

COLOSSIANS

SEEING CHRIST AS THE FULNESS OF GOD

Colossians 1:9-13—For this reason we also, from the day we heard of your faith and love, do not cease praying and asking for you, to the end that ye may be filled with the full knowledge of his will, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding, so as to walk worthily of the Lord unto all well-pleasing, bearing fruit in every good work, and growing by the true knowledge of God; strengthened with all power according to the might of his glory unto all endurance and longsuffering with joy; giving thanks to the Father, who has made us fit for sharing the portion of the saints in light, who has delivered us from the authority of darkness, and translated us into the kingdom of the Son of his love.

Colossians 2:9-10—For in him (that is in Christ) dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily; and ye are complete in him.

Let us look to the Lord in prayer:

Dear heavenly Father, how we do praise and thank Thee for giving us such a high privilege of coming to Thy table to remember Thy beloved Son, and through Thy Son to come to Thy throne of grace to receive help and mercy and grace. Our Father, how we do praise and thank Thee that we are indeed in Thy presence. We thank Thee that the veil has been removed. We thank Thee that we can approach the throne of grace with boldness. Now our Father, we ask that Thou will reveal Thyself to us; reveal Thy Son to us through Thy word. We ask in Thy precious name. Amen.

In the letter to the Colossians the Holy Spirit intends to

reveal to us Christ—the glory of Christ, the supremacy of Christ, the fulness of Christ, and the all-sufficiency of Christ—and because of Christ as such, therefore we find our completeness in Him.

There are two letters written by the Apostle Paul that are considered to be twin letters—Ephesians and Colossians. They were both written by the apostle Paul; they were both written from the Roman prison; they were both written about the same time; and they were both sent by the same messenger, Tychicus. In the letter to the Ephesians we see the glorious vocation of the church as the body of Christ. In the letter to the Colossians we see the glory of Christ as the Head, and in Him the church, that is the body, finds its completeness. So these two letters reveal to us Christ and the church. So far as we know, the letter to the Colossians was written a little ahead of the letter to the Ephesians. There are reasons for that, but we will not dwell on them. However, I think that must be so because we have to see the Head first before we can see the body. We must see Christ first before we can ever see the church, which is His body.

Maybe a little background will help in our understanding of this letter. Colosse was a very small city, and probably, today, we would not even call it a city. It was just a little town situated in the Roman province of Asia. Paul had never been to that town, but we know that he was in Ephesus for three years. During his stay in Ephesus the word of the Lord was heard by all those in Asia, both Jews and Gentiles, and evidently some of the Colossians came to that great city for various reasons, maybe for trade. Among the people who came to Ephesus and heard the word of God through the apostle Paul were Epaphras, Philemon, Apphia, and others. These people went back to Colosse and the church began. Even though Paul had never been to Colosse, yet he was used by the Lord as a channel, an instrument in the very founding of the church there.

While the apostle Paul was in prison in Rome, the church in Colosse sent Epaphras, a messenger, to Paul. Epaphras went to Rome to see Paul for two reasons. One was to convey to him the sympathetic greetings of the saints in Colosse, and the other was to report to him the trouble they had in Colosse. The problem the church in Colosse began to experience was called the Colossian heresy. In order to correct that Colossian heresy, Paul wrote this letter to the Colossians. I do not think we need to know in detail what the Colossian heresy is, even though it is very interesting. Actually, when the great apostle Paul wrote this letter, he did not dwell on the heresy. On the contrary, he focused his approach on Christ. He took a positive approach by presenting Christ to them. If they could see Christ, if they could know Christ, then that heresy would be dropped automatically very quickly.

Mr. Graham Scroggie once said, "A true Christology is the best answer to all heresy that ever has been or ever will be." In other words, a sight of Christ is the answer to all false teachings and false doctrines. If we only knew Christ as we should, then we would be delivered from all heresies and all false teachings. I do believe that this is what it ought to be.

Maybe the question can be raised: "Why is it that the Colossian believers would fall into such heresy?" Probably there are two reasons. First, we find that we are naturally curious. In human nature there is an intellectual urge. We want to know; we want to explain everything. You can see it very clearly from childhood onward. When a child is growing up he is always asking questions: "Why, why, why?" He wants to know the reason for everything. I do not know whether that kind of natural urge is the result of eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, but within human beings there is the natural desire to know, to be curious about things, to speculate, to explain. With that kind of curiosity and intellectual urge, we would like to

know what the origin of the universe is. We would like to know how this thing came to happen or how that other thing came to happen. Instead of trusting in God with a childlike faith, we try to look around, speculate, imagine, and explain everything around us. In doing so, we fall into the trap of the enemy.

