

8.2. Colossians 2:16

8.2.1.1. The Judge and the Judged

- ⁹ We cease not to pray for you
that ye might
be filled in all wisdom and
spiritual
understanding
with the knowledge of his will
¹⁰ **that ye might walk worthy of the Lord**
to all pleasing, fruitful in every work,
increasing in the knowledge of God,
¹¹ strengthened
according to his glorious power
with all might
unto all patience and
longsuffering
with joyfulness
¹² giving thanks unto the Father
Who prepared us meet
to be partakers of the saints'
inheritance in light¹³ **Who delivered us**
from power of darkness and
translated us into the kingdom
of his dear Son ¹⁴ **in Whom**
we have redemption
through his blood
even the forgiveness of sins
¹⁵ Who of invisible God is the image,
of every creature the Firstborn,
¹⁶ **For by Him**
all things that are in heaven,
and in earth visible, invisible –
whether thrones, dominions,
principalities, powers :
By Him
all things were created
and **for Him.**
¹⁷ He is before all things
all consist
by Him. ¹⁸ **He is Head**
of the body the Church.
who from the dead
is the Firstborn
and beginning,
that in all ye
He might have
pre-eminence.
¹⁹ **For it pleased the Father**
that all fulness shall dwell
- ^{2:1} **I have great conflict for you**
² that your hearts might
be comforted in love joined
unto all riches of full assurance
of understanding
unto knowledge of mystery
of the God of Christ ³ **in Whom**
are hidden all treasures of
true wisdom and knowledge.
⁴ *This I say lest any man*
should beguile you
with enticing words.
⁵ For though I be absent in flesh
yet I am with you in the spirit
rejoicing and
beholding your order in Christ.
and steadfastness of your faith
⁶ As ye have therefore received
Christ Jesus the Lord
so walk ye **in Him**
⁷ rooted and built up
in Him
and established in the faith
as ye (**in Him**)
have been taught
abounding in thanksgiving.
- ⁸ *Beware lest any man spoil you*
through philosophy, vain deceit
after the tradition of men
after principles of world,
not after Christ.
⁹ **For in Him**
dwelleth fulness of Godhead bodily.
¹⁰ **In Him who is the Head**
of all rule and power
ye are complete
¹¹ – **in Whom**
ye are circ. w. circ. without hands
putting off body of sins of flesh
by the circumcision of Christ.
¹² **Buried with Him in baptism**
wherein also ye are raised
through faith the work of God
of raising Him from the dead.
¹³ **You indeed being dead**
in y. sins and uncirc. of y. flesh

in Him
²⁰ and having made peace
 through the blood of
 his cross to reconcile all things
 to Himself by Him
²¹ and you alienated, enemies
 in mind through wicked works
 now has He reconciled
²² in the body of his flesh through death
 to present you
 holy unblameable, unproveable
 in His sight.
²³ If ye **continue** in the faith

grounded and settled
THEN DON'T YOU
(by philosophy)
BE MOVED AWAY
 from the hope
 whereof I Paul am a minister
 ye heard, which was preached -
- the hope of the Gospel!
to every creature
under heaven
²⁴ I, Paul, who now
 rejoice in my sufferings
 for you and in my flesh
 that which is lacking
 of the afflictions of Christ fill up
for his body the Church's sake,
²⁵ whereof I am made servant
 for the stewardship given me
of God for your sake
to fulfil the Word of God -
²⁶ the mystery hidden
 from ages and from peoples
but now manifested in his saints

with Him
 Quickened He together
 having forgiven you
 all trespasses
¹⁴ blotting out
the against us, contrary to us
handwriting of ordinances
nailing it to his cross.
Having spoiled
principalities / rule and power
He made a show of them
openly
triumphing

over them in it
¹⁶ **THEREFORE DON'T YOU LET**
ANY MAN
JUDGE YOU
 in meat or in drink or
 in meat or in drink of feasts
 or of months or of sabbaths
¹⁷ **which thing is a shadow**
of what is coming :
this, the body of Christ!
¹⁸ Don't you by *anyone*
be beguiled of your reward
lusting in humility
and angelic worship – things
he vainly sees intruded upon
and fleshly minded
gets puffed up over
¹⁹ *not holding to*
the Head from Whom
all the body by joints and bands
 is administered nourishment
 and being joined together grows
into the grown body of God.

to whom God would make known
 The riches of glory of the mystery
 among the Gentiles -
Christ the hope of glory living
in you ²⁸ Whom we preach
 warning, teaching
 every man in all wisdom
 that we may present
Every man perfect – in Christ
²⁹ toward which
 also I strive
According to the working of Him
 working
 in me
with power!

Wherefor if ye be dead w. Christ
from principles,
of the world
why, as though living
in the world
are ye subject to ordinances
²¹ *touch, taste, treat not*
²² *all which are to perish with use -*
doctrines and theories
according to man
²³ *which things all*
having a repute of wisdom,
in self-chastisement
and neglect of the body
is to no one's honour
but to satisfying of the flesh.

³¹ **If then ye be risen w. Christ**
 Seek those things
 above
Where Christ dwells
on the right hand of God
 Set y. affection on things above
 not on things on earth
³ For ye are dead – your life hid
with Christ in God.
⁴ when Christ our life
 shall appear in glory
then ye with Him!
⁵⁻⁶ Mortify y. members on the
 earth ...through which things
the wrath of God is coming
on children of disobedience
among whom you also walked
then when you still
lived in these things

^{3:8} But now you put off all these
² You have put off the old man
 with his deeds
¹⁰ and have put on the new man -
 renewed in full knowledge
 after the image of Him
 who created him -
¹¹ where neither Greek nor Jew
 but Christ, is all and in all.
¹² Put on therefore as God's elect, holy and beloved,
 bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering
¹³ Forbearing one another and forgiving one another
 If any man have a quarrel against any -
 even as Christ forgave you, so forgive ye
¹⁴ And above all these things put on charity which is the bond of perfectness
¹⁵ And let the peace of God rule in your hearts
 To the which also ye are called in one body; and be thankful
¹⁶ Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom;
 teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs
 Singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord
¹⁷ And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the Name of the Lord Jesus
 Giving thanks to God and the Father by Him.

8.2.1.2.

What Colossians is All About

*“For **in Him** dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily,*

*and ye are complete **in Him** ...*

***in whom** also ye are circumcised ...*

*buried **with Him** in baptism ...*

*ye are risen **with Him** ...*

*you hath he quickened together **with Him** ...*

*by having **forgiven** you all tresspasses ...*

*by having **spoiled** principalities and powers ...*

*by **triumphing** over them ...*

This is the **introduction** to and **summary** of the passage, Colossians chapter 2 **verses 16 to 17**, On strength of this introduction to his admonition, Paul **jubilantly concludes**, “**Therefore, let no man judge you in meat or drink ... the body is Christ's ... which is the Church**” ... 1:24! Paul does not beg for pity on behalf of the Church nor makes excuses for the Church's freedom in Christ. No man should touch the creation of God's Spirit (1:16) of which **Christ the Victor** is the Firstborn and the Beginning (1:17). “**Your life is hid with Christ in God**”, **3:3!** “*Let no man beguile you of your reward!*”, **2:18. That is what Paul's Letter to the Colossians is about!** The **rumour** as well as, we believe **real meaning**, of the text, **2:16**, “*Let no man judge you ...*”, will be considered here in the context and in the light of this total context.

The **before-going** verses, **1 to 15**, and the **following** and explanatory verses, **17 to 23**, as indeed the **whole** of three chapters at least, must be carefully read and **constantly be kept in mind** or else understanding of its true meaning will not be obtained. Actually, Paul supplies the example in this method of study. He **virtually repeats** his central message **several times**, thus not only emphasising the greater content and context, but the **essential and central** thought of his Letter – **in the light of which 2:16 should be understood.**

8.2.1.3.1. **Called in One Body**

Paul does not address detached persons or parties, “**ye are called in one body**”, 3:15. Paul does not argue for the sake of debating – he fights to win the **Church** and the souls of men for Christ. He fights the good fight while an **adversary** stands ready to “*entice*” believers by “*conceited wisdom*” and “*humility*” (2:18, 23) to “*let go of the Head*”. (2:19) Understanding of this passage will be an understanding of **1, Jesus’ glory, 2, the Church’s freedom, 3,** its need of **Christ – 4, in the face of man and his own efforts** at righteousness, redemption, salvation and glorification. Paul in the words of life of this Letter holds forth to the Church of Jesus Christ the benefits and the peace and joy and freedom **of Christ**, of **His** excellence, the excellence of his **Lordship** and **Godhead**.

Paul indeed addresses the one issue that divides mankind, that of being found “in Him” or being found “without Christ”! (Eph.2:12)

This is the most conspicuous quality of this Letter of Paul. It brightly hits the ear, concluding every line of thought, “**in Christ**”, “**are ye**”. This is the sum total of everything for the believer, “Christ all in all” and his Body founded and found “in Him” in the day of judgement. This truth is the “fullness of knowledge and understanding”, the Christian’s freedom charter whereby he may **eat, drink, feast, new moon and rest**, his whole life being encompassed by God’s mercies in Christ. “Therefore, let no man judge you in meat or in drink ... of **feasts**, or of new moons, or of Sabbaths (**rest**)”.

The second most transparent quality of this Letter of Paul, is the **adversary** of Christ’s Body, either expressly described, or **just as visibly implied**. Every time Paul says “**in Him**”, “**through Him**” and so on, **Christ’s opposite is supposed – that thing that is, or those men who are not included “in Him”**. **That which is not** contained “by Him” and “in Him”, **that which is not** the “one Body”, “called”, and “growing with the increase of God” and splendid amplitude of Christ. And **that**, is the “**world**” in its “**vainglory**” (not the glory of Christ, 1:27, 3:4)! Every time Paul refers to the saved as “in Him”, he suggests the “**man**” of the “world” who is “**severed from the Head**”. But “puffed up”, the “man” of “philosophy” makes the most fantastic and exorbitant

claims and **attempts** at having availed, at possessing and at disposing of “**fullness**” in and of wisdom, knowledge and perfection!

8.2.1.3.2.1.

A Realm of Self-Righteousness

The bearing of the passage under consideration, 2:16, can only be truly seen **against the background** of the **adverse**, indeed **fatal** attempt of **natural man** at his own justification. Paul gives a picture, an impression, of **man at his best in this his mighty and lofty attempt at his own salvation**. And **we, see** man trying to lift himself by the shoestrings, very, very devoutly and proudly. What is more, and gives even a darker cast to the background, is self-righteous man’s **ravenous rivalry for the soul of his fellowmen**. This haughty man must drag into pitiable vainglory **with himself** the **many** and the **high**. He erects not only a **personal** self-righteousness over against “*the righteousness which is of God*”, but an **entire empire** of self-righteousness, “*principalities and powers*” that would if it could “*make a shew*” of **Christ** and the “*principality and power*” the Church, of which “**He is Head**” – verses 1:16 and 2:10! Colossians 2 describes the **conflict** between Christ and this “*rudiment*” of “*vainglory*” (2:8, 23; 3:18) – and it portrays Christ ... Victor!

Man’s is a kingdom of nothing but “*doctrine*”, “*philosophy*”, “*rules*”, “*deceit*”, “*impressiveness*” and “*airy pride*”. It utterly lacks **substance**. It is **not even** “**a shadow**” of Christ’s Kingdom and “*things to come*” – that Kingdom on earth, his “*Body the Church*”. “*But*”, alas for the “man” of the “world”, says Paul, “**Christ’s is the Body**”! The Church, the **arrived, and** the **coming** Kingdom, is **His!**

Paul proclaims **Christ, His** excellence and the brightness of his glory seen in his **Church**, over against this haughty, **murky realm** – described or implied. In Colossians chapter 2 Paul describes the glory of Christ and **redemption** “in Him” in the light of **God’s creation, plan and power** put up against the shadowy “*principalities and powers*” of the “*world’s doctrine*” and realm of false “**freedom**”. Verses 16 to 17 occur where these opposing dominions clash. It is the point of crisis, the point of “judgement”.

8.2.1.3.2.2.

The Dark Domain of the Ascetic

In Colossians chapter 2 Paul describes the glory of Christ and his work for the redeemed against the shadowy “principalities and powers” of the world’s doctrine of salvation. This supposition is so strongly supported by the content of the whole chapter it needs no better illustration than the mention of verse 5. Paul must have had in mind the “self-inflicted misery” (2:

19/20; 3: 2, 18) of the “worldly wise” (2: 8, 22) **ascetics** when he wrote, “*Though I thought I may be absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the spirit, joying beholding your order and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ*”. The ascetic’s “philosophy” knows none of these joys. He is **present in the flesh** while **absent in the spirit**, 1:21; 2:21/22: “alienated and hostile”! Paul thought of **Christians, intimidated and incriminated by these** under bondage (1:23c, 2:29c, 23a; 3:5-6) of “self-inflicted” quasi righteousness. Paul **defends** the Church against **such**: “*Let no man judge you!*” ‘You are free in Christ and are Christ’s own’. “*Be not dissuaded*” (1:23); “stand fast” – in “your order” and “establishment” (1:12, 23; 2:7; 3:10).

8.2.1.3.2.3.

Philosophy the Accuser and Judge

Obsessive with “*subjection of the will and discomfort and neglect of the body*” (2:18, 23), engrossed persons exactly by **abnegating themselves** of “food” and “drink”, made of “food” and “drink” the kingdom of God! They “*dishonourably neglect the body to the gratification of fleshly desire*”, verse 23. Then **they – these outsiders** – stand ready to reproach and judge the **Church** that does not go along with them! Paul urgently writes the Church this **encouraging** message, “Let no man judge you in meat or drink, or in respect of ... a Sabbath”. Paul’s message carries no spark of reprimand, reprove, reproach or criticism, but is full of compassion, empathy and care for those judged – those he prays for (1:9) and undergoes great “conflict for” (2:1). The situation at Colossus was far worse than at Rome! And correspondingly not only Paul’s **countering of the heresy** is the more serious, **but also his defending of the Church**. He **loves** the Church (3:14) with “bowls” of empathy (3:12) – even in its **weakest** moment – and **will defend** it with “wrath” (3:5-6) against its **foes** : – who also are the foes of Christ (1:21). “**Therefore, Let no man judge you!**” “Let no man beguile you of your reward!” ‘You are Christ’s – his Body, He your Head – not these “principalities” of nonentity.’

The always vague, muddled popular arguments and interpretations of Col.2:16 are unacceptable. They are always **contextually irrelevant**. They never pose the question of, ‘**Who judged “you”?**’ And they never attempt an answer. This question, ‘Who judged “you”?’ is pivotal and is **only** possible from a **comprehensive perspective** of the **total context** of Colossians 2:16. It cannot be asked and in fact is never asked in popular polemics. Simply because popular polemics are obsessed with anti-sabbathism. They cannot see in Colossians 2:16 **anything they don’t or won’t like to see** – that Colossians 2:16 may mean **just the opposite of their liking!**

8.2.1.4.1.

The Feasting and Eating In the Right!

In Colossians chapter 2 Paul describes the excellence of Christ and his work for the redeemed against the shadowy “principalities and powers” of the world’s doctrine of salvation. Paul’s admonition, “Let no man judge **you**”, supposes that “**you**”, **Christians**, who stand under Christ and his work, **are in the right and not under judgement** “in food or drink or ... in respect of Sabbaths”. The admonition supposes that the “*man*” who judges “*you*” for **this**, is in the **wrong** in **denying** you your **Christian freedom** “in foods or drink or ... in respect of Sabbaths”.

Traditional explanations without exception suppose “**you**” for those who, **in their error** in stead of in their **rights**, keep the Sabbath. Traditional explanations without exception suppose “**you**” for those who, **in their error** in stead of in their **rights**, stand under Paul’s **judgement!**

At **Rome** then, the problem was **believers** who envied, judged and despised “*one another*” over some **Jewish-Christian** scruples; **the issue arose from within the Church itself**. At Colossus, **distinctively**, a “*philosophic*” and **ascetic** “*doctrine*” of “*worldly principle*” (2:8) **forced** itself from **outside upon the Church**. The **judging** “*man*” or men were **strangers** with a **strange doctrine** who tried to “*subject*” the **Church** as they themselves were, to **self-inflicted physical and spiritual torment as the way to redemption and salvation**.

They preached a salvation of the **negation** and **abnegation** of **faith** and **Christian liberty** precisely in their **negation** and **abnegation** of “**foods**” and “**drink**” and “**of Sabbaths**”. **Theirs** was “*the doctrine of men, a philosophy of vain deceit*” – **not** the doctrine, philosophy or practice of **them** who “*in meat or drink ... or in respect of sabbath days*” **could not be reproached or judged!** **Theirs** was the kingdom or “*principality and power*” of repressive authoritarian judgement; **not** the Kingdom of **God**, the “rule and authority” of rejoicing, feasting, singing, praying and “all things being done in the Name of the Lord Jesus” (3: 8-17).

8.2.1.4.2.

The Free and the Bound

In the Church at **Rome**, the “**strong**” were the free, those who “ate everything” and observed their Christian traditions **without self-denying**. The “**weak**” were bound by scruples over food and drink. They ate only vegetables and made a show of drinking wine when their “**Jewish**” brethren abstained for feast-times. At **Colossus** those who ate and drank **without self-denying** were **again, those judged** – by “**men**” **bound and enslaved**. **This time by much worse**, by those who through “*severe self-denying of the body*” (23), “*human tradition*” and “*philosophy*” (8)

(“*Philosophy*” = asceticism. See Par. 5.3.2.2.5.1.2, *Philostratus*.) **made inroad of false “doctrine”** and “*conceited*” “*power / influence*” into the Church. **They**, these renowned, “*famous, showy*” and popular – “*wordly*” ascetics, **enticed** the Church. **They**, judged and coaxed those who **ate and drank**, who, “*in respect of food or in respect of drink ... or in respect of sabbaths*”, were the **free!** Those who **judged the Church** “in food” and “in drink”, were those “*spoiled through philosophy and vain deceit*” (8). **Those who judged** and forbade the enjoyment of “*meat*” and “*drink*” and “*feasts*” were those “*subjected to ordinances like, Touch not! Taste not! Handle not!*” **Those who judged** were “*subjected to dogmas ... subjected to will worship ... subjected to neglect of the body, subjected to its dishonouring, and subjected to the denying of its needs*” (20, 23).

Paul in effect and in fact **defended those who freely enjoyed** “food” and “**drink**” of “**rests**” – “**rests**” indeed of “feasts, new moons and Sabbath Days”. Not only **usual** food and drink, **but also and specifically**, the “eating and drinking” of “**rests**” – “**rests**”, “**of feasts, of new moons and of sabbaths**”! This passage of Scripture should be seen from and appreciated in the context of the worldview of the time and not from the point in time of modern permissive man. **Paul protected** the happy feasting eaters and drinkers to the honour of the Lord (**3:17**). The **conceited refused and prohibited** the happy feasting eaters and drinkers to the honour of the Lord their amenities and rests. The “*conceited*” condemned and judged the **Church “in eating” and “in drinking”** pertaining “rests” of “Sabbath Days” unto the Lord.

But, says Paul: **verses 1 to 15, because Christ has set you free, “*therefore*, let no man judge you in meat and drink, or in meat and drink of feast days, of new moons and of sabbaths**”. Colossians 2:16 means, Paul in effect says, “**Enjoy it!**” Paul’s imperative does **not** mean “**Don’t you eat or drink ... or don’t you observe sabbath days (because you are Christians)!**” Paul’s **imperative** doesn’t mean a **prohibition – even though** the foods and drink and feasts involved were relics of the old dispensation. These relics in any case were of better and longer “*standing*” than the “*fleeting fashion*”, the **philosophy** of asceticism. “*Which all are to perish by the spending of itself*”, 8, 22a. It wasn’t a matter of foods and drink and feasts but of the Church and the Lord of the Church and Christian freedom being menaced and contaminated **verily by the doctrine of abstinence from food, abstinence from drink and abstinence from regard of feast and sabbath days of rest.**

Whereas at **Rome** the problem was an **internal** matter, brother against brother, on matters of **interpretation of tradition**, at **Colossus** the problem was the **introduction** into the Church of a **foreign** and “*worldly principle*” (8) – the **religion of self-will**, “*will-worship*” (23), “*wilful self-humiliation*” (18a). All which are but the expression and discovery of human **pride** (18b) (– as at

Rome). Pride “holds” not “onto the Head, Christ”. Pride pushes Christ from the throne of the heart and off the body of the Church (19). Having **lost** “hold of Christ the Head”, the “enticed” and “deceived” are “subject” to the **tyranny** of the “world”. (Not, as Barclay claims, to a “tyranny of the Sabbath”!)

Paul as it were in verse 20 asks, ‘Why are you **not** eating and feasting?’ “**If** ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, **why** as though living in the world are ye subject to ordinances”, ordinances of **asceticism!** : “Touch not; taste not; handle not. These ordinances are but the fashion of the day and will die out after having raved out. They are the commandments and doctrine of man that looks impressively wise in worship and submission (enslavement) of the will, the worship of the neglect, dishonouring and abnegation of the flesh (God’s creation). **But if ye be risen with Christ** (God’s new creation), 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 earth ... Mortify therefore your (spiritual) members which are upon earth: fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence and covetousness, which is idolatry” (not your physical ailments). It is **not** the selfless and innocent feasting and eating of Christians in remembrance of the great deeds of God and to express their “thankfulness” in which Paul so often encourages them. ‘Will you be fooled by the trickery of these first-principles-of-the-world-citizens and renounce your own Christian citizenship which you celebrate each time you enjoy the food and drink of your feast days and strategic and rest-days? Incredible!’

How then is it possible that polemicists see in Colossians 2:16 a verdict of Paul against the Sabbath?

8.2.1.4.3.

“Fleshly-minded” Or “Renewed in Knowledge”

“Your members which are upon earth” are not the **body of flesh** but the passion and pride of the **heart** – see 3:5. Don’t chastise the body for your proud heart, but **spiritually die and be risen with Christ – in Him!** And therefore feast in the body practically – and practically in the Church. Then “**let no man judge you** in meat or drink, or in meat and drink of your feasting ...”! (Cf. 1Cor.5:7, context.)

But allow yourselves to be **intimidated** and **judged** and **debauched**, and “ye are subject to ordinances ... after the commandments of **men**”, verses 20, 22. **These are the “men” – tis**, of verse 16! They are the “man” who judges and “weighs” (= ”judges”) the Church “in respect of food and drink” and on the opposite scale, places “things that have an impressive show of wisdom, of will worship and of humility”. But, says Paul, he “dishonourably neglects the body to the gratification

of *fleshly desire*”, verse 23. “Beware lest any man spoil you through (this) *philosophy and vain deceit after the tradition of men, after the principles of the world, and not after Christ*”, Paul had said in 2:8 already.

“*Powers*”, verse 15, are no more than “*philosophies*”, and “*principalities*” are no more than so-called “*first principles*” or “*rudiments of the world*”. They are “*vain*” “*neglect of the body*”, **not** at all pious or glorious, but “***dishonourable***”. It basically and essentially is “*gratification of fleshly desire*”. But **he**, this “*man*” of such “*wisdom*”, “*blames (judges) the Christian of gratification of fleshly desires in eating, drinking and feasting!*”. He **presumptuously** “*judges you in food, drink, feasts*”.

Throughout Colossians Paul holds forth **Jesus Christ** as the only way to and standard of the “*peace*” of **God’s “rule to which also ye are called in one body**”. (3:15) Paul in 2:18, repeats his warning of verse 16, “***Don’t let yourselves be measured to any man’s stature!***” – *mehdeis hymahs katabrabeyetoh*. Man’s standards are “*ordinances after the commandments of men*”. “*Don’t you be persuaded by their worship, be it of angels!* (– privilege of only the initiated ascetics.) *Don’t be judged by these men’s standards who being carnally minded intrude into things they don’t understand but pretend and are puffed up about*”. (2:18)

8.2.1.5.1.

At Heart a Problem of the Heart

Just as in the Church at Rome man’s **proud heart** was the **real problem** – the problem at Colossus was man’s proud heart **hiding behind physical pretension and hypocritical chastisement of the body**. And the lower in subjection and infliction of the “*flesh*” the higher and prouder the (heart of) “**man**”. “*Man*” elevates himself – the standard to all not so “*spiritually*”- “*carnally minded*” as **he**. Paul says, *Let not that man judge you in meat and drink or whatever!* “*Let no man therefore*”, says Paul, *beguile you of your reward (in Christ Jesus) ...*. Enjoy your Christian liberty and eat and drink and feast as you may see fit, “*only set your affection on things above : if ye be risen with Christ*” and *if ye be not already enticed and beguiled!* (3:1-2)

‘Let no man force you to choose between the Kingdom of God and the kingdom of the world’, Paul in effect says in Colossians 2:16-17. ‘It will be a decision that flies in the face of **godly** “*wisdom*” because it will mean the betrayal of your inheritance. It will be a choice between something **substantial and real** and a **phantasm and shadow**. There is no decision to be made: Christ **conquered**; He **vanquished** “*principalities and powers and made the fool of them*”. “Let no man, therefore, **judge you!**” Let no man play the fool, at **you, who are Christ’s!**

‘Thus my dear brethren in Jesus Christ may I encourage you, today, in this place, on this God’s Sabbath Day, to keep and guard it in the fear of God and in the sight of the world and opposition. Be prepared to suffer for Christ by your private and public honouring of God’s Sabbath Rest. Amen.’

Could Paul have ended his sermon thus, were he “present in the flesh” in the Colossian Congregation? Undoubtedly it could be possible – **had Sabbath-keeping** been the problem. But seeing it **was not** the problem, Paul would **not** have closed his sermon in this manner. But if Paul preached to a Sabbath-keeping Community **today** such an ending to his sermon would have been most apt.

8.2.1.5.2. **“Judged” Or “Blameless”?**

Quoting Colossians 2:16-17, enthusiasts say, ‘See, you should not keep the **Sabbath!** The Sabbath is a “*weak and beggarly principle*”, say they jumping to Galatians 4:9! The Sabbath stands trial and the reader has become the judge! But the sober Christian must admit, “*Let no man judge you, in respect of the Sabbath*”. Paul supposes the **Christian who observes the Sabbath, and, the Sabbath, blameless**. Otherwise he could not have said, “*Let no man judge you in respect ... of the Sabbath*”. Otherwise he should have said, “**You are judged, judged because you observe the Sabbath! Stop to do it and let no one prescribe to you to keep the Sabbath again!**” (NAB) But no, **this** says Paul: “*Let no man judge you in respect of ... the Sabbath*”.

That is **supposing** Paul in the clear **English** of the Authorised Version **speaks of the Sabbath Day**. (See soon.)

8.2.1.5.3. **“Don’t be Prescribed?”**

Does Paul mean, “Let no one keep the Sabbath!” **for the reasons** he mentions in chapter 2 from verse 1 to 15? Especially verse 15 is important, “*Having spoiled principalities and powers, He parades them publicly in triumphant procession.*” **Does Paul ‘therefore’ mean, as the New Afrikaans Bible reads, that ‘nobody should therefore prescribe to you what you should eat or drink, nobody should prescribe to you that you must ... keep the Sabbath’? Just the opposite!** “*Having spoiled principalities and powers, He parades them publicly in triumphant procession*” **suggests exactly** the celebrating **Church** no reason why not with “*meat*” and “*drink*”, and exactly its **celebrating** no reason why not with “*meat*” and “*drink*” – “*meat*” and “*drink*” ... “*of feasts*” because of Christ’s “*spoiling*” of “*principalities*”; and with “*meat*” and “*drink*” ... “*of months*” because of Christ’s “*triumph over powers*”; and with “*meat*” and “*drink*” ... “*of sabbath days*” because of Christ’s “*peace*” (1:20; 3:15), “*preached to every creature*” (I:23), to “*every man*

perfected” (28), and because of “*all fulness in Him*” (1:19), and “*completion in Him*” (2:10), for “*giving thanks to God and the Father by Him ... all in the Name of the Lord Jesus*” (3:17). As Paul said in Romans 14, “he who regards the day regards it to the honour of the Lord and thank God”! Does it make sense then, **to begin** by saying, “*Having spoiled principalities and powers, He parades them publicly in triumphant procession*”, **and to conclude** by saying, “*Let no one therefore, judge you in meat or in drink, or in meat or drink of feasts, of seasons or of sabbath days*”? How could it **not** make sense?

If Paul said, “*Nobody should therefore prescribe to you what you should eat or drink, nobody should prescribe to you that you must ... keep the Sabbath*”, he **forbids** the Sabbath. If Christ triumphed over principalities and powers of evil and the Sabbath were included He triumphed over the Sabbath – which He created! – as an **evil** thing and paraded its **shame**. Had the Sabbath **not** been created by God **through Christ**, had it **not** been vindicated by God **in Christ**, shamed it Christ and called He not Himself its Lord, **then no place** for the Sabbath in the present reality which is “**Christ all in all**”! So it is utterly impossible to suggest or to imagine – or to ‘translate’ as do the NAB, that Paul could have meant, “*Nobody should therefore prescribe ... to you that you must ... keep the Sabbath*”.

Such a ‘translation’ is no translation but the abuse of privilege and if anything proves contempt for the Word of God. (“For if I do this thing willingly I should be paid for it, but if compelled it is because of the responsibility of my stewardship”, 1Cor.9:17.)

Not all translations are as arrogant as the NAB. The Old Afrikaans Bible interprets the text more cautiously, “*Let nobody judge you over food and drink, or (let nobody judge you) concerning ... a Sabbath*”. (The Authorised Version is much the same.) **There is a world’s difference between (not) to be judged concerning something, and (not) to be prescribed to do (or not to do) something.** The first requires Christian freedom; the second denies Christian freedom.

8.2.1.6.

Not Allowing Christian Liberty

What is of **relevance** in Colossians 2:16, as in the case of judging in Romans 14:5, is “food” and “drink”. As at Rome, also at Colossus, “eating” and “drinking” were the issue. Only there were two differences in the circumstances of the two congregations. In the Congregation at Rome the issue concerned eating and drinking of “regarded” and “esteemed” “days”, obviously of Old Testament institutional worship. At Colossus the “food” and “drink” were of the same kind, as at Rome, but it also involved food not meant for ceremonious celebration but for daily nourishment. In the second place, the issue at Colossus concerned **not** the **enjoyment** of “food” and “drink” but **abstinence and abnegation** of “food” and “drink”.

“Let no man” – who allows not himself the Christian liberty, and who allows not others the Christian liberty – “judge you in “meat or drink”. Believers who ate and drank and feasted were judged by the rules of “*philosophy*” (8) and “*the rudiments of the world*” (8, 20) where Gnostic asceticism held sway.

8.2.2.

What “You Should Not Be Judged” About

Does Paul say what the New Afrikaans Bible literally says, “*Don’t let anyone prescribe to you to celebrate the Sabbath*”? Is Paul talking about the **Sabbath** and is he talking about **celebration** of it? But even before that question could be considered it must be asked, does Paul write about a matter **concerning the Sabbath** or is he writing about a matter **concerning food and drink**? And one may answer, ‘The question is silly because Colossians 2: 16 says that Paul discusses a matter “*in respect of sabbath days*”! **But remembering the broader context and the immediate connection between the triumphant redemption obtained by Christ and the issue over judgements passed on the Congregation, if Paul should have said that, he actually would contradict himself.**

The issue must be **reduced to this**: Is it “*in respect of food or drink*” **as well as** “*in respect of sabbath days*” that Paul says, “*Don’t be judged!*”? Or is it “*in respect of food or drink*” **only** that he says, “*Don’t be judged!*”? From a reading of the older translations it may fairly be objected that such a question is unnecessary and beside the point, but not, considering the **discrepancies highlighted through newer** translations. One’s complacency is shocked in discovering that Paul does not say the same about “*food*” and “*drink*” than what he says about “*an holyday*”, “*the new moon*”, and “*sabbath days*”!

At the root of the **older** translations, lies the idea that judgement is passed on persons “**in respect of**”, “*food*” and “*drink*” and “**in respect of**”, “*a Sabbath*”. These translations without exception precisely as they **relate** “*judgement*” and “*food*” and “*drink*”, relate “*judgement*” and “**Sabbath days**”. “Let no man judge you **in** *meat or drink*, or **in respect of** ... *the Sabbath days*”, says the AV.

While **newer** translations differ so seriously from the older, the student must judge both older and newer translations for himself from the Greek while considering the following.

8.2.2.1.1. The Dative

“*Food*” and “*drink*” is in the **Dative**, and the Dative appears **because** of its most **fundamental function: It refers and relates**. Compare Romans 6:2, to illustrate, “we that are dead **to** sin” = “we are dead **in respect of** sin / **with reference to** sin / **in relation to** sin”. The Greek? *Apethanomen tehi hamartiai*. And the Greek in **Col.2:16? Meh oun tis krinetoh en brohsehi kai en posehi**.

Also refer to Romans 2:1, “Wherein thou judgest another thou condemnest thyself” – *en hohi krineis ton heteron seauton katakrineis*; 2Cor.2:1, “As far as I am concerned I have decided” – *ekrina emautohi*; 1Cor.11:13, “Judge for yourselves” – *en hymihn autois krintate*.

In Colossians 2:16 it is the same, “Let no one judge you in meat or in drink” – *meh tis hymahs krinetoh en brohsehi kai en posehi*. “Meat” and “drink” are in the Dative. “Let not people judge you **with regard to** “meat and drink”. “Eating” and “drinking” caused the “saints” to be judged. They were **judged** pertaining “meat” and “drink”.

Personal interest and **relation** are basic to the meaning of the verb “to **judge**” – *krinoh*. Personal interest and relation at the same time are fundamental to the **Dative’s** meaning and use. The Dative **and** the verb in the instance of their use in Colossians 2:16a mutually complement the basic meaning and function of the Dative. Anything and all that **follow** after this Dative and this predicate and to which it might **relate**, one should **expect** to be in the Dative. In the sentence, “Let no man judge you in meat or drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days”, the nouns, “meat”, “drink”, “day”, “moons”, “sabbaths”, the adjectives, “holy” and “new”, and the article, “the”, should **all** appear in the **Dative**. And in the English all in fact appear to the dictates of the Dative! It all should be Datives because the verb “judge” **relates** to it **all**. “Let no man **judge** you **relating** meat or drink, or let no man **judge** you **relating** an holyday, or let no man **judge** you **relating** the new moon, or let no man **judge** you **relating** the sabbath days”. One to the drive of the **English** language expects the Dative and direct relation and **finds it!** Would it be sound reasoning to also expect direct relation and consequently the Dative in the **Greek** language? **Especially so** in the Greek language because personal relation and directed reference in the Greek language **specifically belong to the fundamental meaning and function of the Dative!**

But one is surprised **not** to find the Dative **throughout** the Greek text of this passage. Its usual translation **as if everything following the verb “judge”, relates to the verb, as if** “you should not be judged in respect of, **meat, or, drink, or, an holyday, or, the new moon, or, sabbath days**”, **all** on equal footing “(not) judged”, must have a problem. To say, “Let no man **judge** you **in respect of**”, this, “**or**” that, **regardless, must** be wrong! What Paul did **not** write in

the **Dative**, **should not** be included **with** the things he **did** write in the Dative. Paul wrote in the Dative **only** “meat”, and, “drink”. Paul did **not** write anything else and specifically not “sabbath days” in the Dative. So one should find out what Paul actually wrote about “Sabbaths”.

8.2.2.1.2. “In Respect of ...”

In each instance where *meros* is used in the New Testament with a meaning of **relevance**, it naturally as one would expect, is used with a **Dative**:

1 Peter 4:16, “for the sake of this Name” – *en tohi onomati toutohi*, or – according to the variant, “If a person may suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed but glorify God **on this behalf**” – *en meros toutohi*.

“For even that which was made glorious had no glory **in this respect** (*en toutohi tohi merehi*) by reason of the glory that excelleth”, 2Cor.3:10. “In this respect” refers to “the ministration of condemnation” **with reference to** “the ministration of righteousness”, verse 9.

“Lest our boasting of you should be in vain **in this behalf**” – *en tohi merei toutohi*. That is, “Lest our boasting of you **pertaining this matter** should be in vain”, 2Cor.9:3.

Meros, if used with the **Dative** indicates **relation**. In view of these examples of its use, where used in Col.2:16, *meros* with the **Dative** awaits the reader. Or so he would think. The Dative does **not** occur and in stead a **Genitive** greets the eye. Then why continue to **translate** with a Dative, with the Dative of **relation** and **personal concern**? **It cannot be explained because it is wrong.** What *meros* points to in the context – the things that **relate** to *meros* – are **already** stipulated. **They are “food” and “drink”.**

8.2.2.2. The Genitive

The whole phrase “an holyday, or the new moon, or the sabbath days” is determined by the prepositional noun, *meros* – which means “**part of**”, “**division**”, “pertinence”, “specifically belonging to”. Cf. “dimerous”, two **segmented** (tarsi of insect); from *meros* – to separate or release, and *krinein* – to separate or judge, “merocrine”, “released” or “secreted” (substance **without** disintegration of cell); “holocrine”, “released” or “secreted” (substance with disintegration of whole cell); “apocrine”, “released” or “secreted” (with part of cell lost). (Colins Dictionary)

The words, “feast”, “new moon”, and “sabbaths” in the sentence, “Let no man judge you in meat or in drink, or in respect of a feast (“holyday”), or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days”, in the Greek are in the **Genitive** inflection. The basic meaning of the Genitive is to indicate **possession**, as a child **belongs** to the mother who gives “**birth**” to it – the Latin word *gignere* from which the word “Genitive” comes. Our words appear and function in the case of **Possession**, **not** in

the case of **Relation** of the **Dative**. Now re-phrase the sentence while these words in the Genitive are **rendered** in the Genitive, “Let no man judge you in meat or in drink, or belonging to feasts or belonging to new moons, or belonging to sabbath days”, and it is obvious that between the words “or” and “belonging”, **something is amiss** – something that must “**belong**” to these “feasts”, “new moons” and “sabbaths”. Of course it would be that which by way of the Ellipses of Relation is **implied!** The Genitive perfectly synchronises with the Dative to give the **true** meaning of the sentence, “Let no man judge you in meat or in drink, or, let no man judge you in respect of **meat or drink belonging** to feasts or in respect of **meat or drink belonging** to new moons, or in respect of **meat or drink belonging** to sabbath days”! This is not only the real meaning of the original, but the only.

And this meaning makes of the thing about which the Church should not be judged, **not the Sabbath!** It makes the thing about which the Church should not be judged, “***food or drink ... food or drink ordinary (koinos) or food or drink extraordinary, i.e., food or drink belonging to feasts, new moons or sabbath days***”. “Let no one judge you ... in respect of it!”

