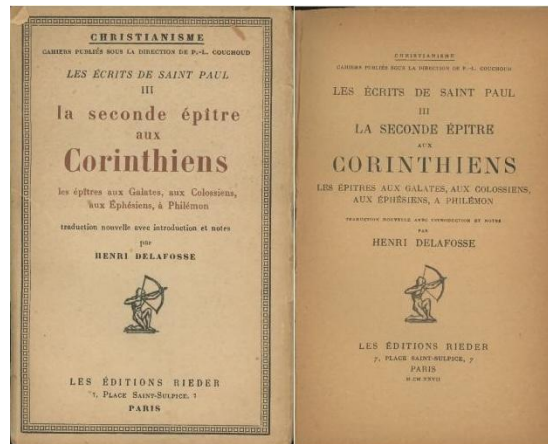


This file was created October 2021 as a translation for my personal use and without any thought of sharing publicly at the time. I only ask that you keep that in mind when using it. I have made a copy of the French text available at

<https://archive.org/details/turmel-les-ecrits-de-saint-paul-ii-la-premiere-epitre-aux-corinthiens>

Neil Godfrey - November 2023



101

EPISTLE TO THE COLOSSIANS

Critics are almost unanimous in saying that this epistle is from Paul who wrote it in captivity, either in Rome or elsewhere.

1. THE RESURRECTION IS ACCOMPLISHED IN CHRISTIANS

I begin by studying texts II, 11-13 and III, 1 which essentially say this to Christians: “By baptism you were buried with Christ; you are also resurrected with him. Your life is in heaven. Do not forget that this celestial life imposes sublime duties on you. »

They paint a picture of the Christian life which does not lack grandeur, but whose provenance raises a considerable problem. They say, in fact, that the Christian is

resurrected. Now the second epistle to Timothy, II, 18, denounces two heretics whose crime consists of saying that “the resurrection has already come” and who, therefore, “overthrow the faith of some”. If the pastoral epistles were written by Paul in the year 60, as theologians believe, how could the apostle, in the epistle to the Colossians, speak of the resurrection accomplished in the Christian just at the time where he treated as heretics those who presented the resurrection as “already arrived”? It will be said that his intentions were pure and that he did not intend to reject the resurrection of the body. But that's not the question. Those who have “overthrown the faith of a few” have achieved their goals simply by saying that the resurrection has “already come.” It is this captious formula which has done evil, because it has surreptitiously combatted the dogma of the resurrection, because it has destroyed it by pretending to respect it. How then did the apostle adopt for his personal use such a perfidious formula? How did he not see that he was supplying weapons to the heretics, that he was working for them? There is an insoluble difficulty here for theologians and for all those who maintain that the current text of the pastoral epistles is authentic.

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The critics experience barely less embarrassment. According to them it was around 125 that an unknown person warned Timothy against the two aforementioned heretics; but it was Paul himself who wrote the text of Col., III, 1; “You are resurrected with Christ.” Here is how they are led by the logic of their system to reconstruct the events. Paul, in 60, explains to the Colossians that the resurrection has already taken place in them, naturally without prejudice to another resurrection which will take place at the end of time but of which he does not speak. Later, around 120, heretics unknown to history abused the apostle's formula and used it to deceive the popular masses attached to the Christian faith. They teach that the resurrection is something that has already happened in the Christian; but they add that there is no other resurrection to be expected. Shortly after, a Catholic theologian, frightened at the sight of the devastation committed by said heretics, wrote under the name of Paul: “Do not listen to those who preach that the resurrection has already arrived: they are heretics.”

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Now this reconstruction comes up against an enormous difficulty. A Catholic theologian from around 125 could not, under the pretext of defending belief in the resurrection, condemn a formula once used by the great apostle, a formula that everyone knew and which he knew himself better than anyone. No doubt, since heretics had abused Paul's expressions, he had to point out the abuse. But he had to point it out while sparing the apostle.