Second, there is within us a desire for quick solutions and success. We are all naturally impatient. We like to see things fixed quickly, instantaneously, and successfully. I think this is the reason why Eve fell into the trick of the enemy because she wanted so much to be like God. Man was created according to the image of God, and therefore, naturally, there is within us a desire to be conformed to that image, and I think this is right. We are made according to that image; therefore, we have an inward desire to be conformed to that image. But there is a problem: how are we to be conformed to the image according to which we were made? Are we to be conformed to the image by the way that God has prescribed for us, eating of the tree of life, receiving God's life in us, and letting that life grow in us, being transformed and conformed to His image? That would take time, of course. Or are we to be conformed by looking around for some instantaneous technique, whether it is through some mystic thing or by doing some external exercises? And you will find the enemy will come in and offer something: "If only you are initiated into this mystery then you are complete." Or, "If you just practice certain things—do this and do that, don't do this and don't do that; then you are perfect." Man just falls into that trap because he wants instantaneous success. I think probably these are the two reasons why the Colossian believers fell into the Colossian heresy.

THE COLOSSIAN HERESY

Let me tell you a little bit about the Colossian heresy because I know you are curious. As far as we know, the

Colossian heresy is a combination of two things: One is heathen gnosticism and the other is Jewish ceremonialism. It is a very odd combination. In those days there were people called the Gnostics. They considered themselves as being people “in the know,” ones who know everything. They know how the universe began, they know how all the things began to evolve, they know the hierarchy in the unseen world, and so on. And they said that if you are initiated into such knowledge then you will know everything. It is an intellectual speculation, a kind of mystic approach, but at the same time it is combined with Jewish ceremonialism, that is, certain rituals and observances. If you have these two things, then you have the full knowledge; then you know everything. You are complete and you are perfect. Now that is roughly the Colossian heresy.

THE FULL KNOWLEDGE OF GOD’S WILL

How will Paul solve that kind of a problem? I think the clue is in his prayer for the Colossian believers in Colossians 1:9: “For this reason we also, from the day we heard of your faith and love, do not cease praying and asking for you, to the end that ye may be filled with the full knowledge of God’s will.”

The Gnostics always talked about full knowledge; they always talked about wisdom; they always talked about fulness. So here Paul turned the table on them and said, “I am going to talk about fulness. I am going to talk about full knowledge. I am going to talk about how we can be filled and with what we should be filled. My prayer is that you may be filled to the full—not just a little bit, but filled completely and filled to the full.” What are we to be filled with? With the full knowledge, and it is a full knowledge of God’s will.

What is of tremendous importance is that we may be filled with the full knowledge of God’s will. What are we

filled with? Are we filled full with the knowledge of God's will? Or do we know what God's will is? Do we know what is the full knowledge of God's will? The full knowledge of God's will means not only that it is the complete, the perfect, the full, but also the experiential, and the living knowledge of God's will. I do believe that it is of tremendous importance that we be filled with this kind of knowledge. It does not matter if you do not have other knowledge, even though other knowledge may be good. However, if you are lacking in the full knowledge of God's will, then something is basically wrong with you, and you will be exposed to all kinds of deceptions. What we need today is to be filled with the full knowledge of God's will, to know what God's will is; to know what the perfect will of God is.

We know that this will of God is not just a mental knowledge, but it is something that is living, something we can experience, enter into, and be involved with. This is Paul's prayer for the Colossian believers and I do believe that this is the prayer for us today: "...that ye may be filled with the full knowledge of God's will in all wisdom and understanding."

What is wisdom? There are different explanations, but if you look back to the Old Testament there was one man who asked for wisdom. God gave him wisdom, and wisdom is "a heart that hears." Wisdom is not primarily conceived in the mind. We always think of wisdom as having to do with the mind, but true wisdom is a heart that hears the voice of God. That is wisdom.

Understanding is that conscious assimilation of knowledge. It is something that you consciously assimilate into you. You know it and you know how to apply it. This full knowledge of God must be in all wisdom and understanding. It is not just something in your mind, but it is something that your heart hears. It is something that has been assimilated consciously into your life. It is not

speculative knowledge; it is a practical knowledge. Gnostic teaching is speculative; it does not affect one's life. This full knowledge of God's will enables us: "To walk worthily of the Lord unto all well-pleasing, bearing fruit in every good work, and growing by the true knowledge of God; strengthened with all power according to the might of his glory unto all endurance and longsuffering with joy; giving thanks to the Father" (Colossians 1:10-11).

