

Why....?

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“Why?” ... “Why?” asks Paul in Colossians two and verse 20, “as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances... after the commandments and doctrines of men?”¹

If ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances, (Touch not; taste not; handle not; Which all are to perish with the using;) after the commandments and doctrines of men? Which things have indeed a shew of wisdom in will worship, and humility, and neglecting of the body; not in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh.²

Why? If ye be dead with Christ are ye subject to ordinances after the commandments and the doctrines of men? Why? Why?

Behind this question of Paul's at the end of this chapter there lies a certain incredulity, a certain astonishment, as it were, that given everything that Paul has taught earlier in the epistle to the Colossians, given everything that is true of the believer in Jesus Christ, given everything that the believer, the child of God, has come to know of Christ and what Christ has done for him and who Christ is, given everything that they have experienced of the grace of God, *why* should they then turn from such things to the commandments, the ordinances, the doctrines of men?

You see, earlier in the chapter Paul has, as it were, already pulled the rug from under his hearers' feet. He has put their backs against the walls and he has demonstrated to them the foolishness of such behavior given what God has done for His people in Christ. Given everything that is true of them in Christ, therefore he comes to his conclusion towards the end of this chapter to bring them to this point of saying, *“Given all of that, why are you subject to these ordinances? Why are you subject to these commandments and doctrines of men? Why have you been beguiled by philosophy and vain deceit, the traditions of man, the rudiments of the world? Don't you know that you are dead with*

¹ Colossians 2:20, 22.

² Colossians 2:20-23.

Christ from the rudiments of the world? You are risen with Him. Then why do you turn to this 'touch not, taste not, handle not' way of living?"

Given all of this why... why... why are you subject to such things? Why have you brought the gospel down to such an earthly level? Why is your walk before God so determined by the things of time and sense in this earth, when all of this is so true of you in Christ, when the gospel is so heavenly, when the things of this world have been brought to an end in Christ at the cross... why?

Well, why does Paul even have to ask the question? Why is this question asked in Colossians?

Well, because this very condition prevailed at Colosse, because despite the folly of such things and the incredulousness of Paul's questions here, nevertheless he has to ask the question because the Colossians *were* subject to such ordinances and they *were* subject to the commandment and the doctrines of men. This sort of thing *had* come into the Church at Colosse and they *were* bound by such things.

And just as they were, so today *most*, indeed, the majority of professing religion and professing Christianity's religion is essentially very, very similar. The majority of Christians walk in such a way in which they are bound by the commandments and the doctrines of men. They have a religion, whether they profess Christ or not, which is simply *'touch not, taste not, handle not'*. They walk by rules. They live by laws. They walk by the doctrines and the commandments of men.

That is what most religion stands in and consists of. It is what most people, whether they are professing Christians or not, are tangled up in. *Touch not, taste not, handle not*. That is pretty much it. Do this or don't do that. Think this. Don't think that. Their religion rarely rises up any higher. It concerns their walk in this world, what they can do and what they can't do.

Practical Christianity, they may call it.

But *why*? Why, Paul asks.

If you know anything of the gospel, if you know anything of what it is to be in Christ, why are you so bound by the commandments and the doctrines of men?

Whether you think you will be saved by such things or merely improved by such things, whether you think such a walk will improve your walk with God, will bring you closer to Him, whatever the thinking behind it, it is merely bondage. You are in subjection to the commandments, the traditions and the doctrines of men, subjection to ordinances, subjection to *'taste not, touch not, handle not'*.

Why? Why does Paul have to ask?

Well, as I said, because this condition prevailed at Colosse. And he asked the question, not out of puzzlement, but in conclusion of the truths which he has presented before the people here in order to bring this question to them, in order to *bring it out*, in order to bring it to an end. He asks the question because he will bring this practice at Colosse to an end. His desire is to root it out, to tear it down, to pull it down, to dig it up and to deliver from bondage, to bring his hearers out from such earthly teaching, such error, such turning away from Christ and His gospel, such turning away from their beginnings in Christ back to these beggarly elements, these earthly elements. He will have them brought back to the gospel and to the liberty in the gospel and to the joy which they once knew in Christ when they first heard of Him.

So here in chapter two, having in the first opening chapter in Colossians opened the epistle by presenting Christ and who Christ is in His preeminence, now in chapter two, from verse six of chapter two essentially through to verse six of chapter four, Paul's concern is the walk of the believer. And Paul's concern is those many enemies which come in the believer's pathway which seek to divert him from walking in Christ and walking in the gospel and seek to drag him off to the left hand and the right hand.

