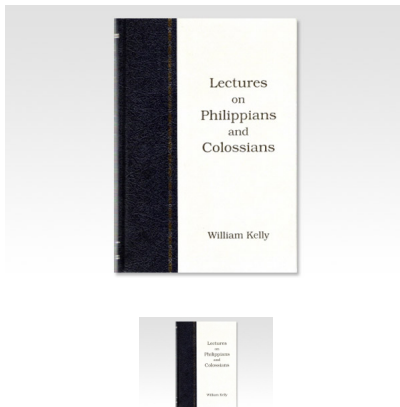




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Description

From the Chapter 1 of Colossians:

"It is hardly possible for the most careless reader to overlook the kindred truth set forth in this epistle and in that to the Ephesians. Union with Christ, the Head of His body the Church, has a place here beyond all other scriptures; for though 1 Corinthians may present the same doctrine (1 Cor. 12), it is evident that there is a question of the assembly of God on earth, in which the Holy Ghost is actively at work through the members, distributing to each as He will, much more than of the saints viewed in Christ above, as in Ephesians, or of Christ viewed in them below, as in Colossians.

Nevertheless, distinctions of great moment and full of interest characterize these two epistles, the chief of which lies in this, that, as in Ephesians we have the privileges of the body of Christ, the fullness of Him who filleth all in all, so in Colossians we have the glories of the Head, in whom dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. This difference, like others, was due, in the wisdom of the Spirit, to the moral condition of those addressed. In the former case the Apostle launches out into the counsels of God, who has blessed the saints with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ; in the latter case there was a measure of departure into philosophy and Jewish traditions, not an abandonment of Christ, of course, but such an admixture of these foreign ingredients as threatened fatal results in the Apostle's eyes, unless their souls were brought back to Christ, and to Christ alone, in all the rights of His Person and work.

Thus the epistle to the Colossians, in consequence of their state, does not admit of the vast scope and development of divine purposes and glory for the saints seen in and united to Christ; whereas in writing to the Ephesians there was then nothing in them to arrest or narrow the outgoing of the Apostle's heart, as the Spirit led him to apprehend with all the saints the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and to know the knowledge-surpassing love of Christ. Here it is largely a question of exhortation, of recovering their souls, of grave warning. Hence the human element is more prominent here.

Writing to the Ephesians the Apostle associates none with himself in the address; yet was Ephesus the capital of proconsular Asia and well known to his fellow labourers and associated by a thousand tender ties with himself and others. The assembly at Colosse as such was among those that had never seen his face in the flesh. This makes it the more marked when he joins Timothy with himself in their case." [...]

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