It affects our life, and this is the knowledge that we must have. I think the key to that is in the second passage that we read: "For in him (that is in Christ) dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily; and ye are complete in him" (Colossians 2:9-10).

This is the full knowledge of God's will. What is God's will? God's will is centered upon His Son. In His Son all the fulness of the Godhead dwells bodily. That is God's will.

What is the fulness of the Godhead? This fulness of the Godhead *dwells*. We know the word *dwells* in John 15 is the word *abides*. It is the same word, and in the original it simply means "makes home." All the fulness of the Godhead makes its home in Christ; not just visits, but stays, remains, abides, dwells, makes its home in Christ Jesus. This is our Lord Jesus. He is the fulness of God. Anything you can think of the Godhead; anything you can think of God, whatever area it may be—His love, His holiness, His justice, His righteousness, His virtue, His power; all the fulness of the Godhead makes its home in Christ Jesus. Christ Jesus is the fulness of God, and in this little letter Paul tried to explain a little bit of what he means.

THE IMAGE OF THE INVISIBLE GOD

First of all he said, "All the fulness of the Godhead dwells in Him." How? He is the image of the invisible God. We know that God is spirit; therefore, He is invisible. No one can see God. But the Son is the image of the invisible

God. The image (eikon) here does not refer to outward form but to the inward quality. All the inward qualities in God are also in Him, and He is the full representation and the full manifestation of God. You remember our Lord Jesus said, “No one has ever seen the Father, but the Son who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him” (see John 1:18). The disciples had been with the Lord for three years and during that last night one of them still asked, “Now show us the Father and it suffices us.” And the Lord Jesus said, “Phillip, I have been with you for three years, and you are still asking this question. Do you not know that if you see Me you see the Father?” (see John 14:8-9)

Who is the Lord Jesus? He is the image of the invisible God. Today all we know of God is through knowing Christ Jesus, because Christ Jesus, the Son, has declared the Father. He has manifested the Father. In the former days God spoke in many ways to our fathers, in many parts through the prophets, but in the last days He spoke in the Son (see Hebrews 1:1). Only the Son is the full representative of the Father, and only through Him is the Father fully manifested—nothing more and nothing less. He is the image of the invisible God, and it is according to that image that man was created, and it is to that image that one day we will be conformed by the grace of God.

THE FIRSTBORN OF ALL CREATION

All the fulness of the Godhead dwells in Him bodily because He is the firstborn of all creation. This word *firstborn* does not refer to what we ordinarily think about firstborn. The word *firstborn* in the Scripture has two uses: One is the common use and the other is the special use. Suppose in a family you are the firstborn and after you there are others who are born who are your brothers and sisters. That is the common usage of the word *firstborn*. But in the Scripture there is a special usage and it does not

refer to that kind of order. It refers to “priority to” and “sovereignty over.” If you are the firstborn then you are prior to everything that follows. You are not within the order; you are before that order. You are prior to, and you have sovereignty over everything that comes. That is the meaning of the firstborn.

So the firstborn of all creation simply means that our Lord Jesus is prior to all creation. I think it is explained here because it says, “He is before all.” He is not created; He is the Creator. He is before all. He is considered as the firstborn of all creation because all things were created in Him, by Him, and for Him. Unfortunately, in verse 16, the translators changed the word because they could not understand it. They translated it to say, “Because *by* him were created all things...” We find this again in the same verse: “All things have been created by Him and for Him.” But in the original it is a different word. It says all things were created “in Him” because He is the designer. He designs all things. All things take their character from Him. And then all things were created by Him; He is the builder, the engineer; He makes all things. And all things were created for Him; He is the owner, the heir of all things. Here we find the fulness of the Godhead in Him. He is the Creator of all things; all things were created in Him, designed by Him, took their character from Him. All things were created through Him; He made them. And all things were created for Him; He is the owner, the heir of all things. That is our Lord Jesus.

THE HEAD OVER THE CHURCH

“And He is the Head of the body, the church; who is the beginning, firstborn from among the dead” (Colossians 1:18).

