

will be of such service unto the Lord. May it please the Lord in these darkening days to raise up more who will be occupied with these deeper issues than life and how to succeed in modern society! Don't you crave such an exciting spiritual stress? Hopefully you do. It comes through knowing Christ and allowing Him control over the activity of your life. Amen.

NOTES:

THE EPISTLE OF COLOSSIANS

"Personal Conflict"

Col. 2:1-3

Introduction

1. Emotional stress of some sort is common to all. How this is handled varies. Spiritual stress is uncommon. How it is employed is exciting.

2. The second chapter of this letter is an extension of Paul's explanation concerning the ministry (Greek "for" in v. 1 proves this). Hence, Paul is still sharing his feeling about a true minister of the Word. He will possess the quality of concern--righteous concern for misguided people!

3. How this deep feeling for others operates in the soul of a servant of God is the thrilling exposure of these verses. There are three helpful considerations which are:

1. DISTINCTIVE v. 1.

Two expressions describe the peculiarity of the situation here:

a. Paul's conduct. The key word is "conflict" and its meaning is extracted from the wrestling arena. Drawing upon the athletic world, Paul notes that this is the sort of stress he is having. This is a favorite expression for him (cf. Phil. 1:30; 1 Thess. 2:2; 1 Tim. 6:12; 2 Tim. 4:7; Heb. 12:1). It is expected that this sort of stress will develop in view of the powers of darkness (Eph. 6:12, 17, 18). The present tense of the verb "have" shows the continuity of the conflict!

b. Prayer's content. Three groups are mentioned as being the concern of Paul's prayer: Colossians, Laodiceans, and those who had

not seen him personally. It will always be challenging to realize the prayer lists which Paul must have had!

2. DIRECTIVE. v. 2.

Whereas much of human personal stress is meaningless and has little or no purpose, the experience of Paul is full of design! Two are cited:

- a. The heart. How here's a great truth—the touching of the heart (feelings) with the Word is expected to secure the Word. When the feelings are consoled, the intellect is clarified. The verb "comforted" is the aorist and is linked with a settled situation. It is commonly used in the NT and with three meanings: comfort (console, encourage), beseech (entreat), and admonish (exhort). The need for the Colossians against the Gnostic heresy was encouragement in the truth. How greatly Paul prayed for this!
- b. The affection. Love is the chief characteristic of those who are born again. It is the single item of true Christianity which forever bears a witness to the lost. The verb "knit together" means to "be compacted and united." Same verb is found in Eph. 4:16 and in both verses shows the importance of love in weaving a garment which bears testimony unto our Lord. A solid phalanx is what is desired. Here is the Biblical brotherhood based upon the work and Person of Christ.

Item: The combination of the above two matters shows that truth and love are companions. One is not to be urged to the neglect of the other.

3. OBJECTIVE vv. 2, 3.

The original text employs a preposition which connotes a goal or objective. This is the end

for truth and love. It is the end toward which Paul agonizes in prayer. The glory of this is that it all moves toward Jesus, our wonderful Lord!

- a. Mentally. "Understanding" is the noun which denotes discernment. Nowhere in our Bibles are we told to allow error. We are told to be compassionate toward those who are in error. Hence, Paul is driving toward a confidence and assurance in spiritual discernment! Far too many never arrive at what they believe. They are full of guesses. Paul aims at "full assurance." This noun is used three other times in the N.T.: Heb. 6:11 of hope; Heb. 10:22 of faith; 1 Thess. 1:5 of the Gospel; here of discernment. Let's not bow the knee to the relativism of the day. Let's be dogmatists because the Word gives us the grit so to be!
- b. Spiritually. The second matter Paul seeks finally to bring about is "full knowledge" (Greek) of the mystery of God, even Christ. The fibre of Paul's concern is the Lord Himself! Any system which does not ultimately lead to Him is obviously not of God. Paul cannot mention our Lord without presenting a peon of praise to Him, hence, he writes that in Christ are treasures which consist of wisdom and knowledge. The latter includes one's conception of truth and the former one's appreciation of truth. Both are in Christ and perceived by believers, but hidden (Greek: apokruphos, meaning secret) from the false teachers. Praise the Lord!

Conclusion

A minister of the Gospel will be a catalyst in many situations in order to bring about God's designed goals for His own. When the so-called "lay believer" gets involved in the "work of the ministry," he too