—a creature that should know evil, not merely by report, but by actual personal experience—a creature that would, after that, be delivered from the power of evil and so should be bound to God by ties of gratitude so strong that it would never revolt from Him again! This creature, knowing evil and knowing good, strengthened by Divine Grace, would, of its own free will, cling to the good and eschew the evil—and would forever be God's best ally against all revolt in His dominions—for this creature, though it had known evil, was to become a child of God and to be a partaker of the Divine Nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. These creatures, partly spiritual and partly material, were to have at their head, Christ Jesus, who was to be the model of them all! And they were to be like He and to be His companions forever! But they were to be to Him more than companions—to be His friends with whom He might hold familiar conversation and to be to Him even more than friends—to be united to Him in personal relationship—to be so completely one with Him that they should be "members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones," that His life should be their life and that their life should be derived from Him!

What a wonderful creature a man will be when He gets to Heaven with His body, soul and spirit all complete! No other creature will be so near to God as man will be through his union to the God-Man, Christ Jesus the Lord! Yet this glorified man will never presume upon his position, but will always keep his proper place. He will have been so trained and educated by his falls, his regeneration and his redemption that he will be always humble, and yet will rejoice that he is a son of the Most High who may say to Him, "Abba, Father." I do not know how such a creature as a perfect man could have been made by God except through the fall in Eden, the birth of Christ at Bethlehem and His death on Calvary. In making man, God had produced a new type of being, that in him, Jesus Christ might find an opportunity of displaying

His wondrous condescension in taking upon Himself man's nature—and His wondrous Grace in taking upon Himself man's sin and dying in his place! Through glorified men becoming Christ's companions, friends and faithful servants by reason of His mysterious union with them, a new race of beings has been created who can have greater sympathy with God than any others of His creatures can have. Devils can have no sympathy with God, for they are only evil. The holy angels cannot have as much sympathy with God as man who has fallen by sin and then been saved by Divine Grace! It is of those who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb, that it is written, "Therefore are they before the Throne of God and serve Him day and night in His temple: and He who sits upon the Throne shall dwell among them." He will be our God and we shall be His people! He will be our Father and we shall be His children forever and ever!

But oh, if you reject the Savior! If you turn the wondrous opportunity of immortal glory which God presents to you in the Gospel, into the dread alternative of eternal wrath—if you are resolved that you will not be among those privileged beings who will be next to God, Himself. If you spurn the dignity that is held before you. Then, notwithstanding all that, you will have to glorify Christ! Even in this life and against your own will—you shall scarcely know how—you shall be made to subserve Christ's purpose! And at the last He will make you realize how terrible He is as He breaks you in pieces as a potter's vessel! If you will not touch His silver scepter of Mercy, you shall feel the weight of the iron rod of His inflexible Justice! If you will not lie at His feet as a penitent, you shall be driven from His Presence into the outer darkness where there will be weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth forever! God grant that none of you may ever know experimentally what this means!—

"You sinners, seek His Grace,

Whose wrath you cannot bear!

Fly to the shelter of His Cross

And find salvation there!"

II. Now I must pass on briefly to REVIEW THE REFLECTIONS ARISING FROM THIS STATEMENT—"All things were created by Him and for Him."

And the first clear reflection from this declaration is, then, Jesus is God. If all things were made by Him and for Him, how is it possible for us to get away from the conviction that He is, indeed, God? I will not attempt to argue about the matter, but whatever others may say or do, as for me, Jesus of Nazareth is my Lord and my God—and I will love and adore, and worship Him forever and ever!

The second reflection is that Jesus is the key of the universe—its center and its explanation. Creation and history are enigmas which can only be understood in the light of the Cross. When we look at the planets, their motions seem irregular from our standpoint. But if we could stand in the sun, we would see the planets revolving in their orbits in an orderly manner around it. Calvary is the sun of the universe! Stand there, believe in God making Propitiation for sin by the death of His Son, and you can understand everything in the light that streams from Calvary! Get away from that great center and you understand nothing. The great question to ask concerning everything is—Will it glorify Christ? How will it affect His infinitely wise designs?

Try, beloved Friends, wherever you are, to see all things in the light of Christ. I think this will teach you not to look with scorn upon any of the things that are around you. See how the Lord Jesus has purged all things for His people so that they shall no longer be common or unclean. That lovely river, those fertile valleys, that dense forest, yonder snow-clad Alps and everything else that Christ has created, you need not say, as some have done, "I will not gaze upon the beauties of Nature, lest they should take my thoughts away from my Master." Scorn not His works, lest you should also scorn the great Maker of them! His are the mountains. And the valleys are His—sun, moon and stars all shine to His praise and glory! Go up and down, then, in the world and be not troubled by many things that now disquiet you. Say, "I do not know how this will glorify Christ, but I am persuaded that in some mysterious way which I cannot yet fully comprehend, His eternal purposes are being accomplished." See Christ in everything and see everything in the light of Christ!