He is not only the Creator of the universe, of all creation, but He is also the beginning, the Head, the foundation of the new creation, which is the church. The

church is a new creation, and this new creation begins with Him. He is the Head, and out of Him comes the church. On the cross when the soldier thrust that spear into His side, water and blood came out, and the apostle John said, "I saw it, I witnessed it, I say this is true." Why was he so emphatic? Through the death of our Lord Jesus, out of His broken heart, came forth blood for the remission of our sins, and water (life) that we may live. Out of the travail of His soul the church, the new creation was born, and it was on the basis of resurrection. It is not the old creation. It is a new creation; therefore it is on resurrection ground. He is the Head of the body, which is the church.

THE RECONCILER OF ALL THINGS

He is the reconciler of all things. After God created all things man fell, and because man sinned the whole earth entered into corruption and vanity (see Romans 8). The whole creation entered into the bondage of corruption and vanity, not because they were willing to, but because they were made to through the fall of man. When our Lord Jesus, who is the fulness of God, came into this world and died on the cross, He reconciled not only mankind, but all things. He brought them back into harmony. All things had disintegrated, fallen into chaos, lost their purpose, but the Lord Jesus brings everything back into harmony, into meaning, into purpose, into His fulness. This is our Lord Jesus. This is the full knowledge of God's will. In Him all the fulness of the Godhead dwells bodily.

Do we see Christ as big as the Bible reveals Him to us, or do we see Christ just as a little Christ? Thank God we do see Him as our Savior. To us that is as big as the universe, but so far as God is concerned that is just a tiny speck because in God's will Christ, His Son, is everything. All the knowledge is in Him; all the wisdom is in Him; everything is in Him.

If you look at the creation, He is the firstborn. If you

look at the new creation, He is the beginning. If you look at the reconciliation, it is through Him. If you look at God, He is the image of the invisible God.

The full knowledge of God's will is simply this: To God, Christ, His Son, is all and in all. If this is so, why do we go outside of Christ trying to find our explanation, trying to find a solution to any problem?

COMPLETE IN HIM

There is not only the glory of Christ as the fulness of God, but it is said, "In Him ye are complete." This word is spoken to us believers. All the fulness of the Godhead dwells in Him, and now it says you are complete in Him. If this is what Christ is and you are complete in Him, then why do you look for anything else? It is absurd! Before the apostle Paul knew the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ, how he went after other knowledge, how he boasted about other things, how he considered achievements in things other than Christ. But one day when he saw the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ, he said, "I count all things but dross, I count everything as loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ. To know Him is my one desire" (see Philippians 3).

In church history there is a man called Count Zinzendorf. He was saved when he was about four to six years old. He belonged to the nobility, and as a little boy in the castle, he loved the Lord very much. He used to sit at the window and write on a paper, "Jesus loves you," and throw it out of the window hoping that someone would pick it up. Throughout his life he just loved the Lord Jesus. He said, "I have only one passion, Jesus Christ."

If we really are filled with the full knowledge of God's will, if we really see who Jesus is and what He is, I wonder if we can have more than one passion. Should that not just fill us with that one longing, one desire to know Him? Paul said, "To know Him and the power of His resurrection."

“In Him ye are complete.”

UNION

When you believe in the Lord Jesus, do you know that something tremendous happens? We often think when we believe in the Lord Jesus our sins are forgiven. Thank God for that; that is true. When we believe in the Lord Jesus we receive a new life; that is true. But how? Why is your sin forgiven when you believe in the Lord Jesus? He died two thousand years ago and you committed your sin only in this century. Why is it that when you believe in the Lord Jesus all your sins are forgiven? Why is it that when you believe in the Lord Jesus you receive a new life? He poured out His life two thousand years ago. Why is it that you receive it today? How does it happen? Something tremendous happens! When you believe in the Lord Jesus, a union happens. “By God you have been put in Christ, whom God made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption” (I Corinthians 1:30). When you receive the Lord Jesus not only does the Lord Jesus come into you, but God puts you into the Lord Jesus; a union happens. You are in Christ and Christ is in you, and because of this your sins are forgiven and a new life is received.

Let me illustrate: God delivered the children of Israel out of Egypt, but His purpose was not just to deliver them out of Egypt and leave them in the wilderness to die. God’s purpose was to lead them into the promised land, the land flowing with milk and honey. God gave the promised land of Canaan to the children of Israel as their inheritance. What kind of a land was it?

“For Jehovah thy God bringeth thee into a good land, a land of waterbrooks, of springs, and of deep waters, that gush forth in the valleys and hills; a land of wheat, and barley, and vines, and fig trees, and pomegranates; a land of olive trees and honey; a land wherein thou shalt eat bread without scarceness, where thou shalt lack nothing; a land whose stones are iron, and out of whose mountains

thou wilt dig copper. And thou shalt eat and be filled, and shalt bless Jehovah thy God for the good land which he hath given thee” (Deuteronomy 8:7-10).