So Paul's attention here is the walk of the believer. He says in verse six of chapter two, "*As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him*"³ ... *so walk ye in Him*. And this is what Paul is dealing with, the believer's walk.

And yet at Colosse *their* walk had turned from that beginning. They no longer walked in the manner in which they had received Christ Jesus the Lord. But they had become ensnared by the traditions of man. They had become spoiled by philosophy and vain deceit. They had become caught up with the rudiments of the world and not after Christ. And they found themselves bound by a '*touch not, taste not, handle not*' form of religion.

So Paul brings them to the truth of the gospel in Christ. He reminds them that their walk should not be according to this world and the traditions and teachings of man. But their walk should be in the light of the *gospel*. Their walk should be *in Christ*. Their walk should be in that manner in which they first *received* Christ. Their walk should be the walk of *faith*. Their pilgrimage through this world should be entirely in Christ.

And the antidote he presents to them, to this bondage in which they had come to be found, the antidote for such legal bondage in which they had become entangled is found in one place only, *in Christ* and in Him alone and in His gospel.

So Paul having pointed us to Christ in the opening chapter, in the introduction to the epistle, now addresses the believer's walk in the light of such things.

You see, here is the answer to verse 20. "[*Having*] *therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him.*"⁴

³ Colossians 2:6.

⁴ Ibid.

There is your answer. There is your antidote. And that is why with incredulity Paul says, *“If you are dead with Christ then from the rudiments of the world, why as those still in the world, as though living in the world, are you subject to such ordinances and commandment and doctrines? Walk as ye have received Christ. Walk in the same way in which you walked at the beginning.”*

Paul here in chapter two has already destroyed any arguments in support of such a practice. Earlier in chapter two he had reminded them of their position in Christ. He has reminded them that in Christ dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. He has reminded his hearers that they are complete in Him who is the head of all principality and power, that they have been circumcised in Him, that they were buried with Him in baptism, that they rose with Him, that they being dead in sins and the uncircumcision of their flesh have been quickened together with Him and that all their trespasses have been forgiven in Him, that the handwriting of ordinances that was against them, which was contrary to them, has been taken out of the way and nailed to His cross and that He has spoiled all principalities and powers and made a show of them openly and triumphed over them in it.

So given all of this... why do they turn to such beggarly elements?

Don't *walk* such a way, he says. Don't walk *that way*, *walk this way!* In Christ, in the same way in which you received Him, in the light of that by which you received Him, in the knowledge of Him and the experience of Him and in communion with Him. Walk *this way* and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.

Consider what the Colossians were subjecting themselves to. Ordinances, the commandment and the doctrines of men, rules, regulations, laws.

But didn't they know, and don't the people today in the churches know, that they have already been delivered from such things, from all such things, that when the believer died in Christ, when he was circumcised in Christ, with that circumcision made without hands in the putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ, when they were buried with Him in baptism and when they rose with Him through the faith of the operation of God who raised him from the dead, when they died and rose in Christ, didn't they know and don't we know and don't you know, child of God today, that you not only were delivered from your sins, but you were delivered from all such commandments, doctrines and ordinances which bring you into bondage? You have been delivered from all such earthly respects in religion. You are no longer *in* the flesh. You are no longer walking, as it were, in this world. You have been delivered, as it were, from the rudiments of the world and from the things of the flesh and from the things of the earth. And you are now risen in Christ! You are risen in the heavens! And you walk, although still in the body in this world, nevertheless in the Spirit the believer walks in the heavenlies. He walks in Christ. He walks as him who is risen and who is alive with that new heavenly life which is found in Christ.

Then though he may walk through in a pilgrimage in time and in sense and in this world, he is not, as it were, subject to this world. He died to this world. He is dead to this world. He is dead to the things of the flesh and he is dead to those laws and commandment and doctrines which govern the flesh.

For we have not only died, but we have risen and we reign in Christ, and we live in Christ and we walk in Christ and we receive Christ when we first heard the gospel through the quickening power of the Holy Spirit in that gospel, when He called us who were once dead in sins to be quickened together with Him, and we were forgiven of all our trespasses and we rose in Christ, and we were given faith to look unto Christ and to rest in Christ. And that is how we receive Christ. And having received Christ in such a way, Paul says, “*Therefore, having received Christ Jesus the Lord so walk ye in him.... so walk ye in him.*”⁵

Think of what Paul says in verse 13 of chapter two of Colossians. Just what have we been delivered from? Verse 13.