He did not lack the means for this. Let us judge by the following two examples. Around 170, the author of the second epistle of Peter (III, 15) was able, in a few words, to exalt the Pauline letters and condemn the heretics who exploited these writings to corrupt the faith. And, around 140, the author of the second epistle to the Thessalonians (II, 2) took care to warn the faithful against the forgers who abuse his name. It would have been easy for the author of the pastoral epistles to make a similar observation and, since he was hiding under the name of Paul, to write something like this: "Hymenaeus and Philetus ruin the faith in the resurrection of the body by using my expressions unduly. I declare that the spiritual resurrection now accomplished in Christians will be followed by a bodily resurrection. » Instead he condemns the formula used by Paul in the epistle to the Colossians. He condemns it without adding any correction, any distinction, any explanation. He plainly declares that we destroy the faith, and that we are heretics when we say that the resurrection has "already happened". This is what is incomprehensible if he knows that the apostle whose name he takes wrote in 60 to the Colossians that the Christian is resurrected with Christ.

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Should we conclude that he does not know this text, he the Catholic interpolator of the pastoral epistles who places himself around 160? No. He most likely knows it, he knows its provenance. In any case, we know where the formulas II, 12, III, 1 come from which reproduce the Marcionite formula so exactly. Since they do not emanate from Paul, they came from the Marcionite office, they could only have come from there. It was Marcion or one of his disciples who, around 140, explained to Christians that their resurrection was an accomplished fact and who recorded this teaching in 1 epistle to the Colossians. And the Catholic interpolator of the pastoral epistles, where he denounces the propaganda of Hymenaeus and Philetus, targets the texts Col, II, 12, III, 1 or one of their like.

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2. THE WRITING NAILED TO THE CROSS

Verse II:14 explains that Christ blotted out the writing which by his ordinances was contrary to us and that he removed it by nailing it to the cross.

The "writing" that Christ destroyed by nailing it to the cross is the Mosaic law. No doubt is possible on this point which, moreover, is admitted by all commentators. This writing

contained orders which were against us; and that is why Christ nailed him to the cross and destroyed him.

Could Paul have used this language? Let us briefly recall its system¹. According to him, God promised to give Abraham and his posterity the land of Canaan or even the whole world, and these but only these participate in this promise who are the sons of Abraham. Now what makes one a son of Abraham is not, as the Jews and Judeo-Christians believe, circumcision and observation of the law. It is faith, faith in Christ which provides this title. We must believe in Christ, that is to say, believe that Christ was charged by God to carry out the promise made to Abraham and that he will soon accomplish this mission by restoring the kingdom of Israel or even by founding the world empire. In this divine plan which was fixed from the time of Abraham and of which this patriarch received notification, what place does 1°1 occupy? None. On this point Paul's thoughts are condensed in the following text from the epistle to the Galatians III, 17-18:

1. The Epistle to the Romans, p. 13 and here p. 49.

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The promise cannot be destroyed by the law that came four hundred and thirty years later; for if the inheritance came from the law it would no longer come from the promise; Now it was through the promise that God gave his gift to Abraham.

The law is of no use to the Christian who wants to participate in the promise that God made to Abraham and that Christ, Abraham's successor, will fulfill. She is totally useless to him.

Useless, but not harmful and contrary to men. According to Paul, men have never ceased to be under the regime of promise, under the regime of faith which is the consequence of the promise. And Christ, whose mission is to finally realize what was promised to Abraham for so long, does not have to worry about the law which does not hinder him in the accomplishment of his work. It is therefore not the one who wrote that the "ordinances" of the law were "contrary to us", and that Christ, taking possession of the law, "obliterated" it by "nailing it to the cross. »