Sources maintain that the **Genitive** has the meaning of relation / reference when used with reference to *meros* with the preposition *en* – “with”. Examples usually given, are, *en trophehs merei*, *en xaritohs merei*, *en merei logou* and, from the New Testament, Col.2:16, *en merei heortehs eh neomehnnias eh sabbatohn*.

But their claim is contestable. They **deduce a rule** of grammar from the traditional interpretation of Colossians 2:16 in stead of to **interpret** Colossians 2:16 **to the rules** of grammar. As far as the **standard examples** of the Genitive’s alleged use of relation is concerned, **not one** of them forced or unforced has the meaning of relation. **Every** of the four cases in the New Testament of the use of the preposition *en* with *meros* is associated with and followed by a **Dative**. The context consistently indicates that the Genitive with *meros* and the preposition *en* is **attributive** – which is the Genitive’s **basic meaning**. *E.g.*, Is.18:7 (LXX), *en merei potamou tehs xohras autou* – “in a region of many rivers of / in his country”. The idea is **not**, “**with reference, to a river** of his country”. Also not in Col.2:16, “with **reference, to a feast / new moon / sabbaths**”, but, “with reference to **food or drink, belonging to / of a feast ...**” – *en merei brohsei kai posei heortehs ...*”, the phrase *en merei brohsei kai posei* (“with reference to food or drink”) implied and functioning as an **ellipses**. The Genitive in Col.2:16 is one of **definition** or **belonging** or **attribute**, or even a Genitive of relation (which is not a real Genitive) **where the concept which indicates relation is**

omitted and it is **assumed** the relationship is **known** or has been made sufficiently clear by the **context**, in this incidence by the mention of *en brohsei kai en posei eh en merei k.t.l.*

8.2.2.3. **Ellipses**

“Food” and “drink” by way of **ellipsis** are **supposed**. The **omission** of “food” and “drink” does **not** mean the **end** of its relation and bearing on the subject, but its **continued (repeated) relevance** to the subject: “Let no one judge you in food and drink, or in respect of food and drink of an holyday, or in respect of food and drink of the new moon, or in respect of food and drink of sabbath days”.

Also the **predicate**, “**Don’t be judged**” is by way of **ellipsis** kept **continually relevant** throughout the remainder of the verse. “**Let no one judge you** in respect of food and drink, or let no one judge you in respect of food and drink of an holyday, or let no one judge you in respect of food and drink of the new moon, or let no one judge you in respect of food and drink of sabbath days”.

“Food”, and “drink” are in Col.2:16 by the linguistic tool of **inflection** and **ellipsis** the real and actual causal factor of the malicious “judging” (16), “spoiling” (8), “beguiling” (18), “subjecting” (20) and unsettling (15) of established, rooted and peaceful believers. **NOT THE SABBATH!** Judgement should be aimed against not the Sabbath or believers that keep the Sabbath, but against the “**man**” who judges, spoils, beguiles, subjects and unsettles the Church of Christ “**in respect of food and drink**”.

8.2.2.4. **“Eating” and “Drinking”**

The Church should not be judged concerning “food or drink” ... not by “any man” of the “world”! More exactly the words *brohsis* and *posis* indicate “the **act** of eating” rather than “food” (for eating); “the **act** of drinking” rather than “drink” (for drinking); It is not a matter of judgement “between” food and food, “between” drink and drink. There is no question here about “clean” or “unclean” foods therefore, no judgement about “meat” offered to idols, either. The matter is “**in eating and in drinking**”; “*in respect of eating and drinking*” – “in respect of eating and drinking belonging to” the **occasion**, whether the occasion “of feast, of new moon or of sabbaths”.

8.2.3. **The Present Church Not Yet the Full Stature of Christ**

The traditionally accepted way to explain the “**shadow**” Paul speaks of immediately after he mentions “food and drink” is that the “**shadow**” should refer to the last mentioned thing or things, the “sabbaths”, the “new moons” and the “feasts” and “eating and drinking”, but especially the

Sabbath for our purpose. “Which things are a shadow (*ha estin skia*) of things to come”. Next it is alleged that being a shadow means the Sabbath is of a **passing nature**.

Traditionally also the Sabbath is understood for the shadow that points to **Christ** that **is**, or rather **was**, the “(thing) **coming**” – *tohn mellontohn*. “These things” – *ha*, then, the Sabbath, had been a shadow of Christ-the-coming or the Christ of the Promises. Which idea in itself no one can deny or would want to deny (except perhaps some). Which idea also does not mean the Sabbath’s abrogation, but its founding in Jesus Christ – which all but few deny. Which ideas in all would be **relevant** here, were it Paul’s intent to make one understand it, and had the text said so. But neither was it Paul’s intent nor does the text say so.

The text conveys Paul’s intent. The Text says that, **in Paul’s time**, “*the Sabbath is a shadow presently*”. (That presupposes the observance of the Sabbath at the time of Paul’s writing. It implies the correctness of Prof. Bacchiocchi’s pithy interjection, “*The judge ... wanted the Colossian believers to do less feasting and more fasting*”.) Then Paul says the shadow is a shadow “of the nearing (things)”. Then one reads the Authorised Version saying, “**but**” – “but the body is of Christ”. That contrasts “things to come” with “the body”. And from this arises the customary rendering, that “**the body is Christ**”, **identifying** the two things, “body”, and, “Christ”. On the basis of this presumption is built the dogmatic interpretation, ‘The Sabbath is but a shadow of fleeting things, but the substance, the abiding structure, is Christ’. The worst thing then comes of this: This rendering or interpretation or paraphrasing is presented as a “**Translation**” or “**Version**”, “Thus says the Lord”! Only into such a liberal rendering is it possible to read anything to one’s liking. As that to the “*practice*” of the Sabbath “*as such*” the “*Colossian false teachers*” added “*regulations*” of “*dietary taboos*” and “*dietary practices*” and that Paul actually “*denounces*” these and not the “*practice*” of the Sabbath “*as such*”. (Which, we shall soon see, **in effect** creates argument **against** the Sabbath and leaves it not unscathed.)

This all stems from the contrast created by the connective, “**but**” between “things to come” and “body”. The Greek words are *to de*, article and conjunctive. Compare Acts 17:32, “**Some** (*hoi men*) began to mock, **but others** (*hoi de*) others said, “We want to hear you”. Is the situation here in Col2:17 the same, *to men ... to de*? “**these** things ... **but the other** thing”? Simply, No! It is **not** a case of any **special** use of the article – **contrast**, but quite the ordinary, to **identify**. “... *The article in the New Testament carries with it a pronounced heritage from its demonstrative origin, and one would make a serious blunder to ignore this fact*”. (Dana and Mantey, *A Manual Grammar of the GNT*.) While the articles are demonstrative and defining, the passage should read, “... food, or drink ... of Sabbaths which are a shadow of what is nearing, indeed the Body of Christ” – as simple as possible, as literal as possible, as unprejudiced as possible. Thus this text indicates but

one thing for “these things” – *ha*, the before-mentioned “practices”; but one thing for the “body”, the before-mentioned “**these things**”; and but one thing for what is “Christ’s”, the before-mentioned “**Body**”. And the whole and total contains no bit of the “teachings of the false teachers”.

The shadow does not point from the **Old Covenant** to the day of Christ. It **from** Jesus’ work and the finishing of His Work **in vanquishing death in triumph of resurrection (verse 15** especially) and from the **current practice** of the Church, from its eating and drinking and feasting, **points to the Body that is Christ’s! The Body is tohn mellontohn** – “yet in the process of being realised / coming together / being formed”. The “things nearing” are “things” of the **last days** – which are of the **Christian dispensation** or New Covenant times. Undoubtedly the Church occupies that time-slot and naturally would be called by Paul the Body of Christ. Christ says the Kingdom is coming and indeed is present already. Just so Paul says, “these things are a shadow of **what is near**” – **yet already is present** as “the Body which is Christ’s”. The Body and the shadow cannot be separated. The shadow is the Body’s.

Paul in this recognises **the in his day still ongoing process** of transformation of the Old into the New Testament **Church** – **not** dispensations, because that already had reached turning point in the death and resurrection of Jesus. The Church was “**presently being** rooted, and **presently being** built up in Him and **presently being confirmed** in the Faith according to the way you **had** been taught”, verse 7. “Beware lest any man spoil you” **while this is going on!** The Church did not by the snap of the finger reach the point of the full stature of Christ. Throughout his Letters Paul admonishes the Church – which almost entirely consisted of Jews and but few Gentiles who also had to become part of the body via the Synagogue and had to be grafted in on the trunk that only bear Jewish branches – to press forward to **fullness in Christ. Yet Paul in spite of the Church’s incompleteness** permits no “worldly principle”, “philosophy”, “doctrine of man”, “rule of power” to “measure” or “judge you”, 2:16, or to “spoil”, “beguile” or “sever” “you” the Body from the Head, because, “**in Him ye are complete already!** (2:10) And that, you rightfully celebrate – so don’t be judged therein! ”

How many times does Paul say, “**in Him**”? Christ is **Representative** of the Church, the Body’s Head. The Church **lacks nothing “in Him”** – “**in Him**” **has no bit to improve or to grow or to shed or to outgrow** in order to be acceptable in God’s Kingdom, in fact, needs not do any of these things in order to **be** God’s Kingdom! **Every condition** had been fulfilled “**in Christ**”: “Blotting out the handwriting against us, ordinances contrary to us, He took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross. And having spoiled principalities and powers He put them to shame in public, triumphing over them in it” – “**in it**”, **the work of Christ described from verse 1 to 15!**

Christ had done everything for his Church that Judaism as well as philosophy could dream to do. He did much more. In fact, He answered to every demand of **God's** law and the ordinances of the past era (2:14). He has made propitiation for sins and thus triumphed gloriously (2:15) over “the accuser (Jn.5:45) of the brethren ... by the power of his Christ”! (Rv.12:10). **At this point in his argument Paul exclaims, “let no man therefore judge you ...”** You who are found in **this** Christ, “let no man therefore judge you”. You while “growing with the increase of God” (19), “let no man therefore judge you”! *‘You and I know “these things” – your “feasting” – that upset the world (“man”) so much, are but a shadow of things to come, a shadow proportionate of that Body that eventually will be Christ’s’. You are his Church and just think of what you are becoming “in Him”! Something of such beauty and greatness is to come of this what you at this point in time are. Therefore don’t be beguiled by any man of your reward. Soon Christ shall have pre-eminence among you (1:18). “God will finish the work He has begun among you” (Ro.9:28), being knit together with the bond of perfection, which is love (3:14). Soon your eating and drinking of feasts may be nothing compared to Christ when He will be all in all of you (3:11). Christ in you, the hope of glory! But these men (*anthropos*) who tell you that you must glory in the mortification of the **physical** body – don’t measure yourselves to their standards (“the standards / doctrines of the world”), but mortify such fleshly members still part of you such as fornication, uncleanness. These are members not of the physical body but of the heart that must be “plucked out” as Jesus said.’*

The Church still had to grow in two respects, It had yet to **outgrow** the “milk” it was raised on, the “food and drink” of the Old Testament “baby”-Church, verses **14 and 16**. And it had to **conquer** by the blood of Jesus those **sins** of **fleshly** man ever present in the greatest of saints and in the Church at its best. **The first as a shadow of the Church would follow. The second the power of Christ had overcome – verses 15 and 18**. Under these circumstances the Church cannot afford to be “*deceived*” (4, 8, 18) by a mere “show of wisdom” (23) of the world and man’s doctrines. **In this time slot of its history** the Church should not be lured off the track to seemingly very religious and spiritual “philosophies” but should go on in the end to triumph by the power of Christ as in its quest it is triumphant already “in Him”!

There are in this Scripture indicated, the three main “principalities and powers” in their vital interrelationship: **Christ the Head**, the **Body** Corporate, and the **world**. In Christ is **fullness** – fullness of wisdom and virtue; in the **Body is coming into being** the full stature of Christ – the outgrowing of its child’s shoes and “putting on of the New Man Christ; and the **world** “rules” pretence, show and “vain deceit”. Paul defends and protects the Body from the inroads and attacks of the world. He poises the “creation” of God over against the world; Christ and his work over

against the wisdom and principles and principalities of the world, the Body over against the “man” (*anthropos*) of the world.

Paul does not judge, accuse or condemn the Church over anything whatsoever – the **world** and the **man** of the world do. **And this provides the scenario, the parading ground for Christ’s victorious manifestation in his Body the Church** (previously “alienated, enemies in mind through wicked works”) “**presented in His sight unblameable, unproveable**” ... “**in Him**”!

8.2.4.1.

“The Colossian Heresy”

Now **from where** comes the “*Colossian heresy*”? From theologians and dogmaticians! From where comes judgement over the Sabbath and its keeping? From the wilful reading into and translating into this Scripture the antipathy of these theologians and dogmaticians. That is so apparent it hurts the eye. Paul’s whole remonstrance **contrasts** the world over against Christ’s body. The heresy and its assault on the Body are launched from **outside** – **by the world, onto** the Church. The heresy is the **world’s** – and **not** the **Church’s**. The Church in its confidently going its own way, the way of the Gospel and the providence of God, **provokes the world’s scorn**. Paul elsewhere puts it this way: The wisdom of God is foolishness to the world. The fullness of the world is emptiness for the Kingdom of God. The principalities and powers of the world over against the principality and power of Christ Jesus in his Church are weighed up the one against the other. The world puts up a hoax, the Body of Christ grows, and Christ rules on triumphantly.

Paul **condones** the Church in its **confidence** in Christ and His victory. “**Therefore**”, says Paul, “**because** of Christ having spoiled principalities and powers ... having blotted out” the only “exhibit of evidence against us”. **‘Therefore** don’t let any man judge you (any man who despises you for whom and what you are – the Body of Christ). Don’t allow yourselves to be judged even in these things, the least of your confidence in Christ Jesus. “You should not be beguiled of your reward”, not even “in your eating or drinking or in respect of the eating and drinking of your feasting, or resting”, “for these things are a shadow of what awaits” you “the increase of God!” I, Paul do not hinder or discourage you. I don’t judge you. Don’t let “any man” of the world! Be yourselves. Put your hopes on Jesus Christ for He is the embodiment of the fullness of God. **Certainly you must still grow** to reach “the increase of God” which He intended for you, but that does not mean you must adapt or measure yourselves to the “principles of the world”, according to its “wisdom” and the “doctrines of men”. No, set Christ before you and strive to reach the fullness you **have “in Him**” and what **He** obtained on your behalf and for you.’ (“The just shall live by faith”.)

8.2.4.2. What “Sabbaths”?

What “sabbaths”, is Paul speaking of in Col.2:16? Does he speak about the **Seventh Day**, **weekly** Sabbath of the **Fourth** Commandment and for the commemoration of God’s **Rest in Finishing** all his Works, or of **yearly** Sabbaths for the commemoration of God’s **Rest in Finishing** all his Works? (I have not repeated myself.)

In the **first** place these feasts and days are **occasions of feasting**, and feasting in celebration and commemoration **of God’s great deeds of salvation in Jesus Christ**. So **it does not matter** what Sabbath or Sabbaths Paul has in mind. He has in mind the whole and practical living of Christ’s Body. It does not matter whether the Sabbath is called a shadow as if that would imply its abrogation and annulment. For as the Body shall be because it is Christ’s, so shall the shadow be because it is the Body’s. And as the Body shall increase because it increases with the growing power that is God’s, so shall the shadow increase with the increase of the Body that is Christ’s. And will the Sabbath even be a thing to be glad and joyous and festive for, “in honour of the Lord and thankfulness to God”. For see, “this, the day the Lord has made, we will rejoice and be glad in it!” Ps.118:24.

Paul refers to Old Testament feasts, but “Christianised”. They are (temporarily) **accepted Christian** practice. Paul sensitively and with empathy steers the Church towards an eventual appropriation of these “**shadow**” **services fully by faith only**. He works towards an appreciation of these symbolic feasts “**in Christ**” and “**in Him**” **only**. The ideal has not been reached yet. “**Things to come**” are **yet to be** the Body, which “is of **Christ**” **only**. “*Therefore don’t be fooled by the philosophy and vain deceit*” of the “*world’s*” “*wisdom*” that **pretends** to have reached “**fullness**”, **already**, and **without Christ!** “*Don’t let any man lure you away from your reward*” **waiting** at the end when “fullness” will finally be reached. Paul as an honest **Christian** admits the Church’s **incompleteness** while the world and man pretend **dishonestly** to have reached fullness already.

Second. These occasions of feasting are characterised by its “**eating and drinking**” – by its “food and drink” – belonging to **joyful and innocent festivity** through which love and communion of the brethren were maintained. “In thy presence is fulness of joy, at thy right hand pleasures for evermore!”, Ps.16:11. It could be the Church still observed these feasts **for the sake of the brethren** “*according to the circumcision of the flesh*” (1:11) the **Jews**. Even the **Gentile** Christians could thus have proved their solidarity with the Jewish nation. It could be the Church still observed these feasts so that the “**in the flesh** circumcised” that were not “circumcised with the circumcision made **without** hands”, could be “circumcised with the circumcision of **Christ in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh**”. It could be the Church still observed these feasts **to win these over**

to the Church and the faith of Jesus. It **must** be the Church **today** should observe God's Sabbath Day for the same purpose to win lost souls for the King of their salvation. (At Rome the Church erred greatly in making the "food and drink" of these feasts, "God's Kingdom" – so much so that **brother** "judged" and "despised" **brother** over "food and drink". There the "eating and drinking" were not a "feasting", the instrument of love and **unity** but the cold and hurting instrument of **division**.) Surely at **Colossus** the Church "regarded" these "feasts" "**to the honour of the Lord**" and through its "esteem", "**thanked God**" (as did the Christians at Rome).

At Colossus the celebration "**in eating and drinking**" was not only in **remembrance** of God's great deeds of the past, but also in **expectancy** of what He was still **going to do**. Its celebrations were "a shadow of **things to come**, even the Body that is Christ's" – the "increase with the increase of God" (2:19c). The Church must have celebrated these feasts through "eating and drinking" while being **aware** of the "growth" still "**in store**" for the Body of Christ. "By joints and bands nourished, knit together" (2:19b) with "charity the bond of perfectness, **ruled by the peace of God in the heart**" (3:14-15, "Thy gentleness has made me great", Ps.18:35.) the Community feasted, eating and drinking **in Godly fear and joy**, fearing no man, **reading Paul's Letter**. This, the Church on these "feasts" and "rest days" and "new moons" – three times "**rest**"-days – did. Naturally they also would do it on the **weekly** Sabbath Days? Then why does Paul not mention the Sabbath? Because he **classed** the Sabbath with the yearly "sabbath days"? Or because he **took for granted** the regular Assembly and festivity of the Church's Sabbaths? Paul now ("*gently*") **supports** the Church in its observance of these days and their eating and drinking customs. But he also reminds the Church of the nature of "these things". They are but a "shadow" of what Christ's Church is to become. Would Paul naturally have included the weekly Sabbath in this his kaleidoscope of the future? He would have presupposed the **Day for its Communion and Worship and Rest** of the grown body of Christ of course! Once the Body was grown to the measure of Christ, "a keeping of the Sabbath (will still) remain for the People of God" (in the words of Hebrews 4:9).

Had the Sabbath been included under the interim "sabbaths", under those "shadow"-sabbaths of "eating and drinking", Paul would not have described them by their **collective name**, "feasts, new moons, sabbaths", "**according to the order**". Cf. 1Chr.23:31; 2Chr.2:4; 31:3; Neh.10:33. Paul meant what he said and no more than what this **typical description** permits (in Ezra 3:5 only called "feasts"). The Sabbath does not fall within the **type** "*feasts, new moons and sabbath days*". The Sabbath does not **sort** under the **category** of "feasts, new moons and sabbath days *to which pertains food and drink*". This is another instance of that silent thunder, that "*spectacular absence*" (to use Krister Stendahl's terminology out of context) of the Sabbath's

presence in the life of the Church. The Sabbath is not specifically mentioned because it naturally is supposed. It is supposed not for being a day of “food or drink”, but for its essential rest and festivity.

The feasts specified in Col.2:16 are feasts known for their “**eating and drinking**” and the “eating and drinking” **are the things** the Church should not let itself be “**judged in**” – not the “feasts” as “*practices*” “*as such*”. The Sabbath is not characterised by such “**things** that are a shadow”. The Sabbath **in itself** may be considered a shadow (a symbolic and prophetic phenomenon) in that it witnesses to God’s great deeds of salvation. But Scripture **never describes the Sabbath as a shadow**. Since in Col.2:16 the “**eating**” and “**drinking**” are the “things” actually concerned and the “**feasts**” thereby involved but **indirectly**, the Sabbath cannot answer to this distinguishing feature. The Sabbath **essentially and intrinsically** is **not** a day of “eating and drinking” customs and ceremonies. **It essentially and intrinsically is a Day observed spiritually in faith purely for the life and worship of the Body of Christ.** And if occupied with “eating and drinking” it will be the eating and drinking of the Lord’s Supper – which is a Christian institution and of parallel validity with the Sabbath.

That “things to be” worked out the way Paul **envisaged** is obvious from the fact the Church since times immemorial has not celebrated the **New Moons**. The New Testament does not mention the Church observing the Day of Atonement once, or the Feast of Tabernacles. But it does mention the Church celebrating Passover and Pentecost. (The Church to the present celebrates Passover and Pentecost its many perversions notwithstanding.) Never, as well, is the Sabbath brought into **contention**. Although not meant as one of the types of “sabbath days” recognised by their “eating” and “drinking”, the Sabbath **naturally** would have been included – **Paul’s statement would also have concerned the weekly Sabbath.**

Not surprising then that the **prophecy** in Isaiah 66:23 finds its fulfilment in this period of the history of the Christian Church. “And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, all flesh shall come to worship before Me, saith the Lord”. For the New Church, the New Dispensation was the promised new heavens and earth. “**Which I will make**” for the Christian was “the Christ of God”, his Anointed, His Blessed One. “**This is the Lord’s doing**” (Ps.118:23). “Which I will make will remain before Me, saith the Lord, so shall your Seed and your Name” – that is Christ! (*cf.* Gal.3:16) For this reason the Church in Paul’s day feasted even on the New Moon, and he **encourages** the Church in its doings **in the face of the world**. It is quite understandable, the Church’s feasting – its eating and drinking of these feast days. Is not Prophecy **but very recently fulfilled** and has not God’s Word **come true in our own day**? Shall we not celebrate? **Paul** objects not. No, no, he objects not to the feasting, he objects to that

“*man*” of the “*world*” who attacks the Church and “*judges*” the Church in its feasting unto the honour of the Lord with grateful hearts.

8.2.5.1. **Different Viewpoints**

I have never before I had my present views formulated read Prof. Bacchiocchi’s views on Colossians 2:16. I say my “present views” because they almost nullify my previous views (and quite stereotype Sabbatharian thinking) expressed in *Die Sondag-Waarheid* of about 15 years ago. So it came to me as no surprise to find **basic differences** between my own and Prof. Bacchiocchi’s explanations in his book, *The Sabbath in the New Testament, Biblical Perspectives*, 1990. By comparing our views the differences are brought into contrasted clarity. (See p.326)

p. 109, “The Colossian Heresy”, “Paul’s reference to the observance of “Sabbaths” in Colossians 2:16 is only one aspect of the “Colossian heresy” refuted by Paul. It is necessary therefor to ascertain first of all the overall nature of the false teachings that threatened to “disqualify” (2:18) the Colossian believers. Were these teachings Mosaic ordinances and can they be identified with the “written document – cheirographon” which God through Christ ‘wiped out ... removed, nailed to the cross” (2:14)?

Most commentators define the Colossian heresy as syncretistic teachings which incorporated both Hellenistic and Jewish elements. Such a false teaching had both a theological and practical aspect.

Theologically the Colossian “philosophy” (2:8) was competing with Christ for man’s allegiance. Its source of authority, according to Paul, was human “tradition” (2:8) and its object was to impart true “wisdom” (2:3,23), “knowledge” (2:2-3; 3:10) and to assure access to and participation in the divine “fulness” (2:9-10; 1:19).

To attain divine fulness, Christians were urged to do homage to cosmic principalities (2:10, 15), to “the elements of the universe” (2:8, 20), and to angelic powers (2:15, 18) and to follow ritualistic ascetic practices (2:11-14, 16, 17, 21-22). Essentially, then, the theological error consisted in interposing inferior mediators in place of the Head Himself, Jesus Cjhris (2:9-10, 18-19).”

Bacchiocchi’s only problem is that he sees this problem as an internal Church matter. “Observance of “Sabbaths” in Colossians 2:16 is only one aspect of the “Colossian heresy” “, says he. Bacchiocchi doesn’t distinguish in the way Paul does between the different “realms of power”, the one consisting of the “Body which is Christ’s”, its “Head”, and the other consisting of “cosmic elements”, “philosophy” or “man”. (Essentially “any” of these are “one” – *tis.*) Between these **TWO** “powers” rages the vying for the souls of men, “philosophy” was competing with

Christ for man's allegiance". The "*heretical*" onslaught on the Church came from **outside!** The "*heresy*" was that of the "world", and "*observance of "Sabbaths" in Colossians 2:16*" was **NO** *aspect* or "*heresy*" of the Church. Paul finds no fault with the Church and has no difficulty in seeing it as Christ's Body. "*The obvious implication then is that Paul in this text (2:16) is expressing not a condemnation but an approbation of the mentioned practices, which include Sabbathkeeping*", p. 113, par. "*Implicit Approbation*".

8.2.5.2. **Not "Mosaic"?**

"Paul's reference to the observance of "Sabbaths" in Colossians 2:16 is only one aspect of the "Colossian heresy" refuted by Paul. It is necessary therefor to ascertain first of all the overall nature of the false teachings that threatened to "disqualify" (2:18) the Colossian believers. Were these teachings Mosaic ordinances and can they be identified with the "written document – cheirographon, which God through Christ "wiped out ... removed, nailed to the cross" (2:14)?" (p. 109 b)

"Observance of "Sabbaths ... refuted by Paul" ... "Observance of Sabbaths ... is only one aspect of the "Colossian heresy"?" No, Prof. Bacchiocchi himself proves this not the case. "*Observance of "Sabbaths"* was no "*aspect of the "Colossian heresy"* and Paul did not "*refute*" it.

"False teachings that threatened to "disqualify" (2:18) the Colossian believers". This statement presupposes that the "*false teachings*" were teachings of "*the Colossian believers*". But "*false teachings*" in fact were teachings of the "**world**" and "**man**" – "man" not presented through the pronoun "**one**" – *ho*, (not "**one** of the believers" as in Romans 14), but "**any**" – *tis / mehdeis*, "any of **man**", *anthroghpos*, used **seven** times in Colossians.

"Man" is representative **1**, Of the "**world**", *kosmos*, particularly as "**nature / natural religion**": "**the first principles of the world**". "Man" is representative of the "world" in the sense of "**philosophy**" – used **only once** in the New Testament, Col.2:8, and in my opinion is the outstanding **equivalent of the "world"**, "man", "wisdom", "doctrine", "principle", "principality / rule", "power", "dominion of darkness", *et al.* "World", "man" and "philosophy" are almost identifiable. **2**, Of "tradition" – *paradosis* – the "tradition of **man**" – used by Paul only once in this **negative** sense; **3**, Of "wisdom" – *sophia* (2:23) – usually used for contrasting **God's** and the **world's** "wisdom", here "a **shew** of wisdom"; and **4**, "doctrine" – *didaskalos* (2:22) – here qualified as "**human** teachings". The "**heresy**" – "division", "sect" – **the word does not occur in Colossians**, in Colossus was not the Church that erred, but the Church that was assaulted by "deceitful" "luring away" and "spoiling" of "*believers*" by the "man" of the "world".

The “beguiling” of the “*Colossian believers*” for this reason may not be understood for an “internal” examination they failing it, could be “*disqualified*” by. Like Demas some through their love of the world might have been overcome and might have deserted the Faith. But at Colossus in contrast with the Church in Rome, the Community was “closely knit together” by the “bond of perfectness”, “love”. Look at them how they use every possible occasion for and occasion of worshipping, in festive spirit to celebrate the reconciliation and peace Christ has obtained for them! And they were privileged to have Paul as their leader, be it in absence and in presentation in spirit and Letter only.

“Most commentators define the Colossian heresy as syncretistic teachings which incorporated both Hellenistic and Jewish elements.” (p.109 c)

“Most commentators” may be right in “*defining the Colossian heresy*”, but not as the heresy of “the Body which is Christ’s”. The “*syncretistic teachings which incorporated both Hellenistic and Jewish elements*” were that of the world as that “principality and power” – 2:15, opposing the “principality and power” – 2:10, of Christ’s Church. To see **only** Satan as the adversary supposed in Colossians is to underestimate the “world” and its “domain” / “dominion” of “wisdom” and “philosophy”. Two “worlds”, two “**realms**” of “**power**” and “**rule**” face each other in Colossians. Paul uses the same words to describe them, “rule” / “principality” and “power”. And both consist of the body and the head, and its charter or constitution of “knowledge and wisdom”. The Church stands for the Body with Christ its Head and “all the fulness of the Godhead bodily” (2:9), “in Whom ye are complete” (2:10) and have “all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge” (2:3). The “world” stands for the body of “men” and its secret head, Satan (not mentioned but doubtless supposed), and its charter or constitution of “philosophy”, a “shew of wisdom” and “traditions of men”. The “*syncretistic teaching*” should be looked for **not** in the **Church**, but in the **world**, and the “*heresy*” or dividing factor of false teachings, **also**.

8.2.5.3.

The “Heresy”, “Essentially”

This conclusion agrees with Prof. Bacchiocchi’s statement, “*Theologically, the Colossian “philosophy” (2:8) was competing with Christ for man’s allegiance. Its source of authority, according to Paul, was human “tradition” (2:8) and its object was to impart true “wisdom” (2:3, 23), “knowledge” (2:2-3; 3:10) and to assure access to and participation in the divine “fulness” (2:9-10; 1:19). To attain divine fulness, Christians were urged to do homage to cosmic principalities (2:10, 15), to “the elements of the universe” (2:8, 20), and the angelic powers (2:11-14, 16, 17, 21-22). Essentially, then, the theological error consisted in interpreting inferior mediators in place of the Head Himself, Jesus Christ (2:9-10, 18-19).*” (p. 109 d, e)

“Interpreting inferior mediators in place of the Head ...”? What is this? *“Colossian philosophy”*, *“cosmic principalities”*, *“human tradition”*, the “dominion” where *“Christians were urged to do homage to cosmic principalities”*? No, although **both** were earthly – communities of “man”, the Church and these “dominions” were **opposing realms**, the one of verse **10**, the **Church**, and the other of verse **15**, the **world**.

“The practical outcome of the theological speculations of the Colossian heretics was their insistence on strict asceticism and ritualism. These consisted in putting off the body of flesh” (2:11 – apparently meaning withdrawal from the world); rigorous treatment of the body (2:23); prohibition to either taste or touch certain kinds of foods and beverages (2:16, 21), and careful observance of sacred days and seasons – festival, new moon, Sabbath (2:16).” (p.109 / 110 a)

Prof. Bacchiocchi includes **Church** practices with the practices of the “**philosophy**” of the “**world**”. *“Careful observance of sacred days and seasons”*, says he, was one “*theological speculation*” among others of “*strict asceticism and ritualism*”. He makes of the **Church-practices** some “*syncretistic ideology*”. If Paul meant “*careful observance of sacred days and seasons – festival, new moon, Sabbath*” to be “*only one aspect of the Colossian heresy*” then as clear as day he “*refuted*” “*observance of sacred days*”. Then like the world, the **Church** stands in the dock and is God “making a shew” of the **Church!** If what Prof. Bacchiocchi says is true, then Paul as every Christian who in Colossus and in Rome at least, “observed” these “feasts” and “days” were guilty of “*heresy*” to the degree of treason against the Church. For “heresy” means to be “beguiled of your reward”, “spoiled” of the “inheritance”, “**dissected**” (from *hairetidzoh*) from the Body and Head. “**Not holding to the Head**” – “*being dissected from*” it, means to cut off “*nourishment*”, to cut off every “*joint and bands*” even “**cut**” “*the bond of perfectness, love*”! Now this exactly Paul in **no way accuses** the Church **of**, nor **excuses** the Church **for**, **but protects and defends it against!** **How could Paul say, “Let no man judge you”, if “in eating and drinking and in respect of feasts, new moons and sabbath days” “you” are guilty of “heresy”?**

8.2.5.4.

Acquitted Or Subjected?

Colossians 2:16 ... The two **foregoing verses** portray Christ as the Conciliator, actually as the Propitiatory, the Victor over the prosecutor and all his “rule and power”. The “*practical outcome*” of this in all would be that **the Church is acquitted and found guiltless of any offence.** Its actions and convictions “in regard to food, drink, feasts, months, sabbaths” **may not be judged.** It needs no excuse or explanation to “**any man**” – least of all to the “conceited” “*false teachers*” and self-appointed “judges” of the Body **that is Christ’s!**

But, says Prof. Bacchiocchi, “*The **practical outcome** of the theological speculations of the Colossian **heretics** was **their** insistence on . . . and careful **observance** of sacred days and seasons – festival, new moon, **Sabbath** (2:16)*”. (Emphasis CGE.) “*Observance*” of the “*Sabbath*” was “*the practical outcome*” “*of the theological speculations of the Colossian **heretics***” – **unambiguously!** If that were true, Paul denounces the **Sabbath**, Sabbath-keeping and the **keepers** of the Sabbath Day. Then, what Luther said, is not “*totally wrong*”, but “*totally*” true and **correct**, that “*here Paul abolished the Sabbath by name and called it a bygone shadow*”! And may we as well give up any further thought on the matter of the validity of the Sabbath for the Christian Church.

Prof. Bacchiocchi, after this **fatal** remark, continues, “*Christians presumably were led to believe that by submitting to these ascetic practices, they were not surrendering their faith in Christ, but rather they were receiving added protection and were assured of full access to the divine fulness.*” (110 b, a)

“*Submitting to*”, “*these ascetic practices*”: “***These consisted in***”: “*putting off the body of flesh ... careful observance of ... (the) Sabbath*”. (p. 109 / 110 a) **Prof. Bacchiocchi** groups the “*Sabbath*” under “*these ascetic practices*” and assesses observance of the Sabbath as “*submitting to*”, “*ascetic practice*”. “*Christians presumably were led to believe that by submitting to (the) Sabbath*”, they were “*submitting to*” “*the theological speculations of the Colossian heretics*” and “*their insistence on strict asceticism and ritualism*” – one cannot help to conclude. (But which I am sure, or hope, Prof. Bacchiocchi didn’t mean to say because only a Jesuit could.)

“*The Colossian heretics*” by their “*theological speculations*” and “*their insistence on strict asceticism and ritualism*” **tried** to “*beguile*” or “*lead*” the Church “*to believe*”. And when they **failed** to, they **judged** Christ’s Body. They faced an effective practical **obstacle** to their efforts in the Church’s ongoing use “*in respect of eating and drinking – of feasts, of new moons and of sabbath days*”. These things seem to have **kept the believers with their feet on the earth**, enabling them to easily recognise the hoax of “*philosophy’s*” high pretences. Their Old Testament foundation was laid solidly. It caused the philosophers to rage and foam judgement on the Church.

If the Church’s keeping of the Sabbath had been in accordance with the “*speculations of the heretics*”, Paul in all his life would not have “*warned*” “*any man*” not to judge the Church in **such** a practice. He would himself have judged and denounced it flatly. Paul’s **very** “*warning*”, “*Let no man judge you pertaining eating or drinking or feasting*” comes as a “*warning*” to the believer – **not, not to** “*submit to the ascetic practices hinted at in verse 20*”. It comes as a warning to the Church **not to let the ascetics intimidate** or even **implicate** them. **This imperative is not against asceticism but against the ascetics** – **not against “practices” but against**

“**principalities and powers**”. Asceticism as the “philosophy of the world” and “**the power of darkness**” and “**man**”, opposes **Christ** represented in his “**Body**” the Church.

8.2.5.5. **No Compromise**

For Paul **there clearly was no compromise to bargain** between the accuser – the “world” and its “philosophy”, and the defendant – the Church. (At Rome he could attempt a compromise because the issue was an internal, “Church”-issue.) The danger from the “world” / “philosophy” constantly lurked and the open attacks were constantly wielded against the Body of Christ. Just as today the Church for no second can dodge the world. It is not to say the world triumphed and Christ’s body was “dissected” and “contaminated” (“spoiled”) by the “*heresy*” of the “man” of the “world” **successfully!** It is not to say that whatever Paul in the context of this constant battle between the Christian and the “deceitfulness of the world” mentions as the “*practice*” of the Church, is the “*Colossian heresy*”. On the contrary, Paul concludes just the opposite, “Having **spoiled** principalities and powers (of the world) He **made a shew of them** openly, **triumphing over them** in it” – that is, in **Christ’s atoning death on the cross**. But “in it” must also be understood as meaning “**in the Church**”, his “**Body**”. Christ triumphed “over them” – the world, as He triumphed “in it” – His Body, not only “**in His flesh** through death”, 1:22, but **in “us”** His Body the Church. “Because you also indeed ... **hath He quickened together with Him**, having forgiven you all trespasses”, 2:13. **This**, the “growth” Paul had in mind, “the coming things” he envisioned and identified for being “the Body that is Christ’s”!

The Church **neither** was to be “**forgiven**” as if for its sins for “eating, drinking or feasting”, **nor** was it to be **judged** “in respect of” it. The Church “in eating or in drinking, or in respect of feasts, new moons and sabbath days”, was “**unblameable**” and was **not brought under judgement** for it either by Paul or by God. **But the “world” waited** not to “judge” the Church “in respect of it”. The Church **participated in no wise** in the “*Colossian heresy*”, **but contrary to it** worshipped its Lord honourably and undaunted – **Paul their champion in the face of a heretic world!** In *these Old Testament practices*, Christians in fact *were not surrendering their faith in Christ but rather they were receiving added protection from Paul and were assured of full access to the divine fulness IN CHRIST!* They had no difficulty in understanding that “these things were (but) a shadow of what awaits the Body that is Christ’s”, namely, Victory! Fullness! Glory! Why? **Because nobody could judge them in it!** They are “found in Him”, **openly showing it** as Christ made an open show of victory to the world, eating, drinking, feasting, resting *to the honour of the Lord and in gratefulness to God.*

8.2.5.6.

Verdict: Not Guilty!

