



BUT now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. ⁹ Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; ¹⁰ And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him: ¹¹ Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is ALL, and in ALL. (Col 3:8-11)

We all have some favorite darling in whose image and presence is magnified a likeness of the 'Apple of our Eye.' That one person may be a dear and faithful spouse, a child, a parent, or even some dearly beloved pet. We would not part with that treasure under any circumstance within our power to satisfy. That object of our affection is our all-in-all. God is pleased that we bear a genuine and over-flowing love for a creature of His own making; but He also expects that our love is held in great perspective of Himself – the Giver of all Good Gifts, and of life itself. We would have no loved ones on earth were it not for the charity and love of God to grant them to us. We often turn our unjust anger and disappointments against God when we lose such a treasured possession; but that is a complete abrogation of the love our Father has shown in allowing us that gift.

Because of Adam's sin way back in the Garden eastward in Eden, the dark shadow of physical death comes to all living. It is a natural result of Adam's great sin. But the Father has provided a remedy for the curse of sin (death) in the form of His only Begotten and well-Beloved Son. The Father in Heaven would be able to create anything of His desiring from nothing by only speaking it into existence; but He cannot create Himself, or that which is part of Himself. His only Begotten Son is not a Personage of the Father's Creation. Our Lord Jesus Christ is Begotten – not made. Therefore, He is the most treasured possession of God the Father. Jesus Christ is the one great 'ALL' in Heaven of the Father. All of the Father's love is rooted in His Beloved Son. God gave the one possession that He could not create as a propitiation for the sins of you and me.

If our Lord Jesus Christ is the All-in-All of the Father, surely His lesser creation of man should also view the Holy and Divine Son with the same love and reverence. Our good Bishop of Liverpool, J. C. Ryle, wrote in detail of the nature of Christ as All

we will ever need or should desire in his book, Holiness. He points out with great love the fact that Jesus Christ is our All-Sufficiency in every matter of life.

There is a grand beloved 34th Psalm illustrates only some particulars of the 'Allness' of Christ to us:

1. *I will bless the Lord at ALL times.* Our Lord is not a Sunday morning only Lord, but a continual Lord who is owed our continual praise and reverence. How? *his praise shall continually be in my mouth.* (Psalm 34:1) Has He delivered us from only some of our fears? *I sought the Lord, and he heard me, and delivered me from ALL my fears.* 34:4 What has the Lord done for the blind and lame? *This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of ALL his troubles.* 34:6 The Lord is partial to His Elect people: *The righteous cry, and the Lord heareth, and delivereth them out of ALL their troubles.* 34:17 We must revere Him for He has delivered us from our afflictions: *Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the Lord delivereth him out of them ALL.* 34:19

If Christ is not our ALL-in-ALL, we have no such ALL. It would be impossible to measure the ALL-NESS of Christ to the believer. *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with ALL SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS in heavenly places in Christ:* (Eph 1:3) *And ALL THINGS are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation.* (2 Cor 5:18) There is no gift we can possess that does not come down from the Father of Lights. So, which is of greater worth – the gift, or the Giver?

We all will lose a loved one at some point in this life. We mourn the loss without knowing that we mourn not for the Heaven-Bound soul, but for ourselves in being left behind. The death of a precious little child is heart-breaking to us. We wonder how God could take such a creature of tender years and innocent spirit – yet, the gift was still a gift for the time that we shared its love and presence. If the gift was for a period of one year, or one hundred, both are nevertheless gifts from God. Did you know that God even takes the clumsy mistakes His elect child makes and turns them to the child's advantage? *And we know that ALL THINGS work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.* (Romans 8:28)

Our Lord enables our good efforts to perform many good works. *If thou canst believe, ALL THINGS are possible to him that believeth.* (Mark 9:23) Since God enables us to do ALL THINGS, should we not give thanks for ALL THINGS? *Giving thanks always for ALL THINGS unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.* (Eph 5:20)

Christ is ALL, and in ALL is a line from our leading text in Colossians. The Person of Christ – His power, His love, His truth, His Way, His Will, and His Grace – pervades all that He has made; and all that He has claimed in His special calling and election. Our first awakening thoughts should be to thank and praise God for the gift of another day. Our last waning hours of each day should be spent in the same – and all hours in between. We are told to *pray at all times.* Does that mean that we should stay all day long on our knees in prayer, or close our eyes at the wheel in prayer? Not at all. It is our lives themselves that must be in an attitude of prayer at all times. Our lives must be a living prayer. Wicked deeds are often learned habits that are passed from father to son or daughter. Habits such as cursing, vulgarity, discourtesy, selfishness, etc., are difficult to break. But ALL sin is impossible to abstain from without the grace and mercy of *Christ working in our organs.*

If many sins have become habitual, I believe our Lord can teach new habits of righteous living. Each pious deed reinforces the habit to do righteously. Parents have a solemn responsibility to see to the moral training of their children and to protect them from the insidious and pernicious influences that dominate in the societies outside the

home. This includes safeguarding our children from unhealthy association, immoral teachings of the public school, and those threatening influences that are everywhere on the public media. If we love them enough, we will take the time and effort to teach and protect them – in ALL ways!

You will remember the exchange between Jesus and some of His followers who had a half-hearted desire to follow Him: *19 And a certain scribe came, and said unto him, Master, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest. 20 And Jesus saith unto him, **The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.** 21 And another of his disciples said unto him, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father. 22 But Jesus said unto him, **Follow me; and let the dead bury their dead.*** (Matt 8:19-22) In verse 19, the scribe had the right inclination, but it was only that – not a firm resolve. He had not counted the cost of following Jesus. He had not considered the life of deprivation that faced him in following after Jesus. Another disciple insisted that he must first go and bury an aging father who was near death; but Jesus told the man to *Follow me; and let the dead bury the dead.* The greatest priority is to follow Christ. The unbelievers at home (the dead according to Ephesians 2) can bury the dead, but Christ is all about life – not death!

Don't we often – all of us – establish priorities that do not place our ALL on the priorities of our Lord Jesus Christ? Perhaps it is some besetting vice or sin that we covet secretly, though we live an otherwise respectable life. Perhaps it is not an outward expression of sin, but simply an attitude of disregard for the things of God in our lives daily. Or perhaps it is a host of sins of omission in failing to do acts of charity when we should be ashamed not to do so. God desires our hearts and minds – all of them. With our Father in Heaven, it is ALL or NOTHING! Where is your ALL, Reader?