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Verse II, 14 is not from Paul. Who is it from? The problem that confronts us here would be much simplified if we found a thought of the same kind elsewhere. Is there another

text in the Pauline epistles presenting the Mosaic law as something contrary to men? We read in Ro V 20 that the law was introduced into the world to multiply sin. And Gal, III, 19 which says that the law was given "in view of transgressions", has, by the admission of the apologists themselves, the same meaning. Legislation whose aim is to multiply our sins is certainly contrary to men, and Christ who loved us must have been keen to tear us away from such an odious institution. We see our text II, 14 completes Ro., V, 20 and Gai., III, 19 which, for their part, provide additional light. These three oracles, which illuminate and support each other, are closely related and derive from the same source. Now the origin of Ro., V, 20 and Ga., III, 19 is known to us. These two texts come from the house of Marcion and they present the Mosaic law as the work of the creator God who instituted it in order to be able to punish men more cruelly by multiplying their sins. Our ^ text II, 14 is therefore also of Marcionite provenance, and it shows us Christ ruining the work of the Creator to free us from it.

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The resurrection realized now in the Christian, as presented in II, 12 and III 1, is an article of Marcionite dogmatics, and the law of which II, 14 says that it was crucified by Christ is another. Let's continue our investigation.

3. THE DIVINE PLAN OF REDEMPTION

From the beginning, the epistle which tells Christians that their hope is "located in both" (I, 5) asks them at the same time to progress in "the knowledge of God" (I, 10), in "the knowledge of his will" (I, 9). By "the will" of God we must understand a set of arrangements made by God with regard to man, that is to say the divine plan.

This plan, which, in II, 2, is called "the mystery of God", in IV, 3, "the mystery of Christ" consists in the fact that the Father, to provide us with access to the light " has been rescued from the power of darkness" (I, 13). Now when we were under the power of darkness, we committed "evil works" which established enmity between God and us (I, 21). It follows that there that "the deliverance" (I, 14) with which we were gratified was also a "reconciliation" (I, 20, 21), a "remission of sins" (I, 14). How did God carry out this double work of deliverance and reconciliation? By "the son of his love" (I,13). "The fullness of divinity dwells in this son" (II, 9), in him also are "the hidden treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (II, 3), treasures which are identical to the mystery of which he was spoken above. This mystery which was once "hidden" is no longer so; it was "revealed" by the one whom God commissioned to carry out his plan, that is to say by Christ (I, 26, 27). What did Christ do to realize this plan? He died (I, 22), then he rose

again (II, 12; III, 1) · With him we also died and we were resurrected. He became our head, we are his body (I 18:24); all “the fullness” of the Church dwells in him (I, 19; see in Ro., XI, 25 “the fullness of nations”).

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Now back to Paul. He too has a divine plan whose execution is entrusted to Christ. But this plan, which includes two parts, deals, in the first, with Palestine, the possession of which is guaranteed to Abraham and his posterity. In its second part it sets out the conditions required to belong to the posterity of Abraham, starting from the principle that the posterity of Abraham is centralized in Christ. There is nothing in common between the divine plan of which Paul is the interpreter and the exalted plan in the epistle to the Colossians. The latter, of a spiritual order, goes beyond the horizon of the apostle whose concerns are material. Let us conclude that the substance of the epistle to the Colossians is foreign to Paul. But let us compare it with the so-called Pauhmen literature* with the Johannine writings and with the Ignatian letters. The second epistle to the Corinthians (V, 1) speaks of “the dwelling place” which awaits us “in heaven”. The Johannine Christ {Jo., VIII, 12} promises to those who follow him “the light of life”; and in the letter to the Romans (VI, 2) Ignatius asks to be allowed to gather pure light.” — The Johannine Christ declares (Jo., XVII, 3) that eternal life consists in knowing God, the one who is the only true God, who was unknown before the coming of Christ and whom Christ made known (I, 18) . For his part, Ignatius (Eph., The “power of darkness” is only mentioned in the epistle to the Colossians and in Luke, XXII, 53; but it is identical to the “Prince of this world”, of whom the Johannine Christ speaks {Jo., XII, 31; XIV, 30} and Ignatius {Eph., XIX, I; Ma., I, 3; Ro., VII, 1; Phi., VI, 2}; identical to the “God of this world” of which II Cor., IV, 4 speaks; identical to the “Bad” of which the Johannine Christ speaks {Jo., XVII, 15}, the historian of this one (I Jo., III, 12; V, 18, 19) and the epistle to the Galatians I, 4 ; identical finally to the “Devil” of which the Johannine Christ speaks {Jo., VIII, 44}. The Johannine Christ declares {Jo., XII, 31} to have come to chase the Prince from this world; he prays his Father {Jo., XVII, 15} to protect his disciples from the attacks of the Evil One; and 1 Epistle to the Galatians I, 4 explains that Christ came to rescue us from the yoke of the Evil One. The Epistle to the Romans teaches (V, 10) that Christ died to reconcile us with God whose enemies we were; she also explains (VII, 18-25; VI,) that our flesh is a machine to sin and, consequently, to make us enemies of God until the day (VI, 6) when our sinful body is killed by baptism. The Christ of the Epistle to the Romans (V, 10) reconciled us to God by his death, and (VIII, 3) God sent him in the likeness of sinful flesh to condemn sin in the flesh. Finally we read in the first epistle to the Corinthians (XII. 27) that the faithful are the body of Christ.