And, Beloved, another clear inference from Paul's declaration is that to live to Christ is to live as we ought to live. If He made us for Himself, then we who live unto Him have found out the true purpose of our existence! Put a thing to a wrong purpose and it is a failure. But use it for the purpose for which it was made and it will answer that end. Christian, Christ made you for Himself! Yes, He has twice made you for Himself! Therefore lay yourself out for Him—body, soul

and spirit—spend all your time, and all your strength, and all your means for Him and Him alone! So you will be in accord with the great purpose of your creation.

If we do not live unto Christ, we have to make the sorrowful reflection that we are out of gear with all things that He has made. Although by the mysterious working of His Divine Power, He will get glory out of us, yet we are not consciously in harmony with Jesus and all discords must have an end. All opposition to Omnipotence must be futile and must also be transient. However long He may allow evil to continue, there is an end even to His long-suffering patience! And then, woe be to those who are still at enmity against the Almighty!

Another reflection from the text is that we can only live for Christ as we live by Christ. We cannot glorify Him except as He gives us the Grace to do so—if we attempt to do it by our own power, we shall most certainly fail. Wait at His Cross, Beloved! Cry to Him to give you the aid of His almighty Spirit and then, through the effectual working of the Holy Spirit, you shall be able to live for Jesus, alone, by whom and for whom you were made both at your first creation and also when you were created anew in Christ Jesus!

And, lastly, it is clear from all this that Christ must triumph. Some of us have been almost breaking our hearts as we look around at the follies of the generation in which we live. They are going on pilgrimages to the shrines of their idols—the gods that are not gods! They are bowing down to their priests and confessing in their ears the sad stories that should be told only to God! They are setting up the calves and images that their fathers worshipped and turning away from the only living and true God! All this we mourn and grieve over, but let us not imagine that Christ's true Kingdom is suffering loss! Beneath the dark clouds that hide the sun, we mourn the absence of the great orb of day, but think how brightly the sun is shining above those clouds! Borrow an eagle's wings and soar above the clouds, and then you shall see the sun shining in his strength. So is it with Christ, the Sun of Righteousness! Get away, by faith, from this poor earth, and you shall see Him shining in His Glory, whether it is day or night, summer or winter! Christ must reign. "The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord, and against His Anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder and cast away their cords from us." But it is still true, "Yet have I set My King upon My holy hill of Zion." And He shall reign forever and ever, and let all His people say, "Hallelujah!" And again and again cry, "Hallelujah!"

He must reign. What power is there that can stand against Him who created all things? What arm can dare to be lifted up against His almighty arm? Be of good courage, you soldiers of the Cross! Dream not of defeat, nor think for a moment of fleeing from the foe in terror. Victory must come to the Lamb that was slain! He shall come from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah. His apparel shall be red, like the garments of him that treads in the wine vat, for all His enemies shall be trodden down in His wrath! And Rome, the harlot church, the chief of all His foes, shall be hurled down like a millstone into the flood and sink to rise no more—

"He shall reign from pole to pole

With illimitable sway!

He shall reign when, like a scroll,

Yonder heavens have passed away!

Then the end—beneath His rod,

Man's last enemy shall fall!

Hallelujah! Christ in God,

God in Christ is All-in-All."

Happy is he who is the lowliest page in the retinue of such a King! Happy is he who shall be privileged to sprinkle a few drops of water to lay the dust in the road over which our conquering King shall ride! Blessed is he who shall spread his garments in the way, or wave a palm branch in honor of the royal Victor in His triumphal procession! Happy shall he be, then, who has been laughed to scorn for Christ's sake! Or who

has been lying in a dungeon till the moss has grown on his eyelids! Or who has been burned at the stake and his ashes cast to the four winds of Heaven because he would not deny his Lord! Oh to be wholly on His side, now, that we may be among His faithful followers on that Day! Here we are, O glorious Son of David! Take us and all that we have, and make us more than ever Yours from this time forward, and unto You shall be the glory forever and ever! Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:

COLOSSIANS¹.

Verses 1, 2. Paul, an Apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy, our brother, to the saints and faithful brethren in Christ which are at Colosse: Grace be unto you, and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ Kindness is the very breath of Christianity, so the Apostle will not begin the subject matter of his letter until first of all he has breathed out a benediction upon those to whom he writes.

3. We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you Paul very graciously blends his giving of thanks and his constant prayer for these Christians at Colosse and, therein, sets us an example that we may well imitate.