Prof. Bacchiocchi: *“This bare outline suffices to show that the Sabbath is mentioned not in the context of a direct discussion on the nature of the law, but rather in the context of syncretistic beliefs and practices advocated by the Colossian ‘philosophers’ ”*. (p. 110, b. See also p. 109, c)

“Let no one judge you in meat or in drink or in respect of feasts” – the **Church** is found “not guilty” in terms of “*the law*”. **In this sense Paul is judge of the case. He acquits his people: ‘Beloved, continue freely. I denounce this menacing perpetrator, Leave my people in peace!’** “Meat, drink, feasts” “*as such*” are judged and found **not** against the law. The **Sabbath** or anything “*practised*” by the Church is judged and found **not** against the law. The Church **positively** “*practices*” within the scope of the law; the “*practices*” are “**lawful**” – although in the light of Paul’s explanation just after, considered **comparatively insignificant against the stature Christ’s Body still has to acquire**. The **accuser** who also acts prosecutor and judge, “man” of “philosophy”, is **shamed and condemned**. And the **Church** is **vindicated**. (See Par. 8.2.2.5.12.)

8.2.5.7.

“Approbation or Condemnation of Sabbath-keeping?” (p. 112)

Some of the words more or less synonymous with the word “*approbation*” are, “approval”, “acknowledgement”, “sanction”, “appreciation”. Paul shows exactly such an attitude towards the Church’s “*practice*” “in eating and drinking, in respect of feasts, new moons and sabbaths”. He, as attorney of defence for the Church, places himself between the Church and its assailant, daring “any man” to “judge” Christ’s Body “in respect” of “these things” – despite the fact “it is (but) a shadow” compared to “the full growth” “to come” “of the Body which is Christ’s”.

“In the context of”

“The Sabbath is mentioned ... in the context of ... syncretistic beliefs and practices advocated by the Colossian ‘philosophers’ ”.

Prof. Bacchiocchi assumes “*the Sabbath is mentioned*”. If “*the Sabbath is mentioned in the context of syncretistic beliefs and practices advocated by the Colossian ‘philosophers’ ”* then the **Sabbath** is considered a, or “*only one aspect*”, of “*syncretistic beliefs and practices advocated by the Colossian ‘philosophers’ ”* – which, I am sure, Prof. Bacchiocchi would agree, **it is not**, even though that is what he says here. To place the Sabbath in the “*context of syncretistic beliefs and practices advocated by the Colossian ‘philosophers’ ”* is to have it concocted in the farrago of “*syncretistic beliefs and practices*”. Paul does **not** mention the Sabbath in any relation but of

contrast with such things, **not** as “*only one aspect of the ‘Colossian heresy’*”, but as an “**unblameable, unprovable**” “*practice*” not of “spoiled” and “beguiled” Colossians, but of “**you**” who are found “**in Him**” – the “Body which is **Christ’s!**”

This “*practice*” of supposed (and acknowledged) observance of the Sabbath in fact, **verse 16 in between verses 15 and 17**, is mentioned **right in contextual relation of Christ’s triumph, and not by any means** “*in the context of syncretistic beliefs and practices advocated by the Colossian philosophers*”. These **Church *practices of Old Testament beliefs and New Testament Faith***, is **poised with** the triumphant glory of **Christ** in dying and rising from the ultimate test to standards, death. That is its **basis** – contextually. And these **Church *practices of Old Testament beliefs and New Testament Faith***, is **poised with** the triumphant glory of **Christ** in his Body the Church. That is its **superstructure** – contextually. And the “inflated / puffed up” boasting of the “**fleshly mind**” of “worldly” “philosophy”, on “*dietary practices*” and “*dietary taboos*” **only in verse 20’s last half** appears “*in the context of syncretistic beliefs and practices advocated by the Colossian philosophers*”.

8.2.5.8.

A Matter of Belonging

“The Sabbath: A Bygone Shadow? Having refuted the theological speculations of the Colossian false teachers by reaffirming the supremacy of Christ and the fulness of His redemption (2:8-15), Paul turns to some practical aspects of their religious practices, saying: “Therefor, let no one pass judgement on you in questions of food and drink or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a sabbath. These are only a shadow of what is to come; but the substance belongs to Christ” (2:16-17). (p. 112 a)

“*Paul turns to some practical aspects of their religious practices*”, says Prof. Bacchiocchi. To “*their religious practices*”, that is, to the religious practices “*of the Colossian false teachers*”. And he quotes “*food ... drink ... festival ... new moon ... sabbath*”. Now if *food ... drink ... festival ... new moon ... sabbath* were “*religious practices*” “*of the Colossian false teachers*”, how could Paul say, “*Let no one pass judgement on you*” therein? Paul could not. **Unless** he regarded these “*Colossian false teachers*” as the **Church** and saw “*food ... drink ... festival ... new moon ... sabbath*” as a “**heresy**” of the **Christian Community**.

But Paul considered these “*Colossian false teachers*” a **threat to** the Church and **not** as the Church itself. The “*false teachers*” – not Paul, **objected** to the food and the feasts. **Paul retaliated against the “*false teachers*”**, admonishing the **Congregation**, “Don’t let any one (“*Colossian false*

teachers”) judge you (the Church) in foods and feasts”. ‘*If they say, “Touch not! Taste not! Treat not!”! Don’t mind them! You don’t belong to them; you are the Body which is Christ’s! Let no man therefore judge you, and eat, drink, feast! Be merry, you are in Him and tomorrow may well not die, but increase with the increase of God whereas their living wastes itself being typical of man’s rock hard and ice cold doctrines!*’

What were the “*practical aspects of their religious practices*”, and **who** were “they”? Were “they” the Church – inclusive of both “*believers*” and “*false teachers*”, or were “they” the **Church** as the “rule and power” of which Christ is Head, the Church, or were “they” as the “rule and power” of the “**world**” of which “man” and “philosophy” is the head? The Sabbath is **not** known in Colossians as a *practical aspect of syncretistic or ascetic religious practices how so ever*. The Sabbath by nature flies in the face of “philosophy” – the “philosophy” of **asceticism**, moreover.

8.2.5.9.1.

Paul’s Chain of Thought

Paul doesn’t “*turn*” from one thing to a next **unrelated** thing. He **continues**, welding what he has said before with what he is going to say after together. He doesn’t only use connective auxiliaries like the words “therefore” and “then” for the purpose, but the concepts as such are progressively dependent. ‘*Because Christ vanquished the enemy* (verse 15), *therefore use your freedom!* (verse 16), *but keep in view the ultimate goal* (verse 17), *and don’t be robbed of it!* (verse 18). *Keep constant guard against the deceitful and vainglorious philosophy of the world while you fully enjoy all wisdom and all salvation, growing with the increase of God as his Church into the Head and full stature of Christ* (verse 19)!’

8.2.5.9.2.

Luther’s Chain of Thought

(See Part 3/4, Par. 7.6, p. 403.) Luther claimed, quotes Bacchiocchi (We follow the order of Prof. Bacchiocchi’s book.), “*Here Paul abolished the Sabbath by name and called it a bygone shadow because the body, which is Christ himself, has come.*” (p. 112, b)

If Paul, as Luther claims, “*abolished the Sabbath by name*” why does he not “**abolish**” it **by word**, but instead warns, “**Let no man** judge, you, in respect of ... sabbaths”? If the Sabbath were “abolished” in Paul’s statement, then “the Sabbath” should appear in the Accusative as the **direct** object of the verb. It would also require a direct subject, “I, Paul, abolish the Sabbath”, or, “You abolish the Sabbath!”, or, “God abolished the Sabbath”. But now the Sabbath – or rather “sabbath days”, are involved very **remotely**. **1**, Let not any man judge **it the Church** (not the Sabbath).

2, Let not any man judge it the Church, **concerning eating or drinking.** **3**, Let not any man judge it the Church, concerning eating or drinking **belonging to sabbath days.** **4**, Only now “sabbath days” come into focus, while it should be the direct object of the verb in order to be “abolished by name”. But **even here** “the Sabbath by name” is not the object or the subject treated on in this Scripture, but “sabbath days” **to which “belong”** “eating” and “drinking”. Which makes these “sabbath days” **different in kind** “sabbaths” than the **one** known “**by name**” as “**The Sabbath**”.

If then, Paul “abolished” anything, he “abolished” “**eating**” and “**drinking**” (being so near the verb of action, **allegedly**, “abolished”), and **that**, of the food and drink belonging to these feasts **and food and drink not even** belonging to these feasts. Paul would be siding with the “world” and would plead for asceticism!

Luther further alleges that Paul “called it (the Sabbath) a bygone shadow”. As shown above, Paul does not call the Sabbath **anything**. He says, “**these things** are a shadow”, “these things” being **the practices of the Church collectively** as he has stipulated just before. And those things, to say it again, were, **directly**, “**eating**” and “**drinking**”, and, only **indirectly**, the “feasts” and the “sabbath days” which the “food” and “drink” were connected with. And, to say it again, the Sabbath **might** be appreciated as a “shadow” or even be sorted with the **type** of “sabbaths” Paul had in mind, but strictly speaking, **was** not in his mind as it **is** not of the same kind of “sabbaths” he mentions “*by name*”.

Then Luther alleges that the “*shadow*” was “a bygone shadow”. By this Luther means the Sabbath had been a “shadow” – a “symbol” of things that had to come and **had had** come. Which is perfectly true of both the “feast”-type of “sabbaths” that Paul mentions, and the weekly Sabbath which he does not mention. And thank you, Luther, for the admission. Were it but the Sunday’s privilege for the sake of your argument! But again as has been shown in various considerations above, the Sabbath’s fulfilment meant its ultimate **confirmation** by the blessing and sanctification it received through Christ. Christ’s fulfilment of the Sabbath meant its true creation and beginning as the Lord’s Day in the Covenant of Grace. But that is not the point here. Paul literally does not write “a bygone shadow” in the Past Perfect tense or sense. He writes, “these things **are** – *estin*, Present Continues Tense and sense – “a shadow”, and they are a shadow “**of near** (- in Paul’s day soon coming) **things**”!

Luther further **errs**, stating, “*the body, which is Christ himself, has come.*” The “body” is “Christ’s”, is that “**of Christ**” – *tou Xristou*. “Christ himself”, as Paul here metaphorically presents Him, is the “**Head**” – **not** the “body”. “The **Head, even Christ**”, Eph.4:15. “**We are members of one another ... members of his body**” – yea, “**Ye are the body of Christ**”, Ephesians 4:25, 5:30 and 1Cor.12:27. The “Body” Paul here speaks of is Christ’s **Church**, at this stage in its history still

infantile and still has to “**grow with the growth of God**”, 2:18. “That we may **grow up** in all things into Him which is the Head, even Christ”, Eph.4:15. (“Paul planted, Barnabas watered, but God caused to **grow**.”) This simple truth about the **age** of the Church here pertinent in Paul’s Letter, is indicative of what kind of “sabbaths” he writes. They were those “sabbaths” that indicated what stature the **Body** or **Church** of Christ **would** still reach, namely, “**unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ**”, Eph.4:13.

Luther finally errs in saying, “*the body . . . has come*”. At the point in time Paul wrote his Letter to the Colossians the “body” has not as yet reached full realisation. The Body, then, “**has**” not come but “was coming”, was “near” and “nearing”. The Body the new creation of God was developing still, had not **reached** maturity, so to speak. And this is **remarkable** contextually, since the First Church immediately and not through a slow process, **shod its heathen religious “principles of the world”** – *stoicheia tou kosmou*, while even the Gentile converts – took **more time** to form a clear distinction between the **Old Testament** (Jewish) religion and the Christian Faith. (We say this here because this perspective will again come to the fore when we shall study Galatians 4:10.)

8.2.5.10.1.

Whom Does Paul “Warn”?

“To test the validity of this traditional interpretation (Luther’s above), we will consider the following questions: (1) Is Paul warning the Colossians against the practices of “eating, drinking, festival, new moon, and Sabbath” as such or against those false teachers who were imposing “regulations” on the manner of observing these practices? (2) What is the nature of the “regulations”? Are they derived from Mosaic prescriptions or from a syncretistic ideology? (p. 112 c)

“Is Paul warning the Colossians?” Paul implicitly and directly warns the assailants, the “beguilers” (18), the “spoilers” (8), the “subjectors” (20) and pretending “**judges**” – verse 16! He warns **them**, as he **also** warns the **Church** about **them**, “**Let no man therefore judge you!**” Paul warns these “judges”, “By ‘no man’ I mean **you, you beguilers** of the members of the Body of **Christ!**” Paul **does** have the “*false teachers*” in mind, and means **them** with the pronoun, “**no man / no one**” – *tis*. He as well could have said, “Let no **false teachers** judge you . . .”, virtually “*warning*” the “*false teachers*” while warning the Church concerning them.

“False teachers” were not “believers”. They were “**any man**” of the “**world**”. Paul did not warn the Church against the **Church** or brother against brother (as in Rome’s Church). He warned the Church against the **world** – in this text **as in the whole Epistle**. “*False teachers*” did not “*prescribe*”^{OAB} or enforce “*manner*”. They **protested** against “*manner*” as well as against believers

in “*practice*” enjoying and feasting “in **meat**” and “in **drink**”, “in respect of **feasts, new moons, and sabbath days**”. The “*false teachers*” **envied** the Christian Body its **freedom** and enjoyment in “*manner*”, that is, exactly in “*practice*”, by food and by feast of their **full** and **finished** salvation “**in Him**”. They **for this very reason** tried to “beguile” the Church of its “reward”.

8.2.5.10.2.

“Manner” Or “Man”

Does Paul “*warn*”, ‘Don’t let *false teachers impose “regulations” on the manner you observe these practices, “food ... drink ... festival ... new moon ... sabbath”?*’ Indeed so! The issue was over “*the manner of observing*” as much as over “*the five mentioned practices ... as such*”. **There virtually is no difference** between “*manner*”, “*practice*” and “*... sabbath ... as such*”. **The fact that the Church ate and drank in the manner of life (feast), new moons and rests (sabbaths) went against the grain of the “false teachers”** of the “philosophy” of asceticism – the “wisdom” of the “world”. “Wherefor if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world ...” (2:20) be sure to excite its jealousy and hatred! The “world’s” motives and attitude, even its *mannerisms* are implied as the **antagonist** of the **Christian** motive, attitude and “manner”. But “Don’t let yourselves be judged!”

Does Paul warn, “Don’t let anyone tell you **to observe**” these “*practices*”? No. But he surely means, “Don’t let anyone tell you **not** to observe” these “*practices*”! He **writes exactly what he means** and that indicates, indeed **proves** the **observance** of these “*practices*” and Paul’s **condoning** these “*practices*”. Paul’s imperative supposes the **actuality** of “**eating, drinking** regarding feasts” and **encourages** its observance. Paul’s imperative supposes the “*manner*” of the observance of these practices, even the Christian’s freedom, peace, joy and fullness – “**in Christ**”. See above, Par. 8.2.2.1.5.3.

8.2.5.11.

“Manner” Or Affectation?

Paul said, yes, **wrote**, “**judge**”, and **meant** what **that** word means and what **that** word may imply . . . **this** word and no other! This word and its meaning allows no other word to be simply taken for granted and have the meaning of everything changed unrecognisable. This word “judge” – *krinoh*, is primarily used for **legal** decision **because its meaning is exact**, “**dividing**” – between right and wrong. But it also may mean to be “**puffed up**”, to be full of **self-esteem**. If Paul writes “judge” he does not mean, “**prescribe (to not observe)**” or “**adjust (in manner of observance)**”. He means “just”, “judged”! And because he says, “**judged**”, the matter is “being **judged** in food or drink”. It’s just fine as far as Paul is concerned but not good enough for the vainglorious ascetic philosophers! The matter is being **judged** in respect of food or drink of feasts, is being **judged** in

respect of food or drink of new moons, is being **judged** in respect of food or drink of sabbath days”. And Paul **assures** the Colossian Christians, *‘Let no man who thinks himself high and mighty judge or criticise you in food or in drink!’*

The “false teachers” were **outside** the Church and **are not permitted** any say on matters of the **Church** for the very reason of their “wisdom” and “philosophy”! They might perhaps reckon that **they** must “impose ‘regulations’” on the Church “on how to observe these practices in order to achieve ‘rigor of devotion and self-abasement and severity to the body (2:23)’” – **but are mistaken!** For us to suppose that “**they**” – “any man”, could “**judge you**” – the Church, is to suppose **reality** and just this, **their** judgement on the **Church** proves the “man” of the “world’s” **audacity!** Paul “**warns**” these “wise” of the “world”, because **they**, “judge” the **Church**.

The Church or its “practices” is not judged by Paul but condoned and dared.

8.2.5.12. **Source of Origin**

“What is the nature of the “regulations”? Are they derived from Mosaic prescriptions or from a syncretistic ideology?”

The “regulations” the “false teachers were imposing” “derived from ... a syncretistic ideology”. They **could** not have “derived from Mosaic prescriptions” because **they were directly opposed** to the “Mosaic prescriptions” on “practices of ‘eating, drinking, festival, new moon, and sabbath’ as such” ” still celebrated by the Christian Church. They also **could** not have derived from **Christian**, ecclesiastic prescription because they were directly opposed to the **spirit** of these “practices of ‘eating, drinking, festival, new moon, and sabbath’ – even the spirit of **freedom!**

*“**Warning Against False Teachers**”. The statement “Therefor, let no one pass judgement on you ...” has been traditionally interpreted as a warning from Paul against the five mentioned practices. This interpretation is totally wrong because in this passage Paul is warning the Colossians not against the observances of these practices as such, but against ‘any one’ (tis) who passes judgement on how to eat, to drink, and to observe sacred times.” (p. 112,d)*

Colossians 2:16 “*traditionally interpreted as a warning from Paul against the five mentioned practices ... is totally wrong*”. **Nevertheless**, according to Prof. Bacchiocchi, interpreted as judgement on **how** to eat etc, this interpretation should be totally **correct**. Thus interpreted Paul’s “warning” is totally **void**.

Of concern is **NOT HOW** to eat, **HOW** to drink, and **HOW** to observe sacred times – **except in free Christian spirit!** Of concern is **NOT HOW** to eat, **HOW** to drink, and **HOW** to observe sacred times – which gives the “false teachers” – **against whom** Paul is warning the Colossians an interest and say in matters of the Church. Concern about “how” – “according to the principles of

the world and not according to Christ”, 2:11, exactly is what Paul warns **against**. **Of concern is** that ***any one*** (*tis*) **who in respect of** food etc. **may get a foothold**, might interfere, influence, dissuade, and eventually **“judge YOU”** the **“*Colossian believers*”**. **Centrally it is a matter of the “man”, the “power and rule” of the “world” or “philosophy”, over against “you” the Body of Christ and of Christ’s “power and rule”.**

Paul does not loose grip on reality. The matter of fact of the situation is *the observances of these practices as such*, and in effect and in fact Paul warns ‘*any one*’ – *tis, who passes judgement ... against ... YOU*. Paul thereby warns **“any one”** not to **judge** the **Church**. He at the same time thereby actually enjoins the **Church**, not to **be** judged. Paul in effect and in fact does not judge the **Church**, but the **judges** judge the Church, the **“*false teachers*”** the **“man”**, **“any one”**, the **“world”**. (See above p. 34, Par. 8.2.2.5.6.)

The “Colossian heresy” existed **outside** Christ’s Body and the foods and feasts had **no** part in it but on the contrary were the focal point of the **“*philosophical*”** **attack** on the Church as the **“world’s”** opposition.

In verses 16 and 18 Paul implies and addresses the “world” while addressing the Church. In verse 17 – that lies in between Paul’s two imperatives – he addresses the Church only. The Church must only **maintain the right perspective** on the nature of “these things” so the target of the enemy’s attack! This verse may even be taken for an imperative as well, “Remember, these things are only a shadow of what the Church should be and should become!” *‘Being so severely pushed at, these things may in themselves seem to be the purpose and the fullness of your faith. But they actually are only temporary, only passing over the ground like a shadow as the Body moves on towards its real goal and purpose, the full stature of the Body of Christ – the real goal and purpose, to be found “in Him” completely. Strive to be endowed with Jesus Christ, putting off the old man of sin and putting on the New Man of righteousness.’*

8.2.5.13.

Paul Not the Judge

Prof. Bacchiocchi supplies his most illumined observation in confirmation of this conclusion, **“*Note should be taken of the fact that the Judge who passes judgement is not Paul but Colossian false teachers ...*”**. (p. 112, e) **“*Paul is warning the Colossians not against the observances of these practices as such, but against ‘any one’ (tis) who passes judgement ...*”** **full stop!** With his **“warning”** Paul has **these men** in the eye while addressing the Church.

What does Paul warn the **“*Colossian false teachers*”** not to do? **Not to judge the Church!** **Not** what Prof. Bacchiocchi alleges, namely to **“*impose*”** **‘regulations’** **on how to observe these**

practices (to eat, to drink, and to observe sacred times)”, “on how to eat, to drink, and to observe sacred times”.

Paul underlines the fact that **he** is called to “minister”, 1:23, this “nourishment” from the Head to the Body, 2:19. He reminds the Body that “*these things, the food, the drink, the feasting, are but a shadow of the nearing reality which will belong to Christ and now already belongs to Christ*” – “when **Christ** will be **all in all**.” (3:11, Eph.1:23) To translate “these things” with “substance” is acceptable. It should only **not** be rendered “the substance **is Christ**” because that would **identify the Church with Christ**. The “substance” as the reached goal of the full stature of Christ, is the Church as having reached its potential “in Christ” as its Representative.

8.2.5.14.

The Purpose of Eating, Drinking, Feasting

Compare Par. 8.2.2.1.3.1 above.

What is the **purpose** of the Church’s observance of “*these practices*”, “*to eat, to drink, and to observe sacred times*”? The **Church** decides its purpose, **not** the “*false teachers*”. And Paul **supports** the Church in it. But the **purpose**? The purpose of “*these practices*” **exists in itself**. The Church **ate** and the Church **drank** and the Church **feasted**, and **that fulfilled its aim and purpose!** Yes, the Church did exactly “these things” as “**a shadow of what is coming**”. That is **Paul’s definition of its purpose!** Paul’s “judgement” on the meaning and purpose of the “*practices*” – the purpose “**in respect of**” foods and drink and feasts, *i.e.*, “as far as” foods and drink and feasts are “concerned” – **is**, that **the Church does it in view of the fact that it belongs to Christ**. The practices are the activity of the Church. That is how the Church lives. ‘*Let no man judge you therein ... but remember, that is not where things end. Look ahead and behold God’s ideal with and in and for you his Kingdom, in Him, Christ.*’ The Church being that **Body** that is Christ’s, observes these practices **the eye on its growth in Christ**. The Church “**increasing with the increase of God**” “through nourishment ministered” “**from the Head**” – and **not** from the **food or drink or feasts**. It “**grows up / increases**”, “**into Him ... which is the Head**”, Eph.4:15.

These things are no purpose in itself. That exactly is the “**deceit**” of the “doctrine of **man**” – to make of eating and drinking – **or of the not eating and not drinking**, the kingdom or ultimate purpose. The “doctrine of **man**” reckons its own wonderful attainment, its own having reached even a state of “angelic worship” and “humility beyond the capacity of the will”, fulfilment and fullness. ‘*But I, Paul, I am telling you that you are complete **in Him**, and not in your eating, drinking, feasts, new moons, sabbath days (or in your not observing of such things, you ascetics over there!) In Him – in Christ, you have **all the fullness of wisdom and knowledge!***

*Christ in you, the hope of glory, the mystery among the Gentiles! So **that**, is the purpose of your food and drink and feasts and new moons and sabbath days or whatever of your best service and devotion **unto the Lord** and in **thankfulness to God.**' Thus Paul describes these practices in Romans 14 and thus he reminds the*

Colossians to do in "whatsoever ye do" – "Do it heartily **as to the Lord**, and **not unto men**", 3:23.

This Paul makes absolutely clear to the **Church** while he **at the same time also** makes it absolutely clear to the "**world**": '*Don't play judge of the Church and denounce it in its freedom and joyful unblameability and unproveability in Jesus Christ its Head!*' Paul allows the Colossians real and complete **freedom**; he allows the "*Colossian false teachers*" **no** freedom or say in deciding for the Church **either** over "*the practice as such*" – to be given up or continued, **or** over the "*manner*" – "*how to ... observe sacred times*".

8.2.5.15.

In Defence of the Faith

"The judge is likely to be the man of ascetic tendencies who objects to the Colossians' eating and drinking. The most natural way of taking the rest of the passage is not that he also imposes a ritual of feast days, but rather that he objects to certain elements of such observation", Prof. Bacchiocchi quoting D.R. De Lacey.

*The most natural way of taking the rest of the passage is that Paul objects to certain **people who object to such observance.** Paul objects not to "*certain elements of such observation*", like the "*manner*", as explained above. Continues Prof. Bacchiocchi, "*Presumably the 'judge' wanted the community to observe these practices in a more ascetic way ("severity to the body" – 2:23, 21), to put it crudely, he wanted the Colossian believers to do less feasting and more fasting*". (p.113, a)*

Both these authors presume **the Church itself** – be it only a party in the Church – the "*imposer*" of "*certain elements of observation*", namely of a "*more ascetic way*". Making the Church the "*imposer*" implies that Paul reprimands the Church. Then his "*warning*" is aimed against the **Church**; then Paul's "*warning*" is aimed against some **wrong** in the Church – which means Paul defends one "*manner*" over against another "*manner*" to observe "sabbath days", which, in fact, would mean Paul defends a **wrong**. Or, in De Lacey's words, Paul "*objects to certain elements of observation*". Making the Church the "*judge*" implies that the issue in the Church was **merely** one of certain "**adjustments**" in observance of **wrong** "*practices*". That of course **still** implies the observance of "sabbath days", but cannot reveal the **real** problem or the **gravity** of the situation in the Colossian Church.

Contextually, whether implied or explicit, there is indication **neither** of a difference over "*manner*", nor of a difference as such over the "*practices as such*" within the Church. Making the

Church the “*imposer*”, or the “*judge*”, implies that the “*imposing*”, “beguiling”, “principality and power”, is **not** the direct antipode of the Church the “principality and power” of which Christ is the Head, the Firstborn and the Creator, **1:15-16, 18**. But the “imposing” (the ascetic, wise and mighty of the world) **opposed**, the Church – *in toto*. It could wipe out, “blot out” Christ’s Body if it could. But most nauseous to this miserable power of oppression was **the freedom of Christ’s Church**, the fact that that one people founded and found in that one Man called Jesus Christ was so free, so happy, so joyful and celebrating, and increasing with the increase of God! **What have you to celebrate? Look at us** the really illumined who have the real truth and understanding and knowledge! Look how we inflict the flesh pain and neglect, **proving** our attainment of wisdom and knowledge! Answers Paul on behalf of the Church **in this matter, in direct relation** to both this “worldly principle” and “philosophy”, and Christ’s “triumph over them”: “**Christ** blotted out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us (and inflicted pain and death upon us). **He** took it out of the way, and nailed it to his cross. And having spoiled principalities and powers (of pain and death), **He** made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it (in life). Therefore, let no man (of the world), judge **you** (my brethren in Christ) in eating or in drinking, or in respect of (your) feasts, new moons and sabbath days” – let no man judge you in your celebrating of this triumphant Life.

There is no judgement from Paul over the **fact** of sabbath days being observed. There is no judgement from Paul over the **way** sabbath days are observed. There is no judgement from Paul over one **brother** against the other over sabbath days being observed. **There is only this warning from Paul, Let the Church not be judged in its observing sabbath days by this “someone”!** Let the Church not be judged by this wise and arrogant guy, indeed the personification of the “power and rule” “of the world” and “of man”. Paul all along unmistakably identifies this “one” as the **foe** of Christ and of his Body the Church. The matter is an “either or”. Either “perfect in Christ Jesus”, 1:28, or, “spoiled through philosophy”, 2:8. Either free and feasting, or, “subjected and neglecting the body”, 2:20, 23.

Not only two schools of thought, two “**wisdoms**”, oppose one another here, but two “**dominions**”, 1:16, both a “**power and rule**” in its own right, the one a “power and rule” which **Christ is the Head** of, 2:10, 1:11. Christ, “in Whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge” – 1:3, and “in Whom” is “all fulness” – 1:19. The other is the “power and rule” – 2:15, the caricature of the first, the “beguiling”, the one “enticing with words” – 2:4, the one “spoiling through philosophy”, “according to the world’s principles” – 2:8, “the body of the sins of the flesh”

– 2:11, “worshipping of angels” – 2:18, “severed from the Head” – 2:19, “moved away from the hope” – 1:23, indeed, the “dominion” of the **“power of darkness”** – **1:13!**

This picture of the “world” over against the “Body which is Christ’s” cannot be compared with the picture in the Church at Rome where the Church was divided in itself, and where both “parties” followed their own way “in honour of the Lord giving thanks to God”. It cannot be compared even though the Church in Rome sinned so gravely in judging and despising one another. Notwithstanding they honestly meant to serve God and be grateful unto Him. But in Colossus the one **“Power”** follows its own way (in one thing by observing feasts and merrily eating and drinking) in honour of the Lord giving thanks to God. The other **“power”** and all its hosts of “ordinances”, “doctrines” “documents” and what have you, **deny God and his praises, and glory in neglect of body and soul**. Paul admonishes the good Christians of Colossus, *‘Let no man judge you for having sided with Christ, not even in the least of things, as in eating, or in drinking, or in respect of feasting, new moons or resting and any days you may set apart for the purpose. Don’t, and go your way because in Christ you are really free!’* Then, in unwritten brackets, Paul just reminds the Colossian Freeman, *‘Remember these things are only a shadow of what your aim and goal is. Don’t stop here. Don’t make of food and drink God’s Kingdom, because God’s Kingdom, the full stature of it, in substance, is not food and drink, but is Jesus Christ, and you, “in Him”, and, his Holy Spirit operating in you.’*

8.2.5.16.

“Approbation” by Surrender?

“By warning (the Church) against the right of the false teachers to “pass judgement” on how to observe festivals, Paul is challenging not the validity of the festivals as such but the authority of the false teachers to legislate on the manner of their observance. The obvious implication then is that Paul in this text is expressing not a condemnation but an approbation of the mentioned practices, which include Sabbathkeeping.” (p.113, b)

How confused can things get? Prof. Bacchiocchi argues that “Sabbath-keeping” is “included” under “the mentioned practices”. (Prof. Bacchiocchi in this respect differs from the **traditional** Sabbatharian interpretation that the Sabbath is **not** included under “the mentioned practices”.) But Prof. Bacchiocchi qualifies the Sabbath’s inclusion under “the mentioned practices”. On page 110 par. b, he insists that “the Sabbath is mentioned not in the context of a direct discussion on the nature of the (“Mosaic”, or, Fourth Commandment?) law”. Obviously not but nonetheless a meaningless observation. “But”, continues Prof. Bacchiocchi, “the Sabbath is mentioned ... rather in the context of syncretistic beliefs and practices advocated by the Colossian

‘philosophers’.” So by final analysis, “Paul’s reference to the observance of “Sabbaths” in Colossians 2:16 is only **one aspect of the ‘Colossian heresy’ refuted by Paul**”.

How can Paul “warn” the Christians of Colossus *against the false teachers* if it is “**their right** to pass judgement”? Prof. Bacchiocchi is quite right in that “Paul is challenging not the validity of the festivals as such but the authority of the false teachers”. Unfortunately Prof. Bacchiocchi goes off course summarily, saying, “Paul is challenging the authority of the false teachers to legislate on the manner of their observance”. (“**Their**” referring to “the festivals” or to “the Colossian believers” or to the “false teachers”?) Paul would **not**, according to Prof. Bacchiocchi, “challenge the authority of the false teachers to legislate” – “**their right** to pass judgement”. Paul would **only** “challenge” their “authority to legislate on the **manner** of their observance”.

Prof. Bacchiocchi – no one knows how – in the end got it right, “The obvious implication then is that Paul in this text is expressing not a condemnation but an **approbation** of the mentioned practices, which include Sabbathkeeping” – and that is all that matters, really.

“It is noteworthy that even De Lacey reaches this conclusion, in spite of his view that Paul did not expect Gentile converts to observe the sabbath. He writes: “Here again (Col.2:16), then, it seems that Paul could happily countenance Sabbathkeeping ... However, we interpret the situation, Paul’s statement ‘Let no man pass judgement on you’, indicates that no stringent regulations are to be laid down over the use of the festivals”.”

In this I find nothing of which can be protested except for its irrelevancy to the issue. The relevant situation, however, should be interpreted, Paul’s statement “Let no man pass judgement on you ...”, indicates that Paul – **at that point in time of the history of the Church** – **dismisses worldly or philosophic (syncretistic) prohibition** of the festivals and **condones the festivals in the face of the adversary** of the Body the Church. Christians are the Freemen of Christ!

8.2.5.17.

“Regulated”, Or, Free Reign?

“What is the nature of the ‘regulations’ promoted by the false teachers regarding the way to eat ... ?” (113 bottom)

In the light of the fact Prof. Bacchiocchi mentions right opposite on the left hand bottom page 112, “the fact that the judge who passes judgement is not Paul but Colossian false teachers who impose regulations”, it is **unnecessary** and **superfluous** to consider this question. It is unnecessary and superfluous because it has been shown beyond a doubt I trust that the “Colossian false teachers” are, **identical**, the “any”, the *tis*, the “world” of “philosophy” – the “philosophy” of

asceticism! And it has been shown I trust without a doubt that these “philosophers” desired no **adjustments** or substitutes for the “*festivals*” “*as such*”, as to the “*manner*” or as to kind. They had in view but one objective, to **lure away** from the Body and Head. They desired to “**dissect**” – to “heresify”, those who exactly by these “*festivals*” illustrated their allegiance to the **Body** that is Christ’s, and, who in their union and “bond” with the **Head** which is Christ Himself, **were** that Body that is Christ’s. Not surprising, Prof. Bacchiocchi could not help to notice the obvious absence of an explanation of the “*nature of the ‘regulations’*”. “*Regretfully*” (sic.), says he, “*Paul gives us only few hints*”. I daresay he gives none. Where Paul “*mentions ... ‘self-abasement and worship of angels’ ‘rigor of devotion ... severity to the body’ (2:18, 23) and that they taught: ‘Do not handle, Do not taste, Do not touch’ (2:21) ... the catch phrases indicate*” NOT “*the regulations*” on the “*observance of the festivals*”, but the “philosophy”, the “world” and its “principles”, and the “doctrines of man”. They all indicate **the foe of Christ and of his Body** and the things by which it attempts inroads into the Church in order to **snatch out** of the Church and to **carry away** to “philosophy” any not thoroughly “**rooted and built up in Him, established in faith**”. Immediately after having said, “... triumphing over them in it”, Paul warns, “Let no man judge you in food ... feasting ...!” It like a refrain emphasises **what the Church enjoys in Christ** and in his fullness and satisfaction. Don’t let the world spoil and deprive you of it!

8.2.5.18.

No Mixture

These catch phrases (Touch not! ...) indicate that the regulations did not derive from the Levitical law since nowhere does the latter contemplate such an ascetic program. 114 ba)

Prof. Bacchiocchi connects the fetish peculiarities of **pretenders** with the free enjoyment of the **righteous**, and imagines a resultant mixture or “*syncretism*”. **Nowhere**, just as the Levitical Law “*nowhere contemplates an ascetic program*”, does Paul contemplate “*regulations*” or “*an ascetic program*” “**with regard to meat, drink, feasts ...**”. Very clearly in fact, Paul **indicates**, quite **literally**, as to where the “*festivals*” “*derive from*”. The meats and the feasts are **mutually dependant** aspects of “*Levitical law*”. Paul addresses the Church “in (the matter of) **meats** (and) **drink**”, in fact “in respect of the eating (and) drinking **of** feasts, **of** new moons and **of** sabbath days”. “**Belonging to**” – Genitive! Certainly these are festal occasions “**to which pertains foods and drink**”. That **identifies** and **limits** the “*matters*” as “**these things**” of “*Levitical law*”. Also, as Prof. Bacchiocchi points out himself, “*The nomenclature of the festivals is Jewish*” that is, it is the Old Testament **collective name** for these Old Testament “*practices*”. See Scriptures given above. Having established the “nature” of the relevant “sabbaths”, it naturally follows that “*since the Levitical law nowhere contemplates an ascetic program*” “in respect of” the “sabbaths”, they would

not suite any “*ascetic regulations*”. The Sabbaths, on the contrary, would be most **undesired** in any “*ascetic program*” and consequently would directly and sternly be **opposed** by the “*false teachers*” and be **irreconcilable** with **their** ascetic “philosophy”.

8.2.5.19. **Broader Context**

The “sabbaths” and “new moons” and “feasts” of Colossians 2:16 are **in the broader context** the **free** opposites of the **fetishes** of verses 21-22. Although “these things” “in respect of” which “no man should judge you” “**are but a shadow**”, they remain, because they “are” – Present ordinary and not Perfect but Continuous (*estin*). And although they are but a shadow, they nonetheless are a shadow “of the body **that is Christ’s**”. They are not of “the doctrines and falsities of man” by which “man” of the “world” all along “beguiles” the Church “not to hold to the Head”. The “heretic” is a man of one ambition, to **sever**. In Colossus he used all his resources of “power”, “philosophy”, “sophistry” etc. to cause to “let go” the Body the Church from “*the Head from which the whole Body by joints and bands is administered nourishment and through which it gets strong and grows with the growth God gives.*”

This is the “shadow” of “these things” the “sabbaths” were of a **kind**.

From this – not accidentally, but consequently, Paul infers, ‘*Wherefor, if ye be dead with Christ If it is true that Christ hath quickened you together with Him having forgiven you all trespasses (verse 13), the implication is singly positive, brethren, that, if what has thus far been discussed are applicable to you, if ye be dead with Christ, then it may justly be concluded that you are a member of the Body*’. “If therefore then ye be dead with Christ ...”, it follows, not accidentally but consequently, that you are dead “from the important things of the world”. “Now if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, WHY, as though living in the world have **the important things of the world** such a hold on you? Fetishes like Touch not! Taste not! Treat not! – doctrines that **all presently affect corruption in its very practice**, exactly as the teachings of men would persuade you to do – which things indeed have the impression of being wise, but wise in its own stubborn worship and haughty in its own humility, not in any honour, but to the satisfaction of the flesh”. (This as near as literal I think it is possible to translate verses 20 to 23.)

The **fetishes** of verses 21-22 are the **grim contextual opposites** of the “**feasting** (“meats” and “drink”) of the (yearly) **occasions** for feasting, the monthly feasts” and (naturally, weekly) “Rests” of Colossians 2:16. The fetishes are the “philosophic” answer of **ascetic** “*nature*” to the “Old Testament” “feasts” of **Christian spirit and symbolism**. The first is not the “*manner*” of the last – not even its perversion! The two are **exclusive ideologically as well as practically ... and contextually and in terms of plain language**. “The doctrines and falsities of man” “**are presently**

affecting your corruption in its very practice", **2:22**. The two oppose each other, and in no sense and in **no** "*aspect*" emerge from the same Body, complementing each other. "Philosophy" (the "*false teachings*") is "**possessed**" with the "body of the flesh" and in 3:5 Paul specifically mentions sins of "inordinate affection" characteristic of these "on the earth" propensities or "members". The fetishes reach the ambit of "fetishism". Paul elsewhere describes the "nature" of these sins as "**sin against one's own body**" (1Cor.6:18) meaning, to its **physical detriment**. So, yes, Paul does "*give us (a) few hints*" at "*the nature of the regulations*" the "**world**" had up its sleeve for the Church. (p. 113 / 114) *To put it crudely*, it had more to do with immorality than with feasts and had nothing to do with regulations on top of feasts of devotion.