And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it.

Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ.⁶

Now do you hear that? Do you hear what he said in verse 14? “*Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross.*”⁷ Do you hear what Paul is saying there? Not only have we died with Christ, not only have we been quickened together with Him, not only have we been forgiven all of our trespasses in Christ, not only were all of our sins washed away by His blood, not only have we been reconciled to God by the blood of His cross, not only have we been justified, brought to life from the dead, quickened together with Him, created anew, not only are we made to be the very righteousness of God in the Lord Jesus Christ, not only are we complete in Him who is the head of all principality and power, not only *this*—if you can say *only* with regard to such tremendous truths—not only have we been delivered from our sins and the consequences of our sins, but we read in verse 14 of something *else* which we have been delivered from.

We have been delivered from those *very* things which condemned us, the very words, the very ordinances, the very law of God which stood in condemnation of us, which was

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Colossians 2:13-17.

⁷ Colossians 2:14.

against us, which was contrary to us. This is that which was blotted out. This is that handwriting of ordinances which was against us, contrary to us, which Christ *took out of the way* nailing it to His cross. That is what He nailed to His cross. He took that law. He took those ordinances. He took that handwriting of God which condemned all His people as sinners, guilty sinners before God, as law breakers, as covenant breakers, as wayward guilty rebels, as those who turned aside from God and His ways, as those who turned to their own ways, as those who turned in rebellion against Him. Christ took that law which condemned us and He *nailed* it to His cross and in so doing He blotted it out. He blotted out the very words and He took the entirety of them out of the way never to be brought back, never to be sounded again, never to be heard in the believer's ear again. Everything which condemned him, every *'thou shalt'* and *'thou shalt not'* which he had broken was blotted out! Ordinances, the handwriting of ordinances, blotted out, taken away, nailed to the cross.

You see Christ didn't just take our sins away. He didn't just take our sin away. He didn't just wash us from all our iniquity and our transgressions, He didn't just deliver us from the flesh from death and from corruption. He didn't just take our sin away. But He also took the *strength* of sin away. He took that handwriting of ordinances, that law, the law *itself* which is called the *strength* of sin. 1 Corinthians 15:56 describes the law as the strength of sin. Yes, our sins were washed away. Yes our trespasses were washed away by the blood of Christ. Yes, our sin was condemned in the body of Christ at the cross, but Christ went one step further. He took away the very strength of sin, that which provoked it, that which kindled it. He took away the handwriting of ordinances.

"What?" you may say. *"What, the law of God? He took away the law of God itself?"*

Yes, the law of God, the handwriting of ordinances.

"What, that holy, that perfect, that just, that good law of God?"

Yes, that holy, that perfect, that just law of God.

"But isn't that holy and just and good, as it says in Romans seven and verse 13?"

Yes, it is.

"Then why take away that which is holy and just and good? Why take away that which is good, which is blameless? Why when the fault lies not in the law, but in man and in his corrupt nature, why take away the law?"

Why? Because the law is the strength of sin, as I've just said.

*"[Because] sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful,"*⁸ as it says in Romans seven. That is why.

⁸ Romans 7:13.

Because sin is fanned, the flames of sin are fanned, by that law. That law may be perfect. It may be just. It may be good. It is God's law, God's immutable holy law. But you bring that law to bear upon a creature upon this earth, upon a fallen sinner, upon one who has a fallen flesh, and all you will do is see the rebellious state of sin within him fired up. You will see those fires, those sparks of sin within him kindled up into burning flames.

No, there is no fault in the law. There is no fault in the commandment. God didn't nail the handwriting of ordinances to the cross of Christ because He found fault with that law in and of itself. But when that law is brought to bear upon the sinner, when that law is brought to bear upon man in this world all it does is condemn him. And God came not to condemn in His gospel. Christ came not to condemn, but to save, not to condemn, but to *deliver*, not to leave man condemned under the sentence of law, but to *deliver* him from the law, to *save* him from his sins, to save him from that which condemned him, from that which slew him, not to leave him under condemnation, not to leave him with a law above his head which continually sounded out 'thou shalt' and 'thou shalt not' to him all the days in which he remains in this world, but to deliver him from such condemnation, to bring him into peace with God. To bring him into righteousness, to bring him into the heavenlies, to bring him into the presence of God, not to keep him afar off. For the law kept man at a distance. But Christ came to bring him near... to the Father. He came to bring his people who were once afar off near. He came to take that away which caused enmity between them and the Father and to make peace.