We see that the ideas that we have gleaned from the epistle to the Colossians are not unknowns. They all end up elsewhere. But where do these texts in which we encountered them come from? Their origin is not mysterious to us. We have acquired proof that all bear the Marcionite stamp. All of them, that is to say those of the Pauline epistles as well as those of Ignatius and the Fourth Gospel, came from the school of Marcion. Let us conclude that the epistle to the Colossians considered in its essential part is Marcionite.

4. CATHOLIC ADDITIONS

Let us now say that we find texts there whose Catholic provenance is not in doubt. They can be divided into two groups.

In the first there are certain small formulas scattered here and there. Such as the expression “by the blood of his cross” which appears in I. 20 as the means which God used to pacify all things. Such again is the expression “by his body of flesh” of 1.22 which, too, is the means by which our reconciliation was accomplished. Finally, such as the particle “corporeally” of II, 9 which expresses the way in which the fullness of the divinity dwells in Christ.

The second group includes two dissertations: 1 one (I, 15-17, 18*) in which the Son of God is presented to us as a creature charged by God to create and preserve all things; the other (II, 16-23) where we learn that certain institutions were “the shadow of things to come”.

Let's take care of the first group first. The text I, 20, if we set aside the formula “by the blood of his cross” tells us this: “God has reconciled all things to himself through him (that is to say, through Christ); he also pacified all things through himself (that is, through Christ). The expression, “by the blood of his cross” which occurs in the second member, duplicates the complement “by him”. If, at least, it followed this complement, we could with good will see in it a useful precision and interpret the text like this: “The pacification was made by Christ who accomplished it by shedding his blood on the cross. » But our text is inexorable. He tells us that God has pacified all things “by the blood of his cross through him.” » In this turn of phrase the “blood of the cross” can only be a gloss introduced surreptitiously by a Catholic reader who wanted to explain that

Christ had accomplished his peacemaking mission by shedding his blood on the cross, but who hindered by the context in which he did not want to change anything gave his explanation a bizarre and incorrect form.

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The same observation applies to the expression “by his body of flesh” of I, 22. It also duplicates the complement “by his death” which follows it; it too is a gloss intended to explain that Christ had a body like ours and introduced by a Catholic reader in a context which originally said this (21, 22): “While you were his enemies, God reconciled you through death from him (from Christ). » The interpolator, at the same time as he inserted “by the body of flesh” between the verb and the complement, slightly moved the possessive pronoun “of him” so that it could be used for both complements.