Under these assaults from outside the Church lives its **normal** life, a normal life "in respect of eating, drinking, new moons and rest". "These things **are**" **Church**-life normal. But **only part** of normal Church-life, of course. The "*practices*" of "these things" show what it is all about – "these things (eating, feasting) are" **about Christ** who "triumphed over **them**" the **destroyer** of the Body the Church. "These things (the feasts)" are of symbolic value and validity, of spiritual reality and reality: the **abode** of Jesus Christ on earth! "These things", that consist in "feasting, in monthly repose and the weekly rest", characterise the "Principality and Power" which is **Jesus**'. It, namely, "YOU", are "complete in Him", **2:10**. What belongs to Christ cannot be confused for what belongs to perdition.

The **ordinary** – the "things" taken for granted in the life of the Church like the shadow of the body is taken for granted in the existence of the living organism – indeed simply prove **there is this Reality and this Reality**. It is prove of the Reality and the Realty of the **Body** – "the **Abode that is Christ's**", his **Church!**

As the Church is in the world yet not of the world, so even "philosophy", the "world", may be in the Church yet not of the Church. Such a situation **neither** in Rome **nor** in Colossus **exactly** existed. In **Rome** the opposing parties were both still brothers in Christ; their motivation and devotion notwithstanding their sin, "to the Lord" and "in gratefulness to God"; their motivation and devotion notwithstanding, both guilty of sin "worthy of death". (See above, Par. 8.2.1.)

In **Colossus** inroads were in fact made by the "world". Paul **could** cry out, "*Why, as though you live in the world are you subject to petty rules?* – speaking to the Church!" **But that at the same time is Paul's reminder** to the Church, '*You are **not** living in the world! You should act like Christians because you **are** Christians, and are **not** to be misled and **perhaps** be severed from your Head, Jesus Christ – through the misleading of these "wise men of the world"! You are the **Free** Subjects of the dominion of **Christ**, not the bewitched subjects of the destroyed, spoiled and*

vanquished principality or dominion of the world!” “Therefore!” says Paul, ‘Let no man (of the “world” whom Christ “openly put to shame”) judge you (in your normal “walk worthy of the Lord” (1:10), and “joying beholding your order” (2:5) and Faith (1:23, 4)! Paul just as well of the “aspect” of Church-order and Faith of “food, drink, feast, new moon and rest”, could have said, “Continue and watch in it”, as “in prayer”, 4:2! ‘As long as you **maintain perspective** (verse 17) in these things and don’t make of it the Body – food and drink are not the Kingdom of God! The shadow belongs to the **Body** and the Body belongs to **Christ. The Lord** belongs not to the Church neither belongs the Church to the shadow! The **Lord is Owner – He is not owned.**’ We are Christ’s slaves and He is not our servant ... although He served us and still serves us as **only the Lord Jesus** would. Just so, even though the Church serves not the Sabbath but it serves the Church, the Church honours the Sabbath ... as indeed the Lord Jesus did.

8.2.5.20.

“Kept for the sake of ‘the elements of the universe’”

In direct contradiction to our conclusion, Eduard Lohse in Bacchiocchi’s opinion “perceptively notes”, “In the context of Colossians, the command to keep festival, new moon, and sabbath is not based on the Torah according to which Israel received the sabbath as a sign of her election from among the nations. Rather the sacred days must be kept for the sake of ‘the elements of the universe’ who direct the course of the stars and also prescribe minutely the order of the calendar . . . The ‘philosophy’ made use of terms which stemmed from Jewish tradition, but which had been transformed in the crucible of syncretism to be subject to the service of ‘the elements of the universe’.” (p. 114, c)

Lohse “perceptively notes”? “Perceptively”, only because agreement of views? “In the context of Colossians, the command to keep festival, new moon, and sabbath is not based on the Torah”? In Col.2:16 there exists no **direct** “command to keep festival”. Yet Paul presupposes the original institution of “festival” as being “based on the Torah”. In Col.2:16 there **also**, exists no “command” **not** “to keep festival”. In Col.2:16 Paul “commands”, “**you**” the Church, “**should not let / should not allow**” “**any**” “man” / “philosophy”, “**to judge**” (for which word I cannot find an equivalent), “**you**” the Church. Let us abide to Scripture if what we are able to say cannot but corrupt it. “The command to keep festival, new moon, and sabbath” – “in the context of Colossians,” “is not based on the Torah” but immediately on the **circumstance in the Church in the city in the time**. And it is a “command” and indeed **by implication** a “command to keep festival” etc. “**not based on the Torah**” as document of origin, but based on **Paul’s apostolic “ministration”**,

“whereof I, Paul, am made a minister” (2:19, 1:25).

(And, by the way, “*Israel received the sabbath as a sign of her election from among the nations*” not as “in the flesh” or “according to the circumcision of the flesh”. Israel received the sign for as long as “*her election from among the nations*” as the spiritual habitation of God, “House of Israel”, would last, and that is as long as the “*election from among the nations*”, the “ecclesia” **the Body that is Christ’s**, shall be.)

“*Rather the sacred days must be kept for the sake of ‘the elements of the universe’*”. Lohse propagates the very **apostasy** of the Galatian Church that wasn’t applicable to the Church in Colossus. In any case not as far as can be made out from the Letter to the Colossians. We cannot draw up our own “inventory” and create a “written document against and contrary to” the Congregation of Colossus – not while Christ has wiped it out completely and it is not even reflected or suggested in this Letter on paper.

That “*sacred days must be kept for the sake of ‘the elements of the universe’*” openly contradicts Paul’s whole plea on behalf of the Freeman of Christ. And one should understand not a “*command*” in these words, but a **plea** on behalf of the **Church** and at the same time a **denouncement** of the “**philosophy**” that attempts this hideous detraction on Christ’s Body.

“*The ‘philosophy’ made use of terms which stemmed from Jewish tradition, but which had been transformed in the crucible of syncretism to be subject to the service of ‘the elements of the universe’.*”

Colossians 2:16 consists of Paul’s words in the direct voice, “Therefore let no man ...”. Lohse says – according to Prof. Bacchiocchi, quite “*perceptively*” – that “*the ‘philosophy’ made use of terms*”. Lohse says the same subject, “*‘philosophy’*”, “*transformed*” these “*terms*” “*in the crucible of syncretism*.” But Paul wrote the Letter himself, and must have collected from “*the crucible of syncretism*” the scruff for the formulation of the appeal he here vents. And he does so for the purpose that the “*terms ... had been transformed in the crucible of syncretism to be subject to the service of ‘the elements of the universe’.*” Lohse’s “*terms*” indicate “*festival, new moon, and sabbath*”, and “*festival, new moon, and sabbath*”, “*had been transformed in the crucible of syncretism to be subject to the service of ‘the elements of the universe’.*” “*... The sacred days must be kept for the sake of ‘the elements of the universe’.*” That means that Paul pleaded for subjection through “*festival, new moon, and sabbath*” of the Church “*to the service of ‘the elements of the universe’*”. And so doing Paul acted one of, if not chief, of the “*false teachers*”, and worked toward **their** aims, as no other could equal, even having infiltrated the very Apostolic Authority of Scripture!

[A certain Professor of Theology once wrote to me, that when he cannot understand something, he throws it in the ashtray – just like that – with gleeful contempt I am sure! But I after some time came to realise that what he understands but cannot take, he throws in the ashtray. And, so it seems to me for tangible reason, what he cannot understand but can take, he endorses and promotes with much acclaim! Yes, many praise him for it and even the Pope bestows much honour upon the man.]

Prof. Bacchiocchi continues, p. 114, c, Heading: *“Condemnation of Perversion. ... In the case of the Colossian ‘philosophy’, the dietary taboos and the observance of sacred times were apparently regarded as an expression of subjection to and worship of the cosmic powers (elements) of the universe.”*

Prof. Bacchiocchi repeats Lohse’s fancies.

There is no qualitative, intrinsic connection or similarity between ‘*philosophy*’ of “*dietary taboos*” and “*sacred times*” referred to in Col.2: 21-22 and in verse 16. “*Dietary taboos*” and “*sacred times*” in every respect of kind, character and practice were unrelated and uninfluenced by each other. **They were opposing “philosophies”**. Paul not only condones but defends the one and rejects the other; sees the one as of the Church that is of Christ, and the other as of the teaching that is of the world. The one, as long as the body remains, remains its shadow and with it moves and grows as being a spectre of what is to become of the Church. The other, as long as “fashion” sticks, “spends itself”. The one is to the nourishment of the Body, to its unity and bonding to the Head. The other “philosophy” is to dissection and dislodging from the Head and the Body. The one is free and joyous in labour and in rest – Christ having spoilt all principalities that oppose it. The other is under bondage to the neglect of the body and its satisfying in things dishonourable and distressing. The one is based on victory and triumph over the rule and power of condemnation; the other have but a show of wisdom and brags self-worship. To summarise: The one concerns the Body – with a capital letter; the other the body of flesh. Besides – technically speaking – the fetishes of verses 21-22 imply “touch not”, “treat not”, and, “taste not” – thrice have nothing to do with “eating or with drinking; thrice exhibits no similarity with “feasts, months or sabbaths in respect of eating or of drinking”. It may well imply (it does not state) the prohibition of anything of the kind of feast. Thus the ‘*philosophy*’ of “*dietary taboos*”, to repeat what we have pointed out above, **through its very negation and abnegation** of the body of “food and drink”, makes of “food and drink” the kingdom and realm of the “principality” “of the world” and the “principle” of the “doctrines of man”.

8.2.5.21.

Neither Directly Nor Indirectly

*“Paul’s warning against the ‘regulations’ of the false teachers can hardly be interpreted as a condemnation of Mosaic laws regarding food and festivals, since what the Apostle condemns is not the teachings of Moses but **their perverted use by the Colossian false teachers**. A precept is not nullified by the condemnation of its perversion.”* (p. 114, d) (Emphasis CGE)

Prof. Bacchiocchi first formulates the hypothesis that Paul supposes that *false teachers* “*imposed* (p. 112 bottom) *‘regulations’ on how to observe these practices (food, feasts ... sabbaths)* and that they “*perverted (its) use*”. Prof. Bacchiocchi then goes on – hypothetically – that Paul distinguishes between the **corruption** or ‘*regulations*’ “*regarding*” the “*food and festivals*” and the “*food and festivals*” as such or as considered pure “*Mosaic laws*” or “*teachings of Moses*”. Paul actually then is “*warning against*” the **corruption**, against the ‘*regulations*’ and the “*perverted use*”. But there is absolutely no mention, indication, inference or suggestion as to Prof. Bacchiocchi’s assumption that Paul in terms of and with reference to “*Mosaic laws regarding food and festivals*”, was “*warning against the ‘regulations’ of the false teachers*”. Paul is “*warning against*”, ‘*regulations*’, and, “*perversion*” . . . *per se*. ‘*Regulations*’, and, “*perversion*” being the “philosophy”, the “wisdom of the world”, the “doctrines of man” etc. etc. Paul is **never** “*warning against*” “*teachings of Moses*” directly or indirectly.

*“**Shadow of Reality.** Paul continues his argument in the following verse, saying, “These are the shadow of what is to come: but the substance belongs to Christ” (Col.2:17). To what does the relative pronoun “these” (ha in Greek) refer? Does it refer to the five practices mentioned in the previous verse or to the “regulations” (dogmata) regarding these practices promoted by the false teachers?”*

Prof. Bacchiocchi further reasons on the basis of his supposition that “*the “regulations” (dogmata) regard... these practices ... the five practices mentioned in the previous verse*” (verse 16). One, in order to find out *to what the relative pronoun “these” refer, has to distinguish between two things*. The one is “*the five practices mentioned*”, and the other, the supposedly supposed “*regulations*” (dogmata) **regarding these practices**” – **not** mentioned and for all the money of the world, not contextually, linguistically, inferentially, relatively, relevantly or however, **there**, in verse 16. Common sense demands if these are the things to decide between, the relative pronoun “these” can **only** refer to “*the five practices mentioned ...*” in verse 16.

Prof. Bacchiocchi announces, “*In a previous study*” on the question, “*Does (the pronoun “these”) refer to the five practices mentioned in the previous verse or to the “regulations” (dogmata) regarding these practices promoted by the false teachers?*”, “*I argued for the former,*

*suggesting that Paul places dietary practices and the observance of days “in their proper perspective with Christ by means of the contrast ‘shadow-body’ ”. Additional reflection has caused me to change my mind and to agree with E. Lohse that the relative pronoun “these” (ha) refers **not** to the **five** mentioned practices as such, but rather to the “regulations” regarding such practices promoted by the false teachers.” (p.115, a)*

Paul “refers to” **one** “practice as such” – “eating” and “drinking”, in fact the “eating or drinking (customs) with regard to feasts, new moons or Sabbaths”.

Paul actually do refer to this practice, and in no manner “to the “regulations” regarding such practices promoted by the false teachers”.

Prof. Bacchiocchi’s previous and recent “suggestions” are essentially no different. Both are based on an answer supplied even before the question could be formulated properly. “I argued for the former, suggesting that Paul places **dietary practices** and the observance of days “in their proper perspective ...”. Into Lohse’s “crucible of syncretism” is first poured “the five mentioned (Mosaic) practices as such”, then are added “dietary taboos” (114 c), then in comes the “element” of “regulations promoted by the false teachers” before the juggling into “proper perspective” is started. Then to the fall of the dice one may decide or change one’s mind and again decide either this or that. But essentially the mix-up starts with the whimsical introduction of “dietary taboos”. Just label “dietary taboos”, “regulations promoted by the false teachers” (- the same thing!) and voila! “these things”!

The pronoun “these (things)” **cannot** refer to the “regulations regarding such practices promoted by the false teachers”, simply because “such practices” as “dietary taboos” or “dietary practices” (Which now, “taboos” or “practices”?) are in **no manner** mentioned, referred to, or even suggested in verse 16. They are in no manner mentioned, referred to, or even suggested **in verse 16**, in **any** of the **foregoing** verses or in **any** of the verses **after** – **not until verse 21!** And, most importantly, the relation in the end drawn between the **two things** mentioned in the **two places**, is one of **contrast** and of **opposing** and **excluding** concepts or “principles”. One of “worldly” “rule”, the other of the “rule of God and peace”; the one “in will worship”, the other “in your hearts” (3:15, 2:13-15).

“A Reference to “Regulations.” This conclusion is supported by two considerations. First, in verse 16, Paul is not warning against the merits or demerits of the Mosaic law regarding food and festivals, but rather against the “regulations” regarding these practices advocated by the false teachers. Thus, it is more plausible to take “the regulations” rather than the actual practices as the antecedent of “these”.

*“Paul is not warning against ... the “regulations” whatsoever. Paul warns the Church personally and directly as he warns the “false teachers” – “any man” personally but indirectly, against “judging” the Church, against putting the Church in the dock for “these things that are the shadow of the Body that is Christ’s (the Church) ”! But mark, Not the shadow of the Body as I have here stated, to be exact, but **this** shadow of **this** Body which is Christ’s, “coming”, unflinching “growing with the increase of God”! What you **now** see, o self-conceited judge, o man of the world, o philosophy, o wisdom, “is (but) a shadow of **that which is coming**, of **this** Body which is Christ’s! His Kingdom shall fill the earth! “These (things)” can refer to nothing else on earth. It is the very opposite of the “regulations”. One could rather attempt to disprove the Body is Christ’s Church than to question the fact that “these things are the spectre of this **Body** that is Christ’s **as it shall be**.*

The “*false teachers’ regulations*” **are** in fact supposed and referred to in 2:16, **not** as Prof. Bacchiocchi claims in “these (things)” – *ha*, but in the pronoun *tis*, “any (man)”! *Paul is warning against the “regulations” as personified in this* pronoun. And he warns: “*Do not o man, o philosophy, o principles of the world – tis, judge the Church which is Christ’s Body even though at this moment in its history it is but the shadow of what (it) is to (be)come, indeed the Body which is Christ’s increased with the increase of God!*” And to the Church, Paul says, ‘*Don’t let any of these false teachers or their teachings judge you in your freedom after Christ has “triumphed over them” all! Don’t let any of these false teachers or their false teachings judge you in your by the doctrines of man, unbecoming feasting on yearly, monthly and even weekly reposes of Sabbath rests. Christ obtained rest, has finished God’s work, has entered into His own rest. Don’t let any man or principality or power rob you of this freedom which He has attained for you.*’ The tenet of the imperative goes against the idea, ‘*Don’t let them prescribe to you HOW to feast your feasts or be judged!*’ or, ‘*Don’t let them prescribe to you TO FEAST your feasts or be judged!*’ (or, “No one should prescribe to you to keep the Sabbath”. See above, Par. 6.2.2.1.5.3.) The tenet as well as the wording, the context as well as Paul’s own practice, show he means, ‘**Don’t BE INTIMIDATED by these false teachers NOT to feast your feasts!**’ Paul says, literally, “Let no man (“*false teachers*”) therefore **judge you** (not your “*manners*”, not your “*sabbaths*”, but **you!**) in meat, or in drink, or, in respect of meat, or, in respect of meat or drink of feasts, of new moons, or of sabbath days”! **You**, are the Free of Christ!

“Second, in the verses that immediately follow, Paul continues his warning against the deceptive teachings, saying, for example, “Let no one disqualify you, insisting on self-abasement ...” (2:18); “Why do you submit to regulations, ‘Do not handle, Do not taste, Do not touch’ “

(2:20-21)?”

To prove that “*it is more plausible to take “the regulations” rather than the actual practices as the antecedent of “these”*”, Prof. Bacchiocchi claims, “*Paul continues his warning ... in the verses that immediately follow*”. **Only** verse 18, and **not** verse **19** – **which is pivotal**, is occupied with “*the deceptive teachings*”. And in verse 18, as Prof. Bacchiocchi notes himself, there is no mention of either “*dietary practices*” or “*dietary taboos*” or “*dietary rules*” (p. 117 c), only “*the deceptive teachings*”. **Where is the connection** between, “food or drink ... food or drink in respect of holy days ...or sabbath days”, and, **1**, “*self-abasement*”, **2**, “*worship of angels*” and **3**, “*mystery solving*”?

How is it possible to insist on connection of these three “doctrines” or “philosophies” or “principles” **of verse 18** with “these things” – *ha*, **of verse 16** while it is difficult just to find connection with known and understood ideas **in order to translate** them? These concepts are so strange no one has ever been able to say exactly what they indicate. Yet Prof. Bacchiocchi claims there is an “*immediate*” connection between them and the “*Mosaic*” “*practices*” of verse 16, because the “*false teachers*” “*imposed*” such “*regulations*” on them! The “*Mosaic*” “*practices*”, as shown above, were **well known** and **understood** quite clearly for what they were – but not according to Prof. Bacchiocchi! According to him, “*the data provided by Colossians are too meagre to answer this question (What kind of Sabbath?) conclusively. Yet the nature of the heresy allows us to draw some basic conclusions.*” (p. 117 b) (Emphasis CGE) Scripture is unclear, but Prof. Bacchiocchi possesses basic and conclusive insights. It was a sad day that “*we*”, Christians, must “*draw*” our “*basic conclusions*” from “*the nature of the heresy*” because “*the data provided by Colossians (the Scriptures) are too meagre to answer this question*”.

Prof. Bacchiocchi ignores verse 17. Paul does **not**. Paul does **not** “*continue his warning*” in verse 18. He warns **anew** and **again** after he in verse 17 had drawn the true and real relation between the festive “practices” of **the Church** and its ultimate **end and aim**, the Body or **Church** that is **Christ’s** (and not the world’s). Instead of being mentioned for being **related** concepts, Paul refers to the philosophic trinity of verse 18 as the specific **threatening opposite** of the dominion or “Body” which is Christ’s”. He actually interrupts and parenthetically inserts a crucial warning: “Let no man beguile you of your reward” – **verily the reward that is this Body that is Christ’s!** Verse **17** described the “**reward**” about which Paul warns the Church: the **Body** and its **Lord-Owner!** Don’t “let go” of your “prize”, your Head and King, and of your Realty, the Body, your only true abode on earth. Nothing **else** is the believers’ “reward”! The believers’ reward is the teaching of Jesus and of the Kingdom of God; it is the Gospel! Else you indeed will be “misled”

and brought under the oppressive god of the world, the “philosophic” trinity as described in verse 18! **which has nothing to do with “these things” of verse 17 and 16.**

Instead of any connection or resemblance between the concepts of verses **16** (feasts, Sabbaths and feasting) and verses **18** (philosophic trinity) there is this **positive** connection, resemblance, and relation between verse **17** and **19**. Between “Body” of which Christ is **Owner** – Genitive – v.17, and **Head** – v.19; which “is near” / “**approaching**” / “imminent” – v.17, is “increasing with the **increase** of God” – v.19. And there is this **negative** connection, resemblance and relation between verse 18 and 17 as just described above and elsewhere several times. Then again connection may legitimately be drawn between verse **18** (philosophic trinity, “false humility”, “angels’ worship” and “things invisible being intruded” / “initiates’ prerogatives”) and the section from verse **20b** to verse **23**. **This section**, verse **20b** to verse **23**, “rudiments of the world ... ordinances (like) Touch not! Taste not! Treat not! ...”, might reasonably be assumed as a **further description** of the specialities of the philosophic trinity of verse 18. And it includes **but one** reference to “dietary taboos”, namely “**taste** not”. “Data” as pertaining “*the nature of the heresy allows us to draw*” **almost no “conclusions”** and **certainly no “basic”** ones and **especially** not much on “dietary taboos”.

“Since what precedes and what follows that relative pronoun “these” (ha) deals with the ‘regulations’ of the Colossian ‘philosophy’, we conclude that it is the latter that Paul describes as ‘a shadow of what is to come’ (2:17).” (p. 115 d)

We, despite, must conclude – for these reasons of contextual relevancy, *what precedes and what follows the relative pronoun “these” – ha, deals with **what Paul says** it deals with. What precedes and what follows that relative pronoun “these” (ha) deals with “**feasting ... feasts ...” and “the nearing, coming Body that is Christ’s”!*** “*The ‘regulations’ of the Colossian ‘philosophy’*” have nothing to do with “**these things**”! They must be seen instead as being personified in the pronoun, *tis* “anybody” that might try to “judge You”, Christ’s Body.

Paul with the indefinite pronoun *tis*, though, **do have** in mind this ‘*philosophy*’ or “man” of the “world”. He, with his ‘regulations’ and all, at the time was not “*to come*”, but **actually** “judged” and condemned “you”, the “Body”, for being the Freemen under the “rule and power” of the “Head”, **Christ**, and not under the “rule and power” of the “dominion of darkness”.

Prof. Bacchiocchi places over against each other the “*regulations ... of the proponents of the Colossian ‘philosophy’* (that) *represented a copy which enabled the believer to have access to reality (“fulness”). ... Paul is turning their argument against them by saying that **their regulations are only a shadow of what is to come; but the substance belongs to Christ** (2:17)*”. (p. 115 e) Prof. Bacchiocchi’s presentation of **the nature of the “philosophy”** could be realistic – that it claimed a

“fullness” that **Paul** claims only could be received freely “in Christ” because of **His ... forgiveness of sins! Such a “fullness” the philosophers denied and that was the reason they judged the Christians FOR THEIR CELEBRATING IN IT, and Paul judged THEM for judging the Church in its celebrating! It all was an issue over salvation – its basis, its event, its effect and its answer returned its Source, Activator and Finisher. Its answer (from its basis) included eating and feasts!**

“Their regulations ‘are only a shadow of what is to come; but the substance belongs to Christ’ ” is a **contradiction in terms**. Not Prof. Bacciocchi only, but the **translators** who translate verse 17 in the words, *“but the substance”* must wear blinds for not seeing it. To say that “these things” = *“regulations of philosophy”*, is *“... a shadow of what is to come”*, yet = *“but”*, *“the substance”* = the ‘noun’ this ‘pro-noun’ stands ‘for’ = **“reality** that casts the shadow / **is** the shadow’s, *“but belongs”* not to **it**, *“but”* *“to Christ”*, means “these things” – *ha*, **cannot** be the relative pronoun of *“regulations of philosophy”*.

We have already shown above that **“but”** is not the right word to use for the Greek’s article and the conjunctive, *to de* – which **emphatically**, will not **contrast** and **distinguish**, but will **relate** and **confirm**: **“indeed! / in fact!”** : *“these things are a shadow of the approaching – indeed of the Body that is Christ’s!”*

“In the light of the above indications, we conclude (again) that what Paul calls a “bygone shadow”, is not the Sabbath but the deceptive teachings of the Colossian ‘philosophy’ which promoted dietary practices and the observance of sacred times as auxiliary aids to salvation”. (p. 116 a)

Paul calls nothing a *“bygone shadow”*. As we have already established. He speaks of an in his day cast shadow, cast by an-in-its-approach-occurring-“thing”, its “Body-being-that-which-belongs-to-Christ”. Paul says this and saying this indicates, verifies, what it **“is”** – *estin*, **not** “was”, and **not in what manner something else**. **“IT IS”** – **THE CHURCH**, unmistakable!

“These things” can but be “the foods, the drinks, the feasts, the new moons and the sabbaths”, they being “a shadow-of-the-Church-the-Body-that-is-Christ’s, “Pertaining to” “these things”, the **world’s philosophy judges “you” – the Church**. Nothing of *“these things”* “belongs to the **world**”, “is **of the world**” and is **not** “of **Christ**” or not “after **Christ**”.

Looking at “these things”, “the foods, the drinks, the feasts, the new moons and the sabbaths” from the viewpoint of **Paul**, one cannot help but notice that **Ezekiel** 45:17 is the only of the five Old Testament Scriptures that *reverses* the *“logical and progressive sequence”*. And one wonders why? And me think because Ezekiel thereby places greater emphasis on the “Blotting out /

oblation of sin” and the “Provision for sin” and “the Prince’s part” and the “cleansing of his Sanctuary” and the “pastures” and the “House of Israel”! And me think if no man can see he must have eyes seeing but sees not **who** is concerned in this method employed by both Ezekiel and Paul. Paul would use the “reverse order”, “feast, new moon, Sabbath”, **because he looks back**, whereas the four of earlier Old Testament times looked forward, while **Ezekiel was so near**, he, as Paul once said, “reaches forward as though to take hold”.

“Feasts” should be what in the four earlier references comes last. Prof. Bacchiocchi observes, “*in the Septuagint the annual ceremonial Sabbaths are ... always designated with the compound expression ‘Sabbath of Sabbaths’ (sabbata sabbatohn)*”. (p. 116 c) “Feasts” actually stands for the Great Day of the Feast Season. We have noticed and noted in our studies on Romans 14:5-6 that the “days” there and all the other indications describe the Passover. In Colossians though **all** the Feasts are implied and supposed. “New Moons” and “sabbaths” for no reason why not, and for every contextual reason, were just that, The “New Moons” and the “Sabbaths” that were any and or specific other “Sabbaths” of those festive Seasons. Nevertheless there is no reason why Paul had not in mind also the **weekly** Sabbath, seeing he does not directly have the “**days**” in mind, but the **celebrations** that **accompanied** the occasions or “Feast-occasions”, “New Moon-occasions” or “occasions of Sabbaths”-**rest!**

“The fact that the plural is used in the Scripture to designate not only the seventh day Sabbath but also the week as a whole ... Mark 16:, Luke 24:1, Acts 20:7 ... ”. (p. 116 bottom)

“The plural is used” is certainly not *per se* “*to designate ... the week as a whole*”. In none of these texts is the “*whole week*” its meaning, but a **specific day** “of the week” – in every instance the **First** Day. The specific meaning does not derive from the plural, but from the **number** the day gets within its relation to the “*whole week*” – in all the instances referred, “the **First** Day of the week”. The use of the **plural** is **conditional** in such a construction and will in fact **always, not** refer to the Sabbath – **the day to which reference is made when indicating which day of the week.** The plural **when used with the numeral** other than the “seventh”, **always** will refer to any **one** of the **other** “*week-days*” with reference to the main day of that cycle of days, the Seventh Day. The plural when used by itself, will **never** indicate or refer to “*week-days in general*”. **It is incomprehensible how Prof. Bacchiocchi could prefer the contrary!**

The fact that Paul in **Galatians 4:10** does **not** use the word “sabbaths” but the word “days” implies that he means **days in general** – so “**general**” they cannot even be called “*week-days in general*” (p. 117 top). But how does Prof. Bacchiocchi manage to infer, “*The fact that the Galatian list begins with “days” ... suggests the possibility that the “sabbaths” in Colossians may also refer*

to week-days in general rather than the seventh-day Sabbath in particular?” By the mere and **alleged** “*fact that the Galatian list **begins with “days”***.” (p. 117 a) What logic! All the important “facts” the different Letters “*suggest*”, making such a comparison and conclusion as Prof. Bacchiocchi here puts forward simply **impossible**, he suddenly **forgets**. The obvious fact of the different terminology he simply **ignores**, and the Professor unequivocally claims the “*lists*” are identical but for their order of “*sequence*”.

“Assuming for the sake of inquiry that the ‘sabbaths’ in Colossians do refer to or include the Sabbath day, the question to be considered is; What kind of Sabbath observance would the false teachers advocate? The data provided by Colossians are too meagre to answer this question conclusively. Yet the nature of the heresy allows us to draw some basic conclusions.” (p. 117 b)

Bacchiocchi’s final word? It is this: “**Heresy**”! And the heresy was this: A “*kind of Sabbath observance*”! It was a “*kind of Sabbath observance ... the false teachers advocate(d)*”. So the Church who fell for “*the false teachers*”, erred, and they therein came under judgement – under Paul’s judgement. According to Prof. Bacchiocchi, that is.

“The question to be considered is: What kind of Sabbath observance would the false teachers advocate?” The Letter calls for no such question, not here, nor elsewhere. The inquirer for the sake of inquiry should be kept within limits by the “*data provided*”. No word, no circumstance, no provocation occurs or exists in this Letter that could suggest an issue or debate or ideological clash or discussion over “*what kind of Sabbath observance the false teachers would advocate*”, or *what kind of Sabbath observance*, Paul, or any Church member or members *would advocate* or discourage or prohibit. The **Question** is uncalled for. The question, even just “*for the sake of inquiry*”, is unjustified.

In all fairness though it might be asked, “How would the **Church** have celebrated its Sabbath days, and, considering the particular circumstances of their worship and state of constitution, or “order”, how would the **Church** also have celebrated its **weekly** Sabbaths? And the answer would come **easy and unforced**, and, **relevant**: They feast and they keep Sabbaths celebrating, eating, drinking, even observing new moons for feasting! **It is as integral of their worship as prayer and reading** – see Acts 15! But in exactly such freedom do they infinitely frustrate the meddlesome philosophers who heap on them injustice and judgement for it. **‘Now I, Paul, will have none of their judging the Body of Christ in respect of its eating, drinking, feasts, new moons or Sabbaths. You, dear brethren, observe and feast, but to the honour of the Head which is Christ and thank God – in and through and while you eat or drink or feast or new moon or rest. You have every reason for it, seeing what Christ did for you! And look ahead at what is in store for you, even the hope of glory, because what you now are and the things you now do, are but**

*the shadow of things to come, even that Body, Christ's, when with Him and in Him and He in you, He will be all in all! Don't be persuaded from this your reward by any man because they are worshippers of strange gods and subjects of another rule and power! **No man is entitled or qualified to disqualify you by any standards or regulations but that of Jesus Christ the standard to which the Body that is Christ's is measured. Theirs is not yours and yours not their rule and power of which Christ is Head.***

Conclusion

What Prof. Bacchiocchi unambiguously wants to tell us – that by “sabbaths” Paul means “ordinary” “week-days”, “corrupted” by the “false teachers”, “is totally wrong”!

As for the real meaning of Colossians 2:16-17, The “shadow” – as Paul here uses the concept – should not be confused for something dogmaticians describe as dark and occult, which Christ “blotted out” and “took out of the way”. *Skia* should be understood **contextually**, that it is only identifiable with “**these things**” mentioned in verse 16 – that may as well imply the Sabbath, “these things” being THE SPECTRE OF THE CHURCH for what it **should become** in the dispensation of God because it is Christ's. (Cf. Hb.8:5, 10:1) A “shadow” (*skia*) is not something that comes and goes by itself. **As this Body appears** in the world and **this Head** is its **Light and Life, the shadow remains**, and **with the Body**, “**increases with the increase of God**”. (A shadow cannot exist without the Light shining upon the Body!)

Only after having discussed Galatians 4:8-10 does Prof. Bacchiocchi finally “conclude” the “conclusion” of his “conclusion” of his “conclusions” on the question of Colossians 2:16,

“In the crucial passage of Colossians 2:16, Paul's warning is not against the validity of observing festivals as such ... Implicitly, (in fact, directly,) Paul expresses approval rather than disapproval of their observance ...”. p.123c

The worst the Church **at this point in its history** and under its circumstance in the world of philosophic wisdom and power could have done was to show temerity and fear and to succumb to the “rule” and “doctrine” and “principles” of “man”, the “world” and “philosophy”. Precisely for this reason Paul encourages the Church with these words, “Let no man therefore judge you! Not in anything you do, be it to eat, or to drink, or to eat and drink to celebrate feasts, new moons or sabbath days. These offer but a **glimpse** of God's ideal for you, his Body, which, just imagine, **is Christ's!**”

Refer Appendix, ‘**A Positive Re-assessment of Colossians 2:16-17**’, Paragraph **8.2.6, p. 335f.**

Appendix (Colossians):

Gerhard Ebersöhn replies to
Robert Parker, who on Fri, 30 Aug 2002, wrote:

I quoted Ratzlaff:

<<If sabbatarians wish to promote the Sabbath by its association with the law (one of the Ten Commandments), then they should also be instructed regarding the cessation of the Sabbath by association with the law.>> ... Next to this statement I wrote in the margin, "Valid". The Sabbath indeed no longer is <<promoted>> <<by association with the law>> and in fact has ceased <<by association with the law>>.

Protests Robert,

<< This all sounds complicated reasoning. The only basis for seventh-day Sabbath keeping is that God created everything in 6 days (see Genesis 2:1-30; Exodus 20:8-11). ... >>

I then reply:

I first quoted an argument of Dale Ratzlaff:

<< If sabbatarians wish to promote the Sabbath by its association << with the law (one of the Ten Commandments), << then they should also be instructed regarding << the cessation of the Sabbath by association with the law...>>. I then proceeded to REPUTE its logic, as if talking to Ratzlaff, that if he would stick to his own reasoning, he'll find the true Christian basis of the Sabbath's validity.

Now allow me to answer you, dear Robert, that if it were true that

<< The only basis for seventh-day Sabbath keeping is that God created everything in 6 days>>,

then we Christians keep the Sabbath by reason of the Law and not by reason of what Christ has done. Which to me would have made the Sabbath and its keeping quite senseless and useless. And the principle for my saying so is exactly the Law's present and Christian validity! For Paul declares the Law is our discipline to Christ - it drives us to Him by reason of our always being its transgressor and our always being under its curse. So the Sabbath-Law cannot for the Christian be his motivation why he would keep the Sabbath. But Christ is the Christian's reason for and motivation of keeping the Sabbath. THE LAW DROVE US TO CHRIST; CHRIST DRIVES US TO THE LAW.

Here's the difference between the Sabbath of the Jew and the Sabbath of the Christian. The Jew keeps the Sabbath because he is constrained by the Law; the Christian keeps the Sabbath NOT

because he is constrained by the Law, but because he is constrained by Christ and the love and faith of Jesus! For although observing the same Day and the same Law, the Jew and the Christian enjoy quite different Rests of Sabbath.

My critique of the Christian keeping of the Sabbath Day - Seventh Day - is that it LACKS CHRISTIAN REASON. For the Law - though holy just and good and valid - DOES NOT AND CANNOT PROVIDE that <<promotion>> which the Sabbath NEEDS to be truly Christian faith. Neither does your reason, that

<<The only basis for seventh-day Sabbath keeping is that God created everything in 6 days>> ... "ONLY" with emphasis? I know of one Christian scholar - the highly esteemed Prof. Jürgen Moltmann of the University of Tübingen - who accepts the Sabbath's Christian validity for reason of its being and I quote, <<the Sabbath of the creation>>. His <<promotion>> of the Sabbath Day merely amounts to its usability to prevent an ecological disaster. He later in his life developed the concept of <<God's Shekina>> to explain the Sabbath as also a Christian thing.

To insist the creation gives the Sabbath its Christian validity - not the creation as an ESCHATOLOGICAL SIGN OF THE CHRIST-EVENT though;
to insist the creation gives the Sabbath its Christian validity while rejecting its ONLY possible Christian basis: the basis of God's having finished "all his works" in the Son in raising Him from the dead "IN SABBATH'S TIME" - such insistence CANNOT withstand the implication hidden in Ratzlaff's reasoning, that the Sabbath, if <<promoted by its association with the law>>, <<by association with the law>>, has <<ceased>>.

Next to this statement I wrote in the margin, "Valid".

Dear Robert, the arguments about the Law you give for the Sabbath's validity and observance, while not really useless, nevertheless are old fashioned. An ox-wagon and whip will still get your transporting done on our modern high ways, but it will be rather obstructive. You could have used a streamlined thousand horses powered carrier, switched on, started and driven by the faith button simply!

Re: Answer to Robert Parker Continues
Date: 05.09.02

Dear Robert,
I didn't last time writing have time to say a bit more of the much I would have liked to say. To avoid misunderstanding, let me here say:

I accept all your arguments for the Sabbath "by association with the Law". I believe the Sabbath as I believe the Law and vice versa. Does not the Psalmist say, "O how love I thy law! It is my meditation all day!" (119:97) - and he must have been a man of faith to enjoy God's law so completely. But I love this text even better that says, "Thou art my portion, O LORD: I have said I would keep thy words". (57) One actually receives one's portion in the Lord, when loving his Word.

You quote,

<< Hebrews 8:10 For this is the covenant that I will make
<< with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord;
<< I will put my laws into their mind,
<< and write them in their hearts: and I will
<< be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people.>>

The New Covenant means God putting HIMSELF into our hearts when He puts his LAW into our minds and hearts! This New Covenant is God's one Eternal Covenant of which the principles are ever the same whether we lived under the New or Old Covenant. God Himself becomes His Law to us.

Say you,

<< So God, THROUGH THE GOSPEL restores mankind to obedience to His
<< Law and the Sabbath, and the Tree of Life. There is no way that
<< Sabbath keeping can lose its association with the law of God.
<< This is in accord with the JESUS' own words ..>>

May I only add, This is not only in accord with Jesus' own words - it is in accordance with his very life and every deed - in accordance with His resurrection from the dead ultimately, and with the Tree of Life.