4-6. Since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which you have to all the saints, for the hope which is laid up for you in Heaven, of which you heard before in the word of the truth of the Gospel, which has come unto you, as it has, also, in all the world and is bringing forth fruit, as it has also among you, since the day you heard of it, and knew the Grace of God in truth. If there is a way of knowing the Grace of God which is of no value, it is when it is not known in truth, that is to say, when it is only head-knowledge, not heart-knowledge. But, oh, when in truth the Grace of God sinks into the soul and changes the whole nature, then it is an experience for which we may well give thanks to God!

7, 8. As you also learned of Epaphra our dear fellow servant, who is for you a faithful minister of Christ; who also declared unto us your love in the Spirit. Epaphras told them of Paul's prayers for them and when he came back from Colosse, he told Paul of their great love in the Spirit.

9. For this cause we, also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you and to desire that you might be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding. [See Sermon #1742, Volume 29—spiritual knowledge AND ITS PRACTICAL RESULTS.] See, the Apostle asks even more

for them than faith, hope and love—that they "might be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding." This shows what a valuable thing it is to know and understand the will of God!

10, 11. That you might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness. If we have faith, hope, and love, it is desirable that we add to these a fullness of knowledge— and to this holiness of life and fruitfulness of service—that we may have patience to endure the afflictions of this life and long-suffering with which to put up with the provocations of the ungodly.

12-14. Giving thanks unto the Father who has made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light who has delivered us from the power of darkness and has translated us into the Kingdom of

His dear Son: in whom we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins. And now Paul, having mentioned his Master's great work—redemption by blood and the forgiveness of sins—goes on a tangent, as it were. He is so enthusiastic with regard to Christ and His great atoning Sacrifice that the very thought of Christ's blood stirs his own blood and he seems like a man all on fire with holy fervor as he writes—

15-17. Who is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature: for by Him were all things created that are in Heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they are 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 consist How can anyone ever read this passage and yet say that Christ Jesus is only a Man? By what twisting of words can such language as this be applied to the most eminent Prophet or Apostle who ever lived? Surely He must be God by whom all things were created, and by whom all things consist! But Paul's next sentence is, to us, the sweetest of all—

18. And He is the head of the body, the Church. [See Sermon #839, Volume 14—THE HEAD OF THE CHURCH.] He is joined by an indissoluble union to His people and is the Head of their glory, their wisdom and their strength!

18. Who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead; that in all things He might have the preeminence. Are we giving Him the preeminence in all things? That theology must be false which puts Jesus in the second place, or even lower than that! And that experience is a wrong one which does not put Christ always in the front. He must in all things always stand first!

19. For it pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell [See Sermons #978, Volume 17—all fullness in christ and

#1169, Volume 20—THE FULLNESS OF CHRIST THE TREASURY OF THE SAINTS.]

That we might have to go to Him for it, it pleased the Father to make errands for us so as to take us to Christ and to thus make our very emptiness to minister to the Glory of Christ!

20-23. And having made peace through the blood of His Cross, by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself; by Him, I say, whether they are things in earth, or things in Heaven. And you that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now has He reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy and blameless and above reproach in His sight—if, indeed, you continue in the faith grounded and steadfast This is a text that ought to be read and pondered every day by the many unstable professors who are in the Church at this present time— "if, indeed, you continue in the faith grounded and steadfast," like a building that will have no further settling, no more splitting of the stones, no more cracking of the walls—because your foundation is secure and you are firmly built upon it!

23, 24. And are not moved away from the hope of the Gospel which you have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under Heaven, of which I, Paul, became a minister; who now rejoices in my sufferings for you Oh how blessed it is when a man has so mastered himself that his sufferings for his fellow Christians become a matter of rejoicing for himself! He not only accepts them and bears them with patience, but he says—

24. And fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for His body's sake, which is the Church. There is nothing "behind" as to the atoning efficacy of the sufferings of Christ, but there is much

yet to be endured in order that all the elect may be brought to Christ. Some must suffer through their extraordinary labors in preaching the Gospel, others through bearing reproach for the Truth of God's sake—and Paul was glad to take in his mortal body, his share of the sufferings to be endured for the sake of Christ's Church—which is His mystical body.

25-27. Of which I became a minister according to the stewardship from God which was given to me for you, to fulfill the Word of God, the mystery which has been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to His saints: to whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory [See Sermon #1720, Volume 29—CHRIST IN YOU.] This is the most blessed of all mysteries! I trust that many of us understand it—may the Holy Spirit reveal it to any who know it not!

28. Whom we preach. That is, Christ. It is not so much what we preach as whom we preach. We preach the Person of Christ—"whom we preach"—

28, 29. Warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus: whereunto I also labor, striving according to His working, which works in me mightily. [See Sermon #914, Volume 16—

WORK IN US AND WORK BY US.] There will never be any mighty work

come from us unless there is first a mighty work in us—no man truly labors for souls unless the Holy Spirit has first worked mightily in him.

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