The land that God gave to the children of Israel as their inheritance was a good land. It was a land filled with every good thing, and when they were there they would eat and be filled and bless the Lord. When they entered into the land this is what they found:

“And it shall be, when Jehovah thy God bringeth thee into the land which he swore unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give thee: great and good cities which thou buildedst not, and houses full of everything good which thou filledst not, and wells digged which thou diggedst not, vineyards and oliveyards which thou plantedst not, and thou shalt have eaten and shalt be full” (Deuteronomy 6:10-11).

When they entered into the land they found the cities were already built. They did not even need to build them. They found that the houses were not only built but filled with good things. The refrigerators were filled, the fields were already planted, and the wells were already dug. They just entered in, enjoyed, and were full.

That is the picture. “Ye are complete in Christ.” When we believe in the Lord Jesus, God puts us into Christ. Christ has become our land flowing with milk and honey. He is the great and good land. Christ is our inheritance, and in Him everything is ready. All the spiritual blessings in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus are available to us. It is all ours. We are complete in Him. We do not need to dig a well; all we need to do is draw out of it. Everything is ready and available in Christ. Christ has done everything for us. Everything He has done is for our sakes. He says, “Just come in and enjoy Me.” “Ye are complete in Him.”

FORGIVENESS OF SINS

“In whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins”

(Colossians 1:14).

“...having forgiven us all the offenses” (Colossians 2:13).

Brothers and sisters, we have sinned terribly. We have offended God greatly, but thank God, in Christ Jesus, our sins are all forgiven.

“...though your sins be as scarlet they shall be as white as snow...” (Isaiah 1:18).

All our sins are washed away. All the offenses are forgiven, and not only forgiven but forgotten. God does not remember your offense to Him anymore. Think of that! He has redeemed us out of the curse of the law so that we do not need to die anymore, and it is all in Christ. Because we are united with Him, therefore our sins are forgiven, our offenses are forgotten, and we are redeemed from the curse of the law. And that is just the beginning.

CIRCUMCISION

“In whom ye have been circumcised with circumcision not done by hand, in the putting off of the body of the flesh, in the circumcision of the Christ” (Colossians 2:11).

When we believe in the Lord Jesus, not only are our sins forgiven, our offenses are forgotten, we are redeemed out of the curse of the law; but we have been circumcised not with hands. It is not a physical thing, but it is the circumcision of the heart. It is the circumcision of Christ. When we believe in the Lord Jesus He has given us a new heart, a heart that is tender and soft, a heart that hears, a heart that loves Him. Our heart has been circumcised.

He has delivered us out of the bondage of the flesh because when He died, you and I died in Him. We are now a new creation. When we were baptized, it says that we were “buried with him in baptism, in which ye have been also raised with him through faith of the working of God who raised him from among the dead” (Colossians 2:12).

Christ not only died for us and we died with Him and in

Him, but He was also buried. The old things have passed away, and when we come out of the water we declare that from now on it is Christ who lives in us. Is that not wonderful?

It is no longer you who live. Sometimes you find yourself very bothersome. It is like Paul said, “Oh, who can deliver me from this wretched body?” (see Romans 7:24). According to the tradition it says that in the Roman world when they wanted to punish a murderer, they would bind the corpse of the murdered with the murderer face to face, hand to hand, feet to feet, mouth to mouth, until gradually the poison of the corrupted corpse penetrated that living man and he died from it. That is what Paul said, “Who can deliver me from this wretched body?” Is it not so that sometimes we feel this wretched “I”? Why is it that it still comes out? Oh, that it be buried, that it be dead! Well, it was dead, it was buried, but you dug it up. If you believe through the faith of Jesus Christ, when Christ was buried you were buried with Him, and when He was raised from the dead you were raised with Him from the dead in newness of life, then it is done.

DEBTS PAID

“Having effaced the handwriting in ordinances which stood out against us, which was contrary to us, he has taken it also out of the way, having nailed it to the cross” (Colossians 2:14).

What does it mean? In the old days when people wanted to borrow from you, they would give you a paper, an I.O.U. (I owe you). With that I.O.U. paper you could demand repayment of the debt. But whether the debtor paid it or not, the I.O.U. paper was yours, and you nailed it. That handwriting on the I.O.U. with the signature was nailed to the cross. When you nailed that paper it meant that the debt was fully paid.