Why is it the line is always drawn just before this act of Christ and God that in the end and in the first place, gives meaning AND VALIDITY to God's law - to especially his Sabbath law? WHY? What is the Gospel without Jesus' resurrection? Is the Gospel without Jesus' resurrection perhaps God's Rest? Simply not.

Now note, line for line, Paul's REASON for the FAITH AND DILIGENCE of the Church in its "Sabbaths' feasting" : Col.2:15-12 ...

"AFTER THAT GOD ... have spoiled principalities and powers" ...

"ALL principality and power and might and dominion" (Eph.1:21)...

"AFTER THAT GOD have shamed them openly, have triumphed over them"...

"AFTER THAT GOD have triumphed over them IN IT" ...

"IN IT": That is:

"(IN) HAVING RAISED HIM (CHRIST JESUS) FROM THE DEAD"

In a word: "BECAUSE"

("BECAUSE" or "AFTER THAT" by means of Paul's use of participles)

In a word: "BECAUSE God having raised Jesus from the dead" ...

"THEREFORE" (Gr.: <oun>) ...
 PAUL CHALLENGES:
 "THEREFORE don't allow ANYBODY" (Gr.: <tis>) ...
 (no "principality", no matter how high, mighty, wise or pious) ...
 "to judge you" ...
 "in your ... SABBATHS' FEASTINGS" ...
 "for these (lawful) things" ...
 "are but the SPECTRE" ...
 "of what is to come" ...
 "the SPECTRE of INDEED THE BODY THAT IS CHRIST'S!" ...
 "THEREFORE allow NO MAN to beguile you of your reward" ...
 "(with his SUPERSTITIONS - verse 18 in short)
 "allow NO MAN to beguile you of your reward" ...
 (which is both this Body of the ideal and its Head) ...
 "Allow NO MAN" ...
 "who is NOT ATTACHED TO THE HEAD (OF THE CHURCH)" ...
 "the HEAD (Christ) from which ALL THE BODY (the Church)" ...
 "by joints and bands having nourishment ministered" ...
 "and KNIT TOGETHER" (in love, grace and freedom) ...
 "INCREASES WITH THE GROWTH OF GOD" ...
 till the BODY OF CHRIST THE CHURCH reaches maturity and perfection
 and glorification AT THE COMING OF CHRIST.

If ever there had been a word of Scripture that by a single vista
 OF THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST supplies REASON for the Sabbath's
 validity for the Christian Faith and Church, this is it:
 Colossians 2:16 and context. Also if ever there had been a word of
 Scripture by reason of which the Sabbath has reached infamous
 status, it is Colossians 2:16 that through thousands of false
 exegeses and translations that deal with the Sabbath <by
 association with the law>, has misled the Christian Faith and
 Church.

Re: Explanation of my own saying: <My critique of the Christian
 keeping of the Sabbath Day>.

It looks here as if I am against the Christian keeping of the
 Sabbath Day. But it is not what I meant. I mean that I am against
 the USUALLY GIVEN basis of and the USUALLY GIVEN reason for the
 Christian keeping of the Sabbath. That basis and reason usually
 are nothing but the law. And it is still the law even when we
 consider the Sabbath merely as coming from "the creation" (like
 with Moltmann). (Don't we Sabbatharians ever get tired of biting
 Gilboan dust and gravel?)

As Kevin Riley beautifully says,
 << Subject: RE: Sabbath's Christian Reason
 << Date: Thu, 5 Sep 2002
 << The Sabbath does not stand or fall by or with the law.
 << Nor is it primarily a reminder of salvation.

<< The Sabbath predates both the law and the need for salvation.
 << It does not belong to either the 'old covenant' or the 'new
 << covenant' -
 << it belongs to the world as God made it,
 << and as he will remake it.
 << Had there been no sin, no need for salvation or the law,
 << there would still be the Sabbath.
 << The Sabbath arises from God's desire to fellowship with his
 << creation.
 << While God exists, the Sabbath will exist,
 << and no human theory can change that.

How strange that Kevin confesses all this in opposition to my views!

But this may explain why:

Kevin: <<The Sabbath does not stand or fall by or with the law.>>

Oh yes, it does. Because: While God exists, His Law will exist. So if God's Law could fall or change, the Sabbath with it must fall or change.

We suppose the impossible.

I thus can appreciate Kevin's back-in-his-mind-idea with saying, <<The Sabbath does not stand or fall by or with the law.>> His back-in-his-mind-idea must be: The Sabbath stands or falls with God!

Phew! Non Sabbatharians will take exception! I wonder if their taking offence at this idea may not be justified? Surely God is greater than the Sabbath is! Jesus in fact said "One greater than the temple is here" - whereby He also implied One greater than the Sabbath Day! There's no way denying it. We are not permitted to place the Sabbath on God's level - it would be idolatry.

CONCLUSION: The Sabbath does NOT stand or fall by or with the law. THE SABBATH LIKE ALL CREATION CONTINUES OF ITS CREATEDNESS NO MOMENT: BUT BY THE GRACE OF GOD. The Sabbath stands or falls by and with the GRACE, MERCY AND LOVE OF GOD IN JESUS CHRIST.

Kevin: <<Nor is it primarily a reminder of salvation.>>

If not <<primarily a reminder of salvation>>, then of what is the Sabbath a reminder of primarily? Of creation perhaps? And what would creation be a reminder of primarily? Not of God's love perhaps? Then what is God's love? Is God's love not his merciful condescending and descending "to us-ward" in Jesus Christ? Does not the Psalmist sing of all the creation in the nineteenth Psalm as singing the praises of the LOVE of this Creator God for creating it?

CONCLUSION: The Sabbath primarily is a reminder of salvation.

Post script: If the Sabbath not primarily were a reminder of salvation, it belonged not in Christian Faith! "Christianity that not utterly is eschatology utterly has nothing to with Jesus Christ." (Karl Barth)

Kevin: <<The Sabbath predates both the law and the need for salvation.>>

Please show me that from Scripture?

In this same post, Sidney Davis posted in answer to my proposals:

<< Hebrews 1:1,2

<< God, who at sundry times and in divers manners

<< spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets,

<< Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son,

<< whom he hath appointed heir of all things,

<< BY WHOM ALSO HE MADE THE WORLDS.>>

Just like that

I need not say more.

CONCLUSION: "The Sabbath was made for man", which implies and expressly means, The Sabbath by act of creation is God's gift of mercy by reason of man's need for salvation.

Kevin: <<It does not belong to either the 'old covenant' or the 'new covenant'>>

CONCLUSION: Opposite: The Sabbath belongs to BOTH the 'old covenant' AND the 'new covenant'.

Kevin: <<it belongs to the world as God made it.>>

CONCLUSION: Opposite: "The Sabbath of the LORD your God"; "The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath".

Kevin: <<and as he will remake it.>>

And as God already in Jesus Christ HAD REMADE the world. We while standing in the Christian Faith and in the Resurrection Faith, are living the "last days"; are living the "end time". We find ourselves in "the New Earth" of Prophecy ALREADY. The "Christian Era" is God's Kingdom of heaven Come - in and by and through Jesus Christ who "HAD GIVEN THEM REST" - as Hebrews 4:8 says. Then in the language of a Paul, the Church - "the Body that is Christ's": WITH its "Sabbaths' feastings" and all, and with and in its IMPERFECTIONS, NOW IS: THE SPECTRE OF THINGS TO COME, IN FACT OF THE BODY THAT IS CHRIST'S in the day of Jesus' Second Advent and the Church's ultimate perfection and glorification.

CONCLUSION: <<and as he will remake it.>> Amen.

Kevin: <<Had there been no sin, no need for salvation or the law>>

CONCLUSION: Conclusion impossible to make seeing the supposition is one of complete impossibility.

Kevin: <<there would still be the Sabbath.>>

There would still be the Sabbath exactly for the reason there had been sin and the need for salvation and the law - there would still be the Sabbath exactly for the reason there had been Jesus Christ and the Glad Tidings of God's redemption . . . eternally!

On the post-judgement New Earth the Sabbath could no longer be celebrated for remembering "the creation" because then we won't be living in the former "creation" but in and on the NEW!

CONCLUSION: On the New Earth there would still be the Sabbath by reason of God's salvation and the New Creation ONLY.

Kevin: <<The Sabbath arises from God's desire to fellowship with his creation.>>

Amen. From the beginning, this day, and in eternity.
In fact "from before the foundation of the world", for the Sabbath "arose" in the thought and will of God - indeed in his WORD that "in the beginning was, that was God, and that was with God" ... "Who is the Beginning of the creation of God".

CONCLUSION: We read it in the New Testament!

Don't try to kill the paradox. It is essential of the Christian Faith.

LAW - HATE

From: Janinesdesk@aol.com
Subject: Re: paradox
Date: Thu, 12 Sep 2002

In a message dated 10/09/02 ... ebersohn@hotmail.com writes:

> Re: Explanation of my own saying: <My critique of the Christian
> keeping of the Sabbath Day>.
> It looks here as if I am against the Christian keeping of the
> Sabbath Day.
> But it is not what I meant. I mean that I am against the USUALLY
> GIVEN basis of and the USUALLY GIVEN reason for the Christian
> keeping of the Sabbath.
> That basis and reason usually are nothing but the law.
> And it is still the law even when we consider the Sabbath merely
> as coming from "the creation" (like with Moltmann).

> (Don't we Sabbatharians ever get tired of biting
> Gilboan dust and gravel?)

<< I Can't help but wonder at those Christian's who have such an
<< intense hatred for the law. Without law there would be anarchy.
<< Blessings
<< Janine Caldicott-Truss

From: Gerhard Ebersöhn ebersohn@hotmail.com
To: Janine Caldicott-Truss
Re: Hatred for the law

Dear Ms Caldicott-Truss,
I sincerely regret my writing having been the cause of your making
the conclusion,

<< I Can't help but wonder at those Christian's who have such an
<< intense hatred for the law.
<< Without law there would be anarchy.>>

I am sure you meant well.

Nevertheless you may benefit from considering a few questions -
which and more like it - you could ask yourself:
Does it mean that one hates the law if he accepts Christ Jesus for
taking its place?
If one accepts Christ Jesus for taking the place of the law, does
that leave him without "Law"? Does it make him "lawless"? Or
"anti-nomian"?
Is it not just consistent that if the Law points to Christ, that
He would be the "End" of it - in both senses of "fulfilling" its
purpose and of making it obsolete?
Truly: Also "obsolete"! For if Jesus is the reason and the purpose
for the believer for believing and to keep the Sabbath Day
(Seventh Day) what does he need the Law for any longer?
Remember what Paul wrote about the glory of the Law - that as
against the glory of Christ it is as good as no glory?
Remember Jesus who said that He came to magnify God's Law? - Then
what advantage does the lesser Law still have?

Though God's Law is "good and holy" and absolutely wonderful and
admirable, it is so only to the believer who BECAUSE OF WHAT JESUS
CHRIST HAS DONE, could sing, "O How I love thy Law o God!" THE LAW
STILL FUNCTIONS ONLY UNTO THE TRANSGRESSOR AS A TERROR.
The Christian no longer needs bite Gilboan dust and gravel.

Now you of course will recognise behind this remark of mine
another author better known to you being a Seventh Day Adventist.
You remember her saying about the same thing in direct relation to
the Sabbath day? You think she hated the law?

But a positive question:

Do you believe the saved on the New Earth will celebrate the Sabbath Day? I think you do.

Now will there be sin on the new Earth? I am sure you agree there won't be.

Then will there be the "Law" on the New Earth by reason of which the saved will celebrate the Sabbath Day?

You think there will be "anarchy" in the life of the eternally saved?

What would be to them their "light unto my feet" as David sang? Sun or moon won't be needed, nor the law for where there is no transgression there is no law as Paul said. God Himself will be their light says John!

Now, dear Ms Caldicott-Truss for the point where the difference between us comes to the fore:

I believe that we as Christians having found salvation in Jesus Christ - having been found by HIM - "have eternal life" as says John. "He who has the Son has life". That is eternal life and salvation. THIS LIFE while breathing as we speak to each other as fellow-believers in Jesus our Lord and Saviour IS OUR EXPERIENCING THE NEW EARTH AND THE NEW HEAVENS AND ETERNAL LIFE ALREADY. IT NOW IS AS TRUE AS IT WILL BE THE DAY CHRIST WILL RETURN AND WILL CREATE THE NEW EARTH AND THE NEW HEAVENS. We do NOT celebrate the Day of Worship Rest of the Gospel Era for the Law's sake or by reason of the law. We celebrate and keep and treasure the Sabbath of the LORD your God by reason and to the honour of no one or nothing ELSE THAN CHRIST'S!

In the love of Christ

Appendix Par. 8.2.6

A Positive Re-assessment of Colossians 2:16-17 (from p. 125)

Remonstrates Ratzlaff: "Cessation of the law"

<< If sabbatarians wish to promote the Sabbath
 << by its association with the law
 << (one of the Ten Commandments),
 << then they should also be instructed
 << regarding the cessation of the Sabbath
 << by association with the law. ...>>

Next to this statement I wrote in the margin, "Valid". The Sabbath indeed no longer is <<promoted>> <<by association with the law>> and in fact has ceased <<by association with the law>>. The Sabbath after Christ again functions the way it originally without the Law used to function, only now no longer in obscurity, but in the full light of the Gospel. The Sabbath after Christ isn't the Sabbath of the creation restored merely – it is the Day of the Gospel Rest that is Jesus Christ. It means the Sabbath – in our era – is promoted by its association with the Gospel. Christians then should be instructed regarding the cessation of the Sabbath by association with the law, but positively even better regarding its "remaining force and validity" (apoleipetai) by association with the People of God – Hb.4:9! Or by its association with "the Body that is Christ's", as Colossians say. For "regarding the Sabbath's festivity no one should judge you", says Paul! (Col.2:16) Feast! "For these things are but the spectre of things still to come – even the (mature, even the perfected and glorified) Body that is Christ's!" "Let no one bother me further" Paul says somewhere. The circumstances must have been very much alike. The Church is not anybody's to judge and resent – it is Christ's and free!

"The Law came ... after ...".

Even though it is the very Law that "came after" (the Torah) that tells of the creation-Sabbath, it changes not the powerful truth that the creation-Sabbath **THOUGH THE SELFSAME DAY AS THE SELFSAME SABBATH, IS NOT LAW**. Verily the creation-Sabbath came **FIRST** in that it came as **GRACE!** And that no one can deny or he must make Jesus the liar for saying "the Sabbath was made for man"! "For the

Sabbath's festivity no one should judge you", Jesus seems to say, and God seems to say in his blessing, sanctification, rest and perfecting of the Seventh Day. Paul in Colossians 2:16 preached the creation-Sabbath-came-true-in-Christ! In its festivity of the Sabbath Day Paul perceived of the Church sovereign before all powers and dominion but Christ's! "The Colossian Heresy" is as rampant today as it was in Paul's day, seeing the "principalities of the world" (- that somehow includes Christ's Church itself -) judges, resents, despises and tramples underfoot the Day and its feasting of the Body that is Christ's.

"Now that faith (in Christ) has come we are not under the law" ... but as the Body that is Christ's is above it, seeing we are with Christ and in Him are seated at the right hand of God in heavenly realms. We as the Church of Jesus Christ in fact with Him "reign as kings" as John in the Revelation says. THE BODY THE CHURCH REPRESENTED BY CHRIST IS GOD'S LAW!

O, we talk of Adam's fall into sin as were it the saddest thing Creation has ever seen. But see God's People in the place where once was seated Lucifer. See us Association of Christian Believers and see us fall from grace! Who is it who has everything to mourn for, who must most lament his putrefying sores of total depravity, who so disbelieves yet is so haughty? It is I, it is us, it is the Body that is Christ's. "In his own image God created him" "man and women", but sooner than nightfall he fell from grace. In His own image Christ redeemed her, bride of his love, but sooner than nightfall she deserted Him. Ere "things nearing" could have realised - in Zion the voice of the bewailing of her children! Silent the feast and the Sabbath song! Gone the hope and the joy and the love! Mournful day that God's Sabbath Day was sold for Emperor's smile and Mithras toasted sweetest cup to lord-god-Sun! No, my dear brother in Jesus Christ, don't be fooled by Sunday's gold! It is Midas'-food for soul. Let us keep God Lord Jesus' Day of Sabbath Rest for lovely is it to behold the glory of God in the

face of Jesus - also by the feasting of his Holy Day. God willed it; for worship He created it - and so we understand it, accept it, rejoice in it, adore the Lord Jesus Christ by it - allowing the Sabbath Day its most noble virtue - its value in serving the Body that is Christ's.

From : dconklin@tcq.net

Date : Thu, 29 Aug 2002

<< In your post on Sabbath and Law ...
 << you happened to mention Colossians 2:16-7:
 << "Or by its association with "the Body
 << that is Christ's", as Colossians say.
 << For "regarding the Sabbath's festivity
 << no one should judge you", says Paul! ...
 <<
 << While this is the common interpretation
 << it is in error on several grounds.
 << In the same order as they appear in your comment:
 << 1) The phrase "the body of Christ" in
 << verse 17 refers to the church and is to
 << be considered the positive counter-part of
 << "let no man judge you" in verse 16.
 << That this understanding is correct
 << can be seen by noting the following:
 << a) Note that elsewhere in this letter to
 << Colossae (Col.1:18,24;3:15)
 << Paul refers to the body of Christ as the
 << church (see Eph1:22-3).
 << b) Troy Martin looked precisely at this and
 << found that Martin: "The construction of
 << [me oun tis umas krintow ... to de soma
 << tou kristou] is an antithesis.
 << The negative member is stated first;
 << the contrasting positive member introduced
 << by an adversative conjunction occurs second.
 <<... The verb [krineto] determines the action
 << that is forbidden by the first member and
 << then enjoined by the second member of this
 << antithesis. ... The prohibition in the first
 << clause of the antithesis in Col 2:16
 << indicates that the nuance of [krineto] is
 << negative. ... However, the action enjoined
 << by the second clause requires a positive
 << nuance. ... An example of precisely this
 << combination of nuances occurs in the
 << antithesis in Rom 14:13" (source:
 << "But Let Everyone Discern the Body of Christ

<< (Colossians 2:17)," Journal of Biblical
 << Literature 114/2 (1995): 249-255.
 <<
 << 2) "in respect of" (in the KJV) refers to the
 << "eating and drinking" on the days that follow
 << in verse 16. Full details can be seen at
 << <http://members.tcq.net/dconklin/colossians/>
 << I found that older English translations had
 << "in part of" thereby indicating to the reader
 << that the "eating and drinking" are part of
 << the days that are mentioned.
 <<
 << 3) If you look at all the uses of the word
 << "heorte" ("holyday" in the KJV) in the LXX
 << (the Greek translation of the OT),
 << you'll find that it is never used in
 << reference to two ceremonial sabbaths:
 << the Day of Atonement or the feast of Trumpets.
 << Hope this helps.
 << David Conklin>>

Dear David,

I appreciate your interesting response to my post. Nothing prompts
 thinking like thinking.

You quote me:

<<... "Or by its (the Sabbath's) association with "the Body
 that is Christ's", as Colossians say. For "regarding the
 Sabbath's festivity no one should judge you", says Paul!
 (Col.2:16)">>

You decline:

<<... While this is the common interpretation
 << it is in error on several grounds.>>

I answer:

First: It is common that the Sabbath and Sabbath-keeping are
 understood to be DISCREDITED in this text. I try to show that Paul
 DEFENDS the Church in its Sabbaths' feasting. Mine is not the
 common interpretation. But it isn't important whether or not it is
 common or popular.

Second: Say you,

<< It is in error on several grounds.>>

I ask:

In error on what grounds?

You present as <<grounds>>:

<< 1) The phrase "the body of Christ" in verse
<< 17 refers to the church and is to be
<< considered the positive counter-part of
<< "let no man judge you" in verse 16.>>

I consent:

Fully! and cannot see how my opinion is at variance with yours up to this point.

We, in your words, agree:

<< That this understanding is correct (and)
<< can be seen ...>>

Say you,

<<... by noting the following:
<< a) Note that elsewhere in this letter to
<< Colossae (Col.1:18,24;3:15)
<< Paul refers to the body of Christ as
<< the church (see also Eph.1:22-3).>>

To which I agree 100%!

Say you further, mentioning the second <<grounds>> by reason of which my <<interpretation>> <<is in error>>:

<< b) Troy Martin looked precisely at this and
<< found that, Martin: "The construction of
<< [me oun tis umas krinetow ... to de soma
<< tou kristou] is an antithesis.
<< The negative member is stated first; the
<< contrasting positive member introduced by
<< an adversative conjunction occurs second.>>

Again, no objection - it is very plain truth!

But pause a moment! "Let no one judge you ... but the Body is Christ's" - "You" = "Body"? I'm sure you'll agree. If then Paul "judges" the "Body" positively, he'll also "judge" "you", positively and will not condemn "you". Therefore: Whom does Paul "judge" if it is he who here judges?

Consequently it cannot be the Church whom Paul judges negatively!

Whom then does Paul “judge” if it is he who judges here? Some scholars like de Lacey and Bacchiocchi reckon Paul judges corrupted teachers – MEMBERS OF AND IN the Church. I cannot accept for the first and weakest but strong enough of reasons, that then Paul would have “judged” the CHURCH – and the Church IS NOT the thing here “judged” if it is Paul who judges.

Continues your argument from Troy Martin:

<<... The verb [krineto] determines the action
<< that is forbidden by the first member and
<< then enjoined by the second member
<< of this antithesis.>>

Let us leave this for a while and first look at the rest:

<<... The prohibition in the first clause of the
<< antithesis in Col 2:16 indicates that the
<< nuance of [krineto] is negative. ...
<< However, the action enjoined by the second
<< clause requires a positive nuance. ...>>

Once again: No objection and nothing at variance with my
<<interpretation>>.

<<... The nuance of [krineto] is negative ...>>

Obviously – it is a Negative Imperative: Second Person, Plural
<meh krinetoh>!

Just as important is the fact the text uses an Active with Passive meaning:– "You", <humahs> is Accusative! The Mode makes the subject the Church, but passively – the Church UNDERGOES an action not of its own, but of another subject. THIS OTHER ACTOR is the <<grounds>> for Paul to speak <<negatively>> – to sternly and uncompromisingly WARN NOT TO judge "you" the "Body that is Christ's". 'Don't dare judge the Church!' Paul indirectly addresses the adversary of the Church while he directly addresses the Church. "Don't YOU (the Church / Body) BE judged by anyone".

And there you have it: <tis>: <meh oun TIS humahs krinetoh> – "Don't you be judged by ANYONE" – "ANYONE" – the ENEMY! The enemy of the Church judges the Church. This impersonal pronoun, <tis> provides the <<key>> to the correct understanding of Colossians 2:16. On the one side is the Negative Imperative aimed at the adversary – on the other is the POSITIVE Imperative aimed at "you" or "the Body", "CELEBRATING (YOUR) SABBATHS"!

Because of this finding, I must REJECT the analogy you picture (or is it Troy Martin or the Journal of Biblical Literature? - It doesn't matter):

<<... An example of precisely this combination
<< of nuances occurs in the antithesis
<< in Rom 14:13.">>

In Romans 14:13 Paul speaks with the Church about the Church - to or about no third party like in Colossians 2:16. Says he in Ro.14:13, "(Because every one of us shall give account of himself to God,) Let US not therefore judge ONE ANOTHER ...". Paul here speaks of "brother" and "brother" - NOT of "ANYONE" - <TIS> over against "you" the "Body"!

Now let us return to your remark we at first have skipped for a while:

<<... The verb [krineto] determines the action
<< that is forbidden by the first member and
<< then enjoined by the second member
<< of this antithesis.>>

<<The first member>> we have seen above is "you", the "Body" or Church. The Church should forbid - we may believe - "anybody" <tis> - that judges it. But linguistically "you" or the Church is not the subject of the forbidding. Paul is the one who tells the Church - "You, don't YOU be judged by anyone (else)!" In that he so commands the CHURCH to do, Paul in effect tells that "anybody" or those "somebodies" - <tis> - not to judge the Church!

Paul CONDONES the Body and DEFENDS it in its action the while its enemies resent the Church her freedom and enjoyment in Jesus Christ - her VERY CHURCH-LIFE constituted (at that stage in her history) inter alia of "Sabbaths' feastings"!

Your statement,

<< The verb [krineto] determines the action
<< that is forbidden by the first member
<< and then enjoined by the second member
<< of this antithesis>>,

is self-contradictory: <<The first member>> in the text is "you"; <<the second member>> is "the Body". We have seen "you" and "the

Body" are the same; of the same 'dominion' - THE CHURCH. So how can

<< the action that is forbidden by the first
<< member ... then (be) enjoined by
<< the second member of this antithesis>>?

It doesn't make sense - it is inconsistent.

The view that Paul here denounces some sort of corrupted Sabbath-keeping - which implies of course another and true kind of Sabbath-keeping - in my mind does not meet sound exegetical criteria.

Your protest against my <<interpretation>> goes on:

<< 2) "in respect of" (in the KJV) refers to
<< the "eating and drinking"
<< on the days that follow in verse 16. ...
<< I found that older English translations had
<< "in part of" thereby indicating to the
<< reader that the "eating and drinking" are
<< part of the days that are mentioned.>>

I agree, provided: 1, "In part of" has the meaning of: "with relation to", and has bearing on "eating and drinking", not on the "days". 2, "In part of" does not take over the function of the possessive or Genitive found in the words "OF feasts, OF new moon, OF Sabbaths". "EATING AND DRINKING" IS PART OF OR ESSENTIAL OF THESE!

I cannot make out much from your last objection though, only that to me it seems rather irrelevant:

<<... 3) If you look at all the uses of
<< the word "heorte" ("holyday" in the KJV)
<< in the LXX (the Greek translation of the OT)
<< you'll find that it is never used in
<< reference to two ceremonial sabbaths: the
<< Day of Atonement or the feast of Trumpets.>>

(We'll discuss this topic when I consider your thesis in detail.)

I am obliged to conclude you haven't precisely grasped my position on Colossians 2:16, and you cannot be blamed it was so little I said. But I would be pleased to send you my book 'The Lord's Day in the Covenant of Grace' on compact disc free of charge - all I need is your consent to accept

and your postal address. You may be able to get it on my web site www.biblestudents.co.za. Go to book 4, "Paul", then find and follow any word or phrase you want with Word "Edit" then "Find" buttons.

Dear Mr Conklin,

Now that I have read your dissertations on your web site, quite a few things have become clear to me. First, why you must have misunderstood my post. Allow me to explain:

What I meant with "Objection", is an observation of Dale Ratzlaff's to which I responded (all by myself for myself -) and so thought I might just as well share it with you. I didn't want to give my post the appearance of an attack on him, and therefore did not mention his name. I wanted my post to be a weighing of IDEAS, not persons, one against the other.

I can condense the differences between our views to ONE MAIN POINT, which I find repeated several times and represented by various of the scholars you referred to. I would like to mention it before I go into detail so that we may get an overall perspective to the problem of the interpretation of Col.2:16 first.

The difference lies in this, and I quote:

```
<< "(Eadie ... goes on to claim that Chrysostom
<< and Theophylact "take it (en merei)
<< as denoting a partial observance".
<< Could this indicate that it was some
<< portion of these days that was being judged?
<< That is, could it be the feasting / fasting
<< on those days that was being judged?" ...
<< "Walker notes ... Paul was talking about
<< some "portion" of days.
<< He also notes ... this implies that it was
<< the "quality or nature [of the days]
<< rather than the identity" of the days
<< that was in question.">>
```

(I'll come back to your reference 16 here. (Markus Barth))

You refer to Yeager (18, and say:

```
<<... "The combined effect of these two points
<< is that Paul is not condemning the keeping
<< of holy days; but is, rather referring to
<< the "how" they were being kept"
<< Another possibility is that Paul is talking
<< of about the "why" these days are kept ...".
<< "Buzzard has ... observed that "... Paul was
<< warning the Colossians against a perversion
<< of the days and not the days themselves ...
<< the heretics impose something in addition to the days."
<< "Lenski agrees: Christians are not to allow
<< any man to judge them in how they observe
<< the festivities ... but are to let the Church ... teach
<< them how to properly observe them ...".>>
```

Now back to that reference (16) I asked to postpone a bit - Markus Barth's - who <<disagrees thinking that it is "without contextual significance".>>

I haven't read Barth here, but this conclusion makes good sense if one keeps in mind,

One, the actual object "judged",

Two, the actual "judge" - the subject judging, and Three, the actual point "concerning which" judgement is passed.

The actual object judged is the Church;

the actual subject that judges is "tis" - "anybody" other than the Church itself;

and the actual point on which the Church is judged, is its TOTAL FREEDOM that is seen in its celebrating.

That is, the Church is judged in its SPIRITUAL FEASTING - a spiritual "eating and drinking" - the "eating and drinking" of 'holy', "days, new moons, sabbaths". ("Circumcision made without hands ... circumcision of Christ"; "co-buried with Him ... co-raised through the faith"; "co-quickenened with Him ... having forgiven you" - these show a spiritual application, so with the "eating and drinking" of the Church. "These are a spectre of the coming" - are of faith, showing forth "the Body that is Christ's".)

And this being the nature of these "concerned / involved / relevant days" <en merei> with the Dative, the WEEKLY Sabbath just as well is "concerned / involved / relevant". It does not matter which of, or whether all of, THE THING resented and judged by whomsoever the "tis" might have been - is the Church's sovereignty and lordly freedom in the Lord of the Church in its "Sabbaths' festivity". As you say,

<< As Martin has convincingly demonstrated ...
<< "but [rather let] the Body of Christ [determine it].>>

THE GROUNDS:

The Church, free and sovereign "in Him", "Sabbaths' feasting", PRESUPPOSES the Church acting ON STRENGTH OF VERSES 12 TO 15: "... having spoiled principalities and powers, (God who ... with Him (Jesus)) made a shaming show of them, triumphing over them in it". ("It": the operation of God who raised Him from the dead.) While God "triumphed" the Body that is Christ's, "in eating and in drinking", celebrates!

Here is that (missing)

<<obvious reason>>

(your note 18 to Segraves), that

<<show(s) how>>, <<the seventh-day Sabbath>>, <<is predictive of the coming Messiah>>.

And there are many other such New and Old Testament Scriptures that "show it" - that show that the Sabbath POINTS TO CHRIST - that the Sabbath is ESCHATOLOGICAL! That's why I referred to the Church's festive observance of ESCHATOLOGICAL "eating and drinking" of ESCHATOLOGICALLY significant 'holy', "days, new moon, sabbaths".

God with and through Jesus Christ spoiled the powers that agitate against his Body the Church and that is why the Body is a "FEASTING" community. In having raised Him from the dead, God - with and through Jesus Christ - triumphed over all powers and principalities. God is Lord Protector of the Church "as pertains

(its) eating and drinking ("festivities")". The Church celebrates "dominion" "in Christ" over against "all powers and principalities". The Church "regarding the eating and drinking of (its) feasts, new moon or Sabbaths - which things are a spectre of the coming, indeed of the Body that is Christ's" - ultimately celebrates its Great Sovereign.

Paul has every reason to be adamant: "Let no one judge you (therein)!"

Your help received and accepted with great appreciation!

PS: Permission asked to use our correspondence and your research as an Appendix to book 6, "Paul"?

On my attempt to eschatologically interpret the Sabbath and Sabbath-Scriptures, refer to the latest Paragraph - so far only Par. 7.7.1.1, on Jürgen Moltmann.

**THE CHRISTIAN SABBATH: A SPECTRE OF THE CHURCH PERFECTED AND
GLORIFIED**

THE CHURCH:

In its infirmity and imperfection - "COMPLETE IN HIM"!

"WITH REGARD TO (its) SABBATHS' FEASTING" - "the Spectre of Future Things"!

In its "growing with the increase of God" - "indeed the Body which is Christ's"!

To the CHURCH

- in its infirmity and imperfection -

Paul's admonition is:

"Let no one judge you in your eating and drinking, even in your feasting of holy days, of new moons' Supper of the Lord,

or of Sabbaths' worship, rest and celebration"

- "FOR YOU ARE COMPLETE IN HIM" (2:10).

Paul admonishes the CHURCH (1:18) - "the Body that is Christ's" (2:17, 1:18, 24), "the elect of God" and Christ (3:12) who "is the Head of all (its) principality and power" (2:10) and "Lord" (1:2,3,10) of the "dominion" "created BY HIM AND FOR HIM" (1:16), "the mystery among the Gentiles which is Christ in you" (4:3, 1:26, 27), "the kingdom of God" (4:11) and "of His dear Son" (1:13), "brethren in Christ" (1:2, 4:15) - "partakers of THE INHERITANCE OF THE SAINTS IN LIGHT" 1:12).

Paul admonishes THIS CHURCH against the 'ENEMY':

"YOU must not allow ANYONE to judge YOU".

Paul admonishes the CHURCH AS OVER AGAINST ITS 'ENEMY': the "world", the "dominion" and "principalities and powers of the world", "the children of disobedience", the "traditions" and

"commandments and doctrines of men" (2:22), their "wisdom", "worship", "ordinances", "mystery" (3:6), and "vain deceit" - "THE POWER OF DARKNESS" (1:13).

Paul does NOT judge the Church,

but admonishes the Church not to BE judged -

Paul does NOT judge "ANYONE" OF OR IN the Church.

Paul does NOT judge any PRACTICES of the Church.

Paul does NOT judge the WAY in which the Church might practice "these things".

Paul does NOT judge any PART or ASPECT of "these things", either "pertaining (its) eating or drinking", or "pertaining (its) holy feasts, monthly (Lord's Supper), or (weekly) Sabbath Celebrations".

Paul not only silently CONDONES the "Sabbaths' feasting" of the Church - he expressly DEFENDS the Church in the FREEDOM AND SOVEREIGNTY it in Jesus Christ ENJOYS in "these things" - and he defends the Church in its freedom and sovereignty ITS IMPERFECTION AND ITS INFIRMITY NOTWITHSTANDING, because he defends the Church AS IT IS "IN HIM", namely, "complete in Him", and AS IT "GROWS WITH THE INCREASE OF GOD"!

Paul does not suppose a perfect Church and does not require as a condition the perfection of the Church to be "IN HIM" or to be reckoned, to be judged, and to be found "PERFECT IN HIM".

Paul judges the "rudiments OF THE WORLD NOT AFTER CHRIST" (2:8), that OPPOSE "all principality IN HIM" (2:10) - that OPPOSE the FREEDOM AND SOVEREIGNTY the Church enjoys and celebrates in Jesus Christ.

These are the basic facts that pertain to the practices of the Church in Colossus mentioned in 2:16.

The "Sabbath's feasting" of the Church neither contained nor amounted to "heresy" OF ANY KIND. "Heresy" (in context a misnomer) FROM OUTSIDE OPPOSED the Church in its innocent and joyous

celebration in faith and hope of the Gospel. Paul says, "Continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the Gospel which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature ... whereof I, PAUL, AM MADE A MINISTER!" (1:23) Paul taught the Colossians these things himself; how could he turn against it?

"I now rejoice in my sufferings for you and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ ... FOR HIS BODY'S SAKE WHICH IS THE CHURCH" - so the Church "might be comforted, being knit together in love ... unto all riches of the full assurance ... And this I say, LEST ANY MAN SHOULD BEGUILE YOU WITH ENTICING WORDS ... OF YOUR REWARD ...". (1:23 to 2:4,18)

Paul undaunted, unconditionally, unreservedly, stands WITH the Church, and with the Church, stands IN CHRIST, "worthy of the Lord ... strengthened with all might according to His glorious power" - FACING THE ADVERSARY "... giving thanks unto the Father who has made us fit to be PARTAKERS OF THE INHERITANCE...".

'Therefore: "Let no man judge you ..." but be holy and separate yourselves at holy feasts - AND FEAST! Each new month eat "the fruit of the tree of life" and observe the Supper of the Lord, and on Sabbath Days, worship, rest and celebrate!'

It says: ENJOY YOUR FREEDOM IN JESUS "IN WHOM WE HAVE REDEMPTION THROUGH HIS BLOOD - TRULY, THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS!" (1:14). FOR THIS I SAY: REJOICE AND CELEBRATE! MIND NO MAN OR POWER OR WISDOM. "BE NOT ENTICED AWAY" FROM YOUR ENJOYMENT OF YOUR "LORD AND HIS SALVATION", AND "CONTINUE IN THE FAITH!".

Paul in Col.2:16 says NOTHING DIFFERENT than what he says in 1:23. The GRAND meaning in its GRAND context of Col.2:16-17 is:

Its Sabbaths are the FREEDOM-CHARTER of the Body that is Christ's.
Paul drew up its formulary and God created its emblems.