So He took away that which was the strength of sin, that which caused sin to become more sinful, that which worked death in man, that which caused sin to appear sin, by that which was good, the law, He came to take it away. For that law only deceived us and slew us. And when the commandment came, when the Spirit applied the commandment, sin revived and we *died*. Yet Christ came to bring the dead to life! So those who had been slain by the commandment, those whom the handwriting of ordinances had condemned utterly, He came to them and He took that very handwriting of ordinances and He took it to His cross and He nailed it to His own cross and He took it out of their sight and He blotted it out never more to be echoed in their hearing - those whom He took with Himself to the cross, those whose sins He blotted out with His own blood, those whose sins He washed away with His own blood as He suffered in their stead. He took that law, too, and He blotted it out and He took it out of the way that it would never more sound in their ears.

For if you are ever going to be free from sin, and if you are ever going to walk free from sin, you *need* to be delivered from that very commandment, from the handwriting of ordinances. And we read in Ephesians 2:15 that wondrous truth, that, "*Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace.*"⁹

You see, Christ came to save, to make peace, to deliver. And the problem wasn't in the commandment, no. But the commandment was the strength of sin and He took away that

⁹ Ephesians 2:15.

which slew man, that which brought him death in order that He might save and bring him life.

Now there was no fault in those commandments. That was the law *of God*. That was God's writing. It was God's handwriting that wrote those laws which He gave to Moses. That was God's handwriting and *those* commands were good commands, were holy and just. Commandments don't come any more good than these commands. They don't come any more holy than God's holy law. *He* wrote them. They are His ordinances. They are God's. They are immutable. They are dogmatic. He wrote them. And He wrote them for one purpose, to show man his sin. And as such they were against man. They were contrary to man. And they were contrary to man and against man because of how perfect and how just they *are* and because of how sinful and how wicked man *is*. And because man's nature is so contrary to the nature of God, the perfect nature of God, because man in his fallen state is so different, so wicked, so contrary to the pure, perfect righteousness of God and the pure perfect righteousness found in the law of God, thus, those commandments were contrary and were against us, despite how good they are.

But it doesn't matter how good the commandment is, how faultless and right the commandment is, the problem lies in *us*, in our flesh. And we still *have* that flesh. Even as believers we still have that flesh. And until we are taken out from this world and go into glory to be with your Lord Jesus forever, we still carry the baggage of this flesh, of this corruption, in our bodies. And whenever you bring law and commandments to bear upon that flesh, all you do is you revive the sin within it. All you do is fan again the flames of rebellion that lie dormant within it. All you do is bring the strength of sin to bear upon the flesh and sin is strengthened by such commands and sin flares up and rebellion flares up. And, again, you fall.

So what folly to return to commandments like this, what folly to return to the commandments of God and what greater folly to return to the commandments and the doctrines of man! For all you do when you return to commandments and such a legal way is you stir up sin and you stir up rebellion and in stirring up you fall down flat on your face. For all it brings up, all it stirs up is wrath and rebellion. And we need to be delivered from such a way, not brought back into such bondage. But Christ *came* to deliver us, not to put us back under bondage, but to deliver us. And having delivered us, to keep us delivered. And having delivered us to lead us by *a new and a living way*, not an old and a dead and a killing way.

So He nailed the handwriting of ordinances to His cross. He nailed it. For He came to deliver us from our enemies, from *all* our enemies, from *every* enemy, from sin, from death, from hell, from Satan, from the corruption that lies within our flesh and from the handwriting of ordinances that was against us which was contrary to us... which He took out of the way nailing it to His cross.

Well, if *that* be so, if that is what He did at the cross, if in dying for us He not only died for our sins, He not only suffered for our sins and our sin, He not only delivered us from sin, but He delivered us from the law of God and the handwriting of ordinances. If that be

so, why on earth would you, why on earth would the Colossians, why on earth would *anyone* having been delivered from God's law, from God's perfect law, why would anyone think to turn and subject themselves to the ordinances, the commandments and the doctrines of men?

Why take away that which God gave in the old covenant and turn to that which is merely of man's teaching? If we could not keep God's law, if God's law condemned us and brought us in guilty before Him are we going to be perfected by some *other* law or other commandments? What are these other doctrines and commandments that you seek to substitute for God's?