That is what Christ did for us. We all have signed

I.O.U.'s. God said, "These are My laws." We said, "All that you have commanded we will do." We, like the children of Israel, again and again have said, "We will do all that God has said." We signed. But we could not do it—I.O.U. We owed God with our handwritings, and when Christ died on the cross He paid it all, and it is nailed. What grace, what mercy!

DELIVERANCE

"He has delivered us out of the power of darkness and has translated us into the kingdom of the Son of God's love" (Colossians 1:13).

We are no longer under the authority of darkness. The enemy tries to keep people in darkness, and he has authority to do that because people belong to him. But we are the Lord's; he has no authority over us to keep us in darkness. God has already translated us out of the authority of darkness and has transported us into the kingdom of the Son of God's love. So all we need to obey is the Son of God's love.

DEFEAT OF THE ENEMY

What happened to the enemy? "Having spoiled principalities and authorities, he made a show of them publicly, leading them in triumph by it" (Colossians 2:15).

When Christ died on the cross, He spoiled principalities and authorities, all the powers of wickedness and the spiritual powers of darkness. He has spoiled Satan and all his hosts, and made a public show of them by the cross. He has completely routed, defeated the enemy, and because He has defeated him there is no reason why we should be defeated today. We can claim the victory of Christ over all the works of the enemy.

These are just a few examples to show that we are complete in Him. There is nothing we need, whether to

know or to live, that we cannot find in Christ Jesus. “All the fulness of the Godhead dwells in Him bodily and ye are complete in Him.” *Complete* means “made full in Him.” If this is the case then what should be our attitude?

OUR WALK

“As therefore ye have received the Christ, Jesus the Lord, walk in Him, rooted and built up in Him, and assured in the faith, even as ye have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving” (Colossians 2:6-7).

If this is so then what do we do? We walk in Him, we get rooted in Him, we are built up in Him, abounding in it with thanksgiving. Do not look outside of Him. Find everything in Him, and if you do you are delivered from all heresies; for instance, Jewish ceremonialism—meat, drink, feast, new moons, Sabbaths. These things in the Old Testament times were given by God, but they were shadows, preparing for the reality to come. When Christ, the reality, the fulfillment, the body of these shadows has come, then these shadows have gone away. There is no need for these external exercises because you have the reality, Christ. If this is the case, then what is the need of “do not touch, do not taste,” and all these mystical things, all these speculations? You do not need that because you have been delivered from the elements of the world. Your life is now hidden with Christ in God. Think of the things in heaven. We become a heavenly people. We will be delivered from all these earthly things. Dear brothers and sisters, this is the will of God.

TRUE MINISTRY

Finally, when you come to the ministry of the Apostle Paul this is what his ministry really is. He said, “I rejoice in sufferings for you, and I fill up that which is behind of the tribulations of Christ in my flesh, for his body, which is the

church; of which I became minister” (Col. 1:24).

In other words, Paul is willing to suffer for the church in what sense? “Whom we announce, admonishing every man, and teaching every man, in all wisdom, to the end that we may present every man perfect in Christ” (Col. 1:28).

True ministry has only this goal, this end, which is to present every man perfect in Christ, not in anything else. If you try to be perfected in anything else you are unperfected. If you want to be perfect it has to be in Christ, and this was the ministry of the apostle Paul. He admonished, he agonized, he toiled, he prayed and only for this purpose, that he may present us perfect in Christ. This was also the ministry of Epaphras, because Paul mentioned that in his prayer: “Epaphras, who is one of you, the bondman of Jesus Christ, salutes you, always combating earnestly for you in prayers, to the end that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God” (Col. 4:12).

What is the will of God? The will of God is, “All the fulness of the Godhead dwells in Him and ye are complete in Him.” As we approach this little letter to the Colossians may we be filled with the full knowledge of God’s will. Oh, that we may see Christ, the fulness of God, and be made partakers of that fulness.

Shall we pray:

Dear heavenly Father, we do look to Thee for the spirit of wisdom and revelation to the full knowledge of God. We pray that Thou will open our understanding, that we may see Christ as the fulness of the Godhead, and that we are complete in Him. We pray that as we see Him our faith would rise within us to claim Him as our all and in all. We pray that we may not in any way be distracted outside of Christ, that we may walk in Him, rooted and built up in Him, and be thankful all the time. In the name of our Lord Jesus. Amen.