Date : 02.09.02,

To David who wrote:

```
<< Ebersöhn,
<< You have my permission to use my material
<< (with credit of course).
<< We do think differently on Col. 2:16 -
<< to me Paul is not talking about
<< the seventh-day Sabbath and is referring to
<< the "eating and drinking" as a short-hand
<< for "feasting and fasting, as the case may
<< be" that took place on the days that are
<< mentioned.
<< ... David Conklin >>
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Dear Mr. Conklin,

Thank you for permission and credit will be given.

Then I have correctly identified the main point of difference between us, that it is reflected in all those references of yours about "portions" and "parts" and "how's" and "why's" of the "Sabbaths" of the text. Only further difference is that you exclude the weekly Sabbath while I include it because it includes all the others.

I believe though you will agree this reveals an agreement between our interpretations whether so explained or not, that the important thing about Colossians 2:16 in context isn't "Sabbaths" or its "how's" or "how not's", BUT PRECISELY THAT THING TO WHICH PAUL CONTRASTS IT: "These things are but a spectre of things yet to come: in fact THE BODY that is Christ's".

What comprises these "things coming" (or reality or "substance" as sometimes translated)? It is the Body, "dead with Christ to the world's principles" (verse 20a); It is the Body, "reward(ed)" (verse 18) and "(held) to the Head, all the Body ... having

nourishment ministered, and knit together, growing with the increase of God (verse 19).

THAT, is the reality of the "spectre" which Paul says - in point of time of his writing so - was yet "to come" / "coming" - <estin ... mellontohn>. In these verses we have the end-result pictured - projected as were it a "spectre of the nearing ideal" of verse 19.

These are glorious and joyful "things" awaiting the Body that is Christ's - God's glory in the face of Jesus magnified through His Church. 'The Sabbaths' celebration points to it', is what Paul says in ESSENCE - and that gives the Sabbath its wealth and virtue ... for us today, to experience real life.

God's Sabbath Day is a beautiful thing and joyous FOR THE SAKE OF CHRIST AND HIS BODY THE CHURCH.

But even greater is the glory seen in the light of the GROUNDS thereof in verses 12 to 15 as I have mentioned last time. Christ has triumphed gloriously, and God, in the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. FROM THIS and BY THIS and BECAUSE OF THIS, the Church FINDS CONFIDENCE in its "eating and drinking", or "celebration" of its Sabbath Days. The Church in its Sabbath-keeping CHALLENGES the "world", and Paul in so many words, challenges the world through the Church: 'Don't you be judged by anyone be it the world or its powers or its wisdom or its principles or its dominion or its rule. Don't you be judged in your freedom of serving your Master!'

To me THIS is the glad tidings of Colossians 2:16, and the Body's assurance of its worship: Its Sabbaths' feastings BECAUSE OF JESUS CHRIST RESURRECTED!

Paul nowhere else uses the word "Sabbaths". That makes of Col.2:16 a very significant Scripture because he here uses the word Sabbath and refers to its keeping in direct and indissoluble relation to Christ's resurrection. Either this Paul's only reference to the Sabbath at once for once and all settles the Sabbath has no place in Christianity and brings Paul off pace with the Gospel - makes of this text a freak incidence of error in his

writings - or it at once, once for all confirms the Sabbath's CONSISTENT FOLLOWING AFTER the Church like the shadow sticks to the Body as long as it goes its life-path IN THE LIGHT of Christ its Head.

It is for this conclusion - or for the evasion of it - that interpreters hesitate to give the plural, "Sabbaths", also its singular meaning of the weekly - or Ten Commandments-Sabbath. Besides technical reasons like the fact the weekly Sabbath also by the "Law" got its fair share of "eating and drinking" instructions, the main and whole tenor of Colossians calls for the LIFE-DAY of the Church while being the Body that is Christ's BY THE POWER OF GOD IN CHRIST SO FREE, SO INVIOLEABLE OVER AGAINST THE PRINCIPALITIES OF THE WORLD.

A POSITIVE RE-ASSESSMENT OF COLOSSIANS 2:16-17

A positive critique of

<< An In-Depth Look at the Significant Words
<< and Grammatical Structure
<< of Colossians 2:16-17
<< By David J Conklin>>

1.

<< Introduction
<< Colossians 2:16-17 (KJV):
<< 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.
<<
<< What is Paul saying here? Is he saying
<< "don't let anyone judge you on what you eat
<< or drink and on what days you keep holy"?
<< Or, is he saying "don't let anyone judge you
<< about feasting on the ceremonial days of festivities"?
<< Anyone who has studied these verses at all
<< will recognize that the first sample is
<< the most common explanation. However, as we
<< will see, the latter option is by far
<< much closer to the truth.>>

Conklin restricts one's scope of understanding of our Scripture to a choice between

<< Is he (Paul) saying "don't let anyone
<< judge you on WHAT you eat or drink and
<< on WHAT days you keep holy"?
<< Or, is he saying "don't let anyone
<< judge you about feasting on the
<< CEREMONIAL days of festivities?">> (Emphasis CGE)

Conklin indicates his own preference, saying,

<<... the latter option is by far
<< much closer to the truth.>>

Says he,

<<... These two verses have been the focus of
<< much debate without most participants
<< in those debates realizing the actual
<< complexity in what appears to be
<< deceptively simple verses. In fact,
<< these two verses are far more complex
<< than most realize. 1>>

One should therefore rather try to find the SIMPLICITY of <<these two verses>> first. What does the passage within its context - the nearer as well as the broader context - say, as it were in a single word?

The mistake is commonly made to read far too great <<complexity>> into these verses while being blind for its obvious 'simplicity'.

Conklin has shown already that his outlook on the question is pre-determined by the alternative between

1, <<... WHAT you eat or drink and on WHAT days you keep holy">>, and,

2, <<... "don't let anyone judge you about feasting on the CEREMONIAL days of festivities".>> (Emphasis CGE)

[[Conklin reacted to what I wrote here:

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<< Gerhard,
<< I have been reading your critique of my
<< study. You forcefully suggest that
<< I had "predetermined" the results that I would find.
<< Nothing could be further from the truth.
<< What you need to remember is that much of
<< the introduction was written _after_ I had
<< "finished" most of the study. I suspect
<< that as you read the "guts"
<< of the study you will find that I
<< can support what I said in the intro.>> ]]
```

Having been reached only <<after>>, Conklin's options are the more <<forcefully>> restricted in preference of

<<... "don't let anyone judge you about feasting on the CEREMONIAL days of festivities">>,

to

<<... "don't let anyone judge you about WHAT you eat or drink and WHAT days you keep holy">>.

We shall try to find out whether ANOTHER option might offer itself to the reader, an explanation that might satisfy better than the

usual as well as better than Conklin's, one which more truly fits in with the context and <<thrust>> of Paul's Letter.

It is neither:

<<... "don't let anyone judge you about feasting on the CEREMONIAL days of festivities">>,

nor,

<<... "don't let anyone judge you about WHAT you eat or drink and WHAT days you keep holy">>.

Scores of similar <<possible alternatives>> have been presented as Conklin has already shown, and as he will show as we progress. But they ALL have a few things in common: They ALL are snatched from thin air. They ALL have no provocation from the Letter. They ALL are children from the marriage between Sabbath-antagonism and Sunday-presumptuousness. They have ALL escaped independent, unprejudiced and unafraid testing. And many more such genetic characteristic will be discovered still.

But Paul isn't in any doubt as he speaks his mind:

"Don't you be judged by anyone with regard to your feasting (= "eating and drinking"), or, with regard to your feasting of your feasts, whether they be your monthly (Lord's Supper), or, whether they be your Sabbath's (celebration ordinarily)".

Conklin:

<<... Most of the reason these two verses have
<< been debated is because they are seen as
<< the locus classicus in regards to
<< the keeping of the seventh-day Sabbath.>>

I think Conklin meant to say most of the reason these two verses have been debated is because they are seen as the *locus classicus* in regards to the ANNULMENT of the seventh-day Sabbath.

This is the perfect illustration of the Sunday-presumptuousness I'm speaking of. And we poor Sabbatharians have for the total duration of this ongoing debate been made fools of and simply

joined in the melodramatic kaka phonics of the Sundaydarians' choir.

It never dawned on the clouded minds of both the contra and the pro parties that here we INDEED have the *locus classicus* in regards to the KEEPING of the seventh-day Sabbath – its Christian Faith keeping. Yes, it is the Church here, celebrating her Sabbaths for Christ's sake and honour – for NO <<motive>> other than “IT” – the “it”: the last word of the section that declares with triumphant voice the <<motive>> why NO ONE should judge YOU the Body that is Christ's, “pertaining your Sabbath's feasting”: “It”, the <<motive>>, is: “the operation of God who hath raised Him”, Christ, “triumphing over principalities and powers IN IT”.– verses 12 to 15!

Actually nothing more should be said. But, unfortunately,

<<... It is often asserted on web sites that
<< according to these verses the seventh-day
<< Sabbath is "no longer in force" or "no longer binding.">>

These two verses in fact must be seen in regards to the keeping of the Seventh-Day Sabbath, but NOT as if one is left with an option whether or not the Seventh-Day Sabbath is "no longer in force" / "no longer binding".

These two verses may be seen in regards to the keeping of the Seventh-Day Sabbath NOT for the reason Don Fortner gives (under <<Endnote>> <2>), that

<<... This could be from looking at vs. 16
<< as identifying the "handwriting of ordinances" of vs 14.>>

The work of God in and through Jesus Christ of “having forgiven you all trespasses, having blotted out the document against us of proof and admission of guilt, having taken it out of the way between God and us, having nailed it to the cross, having spoiled the very highest of authorities and powers, having put them to shame and disappointment in public eye”, God, “IN THAT HE RAISED Christ from the dead”, “TRIUMPHED OVER THEM”. Behold how by the law of God the Sabbath is manifested!

What thinking is it that identifies the “dominion of Christ”, its freedom and sovereignty, and its celebration and employment, with precisely that which Christ has conquered and destroyed?

Conklin is correct in saying,

<< This (identifying the "handwriting of ordinances"
 << of vs 14 with the "Sabbaths" of verse 16>>)
 << is the result of a SUPERFICIAL READING of the text. ...
 <<... (A)s Peter Salemi observes,
 << "this scripture shows that the gentile
 << Christians were KEEPING THE HOLYDAYS,
 << THE SABBATH, AND THE NEW MOONS!
 << So what Christians [usually, CGE] believe is
 << the scripture that proves that the law is
 << done away [with], actually shows
 << the EXACT OPPOSITE!">>

Subtle yet vital conditions pervade this statement. But get it straight:

This Scripture shows that the gentile Christians were "eating and drinking", that is, they were "feasting".

Theirs wasn't so much a <<keeping the holydays>> of the many the Jews observed.

Theirs was a "feasting of feasts" - of two kinds only: "whether of a month's" [singular, monthly, Lord's Supper], "or, of Sabbaths" [ordinarily, weekly, Sabbaths, plural].

Theirs was not <<the new moons>> of the Jews', or like the heathen's.

Theirs was not <<THE Sabbath>> that distinguishes the Jewish People, but a "Sabbaths' CELEBRATION" - with the emphasis on the Object of real celebration - the Lord and Saviour of His People.

The Christian Sabbath was different - so different not only the heathen resented the Church her Sabbaths, but also and particularly the Jews. (Mt.12)

A quite different matter was it and another body than the Church that <<were KEEPING THE HOLYDAYS, THE SABBATH, AND THE NEW MOONS>>. It was the People of Israel to the flesh.

Salemi - to continue ...

<< So what Christians [usually] believe is
 << the scripture that proves that the law is
 << done away [with], actually shows
 << the EXACT OPPOSITE!">> -

that by the law's having been silenced, and its case and accusation against us cancelled, the Church now may joyously and free, feast her Sabbath Days.

So what Sabbatharians always have believed is the Scripture that when it says Sabbaths, proves it is not Sabbaths it says, actually shows the EXACT OPPOSITE, and proves what it says it says - and means it: Sabbaths!

Return to ponder what Conklin wrote ...

To compare and to even identify the <<"handwriting of ordinances" of vs 14>>, with <<keeping the holydays, the Sabbath and the new moons>> of vs. 16, not merely is <<the result of a SUPERFICIAL READING of the text>> - it is far worse: It is the blatant, 'predetermined' and 'forceful' misrepresentation of the meaning and thrust of the text in order to justify the perfectly strange and "worldly principle" of SUNDAY-keeping!

Famous question: Who are the "legalists"?

Christ "OBLITERATED" the "handwriting of ordinances AGAINST US" and "THEREFORE!" says Paul: "DON'T BE judged in feasting ..." - which positively translates, "THEREFORE!: FEAST! AND WITH REGARD TO YOUR SABBATHS: FEAST!" Or: "Feast! And with regard to your Sabbaths: Feast! For the "handwriting of ordinances against us IS OBLITERATED!"

The "handwriting of ordinances" and the "Sabbaths" with their "feasting" therefore cannot be the same and must be OPPOSITES - and Paul treats and "judges" each accordingly. In fact Paul's refusal of the "handwriting of ordinances" - and God's "blotting" it "out" "in Him", Christ, supply Paul with "stablished" and "abounding faith" "with regard to Sabbaths' feasting" - to seal it "WITH THANKSGIVING"!

God's deeds of redemption and salvation through Jesus Christ - those are the "ROOTS" - verse 7 - for the Church's "Sabbaths' celebration".

Wake up! Colossians 2:16 supposes GENUINE CHRISTIAN "CELEBRATION ... with regard to celebration of the Sabbath" (regular, = "of Sabbaths"). It supposes Christian celebration of the Sabbath SOLELY by reason of what CHRIST JESUS has done. It supposes NO MAN but the Christian CHURCH "celebrating Sabbaths". Colossians 2:16 IN CONTEXT is the END of ALL controversy "with regard to Sabbaths' celebration" as far as the Christian Faith is concerned. The Christian Day of Worship-Rest is "FEAST"-day, "Sabbath's FEASTING" - is HOLY FEAR of the LORD your God, the JOY of the believer, and of the "holy convocation", for it is the "feasting" of "the Body that is Christ's". The Sabbath by its CHRISTIAN FEASTING "is spectre of (even better) things nearing", cosmic-eschatological sign of the Church "growing with the increase of God"!

<<... THIS WE BELIEVE: ... (T)he Old Testament observance of the Sabbath and other holy days has been abrogated by God and is not required of the Church under the New Testament.>> Indeed! What is <<required of the Church under the New Testament>>, no longer is <<the Old Testament observance of the Sabbath>>, but its NEW - its CHRISTIAN 'observance' - a "celebration", a "FEAST" unto Yahweh Lord Jesus Christ.

For no different reason does even Bryan T Huie -while he misses the essence of the relevancies- busy himself with irrelevancies:-

<<... "What was the Colossian Heresy?", ...
 << "For the Gnostics to be judging the
 << Colossians regarding the MANNER OF observance
 (Emphasis CGE)
 << of the Sabbath, new moons, and Holy Days,
 << they obviously had to be keeping them!">>

(Under Conklin's <<Endnote>> <2> referred.)

The essence of the relevancies implies there was no <<heresy>> on the part of the Colossians in the first place, yet Huie (for NO reason) MUST find traces of some <<heresy>>. (To be of count as a researcher, why?) So his verdict of judgement is, the Colossians to be judged regarding these, <<they obviously had to be keeping

them>>, but in the wrong <<MANNER>>! So he admits Paul judges them? I hope not, for Paul does not.

It was the <<Gnostics>> who judged - not Paul. And <<judged>> they did - as judging another. Judged they did <<the Colossians>>, that is, Christ's Body the Church - to them the nuisance to the world of wisdom. And to THEIR <<observance>>, <<obviously>> the CHURCH'S, they protested.

To deduce the feasts were 'kept' is legitimate. But to reduce the incrimination to a triviality <<regarding the MANNER OF observance>> supposes the <<Gnostics>> - LIKE GOOD MEMBERS of the believing Body - were really concerned for the IMPROVEMENT of the Church - it actually supposes the <<Gnostics>> involved for true improvement of the major and basic "first principle" and great and true <<motivation>> of the "dominion of Christ" and its "feasting" - which they weren't in the least.

What God has done in Christ - THIS, was the ONLY OFFENCE to them, FOR WHICH "odour unto death unto them" they "judged" those unto whom it was an odour unto LIFE and unto free and joyous "feasting" of "IT" - the biggest "it" of all time!

<<... Ashley has also noted that
 << the believers at Colossae
 << "were clearly observing" the practices
 << mentioned in vs 16 and that Paul's use of
 << "do not let anyone judge you", is
 << "quite different from saying these
 << practices are unnecessary.">>

Indeed it is quite different! For Paul's use of "do not let anyone judge you" is based squarely and solely on verses 12 to 15, with the resurrection of Jesus Christ pivotal. One who cannot see <<the believers at Colossae "were clearly observing" the practices mentioned in vs 16>> must be ignorantly blind. Yet one who does not see WHY they were observing them, must, like the accusers and judges of the Church, be malicious and contriving for being unwilling to see the reason which Paul in the foregoing context so convincingly presents as <<motivation>> of the Church's Sabbaths' celebration. It means it could not have been "anybody" as a member of the Church, who "judged" - it had to have been an ENEMY of the Body but more an ENEMY of the FAITH!

The following then, will sound familiar to the one acquainted with the contest:

<<Endnote>> <2> continues:-

<< ... "A Commentary on the Book of Colossians"...
 << "... there is no more obligation to keep
 << them." See also, Calvary's Touch statement
 << of faith "Why we don't observe the Sabbath?"
 << ... which cites this verse and said:
 << "the NT explicitly teaches that the Sabbath
 << keeping was not a requirement."
 << Or, the statement of belief at
 << Mighty Fortress Orthodox Evangelical Lutheran
 << Church THIS WE BELIEVE which says
 << "the Old Testament observance of the Sabbath
 << and other holy days has been abrogated by God
 << and is not required of the Church under the New Testament."
 <<... Korth goes so far (says Conklin) as to
 << claim that this verse is about
 << "legalists who try to enforce the observance
 << of Sabbaths as a means of salvation or measure of
 spirituality.">>

It is such shallow lying it impresses not the Sabbath-<<observer>> of weakest <<spirituality>>. This verse, Colossians 2:16, is about <<legalists>>, about the angelic, vainly puffed up, vacuum inflated, fleshly minded, self-worshippers of the world's first principles, of the wisdom of philosophy, of the dominion of darkness – "ANYBODY" – who "judges" the Church's Sabbaths' celebrations, and who, as a means of salvation or measure of spirituality, tries to enforce the abrogation of it. That's 'WHY we don't observe the Sabbath' – because 'WE', are the <<legalists>>. 'WE' are those bound by rules and regulations and observances of "DONTs" – "Don't touch! Don't taste! Don't do!" – 'WE' – NOT THE CHURCH, NOT PAUL!

According to Conklin, Korth goes too far when he assumes the <<legalists (tried) to enforce the observance of Sabbaths as a means of salvation or measure of spirituality>>. To be consistent, if the 'enforcement' of 'observance' isn't permissible, how can the enforcement of <<manner>> (Huie) or <<motive>> and <<means>> (Constantelos) be admitted?

Neither 'observance' simply, nor <<motive>>, <<manner>> or <<means>> OF OBSERVANCE, IS AT ISSUE in Col.2:16-17. It is the

burning issue of "Sabbath's celebration" that is the subject-matter of Colossians 2:16. Paul defends what the world's wise, mighty and high denounced and judged as stupid, silly, ignorant, uninformed, unenlightened, petty and pitiful Christian feasts of Supper and Sabbaths that should be discarded in favour of its own strict and severe and intolerable "will-worship, humility, neglecting of the body and the dubious honour of fleshly satisfactions". It was HEATHENDOM OPPOSING CHRISTIANITY, HUMANISTIC LEGALISM AGAINST CHRISTIAN FREEDOM.

Jim Korth ('endnote' no. 3), for this the same reason, is completely OFF the mark and unrealistic, saying:-

<<... the insistence that the keeping of certain
 << Old Testament laws and
 << ceremonies concerning foods and festivals,
 << had to be added to faith in Christ if
 << believers were to have complete salvation.>>

It wasn't a matter of 'manner' - whether 'manner' in terms of <<the keeping of certain Old Testament laws and <<ceremonies>> or not. It wasn't a matter of <<adding>>, but of judging, condemning and extinguishing the very existence, the irritating living reality, of the BODY THAT BELONGS TO CHRIST in its sovereign FEASTING, EATING AND RESTING.

In Colossians 2:16 is reflected and inescapably implied a matter and a historical instance of the suffering and persecution of the saints for their faith in Jesus and for the Faith of Jesus.

Whether observance / <<keeping>> simply, <<added to faith>>, or, whether <<the keeping of certain Old Testament laws and ceremonies concerning foods and festivals>>, <<added to faith>> - THESE ARE NOT THE MATTER NOR ARE AT ISSUE.

WHAT IS PRESUPPOSED, ARE: "FEASTS, NEW MOONS, SABBATH DAYS", BY THEIR "FEASTING"! In the words of the text: "with regard to (your) eating or drinking or with regard to (your) eating or drinking OF

FEASTS, OF NEW MOONS, OF SABBATH DAYS, do not be judged by anyone!"

What is the matter, and what is at issue FIRSTLY, is that of allowing judgement, of possible judgement being accepted or acknowledged as legitimate! Paul says: Never! "Don't you allow yourselves being judged by these anybodies!" - that is Paul's express warning to the Church.

Next, and of deeper significance at issue and the matter here, is that which the "anybodies" really aimed at: The GROUNDS they judged the Church for "regarding" her "feasting", the fountainhead "of (her) feasts, of (her) new moon, of (her) Sabbaths". It was nothing but the redemption God has wrought, in and through and for Christ Jesus - GOD'S COMPLETE WORK FINISHED FOR THE CELEBRATING! "Let no one judge you THEREFORE". "BECAUSE OF IT, don't you be judged by anybody regarding your VERY OWN feasting, celebrating, eating and drinking, feasts, of Sabbaths, of Lord's Supper ... NO MATTER WHAT!" It's Christian, it's Faith, because it's Jesus' resurrection from the dead! Let's just for once, read Paul, and forget the scholars.

<<... In print ... [in commentaries etc. (CGE)]
 << this ... the insistence that the keeping
 << of certain Old Testament laws and ceremonies
 << concerning foods and festivals,
 << had to be added to faith in Christ if
 << believers were to have complete salvation
 << is the thrust of the argument ...>>

- which is the WAYWARD 'thrust' of the majority by far of commentators and exegetes.

I to the rejection of such presumptuous conclusions agree with Conklin: There is nothing in text or context that could justify them. These are not conclusions but prejudice - like the whole idea of the 'Colossian heresy' that originated from only prejudice towards the Seventh Day Sabbath of God's Word.

If "heresy" had been implied in Colossians it is not implied there as "heresy" which is corrupted teaching of the CHURCH, but must be understood unambiguously for what Paul calls it and for where he supposes its presence – which are "the rudiments" of "wisdom" found in the "world" and in the "dominion" and "kingdom of darkness". Not in or of the Church!

<<... However, (says Conklin) as we will see,
 << this,
 (<<the insistence that the keeping of certain Old Testament laws and ceremonies concerning foods and festivals, had to be added to faith in Christ if believers were to have complete salvation>>)
 << is certainly not the case,
 << for the simple reason that this point of view
 << is not the thrust of the passage.>>

To which I cannot agree more.

<< On this point, Constantelos writes:
 << "In matters of food, or drink, or in respect
 << to a feast day, or a new moon, or a Sabbath
 << day, he [Paul] did not say
 << "do not observe them" but he said,
 << "let no man pass judgment on you"
 << whether or not [or, should this be: how?]
 << you observe them. ...>>

Unfortunately Conklin pushed in his question, [<<or, should this be: how?>>].

Not Paul, not the Church and not the "enemy", 'insisted'

<< that the keeping of certain Old Testament
 << and ceremonies concerning foods and
 << festivals, had to be added to faith in Christ
 << if believers were to have complete salvation>>.

It certainly in no part or totality of the Letter is the case.

Nor did Paul, or the Church, or the "enemy", <<say>>, <<"do not observe them">>.

Nor did Paul, or the Church, or the "enemy", <<say>>, <<let no man pass judgment on you WHETHER OR NOT you observe them>>. (Emphasis CGE.)

Least of all was Paul, or the Church, or the "enemy", concerned about <<how>>, <<you observe them>>. I cannot see the necessity of Conklin's bracketed remark, <<[or, should this be: how?]>>.

With the Sabbaths' feasting of the Church, not only taken for granted by Paul, but directly endorsed by him for his defending of it in the face of the "enemy", the question of the "how" of the Church's Sabbaths' feasting is the last thing in Paul's mind.

Conklin refers to Constantelos:

<<... he (Paul) does not write in condemnation
<< either of food or fasting,
<< nor does he condemn holy days.>>

Which says NOTHING still of what the Church in fact DID DO or what Paul in fact did write about. (One could just as well say Paul does not write in condemnation either of marriage or celibacy - so irrelevant is the fact.)

What is the necessity of Constantelos' further qualifications, that

<< He (Paul) condemns the wrong MOTIVE.
<< When FASTING or the observance of holy days
<< is made the MEANS of achieving salvation,
<< by-passing Christ, THEN they are condemnable
<< as bondage rather than as [a] means of
<< liberation"? (Emphasis CGE.)

Paul has no reservations as to his condoning and defence of the CHURCH as over against its prosecutor the "world" with its "wisdom" and "first principles". Paul has no reservations as to his loyalty to, and as to his condoning and defence of, the PRACTICES as over against SOME IMAGINED CRITERIA for it. Paul does NOT condemn holy days; he does NOT say <<do not observe them>>; he does NOT say "whether or not you observe them". So why concern about their 'why?' or their 'how?' Plainly Paul does not condemn nor condone <<motives>>, or <<means>>, or <<fastings>>. <<He does not SAY>> any of these words nor does he suggest any idea behind.

The only 'motive' Paul concerns himself with, is God's finished and conquering salvation in Christ. As a 'motive' God's "dominion" and Lordship by victory, serves the Church in its feasting and worship and days of worship-rest - its very "Sabbaths". As a 'motive' God's "dominion" and Lordship by victory, serves the

"world" - supplies impetus why it should resent and judge the Church. It cannot accept Christ or his work; it cannot accept completeness and fullness "IN HIM" - the finality and exclusivity of it. "Wisdom" and "philosophy" CANNOT TAKE IT! It won't tolerate it, won't give it space as much as an inch to celebrate its freedom.

Paul deals with the BIG ISSUES: "Dominion" over against "dominion", "the Head of all (Godly) principality and power" over against "the rudiments of the world", "all the treasure of wisdom and knowledge in Christ" over against "philosophy and vain deceit", etc. Midst of this vast "inheritance of the saints" Paul sees "the Body that is Christ's"; and he sees it, its "Sabbaths", "feasting"! Opposite, Paul sees the mighty, "worldly", "dominion" of "wisdom" and "philosophy", the "kingdom of darkness" - accusing, judging and condemning the Body that is Christ's FOR BEING SO HAPPY, SO INNOCENT, SO FREE, SO INDEPENDENT, SO RICH IN CHRIST - it gets green with jealousy, red with envy and black with hate!

By the same thrust of the Letter the other ideas that Constantelos brings into discussion, are not remotely suggested in Paul's admonition, "Do not let anyone judge you".

