**14—20.**] *Description, introduced by  
the foregoing, of the pre-eminence and  
majesty of the Son of God, our Redeemer.*

**14.**] **In whom** (as its conditional  
element: as in the frequent expressions,  
“*in Christ*,” “*in the Lord*,” &c.: see the  
parallel, Eph. i. 7) **we have** (see note, ibid.)  
**our redemption** (or simpler, redemption),  
[even] **the remission of our sins** (note,  
Eph. i. 7. There we have “*trespasses*,”  
the more special word: but here **sins**, the  
more general: the meaning being the  
same)

**15.**] (the last verse has been  
a sort of introduction, through our own  
part in Him, to the Person of the Redeemer, which is now directly treated of,  
as against the teachers of error at Colossæ.  
He is described, *in His relation* 1) *to God  
and His Creation* [vv. 15—17]: 2) *to the  
Church* [18—20]) **who is** (*now*—in His  
glorified state — essentially and permanently: therefore not to be understood of  
the *historical* Christ, God manifested in  
our flesh on earth: nor again of the *eternal  
Word*: but of Christ’s present glorified  
state, in which He is exalted in our  
humanity, but exalted to that glory which  
He had with the Father before the world  
was. So that the following description  
applies to Christ’s whole Person in its  
essential glory,—now however, by His  
assumption of humanity, necessarily otherwise conditioned than before that assumption. See for the whole, notes on Phil. ii.  
6, and Heb. i. 2 f.) **the image of the invisible God** (the adjunct invisible is of the  
utmost weight to the understanding of the  
expression. The same fact being the foundation of the whole as in Phil. ii. 6 ff., that  
the Son *subsisted in the form of God*, that  
side of the fact is brought out *here*, which  
points to His being the *visible* manifestation of that in God which is *invisible*: the  
word of the eternal silence, the *shining  
forth* of the *glory* which no creature can  
bear, the *expressed mark* of that *Person*  
which is incommunicably God’s; in one  
word, the *declarer* of the Father, whom  
none hath seen. So that while the epithet  
**invisible** includes in it not only the *invisibility*, but the incommunicability of God,  
the term **image** also must not be restricted  
to Christ corporeally visible in the Incarnation, but understood of Him as the manifestation of God in His whole Person and  
work—pre-existent and incarnate. It is  
obvious, that in this expression, the Apostle  
approaches very near to the Alexandrian  
doctrine of the *Logos* or *Word*: how near,  
may be seen by an extract from Philo:  
“As they who cannot look upon the sun,  
behold the sunshine opposite to him as  
himself, and the changing phases of the  
moon as being himself: so men apprehend  
*the image of God, His Angel the Word,  
as being Himself.*” St. Paul is, in fact, as  
St. John afterwards did, adopting the language of that lore as far as it represented  
divine truth, and rescuing it from being  
used in the service of error), **the first-born  
of all creation** (such, and not ‘*every creature*,’ is the meaning. See the reason for  
maintaining this in my Greek Test.—Christ  
is THE FIRST-BORN, Heb. i. 6. The idea  
was well known in the Alexandrian doctrine, and found in the writings of Philo.  
That the word is used as one whose meaning and reference was already known to  
the readers, is shewn by its being predicated of Christ as compared with two  
classes so different, the *creatures*, and the  
*dead* (ver. 18).—The first and simplest  
meaning is that of *priority of birth*. But  
this, if insisted on, in its limited temporal  
sense, must apply to our Lord’s birth from  
his *human mother*, and could have reference only to those brothers and sisters who  
were born of her afterwards; a reference  
clearly excluded here. But a secondary  
and derived meaning of “*first-born*,” as a  
designation of *dignity and precedence, implied by priority*, cannot be denied. See  
Ps, lxxxix. 27, “*I will make him my first-born, higher than the kings of the earth.*”  
Exod. iv. 22; Rom. viii. 29, and Heb. xii.  
28. It would be obviously wrong here to  
limit the sense entirely to this reference,  
as the very expression below, “*He is before all things*,” shews, in which His  
priority is distinctly predicated. The safe  
method of interpretation therefore will be,  
to take into account the two ideas manifestly included in the word, and here dis-  
tinctly referred to—priority, and dignity,  
and to regard the technical term “*first-born*” as used rather with reference to