We are not to turn back to God's law. And if we are not to turn back to God's law, we are not to turn to any other law. We have been delivered from all such legal walking, from all such a legal way. We are to walk in Christ!

*"As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him."*¹⁰

Then why turn to law and why turn to the commandments and the doctrines of men? Why? Why to a multitude of *'touch not, taste not, handle not'*? Yet men do. *Most* men do.

It is in our hearts. It is in our nature. Our flesh loves to know right from wrong. Our flesh loves to turn to that which tells us what to do and what not to do. It turns aside from that pathway of faith which looks to Christ, which rests in Christ, which walks in Christ, which finds its strength *only* in Christ, which turns from all the flesh and all the reason of the flesh and all the wisdom of man and rests entirely in the wisdom of God and the power of God and the strength of God in Christ and in His gospel. The flesh constantly seeks to turn aside and it is constantly beguiled, constantly spoiled through philosophy and vain deceit, constantly follows after the traditions of men, constantly turns to the rudiment of the world. For the flesh is of the earth and the flesh is earthy and the flesh is worldly and religion in the flesh constantly turns to that which is of the flesh and that which is of the earth. And religion in the flesh is characterized by *'touch not, taste not, handle not'*.

Is that your religion? Is that your 'practical Christianity'? Is that your walk in the Christian life? Do you turn, as it were, either to the law of God again from which Christ delivered you never to return to again? Do you turn to that and set it up before you as some sort of 'rule of life' which you think that you have a power to keep? Or if you don't turn to that do you turn to some other commandments and traditions and doctrines of men which they conjure up for you or do you set up your own rules, your own 'dos' and your own 'don'ts', your own means by which you think that you will gain God's favour and gain God's blessing?

Do you think if I don't do this or do this that God will be more pleased with me today than he was yesterday? Do you find yourself walking in bondage that one day you think

¹⁰ Colossians 2:6.

you have done ok and the next day you have failed to do that which you have set up as a rule which you must keep, and on failing to do it you find yourself *guilty*, you find yourself collapsed in a heap because you have not done that which you think you must do in order that God will be pleased with you? Do you bind your conscience with these 'dos' and these 'don'ts' you set up before yourselves that, oh, unless I spent so much time in prayer, unless I have gone to this place, unless I have turned from this, then I am guilty?

'Touch not, taste not, handle not'.

Do you think you are going to make any better effort in such a way than you could ever do under the law? Do you think you have got any more strength in such religion than you had to keep the law of God? These things will condemn you just as the law condemns. There is no more power in such a way than there was any power in God's law. *God* gave that law and there was no power in it for man to keep it. It merely condemned him and slew him. Then is there any power in the commandment and the doctrines of men? Is there any power in that which comes from man, let alone from God? Of course not! Of course not.

For the law, as we have said, was the strength of sin, a ministration of condemnation, a killing letter, that which works up wrath and brings upon us a curse. And that is the reason that God gave it, to bring upon mankind a curse, to bring upon His people the curse, to curse them, to bring wrath upon them, to demonstrate to them that they are sinners and that they are sin through and through, to show them their sin, to show them themselves, to show them that they are nothing, to condemn them, to slay them, that is why He gave the law.

And when that law had had its work, when the Spirit took it and used it and brought it upon the child of God and slew him and condemned him, then the law's work was done. The work of the schoolmaster was done. And the schoolmaster's work was done having brought the child of God in to that place to which he must then resort. For the law condemns and brings us in guilty and guilty sinners have no place to go but to Jesus Christ and to the foot of His cross and to His gospel.

And that is what the law does and that is why the law was given, to shut us up to the grace of God in Christ Jesus, to bring us to Christ and to Him alone! For it says in Galatians in chapter three:

Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law. But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe. But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed.¹¹

¹¹ Galatians 3:21-22.

We were shut up under the law, condemned under it, locked under it, with no escape. But *when* faith came, when Christ came in the gospel, when He comes with His gospel, when the Spirit comes preaching Christ and preaching the faith of Jesus Christ, when He brings faith to the child of God, he is delivered from that old schoolmaster. He is delivered from that which once condemned him, from that which once bound him.

Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster. For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew [under the law] nor Greek [not under the law], there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.¹²

The law's work was to shut us up to Christ and when we have been brought to Christ we are no longer under the law. We are no longer under that schoolmaster. We are in Christ! We are delivered. And we have no reason to return to the law, in any way, shape or fashion. Whatever men may say, however deceptive they may be with their teaching and their traditions, the law's purpose was to teach us our sin and to shut us up to Christ and it has none other purpose.

That which condemned us we have been delivered from in Christ. It is no rule of life for the believer. Bring the law to bear upon the believer and it shuts him back up under condemnation. It puts him back under bondage. It slays him again. It brings him in guilty.

But send the believer to Christ and he knows liberty in Christ and peace in Christ and salvation in Christ and joy in Christ. Put the believer under any ordinance, commandment and doctrine of men which they may substitute in the place of God's law, with their traditions and their bondage and, again, he will be brought under bondage and again that joy and that peace and that liberty and that rejoicing which he once had in Christ is lost.

Then *why* are you so foolish? Oh, Galatians, why are ye so foolish? Oh, Colossians, *why*... why are you so foolish? Why are you beguiled? Why are you spoiled through the philosophy and vain deceit and traditions of men? Why, why, why are ye subject to ordinances after the commandments and the doctrines of men?

Having received Christ Jesus the Lord, will you return to that which slew you, to your old husband, to a legal system, whether it be the law of God as a rule of life or the commandments, doctrines, ordinances and teachings which religious men may put in its place, will you return to any system which is legal in spirit, anything which demands works and effort that you cannot render? To that which is both against us and contrary to us? For no matter how good the commandment may be no matter how right seeming it

¹² Galatians 3:24-29.

may be, if it is a commandment demanding an obedience which *you* must render by your flesh in your own effort, then it is just legal and it provides no strength, no ability and it leads to condemnation, ruin and misery.

'Touch not, taste not, handle not'.

But we are *dead* to all such things. We are *dead* to this world. We are dead to the law. We are dead to the types and figures, dead to the Old Testament, dead to the sacrifices and priesthood, dead to the feast of the new moons, dead to the sabbaths, we are *dead* to it.

*"I through the law am dead to the law."*¹³

If I build again the things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor. For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God. I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.¹⁴

We are dead to the law, and the accuser has no law and nothing with which he may condemn us. He cannot bring that law back to us again. He cannot take it and say, *"But you have done this and you have done that."* For we have not only been delivered from our sins and our transgressions, we have not only been delivered from our breaking of that law, but Christ took that very law itself. He took it out of the accuser's hands and He nailed it to His tree and He took it away and He blotted it out and it is never to be brought back to us again.

*"There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus,"*¹⁵ no condemnation to them, *"who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."*¹⁶ Because the law is gone! It has been nailed to the tree, taken away and blotted out and we are dead to it. We are risen in Christ, *risen* in Christ!

Then if we are dead to this world, if we are dead to all that is in Adam, if we are dead to the law, dead to the handwriting of ordinances, if that law was nailed to the cross and taken away, that by which Christ spoiled principalities and powers and made a show of them opening, triumphing over them in it, if we are risen in Christ whom we have received in the gospel by the revelation of the Father, by whom the light of the gospel has shined in our hearts, by which we have been delivered from the power of darkness and translated into the kingdom of His dear Son, if that is where we are in Christ—and that *is, believer, where you are in Christ*—if that is how we receive Christ by the revelation of Him in the light of His gospel, if that is how we walk in Him through the darkness of this

¹³ Galatians 2:19.

¹⁴ Galatians 2:18-20.

¹⁵ Romans 8:1.

¹⁶ Ibid.

dead world, how then can you return to *any other way*? Why, why, why are you subject to the *'touch not, taste not, handle not'* of the traditions of men?

No, believer, you are in Christ! You have died in Christ. You have risen in Christ. You are complete in Christ. You have all of your guidance, all your teaching, all your wisdom in Christ. Everything is in Christ. He is the fullness of God. All the light you have for the power is in Christ. Your walk in this world is in Him. Therefore, *"As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him"*¹⁷ ... in Him.

*"Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days."*¹⁸

*"Let no man beguile you..."*¹⁹

Let no man put you under the bondage of *'touch not, taste not, handle not'* religion.

[For] If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.²⁰

Why? For, child of God, *"For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God."*²¹

Amen.

¹⁷ Colossians 2:6.

¹⁸ Colossians 2:16.

¹⁹ Colossians 2:19.

²⁰ Colossians 3:1-2.

²¹ Colossians 3:3.