Rest II, 9 where we read that “in the Christ the fullness of the divinity dwells bodily. » Pope Leo asks himself in one of his sermons (65, 5): “How can the substance of God which is incorporeal be corporeally in Christ? » To this question he gives an answer that many had preceded, that many have followed. There are therefore multiple explanations of this text proposed either by theologians or by critics. All of them miss the question of how an incorporeal substance can dwell in a corporeal way. We can also clearly see that the question is insoluble, in other words that it is impossible for an incorporeal substance to inhabit corporeally. And this result authorizes us to consider the particle “corporeally” as a disruptive element violently introduced into a framework that was not made for it. Immediately everything becomes clear. The original writing was limited to teaching that the fullness of the divinity dwells in Christ, that is to say that Christ is the supreme God come among us. The adverb “corporeally” which, from the grammatical point of view has no meaning, tends towards an aim which we are reduced to conjecturing but which we conjecture without difficulty: it was introduced by a Catholic reader to prove, without any concern for syntax, that Christ had a real body.

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I now move on to the dissertation on the Son of God the creator (I, 15-17, 18b). What precedes it (12-14) is the presentation of the work accomplished by God to save us. And it is also the exposition of the same work which follows it (19-23). If we only took into account its place we would say that it is an integral part of the redemptive plan in the middle of which it is thrown. But in reality it cuts it into two sections which it separates from each other and with which it has nothing in common since it deals with the creation of beings and their conservation. Is it likely that the author, obsessed as he

is by the thought of redemption, got lost in an hors d'oeuvre and then returned to it? Let us say that the presentation of the redemptive plan was originally a single piece and that verses 15-17, 18b which deal with creation were later artificially introduced.

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We also arrive at the same result by another route. If we read the epistle to the Ephesians I, 6, 7, 10, 11, 22, 23; II, 2, 9; IV, 18, VI, 12, we find there everything that is said here of the work accomplished by God to rescue us from the power of darkness, and introduce us into the kingdom of his Son who is the head of the Church . On the other hand, there is no question of the Creator who gave existence to beings and who preserves it for them. And, to explain this strange fact, we are led once again to conclude that verses I, 15-17, 18b did not belong to the primitive writing which was strictly confined to the description of the redemptive plan.

Dissertation II, 16-23 on the institutions which were “the shadow of things to come” also has no parallel in the epistle to the Ephesians. It also, therefore, did not belong to the original editorial team. Its purpose is to explain that one should not condemn anyone regarding eating and drinking or regarding a festival, a new moon, or sabbaths, because all these things were shadows of the things to be come. The author is clearly inspired by the epistle to the Hebrews X, 1 which teaches that the Mosaic institutions were “the shadow of things to come”. From which we are authorized to conclude that he also has these same institutions in mind. Equipped with this guiding thread we can move forward through the thick darkness that envelops us. The “feast” about which it is forbidden to condemn must be the Jewish Passover. Eating and drinking must follow the dietary regulations which set the terms of this Passover. The “new moon” must designate not neomenia itself, but 1 age of the moon which depends on neomenia and can only be known through it (we know that the Jews celebrated Passover on the fourteenth day of the moon of the month of nisan). “Sabbaths” have the same meaning as in the gospels where this word designates the week. Our text prohibits condemning Christians to the observation of the Jewish Passover with all the regulations attached to it. It is probably directed against Blastus who, around 175, tried to bring back into force in the Roman church the rites of the Jewish Passover (see the appendix of *De praescriptionibus*, 53, by Tertullian). If the rest of the dissertation still targets Blastus, the “worship of angels” mentioned there is a reminiscence of Hebr., II, 2 where the Mosaic law is attributed to angels. Blastus propagated the worship of angels by advocating the observation of the Mosaic law which was the work of angels.

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5. COLLECTIVE WRITING AND INDIVIDUAL WRITING

The epistle to the Colossians begins with these words: "We give thanks to God. » It continues: "We never stop praying for you... We proclaim Christ... Pray also for us so that God opens a door for us to speak. » It was therefore written by a community or, which amounts to the same thing, in the name of a community.

