both these, than in strict construction  
where it stands. “First-born of every  
creature” will then imply, that Christ was  
not only first-born of His mother in the  
world, but first-begotten of His Father,  
before the worlds,—and that He holds  
the rank, as compared with every created  
thing, of first-born in dignity: BECAUSE,  
&c., ver. 16, where this assertion is justified. See below on ver. 18):

**16**.]  
**because** (explanatory of the words “*first-born of all creation*”—it must be so,  
seeing that nothing can so completely  
refute the idea that Christ Himself is included in creation, as this verse) **in Him**  
(as the conditional element, pre-existent  
and all-including : not ‘*by Him*,’ as A. V.—  
this is expressed afterwards, and is a different  
fact from the present one, though implied  
in it) **were all things created** (**was created  
the universe** would better give the force  
of the Greek singular with the collective  
neuter plural, which it is important here to  
preserve, as ‘*all things*’ may be thought of  
individually, not collectively—viz.), **things  
in the heavens and things on the earth**(an inexact designation of heaven and  
earth, and all that in them is, Rev. x. 6),  
**things visible and things invisible, whether**(these latter be) **thrones, whether lordships,  
whether governments, whether authorities** (these or nearly these distinctive  
classes of the heavenly powers occur in a  
more general sense in Eph. i. 21, where see  
note. It would be vain to attempt to  
assign to each of these their places in the  
celestial world. Perhaps the Apostle chose  
the expressions as terms common to the  
doctrine of the Colossian false teachers and  
his own: but the occurrence of so very  
similar a catalogue in Eph. i. 21, where no  
such object could be in view, hardly looks  
as if such a design were before him.  
Meyer well remarks, “For Christian faith it remains fixed, and it is sufficient, that  
there is testimony borne to the existence  
of different degrees and categories in the  
world of spirits above; but all attempts  
more precisely to fix these degrees, beyond  
what is written in the New Test., belong to  
the fanciful domain of theosophy”): **the  
whole universe** (see above on ail things,  
ver. 16) **has been created** (not now of the  
mere act, but of the resulting endurance of  
creation—leading on to the “*subsisting*”  
below) **by Him** (instrumental: He is the  
agent in creation—the act was His, and  
the upholding is His: see John i. 3, note)  
**and for Him** (with a view to Him: He is  
the end of creation, containing the reason  
in Himself why creation is at all, and why  
it is as it is. See my Sermons on Divine  
Love, Serm. i. ii.):

**17.** ] **and He Himself** (emphatic, His own person) **is** (as in  
John viii. 58, of essential existence : “*was*”?  
might have been used, as in John i. 1: but.  
as Meyer well observes, the Apostle keeps  
the past tenses for the explanatory clauses  
referring to past facts, vy. 16, 19) **before**(in *time*; bringing out one side of the  
*primo-genitive* above: not in *rank*, as  
the Socinians), **all things, and in Him** (as  
its conditional element of existence, see  
above on “*in him*,” ver. 16) **the universe  
subsists** (*‘keeps together,’ ‘is held together  
in its present state:’* “Not only did He  
call it out of nothing into being, but He  
also holds it together now.” Chrysostom).

**18—20.**] *Relation of Christ to the  
Church* (see above on ver. 15).

**18.**] **And He** (emphatic; not any angels nor  
created beings: the whole following passage  
has a controversial bearing on the errors of  
the Colossian teachers) **is the Head of the  
body, the Church** (the genitive is one of  
apposition, inasmuch as in St. Paul, it is  
the church which *is*, not which *possesses*,  
the body): **who** (as if it had been said, ‘in