But here and there the collective style gives way to individual style. In I, 23 the sentence which relates to the preaching of the gospel ends with this declaration: "of which I, Paul, was made a minister". In I, 29 immediately after the sentence where the community said: "We proclaim Christ", we read: "On what I also work". In II, 4 same show: "I say this so that no one deceives you." In IV, 3 the community which speaks at the beginning of the sentence disappears before the sentence is completed: "Pray also for us so that God will open a door for us... to preach the mystery of Christ for which also I am chained (I leave aside the title and the greetings at the end). We see that individual writing is entangled in collective writing: that is the fact.

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It is this fact that must be explained. Let us examine each of the texts in which individual writing appears. In I, 23 the mention that Paul makes of his person and his personal situation has no relation to the context which surrounds it. It is an appetizer, and the two sections that it separates can be joined without difficulty. That being said, we have the right to say that it differs in origin from the collective drafting. It was inserted after the fact in a text which spoke of the gospel "preached to every creature under heaven" and which added that the mystery hidden to previous generations had just been manifested. The hook was executed using the relative pronoun "including me Paul."

In I, 29 Paul, who intervenes a second time, begins by naively saying that he "also" does what the community has just said it does. Then he engages in a digression which includes II, 1. As for the thought expressed in I, 28 it continues in II, 2. Everything appears as if II, 2 was originally connected to I, 28 and had been separated from it later by the piece I, 29, II, 1 attached by means of the formula "A quoi aussi".

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In II, 4 Paul's intervention which takes place for the third time has no other purpose than to put the apostle in the spotlight and to call him to the attention of the readers. Moreover, it only obtains this result by interrupting the thread of ideas which resumes in II, 6. Here, unlike what exists elsewhere, the interpolation is not welded to the context

by means of a conjunctive particle. It announces itself as an insistence: "I say this so that..."

In IV, 3b the intervention of the apostle is attached to the context by the particle "for which". Paul tells us once again that he is the author of the letter. But the orders expressed in IV, 2 and 3a return in IV, 5. Here again Paul, by intervening, cuts the thread of ideas. Let's conclude. The individual writing in which Paul speaks in his personal name (I remind you that I am leaving aside the title and the greetings at the end here) is not one with the collective writing; but it is attached to it by means of fortune.

This observation sheds light on a problem that I have until now left in the shadows. I said that there is a Marcionite edition of the epistle to the Colossians. I now add that this edition was written like Clément Romain's letter. The editor faded away, behind the community which alone had the floor. There was nothing fictitious about the letter. It was sent by a group of Marcionite Christians to another group of Marcionite Christians domiciled in Colossae, just as Clement's letter is sent by the church of Rome to the church of Corinth. It began with I, 2: "To the saints and faithful brothers in Christ who are in Colossae. » And the community in whose name the letter was sent had been informed of the feelings of the recipients by Epaphras of whom I, 7-8 speaks.

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Then the Catholic publisher intervened, the one who through the dissertation I, 15-17, 18b transformed the Son of God, liberator and redeemer of the human race into creator of the world, the one also who, through the slight interpolations of I, 20, 22, II, 9, gave to Christ the redeemer a body of flesh and provided with blood. It is this same editor who inserted the individual editorial, who involved Paul and put our letter under his patronage. Before him there existed a letter written on behalf of a Marcionite community to the friendly community of Colossae. Since the Catholic publisher passed by, this letter of Marcionite provenance has taught Catholic dogmatics without ceasing to teach contrary dogmatics; it has Paul as its author while continuing to be written in the name of a community; and it begins with the name of its new author: "Paul, apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God. » Timothy, whose name is annexed to that of Paul, intervenes to give the appearance of an explanation to the collective writing which forms the basis of the letter. If, in fact, Paul were the only one to hold the title, this collective writing would shock people. The addition of Timothy tries to remedy the evil. In reality it does not resolve the problem, since it comes up against the artifice of individual writing; Besides, Timothy is not mentioned in the post that will be discussed right now. But she keeps up appearances.

Two words on the date of the Catholic edition. It could not have appeared before around 150. It would be before 165 if Justin who, in Dialogue 84, 2; 85, 2; 100, 2 etc., calls Christ “the eldest of all creatures”, had borrowed this title from our epistle. But the dependence is more probably on the side of the epistle which, consequently, only received its Catholic makeover around 170. I do not forget that dissertation II, 16-23 is placed around 175, but the The Catholic edition had probably existed for several years when this piece was inserted.

6. GREETINGS

Nothing prevents us from accepting as coming from Paul himself what is said about Tychicus (7-9), Aristarchus, Mark, Jesus called Justus (10-11), Nymphas and of the church which is in his house (15). There therefore existed a note from Paul, the outline of which is as follows: “Tychicus will give you my news. I sent it to you for this. I also sent Onesimus with him who is from you. Both will tell you what concerns me. My companions salute you. They belong to circumcision. They alone have helped me in the work of the kingdom of God. Greet Nymphas and the church that is in her house. »

In Romans XV, 7 Paul calls Andronicus and Junia his “fellow captives.” He is referring to one of the multiple incarcerations he suffered in the past and during which he met these two people. Levers and IV, 10 of our epistle where Aristarchus is called the companion of captivity can be interpreted in the same sense and it does not force us to conclude that Paul wrote the above-mentioned note during his captivity in Rome. In any case we are surprised to note that Luke, mentioned in 14 with the qualifier "beloved physician", is not named in 11 among those who were "the only ones" to help Paul in the work of the kingdom of God. Alleging that Luke was not circumcised and that he dealt exclusively with circumcised collaborators is not an admissible solution given that, in 11, Paul does not say that he had no other circumcised collaborators, but : “The men I have just named and who belong to the world of circumcision were my only collaborators. » The only way to solve this riddle is to say that 14 does not belong to Paul's note.

It is especially necessary to eliminate from the above-mentioned note verse 12 relating to Epaphras, a Marcionite missionary around 140 (see I, 7) and verse 16 which supposes a letter whereas Paul wrote a simple note of a few lines. On the other hand, these two verses adapt so naturally to the letter of the Marcionite community to the

Colossians that we can without hesitation attribute them to it and with them the mention of Luke as well as the warning given to Archippus (17).

Now let's come to the editor's work. Probably head of a Catholic community once evangelized by Paul, for example, that of Ephesus, he found in the archives the note that the apostle had sent to this community. On the other hand, defectors from Marcionism originating either from Colossae or from Laodicea showed him a copy of a letter addressed "to the saints and faithful brothers of Colossae" and in which the anonymous author spoke in the plural. Well convinced that this admirable writing must have come from Paul, he provided the proofs that were lacking for this apostolic origin. We already know two of the steps he took (individual editing and title) to achieve this result. Let us now add a third measure which consisted of inserting Paul's note in the greetings of the letter "to the saints and faithful brothers of Colossae". Lead, rightly or wrongly, by the qualifier given to Aristarchus to believe that the note dated from Paul's captivity, he created two attestations of this captivity, one in IV, 3b, the other in IV, 13b. Finally learning from the letter to the Colossians IV, 16 that Paul had been interested in the Christians of Laodicea, he provided two proofs of this concern, one in II, 1, the other in IV, 13 where Hierapolis intervenes as precision. In a word, he did everything necessary to achieve the fusion of Paul's post with the epistle to the Colossians.

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CONCLUSION

The Epistle to the Colossians includes 1° a letter addressed by an unknown Marcionite community to the Marcionite community of Colossae; 2° an authentic note from Paul; 3° the work of a Catholic editor who inserted the note into the letter and who adapted it to Catholic orthodoxy at the same time as giving it a Pauline origin.