Says Constantelos:-

```
<<... (Paul) condemns the wrong MOTIVE.
<< When FASTING or the observance
<< of holy days is made the MEANS of
<< achieving salvation, by-passing Christ,
<< then they are condemnable as bondage
<< rather than as [a] means of liberation."4>> (Emphasis CGE.)
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What Constantelos says of course in principle is true and nothing wrong with. Only, Paul doesn't 'textually' or contextually bring <<motive>>, <<fasting>>, or <<means>> from the human point of view, into consideration. If Paul any further has <<motives>> in mind, they are the "enemy's" - not the believers'. If he has <<fasting>> in mind, he has it in mind as belonging to the "world" and its "wisdom" and "philosophy" - and not here, but elsewhere in his letter. And if he has <<means of achieving salvation>> in mind, he also must have had the "first principles of the world(s)"

<<means of achieving salvation>> in mind – which also he does not have in mind here in 2:16-17, but in terms of context and relevance, a meaningful distance from here.

What is foremost in the mind of Paul – HERE – is just what he says and just what it immediately relates to, namely to the SAVING TRUTH that Christ (verses 12 to 15) has done everything necessary for the Church to celebrate:- "Therefore" (<oun>) "don't you BE (<humahs> – Accusative!) judged (<krinetoh>) by nobody but nobody (<tis>)"! To paraphrase:- "BY REASON OF WHAT CHRIST DID FOR YOU ... don't you be judged by any of the world's mighty and wise in your FREE and SOVEREIGN Sabbaths' CELEBRATION".

'THIS IS THE THRUST OF THE PASSAGE' – the thrust indeed of the WHOLE LETTER.

Conklin goes on:-

<< This observation (of Constantelos)
<< fits well with Barclay's observation
<< that the ascetics had reduced
<< the Christian religion to ritual>>.

The <<ascetics>> did nothing of the sort to <<the Christian religion>>. They were too good for the 'Christian religion'. They "judged" it and they judged it unfavourably. They envied and condemned the Christian Faith for its freedom in Jesus Christ. They resented the Church's independence of them and dependence on Christ. They had some wise guys to "beguile" the Church with their "subtlety" of "vain deceit" and "enticing words" (2:4), who tried to "spoil" the Church "through philosophy" (2:8). But they did not <<(reduce) the Christian religion to ritual>> ... Their onslaughts were unsuccessful, and Paul in effect praises the Church that it withstood the onslaughts. That is what verse 16 means where Paul says: "Don't be judged by anyone!"

The <<ascetics>> DID NOT SUCCEED. Attested Paul:- "Yet am I with you in the spirit, rejoicing and beholding your order, and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ" (2:5). While witnessing to the believers of Colossus' "stablish(ment) in the faith" and to their "abounding therein", Paul was obliged also to warn them, because they were living right in the heart of the "world's" "dominion" of "wisdom". ("In the world but not of the world.")

Therefore Paul in 2:8 already warns against this "enemy", this "someone" - <tis>:- "Beware lest any man spoil you with philosophy ... after the traditions of men, after the rudiments of the world, AND NOT AFTER CHRIST".

The Church and "world" were two opposing and exclusive "world's" of "wisdom". The Church is the "world" or "dominion", "of the full assurance of understanding to the acknowledgement of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge". (2:2-3) "Ye are complete in Him!" (2:10) This assurance underlies the freedom in Christ of his Body as well as of his Body "with regard to feasting ("eating and drinking") ... of Sabbaths".

PAUL NOWHERE FINDS FAULT WITH THE CHURCH IN COLOSSUS. He in contrast has no accommodating or reconciling word for the adversary of the Church in Colossus. He draws the distinction between the Church and the world clear and straight. And he does so ABUNDANTLY AND THROUGHOUT his Letter.

Had the <<ascetics>> been "brethren", Paul would have adopted the same approach to the issue in Colossians than he did in his letter to the Church in Rome. He would have tried to appease the parties; he would have begged both sides be the least. And I could assert this with certainty for I am sure Paul was never inconsistent. If the problem in Rome and in Colossus had been the same, his approach and verdict would have been the same. But here in Colossians Paul dares the Church be BOLD! Face the enemy and renounce him - "Don't you be judged by any man"!

The <<ascetics>> were not the Church; they were not of the Church; they were not in the Church. They did not observe the Sabbath much less celebrated it by holy feasting. But the Church did - the whole Church of the city of Colossus.

Therefore,

<<Barclay's observation>>,
 <<... that the ascetics had reduced
 << the Christian religion to ritual>>,>>

does NOT <<fit well>> at all! It's BLIND NONSENSE GENERATED FROM A PIOUS DISLIKE OF THE SABBATH, THAT'S ALL.

In Conklin's <<Endnote>> no. <5> at this point, he notes Gary DeLashmutt's <<3Spiritual Red Herrings>>. DeLashmutt would imply Colossians 2:16-17, Romans 14:5-6 and Galatians 4:10 are an unmanageable embarrassment for believers of the Sabbath Day Christian. (But the tables are turned on the Sabbath's opposition.)

Says Conklin:-

<<... We will also see that Paul is NOT
<< "adamantly reject(ing)" the elements
<< that are given in verse 16.>>

There's an element in this statement of Conklin's - which otherwise may have been correct - that worries me a bit. I assume he with <<the elements ... given in verse 16>> would define or identify the "eating or drinking" and the "feasts, new moon and Sabbaths" given in verse 16 with the "rudiments" or "first principles" - <stoicheia>, "of the world" - which they most certainly are not.

Collectively, the celebrations "regarding feasts, Sabbaths", infer the CHRISTIAN 'element' or "(first) principle" of the Church's PRESENT FREEDOM AND SOVEREIGNTY.

These celebrations, collectively, also refer to yet another CHRISTIAN 'element' or "(first) principle", namely the Church as Body of Christ PERFECTED AND GLORIFIED in Christ - "things nearing" and yet future, nevertheless "assured" fully and enjoyed ALREADY by faith in Christ - WHENCE these 'celebrations' - "eating and drinking" - "by food and drink or by feasts, new moons or Sabbath days".

In themselves then, "these things", are not Christian 'basics' or "principles". Nevertheless, they are INDISPENSIBLE TO, while FULLY DEPENDENT OF, THE CHURCH, OF ITS HEAD AND OF ITS LIFE - exactly what Paul reminds the Colossian believers of where he warns:

"These things are but a shadow - a spectre - of future things, indeed the Body that is Christ's (perfected and glorified)". The Sabbath therefore, is a cosmic-eschatological sign of "end-time" realities and issues.

CHRIST'S CHURCH, there now, is a "first principle" - not of the world, but as opposed to the world - a "first principle" of the "dominion" of "all principalities" under Jesus Christ! The Church - cosmic-eschatological sign of "end-time" realities and issues - its Sabbaths celebrating, is "first principle" of the "dominion of Christ". "Sabbaths' celebration" is its promising mirrored image.

'KEEP PERSPECTIVE!' Paul in effect in 2:17 advises. But also:

'KEEP FAITH AND HOPE': Remember the Christian Faith is one of "faith", "hope" and "love", "unity" and "the mystery of God the Father and of Christ" (1:23 and 2:2) "These things (the Sabbaths' celebrations) are but a shadow - a spectre - of future things".

These things result from, as they point to, as they are inseparable of, the Body which they always, BUT ONLY, REFLECT: "indeed the Body that is CHRIST'S". By itself and in itself, "these things" ARE NOT the "substance". They are not in themselves, the end. They witness to the Body of Christ which is the end-purpose of Christ's own having become "God with us", "the Light that lighteth the world". Day of Worship-Rest the Sabbath of the LORD your God, and Church, and "God-to-us-ward", are INSEPARABLE like substance and shadow IN THE LIGHT, are inseparable.

'Treasure modesty and humility, dear brethren - those priceless virtues of Christianity. Even in your most joyous celebrations beware the pride and audacity of unbelief. For you won't find a "shadow" where "the power of darkness" holds "dominion". You won't find THIS "shadow" - the Church's "Sabbaths' celebration" - in "the world", in its "domain" or in its "wisdom". You'll only find it there ridiculed and displaced by the "will-worship" of "puffed up" and "fleshly-minded" "any-bodies" who find their "reward in hypocrisy [Ellicott: "false humility"] as were they angels and

their worship that of angels". (2:18) You'll only find the Church's Sabbaths in the dominion of darkness, BY JUDGEMENTS upon the Body that "feasts" and holds its "Sabbaths" dear.'

IN DIRECT RESPONSE TO THE GOSPEL:

Paul in fact <<is NOT "adamantly">> or in the least, <<rejecting>> the "shadow-spectre" of "Sabbaths' celebration" <<given in vs. 16>>. He ADAMENTLY is promulgating them! He promulgates the Body's "Sabbaths' celebration" by association with the Gospel of Christ - DIRECTLY by association with the Gospel, considering the DIRECT CONTEXTUAL relation between the GOSPEL - verses 12 to 15 - and the Church's freedom and sovereignty IN PRACTICAL RESPONSE TO THE GOSPEL - verses 16 and 17; and this relationship further, IN DIRECT CONTEXTUAL CONTRAST with the threatening menace the "WORLD" and its "first principles" IN PRACTICAL RESPONSE TO THE GOSPEL - verse 18.

Conklin, <<Introduction>> continued:-

<< This study will focus its attention
<< primarily on the linguistic and
<< grammatical features of the text.
<< It will be assumed that the reader
<< is familiar with the historical elements
<< related to the background of the book and
<< the nature of the syncretistic blend of
<< Gnosticism, Judaism, and asceticism that
<< was besetting the church at Colossae.⁹ If
<< this is ignored, as it frequently is, then
<< one's perception of Paul's intended meaning
<< in this passage is automatically coloured
<< by one's own private interpretation
<< and/or speculation.

WHAT <SYNCRETISM>?

The perception of the <<familiar>>

<< syncretistic blend of Gnosticism, Judaism, and asceticism
<<... (that) was besetting the church at Colossae>>,

ALREADY IS a <<familiar>> perception <<coloured by (the) private interpretation and/or speculation>> of traditionally accepted a priori's.

<<... The historical elements related to
 << the background of the book>>,
 does in fact reveal a <<syncretistic blend>>, but not one of
 <<Gnosticism, Judaism, and asceticism>>, because Judaism does not
 have a part in it. The <<syncretism>> reflected in the Letter to
 the Colossians wasn't ecclesiastical, because it was one belonging
 to the "world", or to the "dominion" "of darkness", ENTIRELY.

A <SYNCRETISM> - BUT WHERE?

A <<syncretistic blend of Gnosticism, Judaism, and asceticism>> in
 fact is mentioned and applied in Paul's Letter to the Colossians,
 BUT, was NOT

<<besetting the CHURCH at Colossae>> ...

It was <<besetting>> the "dominion" of "philosophy" and "wisdom"
 <<at Colossae>> - WHICH WAS NOT THE CHURCH BUT THE WORLD!

A <SYNCRETISM> THAT INCLUDES <JUDAISM>?

Further, for the truer 'interpretation' of <<Paul's intended
 meaning in this passage>>, the aspect or part of the <<blend>>
 seen as containing <<Judaism>> by the traditionally accepted a
 priori's, must also be rejected. <<Judaism>> was made an
 ingredient of the festivities and feasts of Colossians 2:16 by the
 popular exegetes and commentaries - by them alone - and by them by
 reference to the "rudiments of the WORLD" - by nothing ACTUALLY
 said or GENUINELY implied IN Col.2:14-17! "The Christian religion
 (was) reduced to <<Jewish festivals and ceremonies>> by
 PRESUMPTION of the exegetes, because Colossians is such an
 absolutely CHRISTIAN document, IT NOWHERE AND IN NO MANNER deals
 with Judaism. It deals with CHRISTIANITY - AS OVER AGAINST the
 "philosophy", "wisdom" and "principalities of the WORLD" - the
 pagan, heathen, civilised, RELIGIOUS, "world".

A <SYNCRETISM> THAT INCLUDED <ASCETICISM>

<<Asceticism>> - as ingredient of the <<syncretistic blend>> - implies the concoction wasn't 'Jewish', for <<Judaism>> NEVER is associated with asceticism. It also is illogical how a <<syncretistic blend>> that enhanced <<asceticism>>, could be "REGARD(ED) WITH eating and drinking, or (be) REGARD(ED) WITH feasts ...".

A "FEASTING" PURELY CHRISTIAN

The "feasting" ("eating and drinking") and the festivals referred to in 2:16 were NOT "Jewish" OR pagan, but PURELY CHRISTIAN PRACTICE AND FAITH! [It will be noticed from a reading of Part 4 of The Lord's Day in the Covenant of Grace, that this is a new development in my own thinking on the nature of the 'festivities' of 2:16.]

Paul's Letter also makes plain that any <<syncretistic blend of Gnosticism, ... and asceticism>> must be found in and as pertaining to "the kingdom of darkness". The "kingdom of darkness" no way could be associated with "the Body that is Christ's"! Paul separates and contrasts the two "dominions" - that of Christ and that of "wisdom"; that of the Church and that the "world". And the two were not <<syncretistic blended>> whatsoever. Paul's whole Letter is one of opposing and contrast rather than of merging and mixture of the Church and the "world" of "philosophy" and "rudiments" <stoicheia>.

PREDISPOSITION UNPROVOKED

Colossians 2:16-17 always gets 'interpreted' predisposed and prejudiced - the mind 'beset' - that this, the CHURCH'S "Sabbaths' feasting", is an ugly thing which Paul finds IN the Church and which he instructs the Church to get out of its system. Even Sabbath-orientated scholars are guilty. Also Sabbath-defending 'interpretations' - not realising it - are 'beset' by commonly taken for granted presuppositions. <<(P)erception of Paul's

intended meaning in this passage is automatically colored by one's own private interpretation and/or speculation>>, says Conklin. The pre-supposition of <<the syncretistic blend of Gnosticism, Judaism, and asceticism that was besetting the church at Colossae>>, is proof also Sabbath-defending 'interpretations' (not realising?) are 'beset' - their minds like concrete: totally mixed up and permanently set. Worse: their minds "bewitched" already, beforehand "beguiled", by the "philosophy" of the anti-Sabbatharians - ALREADY IN PAUL'S DAY identifiable as the "enemy" of the "Elect" or "Church" - as the enemy of her Sabbaths' feasting!

COSMIC ESCHATOLOGICAL SIGN

The Sabbath Day much more than we ever could have thought, is cosmic-eschatological sign of the Church: Cosmic Eschatological Sign of the Gospel and of "the Body that is Christ's"! Here we see it even in its negative context of denial, rejection, of being despised and judged! "Here comes to the fore the suffering of the saints, those holding to the law of God indeed of the Faith of Jesus". "With regard to Sabbaths' celebration" (see e.g. Mark 2:23 further), also the Gospels - the Christians' LATER account for their faith - reveal that SUFFERING is the "inheritance of the saints" by their "Faith of Jesus".

THE SYNCRETISM IN THE LETTER

Under <<Endnote>> no. <9>, Conklin mentions Joseph A. Pipa who

<< refers to it (<<the syncretistic blend ...
<< that was besetting the Church at Colossae>>)
<< as a "hybrid heresy">>.

<<A "hybrid heresy">> it certainly was.

But "Bible"-elements - elements of divine truth - one would not have found and today still won't find in Colossians as pertaining the "dominion of darkness". "Jewish elements" - as the "feasts" and their "feasting" of Colossians 2:16 are called - are "Bible"-elements. "Bible"- "principles" IN

ANY DISCRPTION WHICH PAUL GIVES of the <<hybrid heresy ... at Colossae>>, COMPLETELY LACK. The <<hybrid heresy ... at Colossae>>, belonged with and to the "world", and neither with, nor to, the "Ecclesia".

One should just here again read the whole Letter with the one objective to see if this is true or not. Even a biased reading - we are just human and cannot help to be biased - WON'T REVEAL ANY CHRISTIAN OR OLD-TESTAMENT ELEMENT contained in the <<hybrid heresy>> ... that was 'besetting' the "WORLD" <<at Colossae>>.

THE SYNCRETISM NO <<HERESY>>

Says Conklin,

<< One thing that needs to be kept in mind
<< is that the Jewish elements
<< of this syncretistic heresy,
<< as Weiss points out, ... have become
<< separated from their Jewish matrix".
<< That is, we have to be very careful
<< that we do not import the full meaning
<< of Jewish elements into anything
<< that is mentioned.
<< It is more likely that as a heresy
<< the meaning(s) of any Jewish element
<< have been distorted and twisted
<< into something other than
<< what we are familiar with.>>

So we don't know about the true nature and full scope of the syncretism that was besetting the "world" <<at Colossae>>. We only know what Paul informs us on. AND THEREFORE IT ALREADY IS A MISTAKE to call this 'syncretism' a <<syncretistic HERESY>>, because a "heresy" is an ill of the CHURCH - which this syncretism was NOT! Not PAUL finds it in the Church, and he finds it not in the CHURCH. He, Paul, in 2:16, encounters this philosophical fashion of the WORLD, jealously and maliciously attacking and JUDGING THE CHURCH IN ITS FREEDOM AND SOVEREIGNTY - GAINED FOR IT BY CHRIST AND ENJOYED BY IT IN CHRIST BY "SABBATHS' FEASTING"!

<<... (w)e have to be very careful
<< that we do not import the full meaning
<< of Jewish elements into anything
<< that is mentioned ...>>.

We should not <<import>> it into the <<syncretistic blend>> because that <<blend>> consisted of "WORDLY principles" completely

and exclusively. And we should not <<import>> it into the CHURCH because the Church's "celebrations" were purely, completely and exclusively that of primitive Christianity.

<<... (W)e have to be very careful that we do not import ... Jewish elements into anything that is mentioned ...>> AT ALL! This reminder is urgent. 'Judaism' is not acceptable for having formed part of the syncretism - the syncretism which PAUL in fact DOES suppose, as well as unmistakably DESCRIBE in Colossians as NON-Christian, AND, as NON-Jewish!

THE SYNCRETISM IN ITS LARGER CONTEXT

Here in Colossians - like as in Galatians - FAR TOO MUCH HAS BEEN MADE OF JUDAISM WHILE FAR TOO LITTLE OF HEATHENDOM AND PAGANISM. The "world" was Greek. 'Hellenism' ruled the day. It consisted of its own syncretistic philosophic 'blends' and 'isms'. Christians were people from this "world" and from these "philosophies". After they had become Christians they were persecuted for their Faith; they were not met and comfortably accommodated half-way by paganism and idolatry. The <<historical elements related to the background of the book>>, show it. Chapter 2:16 shows the role the Christians' "Sabbaths' celebration" played in this very real CONFLICT OVER LOYALTIES AND BELONGING ... considering the immediate and larger SOCIAL AND RELIGIOUS context.

CONCLUSION: NO such cancer as <<the syncretistic blend of Gnosticism, Judaism, and asceticism>>, <<was besetting the CHURCH at Colossae>>. Paul's Letter does not reveal or conceal it.

Conklin:

<< In the above verses the dispute has
 << often centered around the Greek word
 << "sabbatwn," translated here in the KJV,
 << as "sabbath days."
 << To what does this word refer?

<< One could try to answer this question
 << in any number of ways.
 << This study attempts to answer that question
 << by considering its immediate and larger
 << linguistic context.
 << It turns out that our decisions about
 << the immediate context greatly affects
 << our understanding of the word "sabbatwn."
 << It also became obvious during the course of
 << this study that some authors decided,
 << either intentionally or not, to at best,
 << slight the linguistic features of the text.
 << And it seems that too often we are not fully
 << conscious of those decisions. In this study
 << we will attempt to make at least some of
 << those decisions explicit in the hopes that
 << doing so will help to resolve the problem.
 << Unless otherwise noted all the Bible verses are in the KJV.

<<
 << We should first note that Paul is telling
 << the Christians who were in Colossae
 << not to let ANY MAN judge them on these matters,
 << not that they were not to be judged
 << "by any of these" THINGS that follow
 << in verse.10 (Emphasis CGE)
 << Two notes before we start.
 << First, in the course of my investigation
 << I became aware that some very basic questions
 << need to be asked and answered.
 << When reading Col. 2:16-17 and interpretations
 << of it, one should ask this question:
 << is Paul talking about others condemning
 << the believers of Colossae
 << a) for participating in the things listed in vs. 16? Or,
 << b) are these critics complaining about
 << their non-participation?¹¹ Or
 << c) are the critics condemning the believers
 << for not following their
 << man-made rules about these things? Or,
 << to say it another way, as Troy Martin
 << has, the critics of the church
 << in Colossae may be condemning "the Colossian
 << Christians for engaging, not engaging, or
 << engaging incorrectly in these practices."¹³
 << Hay thinks that Romans 14 [verses 5-6]
 << suggests yet another possibility:
 << "[p]erhaps some Colossians are practicing
 << restrictions on diet and holy days and are
 << others not - and the Errorists are condemning
 << some or all of the Colossian believers for
 << not considering such matters essential."¹⁴

<< He then goes on to correctly note that
 << "Colossians 2:16 does not make clear
 << what kinds of judgment are in view."
 << Alternatively, Ratzlaff has suggested that
 << if Paul had "taught Gentile Christians
 << to keep the Sabbath, he would have
 << corrected the Colossian's perversion
 << of Sabbath-keeping."¹⁵ This explanation
 << of course assumes that it was the believers
 << who were practicing some perversion of the
 << Sabbath; What if, however, it was
 << those doing the judging, who were
 << advocating some perversion of what the
 << believers were doing? This is not an idle
 << question for if we can't even agree on what
 << is being criticized and why it was being
 << criticized then how can we tell if our
 << interpretation of these verses is valid?>>

Considering:

<<... Paul is telling the Christians who were in
 << Colossae not to let ANY MAN judge them on
 << these matters, not that they were not to be
 << judged "by any of these" THINGS
 << that follow in the verse.¹⁰>> (Emphasis CGE)

Conklin prepares for what he is going to say further:

<<We should first note ...>>;
 <<Two notes before we start ...>>.

Then he makes this PRELIMINARY AND TREND-SETTING statement:

<<... When reading Col. 2:16-17 and
 << interpretations of it, one should
 << ask this question: is Paul talking about
 << OTHERS CONDEMNING the BELIEVERS of
 << Colossae>>? (Emphasis CGE.)

Notice the PRESUPPOSITIONS already contained in this:

<<OTHERS>>: WHO might these <<others>> be?
 <<CONDEMNING>>: Does PAUL <<condemn>>; Does Paul, <<CONDEMN>>?
 <<BELIEVERS>>: Are these <<believers>>?

What Troy Martin has to say, that the matter concerned whether or not

<<... "the Colossian Christians (were) ENGAGING,

<< NOT engaging, or
 << engaging INCORRECTLY in these practices">> (Emphasis CGE.),
 also, BY PREDISPOSITION, pulls the whole argument skew. These
 arbitrary alternatives simply are not permitted.

<< Hay thinks that Romans 14 [verses 5-6]
 << suggests yet another possibility:
 << "[p]erhaps some Colossians are practicing
 << restrictions on diet and holy days and others
 << are not - and the Errorists are condemning
 << some or all of the Colossian
 << believers for not considering such matters essential.">>

<<... (Y)et another possibility ...>>? Not so!
 <<... (R)estrictions on diet and holy days ...>>? Perhaps the
 "world" might have been obsessed with such <<restrictions>>. But
 nowhere does PAUL find this type of issue a matter of concern in
 the Colossian CONGREGATION! Are <<... restrictions on diet and
 holy days ...>> the issue? Can restrictions be the issue while
 Paul takes for granted the "CELEBRATION" = "eating and drinking"
 of feasts, new moon's Lord's Supper and Sabbaths? Can
 <<restrictions on diet and holy days>> be the issue while Paul
 does more than to take for granted the feasting as well as the
 feasts, and stalwartly condones and defends them?

<<... (A)nd others are not ...>>? While Paul throughout his Letter
 praises the Congregation of the city of Colossus for their unity
 in love and steadfast faith in Christ's Gospel? In fact for their
 unity in love and steadfast faith in 'Paul's Gospel' = the Gospel
 exactly which HE taught them? Did Paul confront division in the
 Church caused by his own teaching? "Of which (he) became a
 minister"? Of course not!

<<... (S)ome or all ... for not considering such matters
 essential>>? Paul isn't here in Colossians addressing the
 believers in Romans! The situation in the city of Colossus is

quite different, obviously. Between the times of the writing of Paul's two Letters, there also is a difference of at least five years. And things changed fast. (As may be seen from the fact the heresy in the Churches of Galatia - Paul's Letter to them was a very early Letter - is never referred to again).

Colossians 2:16 isn't about the INDIFFERENCE of, or DIFFERENCE between <<some or all of the Colossian believers>>, about whether or not to <<consider matters essential>> or inessential. It is about CERTAINTY: NOBODY SHOULD JUDGE YOU CHRIST'S BODY IN ANYTHING! It is about the CONFLICT between the Church and the <<Errorists>> - the "world"! In Colossians it for Paul is about the CONFLICT between Christ and the "principalities" of "darkness" and THIS conflict as between His "Body" and the "world". The onslaught of the "world" upon "Christ's Body" MUST BE SEEN IN THE GREATER CONTEXT OF CHRIST'S VICTORY OVER THE "POWERS OF DARKNESS".

One may read the whole Letter to the Colossians and find NO WORD OR IDEA against this 'first principle' of 'interpretation' there, but all in agreement with and to the strengthening of it! There is NOT <<yet another possibility>> there.

Ratzlaff's 'suggestion',

<<... that if Paul had "taught Gentile Christians to keep the Sabbath, he would have corrected the Colossians' perversion of Sabbath-keeping>>,

would have made sense, had Paul been 'teaching' <<Gentile Christians to keep the Sabbath>>, and had there been

<<Colossians>> who 'perverted' <<Sabbath-keeping>>. But these presupposed concepts are purely imaginary and have to be 'suggested' FIRST, before an argument could be built upon them.

Comments Conklin on Ratzlaff's imagining:

<< This explanation of course assumes that it was
<< the believers who were practicing some
<< perversion of the Sabbath;

<< What if, however, it was those doing the
<< judging, who were advocating some perversion
<< of what the believers were doing?>>

Conklin himself, <<of course assumes>>, and he assumes <<SOME
PERVERSION of the Sabbath>> / <<some perversion ... the BELIEVERS
were doing>> - which again is no more than an assumption.

I cannot see any perversion of the Sabbath, neither do I find that it is the believers that did those
imagined perversions. So Conklin, just like Ratzlaff, <<of course assumes>> and no more. And
Conklin's remark that <<This is not an idle question>> relieves it of no fickleness,

<<... for if we can't even agree on what is
<< being criticized and why it was being
<< criticized then how can we tell if our
<< interpretation of these verses is valid?>>

We'll never get to an agreement because we'll ever have to imagine
our criticisms.

Point is: There's no need to disagree on what is NON-existent. It
is the CHURCH that <<is being criticized>>, and not <<what>> or
<<some>> <<perversion of the Sabbath>>; and it is the CHURCH that
<<is being criticized>> and JUDGED, and <<WHY>>? : BECAUSE OF =
"WITH REGARD TO", its "Sabbaths' celebration"! First SEE what
there is to see, then <<explain>> what IS seen.

So back to the basic questions: WHO might these <<OTHERS>> who <<CONDEMN(ED) the
BELIEVERS of Colossae>> be? They are OTHERS THAN THE BELIEVERS! And this is a
fundamental fact never to be lost from mind when grappling with the exposition of Col.2:16.
Are these 'others' of and within the Church "the Body that is Christ's"? Or are they of or from "the
world" of the "first principles" of "philosophy" and "wisdom"? They indeed are the last mentioned.
And that makes the world's difference to one's understanding of the whole issue implied in our
Scripture. It makes of Paul the undaunted protector of the Church in its freedom as over against this
world and "kingdom of darkness" with its judgements upon "the Body that is Christ's".

<<... It (consequently, CGE) greatly affects ...
<< our understanding of the word "sabbatwn.">>

This word "Sabbaths" - with the full descriptive phrase it comes
with - consequently and consistently to the thinking of Paul,
obtains tropological meaning. Paul namely uses it metonymically

for the Church's freedom - the freedom it ENJOYS in guiltless FREEDOM IN CHRIST. The Church cannot be judged 'IN ANYTHING'; the Church cannot be judged BY "ANYBODY" (<tis>); the Church especially cannot be judged in its "CELEBRATION ("eating and drinking") - in (its) CELEBRATION of feasts, of monthly (Lord's) Supper, of Sabbath Days"!

Paul's use of "Sabbaths" with reference to the impersonal pronoun "(by) whomsoever" (<tis>), explains why he isn't saying, "and": "Don't you be judged by ANYONE with regard to ANYTHING - whether with regard to your eating and drinking, OR with regard to your eating and drinking of any particular feast: either (<eh>) (not "and") of monthly (Lord's) Supper, OR (<eh>) (not "and") of Sabbath Days."

This fact of "whether, either, or", reciprocally lends impetus to the impersonal pronoun <tis> - "ANYONE", as well as to the Accusative <humahs> - "YOU": 'Don't YOU, BE judged, not by ANYONE, and not in ANYTHING! Christ is it that made you FREE - who EARNED your freedom. (vs. 12-15) He is your Head - NOBODY ELSE is. In Him you ARE perfect, and under HIM, you are SOVEREIGN! Don't be intimidated. (vs. 16) And least of all feel guilty about all the "don't's" of those hypocritical beguilers.' (vs. 18)

ONLY KEEP PERSPECTIVE!: "These (your Sabbaths' celebrations) are but a spectre of things yet in future: Indeed the Body that is Christ's" ... as such perfected at His coming, and glorified. (vs.17)

Verse 17 is a parenthesis, a reminder, an exhortation to the Church to keep balance and to stay realistic. Don't fall into the same trap of those beguilers so obsessed with their grotesque philosophies and practices. Don't be drawn into their type of wisdom and self-will worship. (vs. 18) The Christian Faith is far too worthy of it because you in fact are the inheritors of the

promises of God and in Christ through faith already are the beneficiaries of His fullness, perfection and glory, in faith and hope of His coming.

The meaning of each word only if true, effects the meaning of each other word and of all combined. It is SUPERFLUOUS to determine in isolation the meaning of the word "Sabbaths". It totally is UNNECESSARY to determine in isolation the several ways the Sabbath could have been kept, disregarded or <<perverted>>.

Disregarding of the Sabbath in any case is a priori an IMPOSSIBILITY seeing it is "WITH REGARD TO" the "eating and drinking OF SABBATHS", that Paul says nobody should judge the Church.

It not only <<... turns out that our decisions about the IMMEDIATE context greatly affects our understanding of the word "sabbatwn">>, but also our decisions about the LARGER context.

Continues Conklin:

<<... It also became obvious during the course
<< of this study that some authors decided,
<< either intentionally or not,
<< to at best, slight the linguistic features
<< of the text. ...>>

No doubt one has to agree, and only may go further. A person may unintentionally neglect, but can <slight> when <intentionally> only. I do not believe lack of information, interest or of insight were reason for authors' neglect of many factors with the exegesis of Col. 2:16. BIAS was their reason.

Precisely the fact that <<... the dispute has often centered around the Greek word "sabbatwn"... >>, proves bias determined the format and direction of the debate. 'Authors' in advance have decided: the Sabbath should be condemned and its keepers, "judged"!

Let us, Sabbath-believers, not lament the judgements thus meted out against us; it serves to our suffering for the sake of the suffering of Christ - our Christian privilege and joy.

Conklin:

```
<<... is Paul talking about others condemning
<< the believers of Colossae
<< a) for participating in the things listed in vs. 16? Or,
<< b) are these critics complaining about
<< their non-participation?11 Or
<< c) are the critics condemning the believers
<< for not following
<< their man-made rules about these things?12>>
```

If it is accepted a priori – as Paul accepts a priori – the Sabbaths were celebrated, then none of these alternatives is needed or needs consideration.

In this regard notice <<Endnote>> no. <11>:

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<< Thornton ... writes: "... the Christians at
<< Colossae may be envisaged as being
<< criticized, among other things,
<< for their failure to keep the Jewish calendar
<< and to watch out for new moons ...";
<< Living Way Ministries ...: "We are warned
<< against Sabbath-keepers who want to judge
<< others for not keeping it ...";
<< Thomas: ... but also against those who would
<< call them to account for not observing them";
<< Ogilvie ...: "Nor do we have to be
<< intimidated by those who seek to impose
<< religious or other rules and regulations.>>
```

Observes Conklin with every right:

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<< Take careful note of how they have
<< not only changed the text but the thrust
<< of (Paul's) warning as well.>>
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Ogilvie's contention is representative of the glaring injustice this Scripture constantly has to endure ...:

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<<... Nor do we have to be intimidated by those
<< who seek to impose religious or other rules
<< and regulations ...>>.
```

Paul's very words and intention are twisted against itself most unbecomingly! But Paul actually says and he ultimately means to say just what he says, that "You (<<we>>) DO NOT BE (<<have not to be>>) judged (<<intimidated>>) by anyone (<<by those who seek to>>)" <<We do not have to be intimidated by those who seek to ...>> JUDGE THE CHRISTIAN'S FEASTING AND CELEBRATING OF HIS DAYS OF WORSHIP, UNINTIMIDATED, UNIMPOSED AND UNREGULATED BY THOSE OTHERS NOT of the faith (or <<religion>>)!"

HOW, have they <<not only changed the text but the thrust>> of Paul's warning?:

1. Paul does NOT criticise <<the Christians at Colossae>>. If <<others>> do - and <others> in fact did criticise them - it is exactly THE OTHERS whom Paul has in mind while he tells the Colossians, "DON'T you be judged by ANYONE". Therefore rather, the Christians at Colossus should <<be envisaged as being>> VINDICATED in their very celebration - "eating and drinking" - "of feasts (of any instance), either of month's (Lord's Supper) or of (weekly) Sabbaths".

2. NO <<FAILURE>> on the part of <<the Christians at Colossae ... may be envisaged>>. On the contrary, their TRIUMPH as "the Body that is Christ's", should be <<envisaged>>.

3. <<The Christians at Colossae may>> NOT <<be envisaged>> as <<keep(ing) the JEWISH CALENDAR>> for theirs was the CHRISTIAN CALENDAR UNCONDITIONALLY.

4. NO <<OTHER THINGS>> of <<failure>> <<may be envisaged>> on the part of <<the Christians at Colossae>>, for they failed IN NOTHING that Paul might have mentioned or might have supposed, but JUBILANTLY CELEBRATED THEIR STATUS "IN CHRIST" which was that of PERFECTION AND COMPLETENESS. Paul finds NO fault with <<the Christians at Colossae>>, as we have already noticed. He <<criticized>> them for absolutely nothing. It is a mistake and a FALSE starting point that <<the Christians at Colossae>> deserved to be <<criticized>>.

5. Totally unasked for and completely unprovoked by anything in the text or context, is the idea that <<We are warned against Sabbath-keepers who want to judge others for not keeping it (the Sabbath)>>.

6. Equally unasked for and unprovoked by the text is the notion that

<<... We are warned ... against those who would
<< call them (<<the Christians at Colossae>>)
<< to account for not observing them
(<<the Jewish calendar and new moons>>)>>.

7. Ogilvie's remark,

<<Nor do we have to be intimidated by those
<< who seek to impose religious or other
<< rules and regulations>>

... if taken for being applicable to the world in opposition with the Church, would have been quite true. Only problem is Ogilvie supposes <<those who seek to impose>>, are the Church!

In the same way one could observe the identically mistaken interpretations, <<changes (to) the text>> and to <<the thrust of (Paul's) warning>> from Conklin's proposed alternatives:

<<... is Paul talking about others condemning
<< the believers of Colossae
<< a) for participating in the things listed
<< in vs. 16? Or,
<< b) are these critics complaining about
<< their non-participation? Or
<< c) are the critics condemning the believers
<< for not following their man-made
<< rules about these things?

'Others' other than the Church indeed <<condemn(ed) the believers of Colossae>>.

They <<condemn(ed) the believers of Colossae>> exactly

<<for participating in the things listed in vs. 16>> ...

it's plain obvious!

But NOWHERE AND NOHOW IS IT POSSIBLE TO SEE HOW

<<are these critics complaining about ...
<< the believers of Colossae('s) ...
<< NON-participation>>,

OR HOW

<<... the critics ... condemn(ed) the believers
<< for not following ... RULES
<< about these things>>!

OR HOW (the same thing)

<<... as Troy Martin has (said),
<< the critics of the church in Colossae
<< may be condemning "the Colossian Christians
<< for engaging, not engaging, or engaging
<< incorrectly in these practices">>.

OR HOW - <<yet another>> IM-<<POSSIBILITY>>! -

<<... Hay thinks that Romans 14 [verses 5-6]

<< suggests yet another possibility: (that)
 << "[p]erhaps some Colossians are practicing
 << restrictions on diet and holy days and others
 << are not - and the Errorists are condemning
 << some or all of the Colossian believers
 << for not considering such matters essential.">>

What confusion for no reason whatsoever!

HOW then could Conklin see his way open to approve the following:

<<... He (Hay) then goes on to CORRECTLY note
 << that "Colossians 2:16
 << DOES NOT MAKE CLEAR what kinds of judgements
 << are in view">>? (Emphasis CGE)

Of course Colossians 2:16 'makes clear' <<what kinds of judgements are in view>>! It describes it there in bold letters: "Don't you be judged by anyone WITH REGARD TO YOUR FEASTING (= "EATING AND DRINKING"), WITH REGARD TO YOUR FEASTING OF FEASTS, OR OF NEW MOON, OR OF SABBATHS". SPECIFICALLY: "EITHER with regard to your eating and drinking PER SE, OR with regard to your eating and drinking WHETHER OF FEASTS, NEW MOON'S, OR SABBATHS'"! In ESSENCE: 'Don't you be judged by anyone in ANYTHING that might concern your freedom in Jesus Christ!'

EVERYTHING IS MADE <<CLEAR>>:

It is clear the whole matter concerns JUDGEMENT / INTIMIDATION / BELITTILING of the faithful;

It is clear WHO judges - <<the Errorists>> - the unbelievers;

It is clear who ARE judged: <<the Colossian believers>> - the Church and Paul included;

And it is clear WHAT they are judged "about": They are judged "concerning" / "with regard to" their Christian celebration in one Body that is Christ's of the Gospel that is Christ's!

There is NOTHING in this passage from Colossians <<considering such matters>> as are NOT <<ESSENTIAL>> or NOT ESSENTIALLY CHRISTIAN!

Conklin, << Secondly>>, of his <<two notes before we start>>:

<< I have found too often in the course of this
 << study that some anti-sabbatarian critics
 << have ASSUMED, without presenting even
 << a scintilla of evidence to support

<< their case, that Paul was saying that
 << no one should judge whether
 << a Christian SHOULD observe these things
 << and certain others have THEN
 << twisted the meaning of the text
 << to mean that therefor the seventh-day
 << Sabbath is null and void.>>

What escaped Conklin's attention is that this objection of his also applies to his own proposal for a solution to the - ALL <<ASSUMED>> - problematics of our Scripture! Anti-sabbatharian critics WITHOUT EXCEPTION, ASSUME, ASSUME AND ASSUME, <<without presenting even a scintilla of evidence to support their case>>. It is true: In Colossians 2:16 and context it is not a matter of whether or not

<<... Paul was saying that no one should
 << judge whether a Christian SHOULD
 << observe these things>>.

That's the whole point! And for the very reason of it, it is not a matter of whether or not Paul was saying HOW or WHY or with what MOTIVE or WHICH OF or WHAT PART OF or WHAT KIND OF <<days>> a Christian should or should not observe.

Paul simply accepts a status quo within the Church - that it "celebrates" very expressively by "eating and drinking", its "feasts, of new moon's (Lord's Supper), of Sabbaths" - signs of the deeper lying reason and cause, the CHRISTIAN FREEDOM IN CHRIST - the fountain of the overflowing waters.

Paul takes this VISIBLE status quo as THE example - as the representative instance - as <<the locus classicus>> - of the Church's STATUS IN CHRIST! That status in Christ is one of "FULLNESS", of "COMPLETENESS", of "PERFECTION" and its "proof" or "sign" of visibility can be seen in the Church's "Sabbaths' celebration". But it is "SIGN ONLY" - <skia>, "spectre", "promise", of the "yet future things" - the LAST "FULLNESS" of "COMPLETENESS" and "PERFECTION" of the Body that SHALL belong to Christ IN THE DAY OF CHRIST AND OF HIS RETURN.

The "enemy" (the "Errorists", "critics") of the world's domain of philosophy is just as aware as Paul of this relation of the "sign" or "shadow" to its DEEPER CAUSE or "substance". And in its "judging" of the Church, the "enemy" REALLY aims at the heart of the Body and its Head - at the "substance" and "ESSENTIALITY". The "principalities of the world" cannot bear the Body that "BELONGS TO CHRIST"! It aims at severing this Body from its Head which is Christ. THIS SUPPLIES THE TRUE REASON FOR THE DOMINION OF DARKNESS' JUDGING OF THE CHURCH "WITH REGARD TO (its) CELEBRATING SABBATHS". All and any other minutiae are reduced to insignificance and irrelevancy.

So it is not only <<THEN>> that <<certain others have twisted the meaning of the text to mean that therefore the seventh-day Sabbath is null and void.>> The FIRST lot of anti Church men were <<anti-sabbatarians>>. <<Anti-sabbatarians>> today only further <<twist the meaning of the text ... to support their case>>, and that <<without presenting even a scintilla of evidence>>.

Conklin:

<<... Now Another thing that happens,
 << is that those who twist this Scripture
 << to make it say what they want it to say,
 << "rarely if ever ... explain the relevance
 << of verse 17" - as noted by Scheiffer.
 << And yet this verse is one of the keys to understanding vs.

16!

The interpretation presented here in answer to Conklin, does not fail in fulfilling the requirement of a genuine explanation of verse 16. It actually cannot do without taking verse 17 (and verse 18!) into thorough consideration.

Conklin:

<<... To help make it easy I have broken
 << this study up into sections and
 << you can read whichever ones you chose.
 << Of course, you'll miss out on the flow
 << of the analysis if you don't read them
 << all and in sequence.
 << ... here's the real high points:

<< 1) The words translated as "in meat and
 << drinks" is NOT about unclean food or
 << dietary laws. This because there are simply
 << NO LAWS about unclean drinks.
 << Also, the words translated as "in meat and
 << drinks" should be translated as
 << "in eating and drinking".
 << Therefor, as we will see, it is most likely
 << that these words are about "feasting and
 << fasting as the case may be".
 << So, the believers in Colossae were being
 << criticized about feasting/fasting
 << on the days that follow;
 << rather than fasting which the Gnostic
 << ascetics alleged would bring them into
 << a closer union, or communion, with God.>>

Considering:

<<... (T)he words translated as "in meat and
 << drinks" should be translated as
 << "in eating and drinking".
 << Therefor, as we will see, it is most likely
 << that these words are about "feasting and
 << fasting as the case may be".

Please explain this riddle?: <<... (T)he words translated as "in
 meat and drinks" should be translated as "in eating and drinking"
 ...>> all right!

<<THEREFOR>>, says Conklin, <<... these words are about "feasting and FASTING AS THE
 CASE MAY BE">>?!

It makes no sense!

"Eating and drinking", means to CELEBRATE or FEAST. From where
 then the idea of <<feasting and FASTING>>, even <<feasting AND
 fasting as the case may be>>?

How does <<fasting>> fit in with "feasting" / "celebrating" -
 which implies a joyful time of "eating and drinking" of
 EXCEPTIONAL meaning?

We know Paul contextually as well as topically a good distance from here in his Letter speaks
 about fasting, or something like a lot of ascetic 'don'ts' - "Don't touch! Don't taste!" Such are
 "ordinances". ("Ordinances" from <dogmatidzesthe> - more truly: "specious pretext",

“declamation”.) This is quite the OPPOSITE of “feasting” – the OPPOSITE of the “eating and drinking” mentioned and meant in 2:16!

The only IMPLIED possibility of <<fasting>> – Paul nowhere makes mention of it – may perhaps be found in these philosophical worldly practices of verse 21. The very words and thrust of verse 16 and its context, where Paul speaks of the CHURCH’s practice and philosophy, namely its festive “eating and drinking”, naturally EXCLUDE any possibility of fasting.

Verse 21: “Which things indeed have the appearance of (“Which things are the specious pretext of ...” = “Which things are the ‘dogmatism’ of) ... the neglect of the body”, verses 21-23. Paul refers to this sort of “arbitrary / legalistic ... will-worship” or “self-imposed worship” (Marshall), in SHARPEST CONTRAST with the worship which the CHURCH actually and from its innermost recourses, lives out and practices. Paul refers to the “WORLDLY”, “philosophical” and “dogmatic” “will-worship” of verse 21 in SHARPEST CONTRAST with WHAT CHRIST OBTAINED AND ATTAINED, and has apportioned his Elect the Church in verse 15 and 16 – for which reason the Church in its FREEDOM, “feasts”!

No! <<these words ... about “feasting”>> are NOT <<about ... FASTING AS THE CASE MAY BE”>>! While Paul in verse 16 ENCOURAGES and encourages the CHURCH: “Be not judged with regard to (your) feasting ...!”, he in verse 20 DISDAINS, and disdains the WORLD, with regard to ITS ordinances” and “shew of wisdom ... and hypocrisy” (=“false humility”), verse 23.

Paul disdains the ascetics as he disdains asceticism and the “dogmatism” of asceticism, while he sides with the hosts of the Lord Jesus as he sides with their “feasting”.

The Church,

“holding to the Head

from which all the body by joints and bands

having nourishment ministered –

and knit together,

GROWS WITH THE INCREASE OF GOD!"

Paul permits the Church's constitution no CRACKS ("knit together") through which the menacing "dogmatism" of ascetic philosophy may penetrate the Church.

"Having nourishment ministered" - 'having been filled with proper spiritual food', Paul leaves the Church no EMPTINESS which the world's deprivations could fill.

The adverse menace receives no place in the Church; it is a stranger, outsider and enemy of "the Body that is Christ's".

<<Fastings>> belongs to and belongs with the philosophical wisdom, power and dominion "OF THE WORLD" and "OF DARKNESS" (where no "shadow" goes for the want of the LIGHT of the Dominion that is Christ's!

This apposition of OPPOSITES found in verses 20 to 23 of Colossians the second chapter IN EFFECT throws even more light on the nature of the "nourishment" (verse 19) that the Church receives through its worship of Christ. The "nourishment" spoken of in verse 19 - by which the Body "GROWS WITH THE INCREASE OF GOD" - without doubt infers the "eating and drinking" of verse 16! What it boils down to, is that the "eating and drinking" of verse 16 - which Paul admonishes the CHURCH not "regarding to" it to be judged by "any man" of the WORLD - is that this "eating and drinking", INVOLVE MORE THAN JUST "FOOD AND DRINKS"! The "eating and drinking of feasts, of new moon, and of Sabbaths (= "THE Sabbath"), means THIS SPIRITUAL "NOURISHMENT MINISTERED" BY "HOLDING TO THE HEAD" WHICH IS CHRIST! It means an "eating and drinking" of and by WORSHIP - even of and by the Faith of Jesus Christ, Head and Lord of the Body that THUS FEASTS ITS SABBATHS, "IN CHRIST".

Here then I must disagree with the idea that Paul in verse 16, "with reference to your eating and drinking of feasts, of new moon and of Sabbaths", meant <<irrelevancies>> (Markus Barth) <<These things>> - as Conklin refers to it and in fact Paul - were and are NO 'irrelevancies'.

Looking at the several passages in the Letter to the Colossians where Paul warns the Church "Let no man ...", it is striking that in each instance Paul means the essence of the Faith as with regard to it:

"This I say, lest any man ...", 1:4 - with reference to the previous verses 2-3:

"That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgement of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ - in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge ... This I say, lest any man should beguile you ...". (<paralogidzehtai>)

"Beware lest any man ...", 1:8 - with reference to the previous verse, verse 7:

"Rooted and built up in Him, and established in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving ... Beware lest any man spoil (rob) you ...". (<sulagohohn>)

"Let no man therefore judge you ...", 2:16 - with reference to the previous verses, verses 12 to 15 that tell of the raising of Christ from the dead, of which I quote verse 15: "Having spoiled principalities and powers, He made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them (through raising Christ from the dead) ... Let no man therefore judge you ...". (<krinetoh>)

"Let no man beguile you ...", 2:18 - with reference to the previous verse 17:

"... the body is of Christ ... Let no man beguile you of your reward ...". (<katabrabeuetoh>).

Having looked at the passages then where Paul warns the Church, "Let no man ...", it is striking that in 2:16, he, with reference to verses 12 to 15, more intensely than in any other instance of the like admonitions, means the ESSENCE of the Faith as "with

regard to" his admonition. Paul means 'relevancy' - the things that matter. He doesn't imply 'irrelevancies'; he doesn't say: ... 'Ah, these things are of little or no concern ... don't let anyone judge you in it!'

The "eating and drinking" of the Church which Paul in 2:16-17 mentions "with regard to" its "feasts, new moon (Supper of the Lord) and Sabbaths", in "SUBSTANCE" - like in "substance" the things he mentions in verses 19 and 20a - are SPIRITUAL, MATTER OF FAITH "things". The "eating and drinking" of verse 16, though also matter of fact "things", are of CHRISTIAN and "festive" nature - a 'Gospel'-"celebration" of the deeds of God through Jesus Christ. The feasting as well as the particular days of the Church's feasting, were CHRISTIAN "feasting" and CHRISTIAN "days"! That solves any problem - which could only be imagined - and in reality does not exist.

Conklin:

<< 2) The words "in respect of" mean
 << "in portion of"; thus when we link the
 << previous observation with this it is
 << reinforced: the believers at Colossae were
 << being criticized about feasting/fasting
 << on the days that follow rather than
 << fasting which the Gnostic ascetics alleged
 << would bring them into a closer union,
 << or communication, with God.

Conklin understands the difference between worldly fasting and believer's fasting. But his only grounds for insisting Paul meant <<fasting>> when saying "regarding eating and drinking ... of Sabbaths", is the fact the Day of Atonement and Feast of Trumpets are not in the Old Testament called "feasts", but indeed there are called "Sabbaths". These are all aspects of a non-existing problem in the situation in life of the Colossian Christian Congregation. Now we are forced to the still further remote information that on the Day of Atonement the People fasted, and therefore Paul, saying, "eating and drinking of Sabbaths", actually meant 'as the case may be regarding the fasting of certain annual feasts'. Then finally we might have been informed of the fact the Old Testament does NOT prescribe fasting of any kind, and least of all fasting on the Day of Atonement or on the Feast of Trumpets. <<Simply no law>> - Conklin's own words - by Old Testament economy demanded or commanded, "fasting".

<< It is amazing the number of people who
<< can't seem to read the English translation
<< correctly!>>

"In respect of":

<< The words "in respect of" tell you the days
<< on which the believers were
<< feasting and fasting.>>

I regret that I seem to be unable to read the English translation correctly where on the two "Sabbaths" that weren't 'feasts' so called I should read the believers were <<feasting and fasting>>.

<<... In their rush to condemn the seventh-day
<< Sabbath far too many people
<< (even some high-powered scholars among them!)
<< have simply glossed over
<< these very simple words.>>

These very simple words: "in eating and drinking" ... of feasts, whether of new moon, or, of Sabbaths" - don't rush now, don't simply gloss over - these very simple words most likely are about feasting and fasting as the case may be. As the case happened to be, regarding the eating and drinking of the Sabbaths - which were actually not Sabbaths but feasts but not feasts that were called feasts but that were called Sabbaths - now as the case happened to be in their case, these very simple words most likely are about feasting and fasting. Phiew! Nevertheless ...!

<<... These words are ONE OF THE MAJOR KEYS
<< to understanding these two verses.
<< In effect, these words begin a parenthetical
<< statement that could be dropped with
<< no effect on the meaning of the verses.>>

Yet they are ONE OF THE MAJOR KEYS to understanding these two verses! Phiew!

Conklin's logic is meticulous where he says,

<<... The words translated as "in meat and
<< drinks" is NOT about unclean food or dietary
<< laws. THIS BECAUSE there ARE SIMPLY NO LAWS
<< about unclean drinks...>>

But with complete disregard for the way he has just argued,
Conklin continues,

<< Also, the words translated as
<< "in meat and drinks" should be
<< translated as "in eating and drinking".
<< Therefor, as we will see, it is most
<< likely that these words are about
<< "feasting and FASTING as the case may be".>>

Amazing! Conklin immediately and completely must have forgotten <<there ARE SIMPLY NO LAWS>> about <<fasting>>! And in 2:16-17 there is simply no MENTION, or, implication, of <<fasting>>.

Conklin says <<the Gnostic ascetics>> <<alleged>> their <<fasting>> <<would bring them into a closer union, or communion, with God.>> That may have been so, and it also may not have been so. Nevertheless Paul tells us nothing about such a teaching of the <<Gnostic ascetics>>. He mentions another and sinister purpose of the enemy out there in the "world" though. Says he, "This I say, lest any man should BEGUILE YOU with enticing words ... (2:4) ... Beware lest any man SPOIL YOU through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ ... 2:4 ... Let no man therefore JUDGE YOU ... (2:16) ... Let no man BEGUILE YOU of your reward in a false humility as the worship of an angel, intruding into those things which he has not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mindedness." (2:18)

"WHY?", asks Paul, "WHY, if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, would you be subjected to the pettiness of its ordinances - Don't touch! Don't taste! Don't use!" ... It's two different worlds! Paul says he cannot grasp how a believer at his wits would associate with the "kingdom of darkness" while the Kingdom of light is so obvious and open, so joyous and free, so spontaneously "celebrating" its "Sabbaths" - without concern over being judged therein.

Although Paul uses the Indicative, "Why ARE you subjected to ..." - <dogmatidzesthe>, he uses it with the conjunctive particle <hohs> - "as if". As a rhetorical question, Paul gives the Indicative a strong Subjunctive connotation: "Why WOULD you be subjected to its pettiness - Don't touch! Don't taste! Don't use?" Paul does not suppose an actual presence IN OR OF THE CHURCH to such subjection or to such subjected persons or subjected parties. He ASKS, as for emphasising the vanity of the idea and of the ideals of the <<Gnostic ascetics>>. Paul says it is the pettiness of the "WORLD" - a pettiness at home in the world, and not in the Church.

That Paul's question is rhetorical - not implying reality IN THE CHURCH but IMPOSSIBILITY in the Church - is clear, taking into further consideration his foregoing description (verse 19), of the fully approved state he finds the Church in. Paul is happy with the faith of the faithful.

Paul's expressions of approval of the Colossian Congregation add up to a significant proportion of the Letter. He doesn't after he many times and strongly has expressed his contentment with their status in Christ, in a sudden and isolated instance in verse 21 (or in verse 16 for that matter) remember something to criticise the Church about. Paul, in verse 20 is recusant, as always, when referring to the "world". He, in verse 16, assents, as always, when speaking to or of the Body.

Asking, "Why ARE you subjected to ...", therefore doesn't indicate the Congregation or even a section of the Congregation, actually was "subjected" by or to another section of the Church itself.

This inference is in the last analysis substantiated by the fact that where Paul tells the Church not to be judged by "anyone", he supposes the Church inclusively and comprehensively, and united - a complete entity. Paul addressing "YOU", addresses the CHURCH IN TOTO, and not "some" or "certain ones" or factions of the Body, the Church,

"holding to the Head
 from which all the body by joints and bands
 having nourishment ministered -
 and knit together,
 GROWS WITH THE INCREASE OF GOD!"

Paul warns the Church about the <<Gnostic ascetics'>> true intentions - They barely could have designed their "dogmatism" to bring a person <<into a closer union, or communication, with God>>. They did not aim at just a partial perversion of ceremonial ordinances forced on fellow believers, but they aimed to SEVER the members and Body from the HEAD!

This fact proves - if anything does - that the <<Gnostic ascetics>> were not of the CHURCH, but of the WORLD; not IN the Church, but OUTSIDE the Church; not WITH the Church, but AGAINST the Church. Against this "any man" of the world, comes Paul's warning to the Church: "Don't YOU, BE judged by ANYBODY!" 'And therefore, feast! Keep Holy Communion every month! Rest and celebrate your Sabbaths! The substance - the important thing - belongs to Christ, and that means YOU, ARE the BODY THAT IS CHRIST'S, and your Sabbaths' celebrating is the shadow of promise - the spectre - of things yet in store for you AS THAT BODY!'

What more glorious conviction could Paul have had of the Church and of the Church living its very faith in Christ Jesus? What more glorious conviction could Paul have had of the Church's Sabbaths and its <<observance>> - an <<observance>> that was the Church's "celebration" - its spiritual "eating and drinking" BY FAITH - of its freedom and sovereignty in Christ Jesus - and of what it in the end of its earthly dispensation PROMISED to be?

How could the <<guts>> of this Scripture be kept buried under tradition, prejudice and sloth so long? The <<key>> to a positive assessment of our Scripture must be the 'key' to freedom from tradition, prejudice and sloth.

[So, dear Mr. Conklin, this criticism of mine of your <<study>> on Colossians 2:16 is AS MUCH A CRITICISM OF MYSELF and of my own previous studies (two of them) which also leant much toward the old and trite expositions. We must endeavour to reach <<in depth>>, as you have said!]

First, a question: How could <<(t)hese words ("in respect of") (be) ONE OF THE MAJOR KEYS to understanding these two verses>>, YET, <<(i)n effect, ... begin a parenthetical statement that could be dropped with no effect on the meaning of the verses>>? <<These words>> ARE important to an understanding of <<these two verses>>; and vice versa will an understanding of <<these two verses>>, <<effect>> one's understanding of the meaning of <<these words>>.

From our re-assessment of Colossians 2:16-17 so far, it must have become obvious that the meaning which Conklin suggests for the words "in respect of" (<en merei> in the Greek), namely, <<in portion of>>, is unacceptable.

Paul doesn't deal with small issues - parts or portions - he deals with things OF REAL "CONCERN". Paul means precisely, "Don't you be judged by anybody WITH REGARD TO THINGS OF CONCERN!"

One doesn't say, 'Don't you be judged by anybody with regard to trivialities. One also doesn't say, 'Don't you be judged by anybody in portion of ...', because then "you", are still judged or still ALLOW yourself be judged in portion of the rest - EXACTLY WHAT Paul admonishes is unacceptable! Paul meant: "Don't you be judged by anybody WITH REGARD TO ...", and, "with regard to ANYTHING!" - which implies "with regard to" all and the whole as well as to any part and specific. When one is judged in court he is judged to "the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth". Paul meant just that sort of "concerned", "pertaining to" - RELEVANT judgement.

I would repeat what I have already written in The Lord's Day in the Covenant of Grace, Book, Paul, on this phrase. In short, Conklin's mistake is linguistically. The words <en merei> used with the Genitive may have the meaning of "in portion of"; but not when it is used with the Dative - which in our text is the case. Used with the Dative <en merei> strictly means "with regard to" / "concerning" / "with respect to".

The KJV is correct, <<(t)he words "in respect of" tell you the days on which the believers were feasting ...>> - though it does not <<tell you the days on which the believers were feasting AND fasting>> - which is a contradiction, from the outset!

The phrase in which the words "with respect to" are found, refers to days ON ALL OF WHICH CHRISTIANS, "FEASTED"! It does NOT imply any day or days on which Christians did NOT "feast". It does NOT imply any day or days ON WHICH CHRISTIANS, FASTED. And it also does NOT imply any day or days on which JEWS, fasted.

<<If this is ignored ... then one's perception of Paul's intended meaning in this passage is automatically colored by one's own private interpretation and/or speculation.>>

Another point of (technical, grammatical) relevance is: (See Part 4)

<En merei> relates to "eating and drinking" = "feasting". It does NOT relate directly to the mentioned "feasts, or new moon's (Lord's Supper), or Sabbaths". So all the days without 'exception' or <<part>> involved, INVOLVED "eating and drinking" and none involved <<fasting>>. At the same time, the "concern" was "concerning their FEASTING" in freedom and without fear of, or concern for, the "world's" "powers", "principles" or judgements.

It is EXTREMELY FAR FETCHED to argue that because the Day of Atonement was a Jewish 'feast' day, and because Jewish 'feast' days are meant in Colossians 2:16 and the Day of Atonement and the Feast of Trumpets are never referred to with the word "feast" in the Old Testament but are called "sabbaths", and because the Jews on the 'feast' day of Atonement, "AFFLICTED THEIR SOULS", it also must have meant they afflicted their BODIES by FASTING, that therefore thus 'feasting', the 'feast-DAYS' mentioned must have included this day of ALLEGED fasting, and therefore <<portion of eating and drinking>> meant <<fasting>>, and because the <<Gnostics>> were <<ascetics>>, therefore the phraseology "eating and drinking" should imply the ascetic <<teaching>> 'concerning fasting portion of days' of the <<Errorists>> within the Church, and that therefore, the "days" implied were Jewish <<feasts>> that either could be associated with eating or with fasting <<as the case may be>>, that, lastly, meant the weekly Sabbath could not have been included or implied.

I inexplicably still trust Conklin's honesty. At least he doesn't fabricate silly arguments with ill design.

Point <3> of Conklin's <<real high points>>

<< The Greek word translated "holyday" (heorte)
 << in the KJV is NEVER used in reference
 << to the Feast of Trumpets or the day of
 << Atonement. If you wish to check the texts
 << for yourself they are provided in Table 3.16
 << And both are ceremonial sabbath days. So,
 << Paul would not be redundant to say "sabbath
 << days" if he was trying to list ALL of the
 << feast days of the Jewish religious economy.
 << This is a CRUCIAL key to understanding the text.>>

I have found this very hard to understand and even harder its relevancy to the explanation of our text and the factor of "Sabbaths" mentioned there. So I skipped the in-betweens and advanced to Conklin's treatment on this point of the "Sabbaths"

not being called "feasts". I shall insert the whole of his dissertation at the end, and shall here only comment in general. I have found Conklin's research on the word <heorteh> quite thorough. He has made some unique discoveries of merit. But I could not find in Conklin's study on this point any help to a better understanding of Colossians 2:16-17! To me the reason why became clearer through having taken an overall rethinking of the Scripture, that also to myself resulted in a much truer understanding of it than I have before been able to reach.

In the first place my conclusion reached is that all these researchers APPROACH the "issue" wrongly. Their approach to the "problem" PRESUMES that there is, and that there MUST BE, a "problem" in this text that must be solved and must be solved with this term <heorteh>. Meanwhile there never existed a problem! By sheer need of Scripture to invalidate the Sabbath and to validate the Sunday Bible scholars erroneously presuppose and presume and demand with great authority, a problem. And the problem or the supposition of it they then base upon another erroneous presumptuous presupposition, namely, that Paul is the one who supposes and denounces a JEWISH "problem" at this place in his Letter to the Colossians - the evil of Sabbath-keeping.

To answer by summarising:

There IS no "problem" with any aspect or word of the text of Colossians 2:16-17, and there is NOTHING "Jewish" about it. Paul presumes - of course he presumes - he presumes because he admonishes the Church. But what is it he presumes? A "problem" of any kind? If it were a problem of and with the Church he would not have said one word that and not one word like he has actually said. Paul admonishes the Church - which does not mean that he reprimands the Church - he admonishingly ENCOURAGES the Church. Which means he finds NO FAULT with the Church, but the very opposite - he finds something with, of and in the Church - something that belongs to the Church and the very life of it - something legitimately and praiseworthy. Paul then tells the Church: Don't you ever be robbed of this ASSET, this recommendable

committal! "Don't you be judged in your Sabbaths' feasting by whomsoever!"

We have to do here with Christian "things", so how could there be a problem with that? There is not the vaguest suggestion in the whole of Colossians that "these things" - the things in verse 16 referred to - were other or different than "Christian" or opposed to "Christian". The "eating and drinking", and the "feasts, new moon and Sabbaths", were CHRISTIAN. Not one of them and nothing about any of them, was "Jewish". ALL of it had its Old Testament type. But here we see the true! Being the practice and faith of the Body that (now) is Christ's, there's no chance it could still be the typical. This was the reality of the inheritance of the saints, of "things" come to life as it were under the Christian dispensation. "These" were not "things" "under the (dispensation of the) Law" - "these things" were valid under and within the dominion of the Christ resurrected from the dead. They were things of the "new heavens and new earth" - things ascertained, validated, in fact introduced and institutionalised FIRST TIME AND ORIGINALLY BY THE ANTI-TYPE HIMSELF to whom all types before had shown and witnessed.

Paul deals with CHRISTIAN FREEDOM AND SOVEREIGNTY and with the Sabbaths of the Body that is Christ's that singularly have reached eschatological fulfilment in the dispensation of the Church of the End-Time. NEVER, NEVER read Colossians 2 verses 16 and 17 apart from verses 12 to 15! That not only is the 'key' to its understanding - that IS ITS UNDERSTANDING. With having read verses 12 to 15, stop every effort right there - which is before having created "problems" in verses 16-17. Problems are meaningless, and confusing. Rather, with having read verses 12 to 15, stop every effort right there - which is before having created "problems" in verses 16-17, and IMMEDIATELY AND WHILE KEEPING VERSES 12 TO 15 IN MIND, try to understand verses 16-17, and they will make themselves understood.

I - not feeling foolish at all but confident - shall try to explain what "feasts", "a new moon", and "Sabbaths", in Colossians 2:16 mean. I shall not feel foolish but confident in daring such august an attempt, because I shall simply let Paul do the job:

Says he, "These things are a spectre of the nearing and yet future, but the Body is of Christ ... (He is) the Head from whom the whole Body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together (in love 2:2), INCREASETH WITH THE INCREASE OF GOD"!

Simple! And this solution is preferable to all the hard labour of well-meaning slaves of research. Here is the Church of Jesus Christ latter day saints FEASTING. Like they IN CHRIST celebrate ALL THEIR JOY, they IN THEIR SABBATHS find FEAST and NEW MOON, combined. Whether "a feast", "or", "a new moon", or whether "with regard to the eating and drinking of a feast, or, of a new moon" ... they are all the "CELEBRATION OF SABBATHS". (See The Lord's Day in the Covenant of Grace, Par. 5.1.1.6.3.7 - "Feasts" (in Part 1, 'Goshen to Gethsemane').

Isaiah 66 speaks of the New Earth and the Sabbath and the new moon celebrated by the saved. It sees the new creation TO BE - in the last analysis. It - by first analysis - sees the New Creation THAT IS - the Kingdom of God, the Kingdom of heaven, the Kingdom of the "rule" and "dominion" of His Christ. It sees the Christian era of faith, and the Christian Community celebrating the Lord's Supper - every month or "new moon". It sees the Christian Community enjoying the Lord's Supper every month or "new moon", "celebrating their Sabbaths"! This is the eating of the fruit of the Apocalyptic Tree of Life - even of Jesus Christ - "... every month's Sabbaths' celebration"! "A FEAST'S OR A NEW MOON'S

celebration" in the CHRISTIAN Church, meant its "SABBATHS' feasting / celebration".

That was the status quo which Paul found in the Colossian Congregation and which he saw himself the defender AND CHAMPION of for the sake of Jesus Christ the Head.

The "problem" with Colossians 2:16 and its "Sabbaths" for the Christian Church has been the same as with other <<very early>> Christian documents like the Letters of Ignatius and Barnabas. "Problems" have been PRESUMED BEFORE they have been found to actually have existed. Assumptions are made conditional presumptions. In the case of Colossians it is presumed Paul writes about a "Judaistic issue"; it is presumed he denounces the Sabbath, etcetera. Meanwhile none of such notions exists in the Letter. The principle is also illustrated by the cases of later documents such as Barnabas and Ignatius, where it is taken for granted "the Lord's Day" means Sunday; taken for granted also "the eighth day" means Sunday; taken for granted Ignatius is "anti-Jewish"; taken for granted he denounces the Sabbath as well as its keeping - while nothing of the sort can be substantiated from the document itself and while just the opposites to each of the presumptions are obvious from the document itself. In Colossians Paul vindicates the Christian celebration and the Christians' celebrating of the Sabbath on the grounds of its Christian reason for being. Ignatius pleads for a Christian substantiation of the Christians' keeping of the Sabbath Day; he pictures the Sabbath as the institution from which the Gospel-era or the "eighth day" draws its significance; he pictures the Sabbath as "the Lord's Day" kept in Christian faith. The idea of the First Day or Sunday NEVER crosses his mind. Just so the idea of anti-Sabbathism or First-Day Christianity NEVER crosses the mind of Paul in Colossians! One is confronted by TRADITION - apostate tradition - throughout the myriads of argumentations that mimic one the other. Content, context, intention, overview, detail ... NOTHING about or

in these early Christian documents as such supply occasion or support for the traditional misrepresentations.

Colossians 2:16 should be interpreted and appreciated POSITIVELY by analogy of the positive tenure of the WHOLE Letter - the Sabbath most positively so by analogy of Christ's most positive accomplishment of redemption through resurrection from the dead. Read the whole Letter and our text without reserving a shadow of the traditional "Sabbath-shadow" and discover its inspirational excellence - its "spectre"-nuance or quality!

<<We now arrive at>> Conklin's <<analysis>> <<of one of the most neglected words ... of this passage>> Colossians 2:16, the word "Feasts", from <heorteh>.

(The reader will find this under the section called <<an holy day, or of the new moon, or>> on Conklin's web-page.)

However, it would be appropriate to first ask whether or not the context demands the usual <<analysis>> by way of comparing the order of the three "feasts", "feasts ... new moon ... Sabbaths" with every possible and impossible occurrence of it in the Old Testament and other sources? The task of comparison is created artificially ONLY IF it is PRESUMED that Paul meant Old Testament or "Jewish" "feasts".

Paul though with his admonition confronts no religious, ceremonial or just a linguistic problem. He does not even tackle a social problem. Paul has to do with a problem of dual nature: It is the Gospel of Jesus Christ that is under threat, first of all. Then it is the Church under the dominion of Christ that is under threat. Arrogantly and menacingly the shadow of the "worldly principles and powers", "philosophy" and "wisdom" of the "kingdom of darkness" envelopes the Enlightened, Congregating, Worshipping and

Celebrating "Body that is Christ's". Christianity - its purity, innocence and simplicity, its freedom and sovereignty - is at stake. Christianity could fall prey to the religion "after the tradition of men" and "vain deceit", of "will-worship", "neglecting of the body" and "subjection of the flesh"! Paul for the sake of Christ and his Body the Church moves in between: "Beware, don't you be judged by anyone regarding your eating and drinking, or regarding your eating and drinking of your feasts - or of your new moon feasts, or of your Sabbath-feasts!"

Thus understood in context there's no need to make of the "feasts", Jewish or Old Testament feasts. They were Christian, and that settles the question - so the thrust of Paul's Letter demands. Thus understood, the word "feasts" is the Collective Noun of ALL the Christian "Feasts", NAMELY, "Monthly (Lord's Supper) Feasts", and, weekly, "Sabbaths' Feasts".

Ultimately the very "Sabbath" meant to be "annulled", vanquished and "destroyed" by the anti-Sabbatharian onslaughts with this very INSTRUMENT of Colossians 2:16, is THEREBY extolled, exonerated and confirmed: The Sabbath: Indispensable, indissoluble, imprescriptibly and indestructibly INSTRUMENT unto "nourishment ministered, and JOINING TOGETHER unto the cause of God" upon this earth - His Church. (19)

So, why we should further follow the review of every possible and impossible explanation of the word <heorteh> and its phrase of occurrence is academic. At least we could proceed with the task without pretext.

Conklin states that he has

<<... found that it (the word "feast" <heorteh>)
 << is never used in association with either
 << the Day of Atonement or the feast
 << of Trumpets both of which are described
 << as Sabbaths in Lev.23.>>

In his <<Introduction>> he also says,

<<... both are ceremonial Sabbath days.>>

For Conklin the importance of this is that Paul did not have the weekly Sabbath of the Fourth Commandment in mind, but <<ceremonial Sabbaths>> whether “feasts” ordinarily like the Passover Feast that is called a “feast”, whether “new moon” that is also called a “feast”, and “Sabbaths” that really were “feasts” but were not so called distinctively, but were distinctly called “Sabbaths”. So Paul’s “list” is truly comprehensive of each and every <<ceremonial Sabbath>> of the Jewish economy WHILE EXCLUSIVE of the usual or weekly Sabbath.

Conklin tries to show the Sabbath is not what Paul means with saying “Sabbaths”. We try to show the Sabbath precisely is what Paul means with saying “Sabbaths”. Many others, also try to show the Sabbath is what Paul means with saying “Sabbaths” – but that he in the process judges and condemns the Sabbath. We say Paul in the process judges nobody or nothing except the adversary of the Church, but indirectly and implicitly as well as directly and effectively invests the Sabbath with meaning such as it never had under the previous dispensation – such as it never had the while not actually, eventually and ultimately by the risen and living Christ, but only eschatologically by virtue of the risen and living Christ.

What does Conklin’s findings help us in understanding the essential “message” of this passage? In fact it defeats the Sabbatharians’ object of finding confirmation to the assumption the Apostolic Church kept the Sabbath Seventh Day! In Colossians 2:16 Conklin’s argument amounts to confirming the assumption the Church DID NOT keep the Sabbath while it ERRED in some <<way>> or <<part>> of <<observing>> the <<ceremonial sabbaths>>. From this logical conclusion one is forced to further deduce that some ‘errorists’ must have influenced the Congregation into ‘perverse’ or ‘corrupted’ ‘ways’ of ‘observing’ the ‘Jewish feasts’ ... So far Conklin’s ‘finding’. He goes on to review the explanations given by many scholars of,

1, the sequence of the feasts, 2, of what Paul practically aimed at – what the ethical issue actually was – and, 3, as a result, the meaning of the words used.

As to the matter of the sequence or order in which the mentioned 'feasts' are mentioned in Colossians 2:16, we may <<conclude>> with Conklin, where he quotes Giem, that

<<... most of these references [of whichever << source in or outside the Bible, CGE] are << "a hodgepodge of calendrical occasions." << So we cannot take the order [sequence of mentioning] << as being directly indicative as to what << the term "sabbatwn" refers to. The preceding << evidence thus reveals that there is NO << "well established OT time sequence << of religious days." (contra Coffen and << Schweitzer, Endnote 13)>>

We in our critique of Conklin's thesis, presuppose – on the grounds of the text and context of the Letter to the Colossians – that Paul meant the weekly Sabbath with his using the word "of the Sabbaths" <sabbatohn>, it having been the CHRISTIAN Day of "celebration" so opposed, criticised and judged by the religion of philosophic asceticism of Paul's day, and so taken for granted and natural and integral a part of the Christian worship of Paul's day. We do NOT though so think because of any similarity or dissimilarity between the Letter and the Old Testament order of words or events, except for the divine truth that the Sabbath derives from the creation and the Old Testament Revelation of God in the Law and the Prophets concerning the coming God in Christ. It purely is a case of co-incidence directly due to both the eschatological significance – the messianic pointing – of the Sabbath Day, and its Anti-Typical, FIRST, and ORIGIN-al realisation and fulfilment in Jesus Christ through resurrection from the dead. This Sabbath, as far as it is away from the 'Judaistic' Sabbath, so far away is it from a First Day of the week Lord's Day, for it claims for itself that which neither has, namely the Lord Jesus Christ in resurrection from the dead. This Sabbath divests both the Judaistic Sabbath and First Day of the week of the titles and honour of "Sabbath" and "Lord's Day", both being invested upon itself the Seventh Day, by God.

Conklin objects to deducing from the order of the words that Paul meant the weekly Sabbath. We say it doesn't matter whether the sequence and the application of the word "feast" confirms the word "Sabbath" is the weekly Sabbath, or not.

<<... Richardson suggests that although
 << the sequence is reversed in some of the OT
 << passages ... "new moon" is always the middle term ...
 << [Therefore] it would...be logical to assume that
 << the sabbath ... described is the weekly Sabbath">>.

Conklin denies this, saying,

<<... this assumption is logical only if you start with
 << an assumption this is a calendrical progression.>>

We also deny the explanation, and say,

This assumption is logical only if you start with an ASSUMPTION Paul supposes "Jewish" or Old Testament "holy days" – which to suppose is totally uncalled for and out of context. Although having their roots in the Old Testament economy of God's revelation, Paul deals with these (and no other) occasions, as and for being the CHURCH "feasting" or "celebrating", as and for being the CHURCH by "eating and drinking, CELEBRATING feasts, CELEBRATING monthly Lord's Supper (Holy Communion), CELEBRATING Sabbaths".

The idea that Paul speaks of Jewish (ceremonial) feasts finds no provocation in the Letter itself – none whatsoever. Tradition, and specifically anti-Sabbath tradition, introduced the idea and it has simply grown on expositors and through them has gained universal acceptance.

Understood for being the FEASTING and for being the CHRISTIAN feasting – understood for BEING "the BODY that belongs to CHRIST" in its very "eating and drinking" of spiritual freedom and sovereignty "IN HIM", "AS HEAD OF THE CHURCH", "from which all the Body ... having nourishment ministered ... grows with the increase of God" – understood from this point of view, the fact that "NEW MOON" <<is the ... middle term>>, might receive new significance. The Lord's Supper having received CENTRAL importance in Christian worship, and Christ being the Bread of Life, and the pure River of living Water, "in the midst of" which "the Tree of Life yields perfect fruit every month", indicates Christ's Body monthly eating, monthly by faith feasting of Christ' body, and monthly drinking, by faith feasting of Christ's blood.

The fact it has got nothing to do with a fixed seasonal sequence or <<calendrical progression>>, the new moon's mention here in

Colossians in a central context, clearly associates it with and depends it upon the monthly recurrence of the weekly Sabbath Day as the Feast Day of Church life and Church order, of Congregational Assembly and of Congregational Proclamation, Worship, Witness and CELEBRATION through preaching and sacrament of the Faith of Jesus.

Conklin:

<<... Another suggestion is that whenever the
 << word "Sabbath(s)" is mentioned with new
 << moon(s) in the OT then the reference is
 << to the weekly Sabbath. We should note
 << however, that it is when ONLY the new moon
 << and the Sabbath are mentioned this is so;
 << when other days are brought in the picture
 << changes very quickly. ... 2 Kings 4:23; Isa.
 << 1:13, 66:23, Ezek. 46:1, 3 and Amos 8:5.
 << Again, if we read the texts for ourselves the
 << evidence isn't all that clear - with the
 << exception of Isa. 66:23 and Ezek. 46:1.
 << In both of these cases, however,
 << the fact that the reference is to the weekly Sabbath
 << is made explicitly clear by the passage itself.>>

Be that as it may, it makes no difference to what Paul's meaning with these words and this sequence in Colossians 2:16 is. Paul uses the word "feast" <heorteh> – not as "(an)other day ... brought in", but as the collective word for all Christian "feasts". Paul speaks literally and comprehensively. Says he to the Colossians: "Don't you be judged by anyone as pertains your eating and drinking" (= feasting), OR <eh>, as pertaining your eating and drinking (= feasting) WHETHER <eh>, OF new moon, OR <eh>, of Sabbaths." That is to say: '... as pertains your FEASTING OF YOUR FEASTS whether of monthly SABBATH'S (Lord's Supper) celebration, or of SABBATHS' celebration generally.'

(Another factor here of course is the significance and use of the copulative <eh> – "OR". In the English idiom "whether ... or" is the perfectly satisfactory equivalent.) So instead of excluding the weekly Sabbath, the word "Feasts" in Colossians 2:16 pertinently INCLUDES it.

Conklin,

<<... Another possibility is that the word

<< "sabbatwn" refers to week-days.
 << This interpretation looks at the following
 << texts: in the LXX: Ps 23:1; 47:1; 47:1; 93:1
 >> and in the NT: Mark 16:2; Luke 24:1; Acts 20:7.>>

Conklin's <<Endnote 15>> mentions Bacchiocchi, Lohse and Eduard. I shall not waste time on this by far the weakest excuse for an <<interpretation>>. Conklin must by accident have called it a <<possibility>>. (See Part Four, 'Paul' of LD.)

Conklin,

<<... Another interesting possibility is
 << that the reference here isn't to just
 << the seventh day Sabbath but also to the
 << jubilee Sabbath and to the Sabbath of
 << the land every seven years. (Gill)
 << Barnes' note on this is especially interesting:
 <<"The word Sabbath in the Old Testament is applied
 << not only to the seventh day, but to all the
 << days of holy rest that were observed by the
 << Hebrews, and in particular to the beginnings
 << and endings of their great festivals.
 << There is, doubtless, reference to those days
 << in this place, as the word is used
 << in the plural number, and the apostle does
 << not refer to particularly the Sabbath
 << properly so-called. There is no evidence
 << from this passage that he [Paul] would teach
 << that there was no obligation to observe
 << any holy time, for there is not the slightest
 << reason to believe that he meant
 << to teach that one of the ten commandments had
 << ceased to be binding on mankind. If he had
 << used the word in the singular number - "the
 << Sabbath", it would then, of course,
 << have been clear that he meant to teach that
 << that commandment had ceased to be binding.
 << But the use of the plural number, and the
 << connection, show that he had his eye on
 << the great number of days which were observed
 << by the Hebrews as festivals, as part of their
 << ceremonial and typical law, and not to the
 << moral law, or the ten commandments. No part
 << of the moral law - no one of the ten
 << commandments could be spoken of as 'a shadow
 << of good things to come'! These commandments
 << from the nature of moral law, are
 << of perpetual and universal obligation.>>

<<Especially interesting>> perhaps, because particularly confused! Barnes supplies us with a typical example of how the explanations of this Scripture became so distorted nothing remained of its purity.

<< The word Sabbath in the Old Testament is
<< applied not only to the seventh day, but to
<< all the days of holy rest that were observed
<< by the Hebrews ...>>

Plainly incorrect. Not even when <<applied>>

<<... in particular to the beginnings and
<< endings of their great festivals>>.

It will be of no use to go into detail here. There is, doubtless, NO <<reference>> <<... to those days in this place>>, despite the word-semblance. Yes, the Sabbath, the new moon and "feasts" were Old Testament <<festivals>>. Who would not know it? Who would not realise that these Christian activities in "feasting" were also the festive activities of the Old Church? But the word Sabbath in and under the NEW Testament is applied ONLY to the Seventh Day concerning which and according to which "God thus spoke ... in these last days ... in the Son", as comprehending, encompassing and grouping all the days of holy rest, as "feasts, whether of monthly or of Sabbathly", weekly, "celebration", that were observed by the Christians.

Paul has just spoken of what Christ had done for the Church and how Christ gives every reason for his Church to celebrate, and now (in verse 16) he speaks to the Church as opposed and confronted by the vanquished, demolished and shamed "powers" and "principalities of the world". He speaks against "anyone" from this realm and of this "dominion" who might "judge", "you", the Church, in "your feasting". How could Paul be speaking of the Jews of yonder day, or of the Jews of the present day and THEIR "feasts" and "celebrations"? It's absurd!

<< There is no evidence from this passage
<< that he [Paul] would teach that there was no
<< obligation to observe any holy time, for
<< there is not the slightest reason to believe
<< that he meant to teach that one of the ten
<< commandments had ceased to be binding on mankind.>>

Barnes presupposes that the Seventh Day Sabbath is 'ceremonial'; that the Sabbaths meant in Colossians 2:16 are 'ceremonial'. Christians no longer are supposed to keep 'ceremonial' Sabbaths, but the Sunday. He admits not that the Christian is obliged to observe God's holy Sabbath Day the Seventh Day. He says <<any holy time>>, meaning the Sunday. And although Barnes says <<there is not the slightest reason to believe that [Paul] meant to teach that one of the ten commandments had ceased to be binding on mankind>>, it is precisely because he presumes that Paul judges the Seventh Day of the week Sabbath as being judged unfavourably in this Scripture.

Barnes also doesn't tell WHY the Christian should or in fact does oblige and observe with much vigour and enthusiasm his Sabbaths. He would never allow the idea from Colossians 2:16! Barnes sees nothing of the Christian's freedom and sovereignty which he obtained "IN HIM" - "IN CHRIST" - who for the believer has become his "Commandment", and by whom the SABBATH has become <<binding>> upon him by the NEW COVENANT COMMANDMENT OF CHRIST. Barnes has not the slightest intention of admitting that by strength of what God had done through Christ (12 to 15), the Christian joyfully "feasts" his "Sabbaths'" (16 to 17). That one won't find with Barnes. Yet that is exactly and no less than what one finds with Paul.

Make it ceremonial Sabbaths spoken of here, then make the Sabbath ceremonial, then let Paul speak out damnation on the keeping of ceremonial Sabbaths and so the <moral> Sabbath, the Sunday, is cleared of judgement, and the Sunday, in the Sabbath's stead, for Christians stands untouched by Paul's denouncement. Barnes' so seeming innocent <<interpretation>> proves to be corruption most subtle - and most common. It catches the unwary unawares. <<Especially interesting>>? If one wanted to understand the wisdom of philosophy, certainly!

Barnes:

<<... as the word (Sabbath) is used in the
<< plural number, and the apostle

[because of the fact]

<< does not refer to particularly
<< the Sabbath properly so-called>> ...

by which Barnes means Sunday!

Since when does the word in its plural, "Sabbaths" <<not refer to particularly the Sabbath properly so-called>>? Barnes has NO grounds for his pure presumption. Paul has the weekly Sabbath in mind.

Then why does Barnes without saying it, shy away from the truth? Because he thinks Paul here denounces "Sabbaths", and if Paul denounced "Sabbaths" in the sense of the Day of Worship, then he denounced also the Christian Sabbath, which Barnes understood as Sunday. He must make of Paul's word "Sabbaths", 'ceremonial sabbaths'.

Conklin like many other Sabbatharians also try this strategy of making the "Sabbaths" of which Paul speaks, 'ceremonial' Sabbaths, of course in order to protect and clear the Sabbath of Paul's supposed condemning judgement. In so doing they do the Sabbath no favour. God is Protector of the Sabbath, Jesus its Lord - no human assault shall touch it ... which exactly is Paul's 'strategy' here in Colossians 2:16!

Barnes argues from the Old Testament where he agrees to the Christian's <<obligation to observe (the) holy time>> of the Christian Sunday. He bases Sunday's holiness upon the <<ten commandments>>. (He does not base it on Colossians 2:16.) That reveals the confused principle that the Sabbath is 'ceremonial', and by which principle, while arguing from the Ten Commandments, the Sabbath is first discarded because it is 'ceremonial', then while arguing from the Ten Commandments, the Sunday is accepted because it is <<holy time>>.

Nevertheless the distinction between the weekly Sabbath <<properly so-called>> and the other, not so <<proper>>, but 'ceremonial'

"Sabbaths", cannot be made clearer than this same Old Testament makes it itself. Says it: "Concerning the feasts of the LORD, which ye shall proclaim holy convocations - these, My feasts - ... only ("but"), the Seventh Day is the Sabbath ... it is the Sabbath of the LORD" - SINGULAR, Lv.23:2-3. Now: "Verily my SABBATHS ye shall keep" - PLURAL, Ex.31:13. Exodus 31 from verse 13 on speaks of the Seventh Day Sabbath all by itself for the whole passage through to verse 18. This Sabbath, indicated by the PLURAL, it says "is a sign between me and you". It is the weekly Sabbath or <<the Sabbath properly so-called>> indicated by the PLURAL! Then again elsewhere, the Old Testament again uses the SINGULAR for 'ceremonial', feast-"Sabbath", e.g. the Sabbath of Passover. So Barnes' observations aren't <<interesting>>, they are nonsense. Paul who used the plural has no other day, and no other Sabbath than this, the LORD'S Sabbath Day in mind, though he certainly has another festive - "celebrating" or "observing" - and another festive Community, in mind! The Sabbath was the same yet not the same because for Paul the Sabbath was the Day of CHRISTIAN celebration of Sabbaths - of the Sabbath - that SINCE OLD HAS TOLD OF the great deeds of God through Jesus Christ.

Barnes:

<<... If he had used the word in the singular
 << number - "the Sabbath",
 << it would then, of course, have been clear
 << that he meant to teach that
 << that commandment had ceased to be binding.>>

I wish I were able to see why <<that that commandment>> would, could, or should have <<ceased to be binding>> if Paul <<had used the word in the singular number - "the Sabbath", even were it true the word when plural, "Sabbaths", meant any but the weekly Sabbath? What hollow reasoning! Let's just recall what says Paul, but suppose <<the singular number - "the Sabbath">>: "Since [God] has spoiled principalities and powers, and publicly has humiliated them, having triumphed over them in it [having raised Christ from the dead (12)], for the very reason of it then, don't you be judged by anybody with regard to your festivities, or with regard to your festivities of feasts, whether of month's or of Sabbath's festivities." Had the Sabbath now because of <<the singular

number>>, <<ceased to be binding>>? Did Paul now because of <<the singular number>>, <<mean... to teach that that commandment had ceased to be binding>>? It would then, of course, have been clear that IT WOULD HAVE MADE NOT THE LEAST DIFFERENCE had Paul <<used the word in the singular number – “the Sabbath”>>. It “Sabbaths” – would still have been <<particularly the Sabbath properly so-called>>.

Barnes:

<<... But the use of the plural number,
<< and the connection, show that he [Paul] had
<< his eye on the great number of days which
<< were observed by the Hebrews as festivals,
<< as part of their ceremonial
<< and typical law.>>

Which is just a repetition of what Barnes has unsuccessfully attempted to do with supposing <<the word in the singular number>>. The relation – the “with regard to” – is here in Colossians 2;16 between “you” (being judged) – the Church – and “your feasting (= “your eating and drinking””, and that “of feasts, of new moon, of Sabbaths”. Paul speaks to and of the Church Christian and of it in its activities of and in the Faith of Jesus. There’s not the least indication Paul here writes about <<the great number of days observed by the Hebrews as festivals, as part of their ceremonial and typical law>>. Paul doesn’t have his eye on these; he while saying concerning “the Sabbaths”, “Don’t be judged” or shamed, HAS HIS EYE ON GOD who in having raised Christ from the dead, shamed the world’s wisdom and dogmatism.

Barnes:

<<... No part of the moral law – no one of the
<< ten commandments could be spoken of as
<< ‘a shadow of good things to come’! These
<< commandments are, from the nature of moral
<< law, of perpetual and universal obligation.>>

Consider:

<<... No part of the moral law – no one of the
<< ten commandments could be spoken of as
<< ‘a shadow of good things to come’!>>

What impression of the Law’s moral quality? But such is the pious arrogance of every word spoken against the Ten Commandments or against its Sabbath. This sort of concern for God’s Law is all shine; there’s no depth.

"Wherefore", says Paul making statement, "the Law was our schoolmaster unto Christ"! Then what 'good things to come' better than Christ could the Law have been <<'a shadow of'>>? "Hath the Scripture concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe" at the price of the blood of the Lamb of God? Then is not the Law <<'a shadow of good things to come'>>? Is it not true for us, today, as for them of old? Does the Law not still conclude and include all under sin for the sake of God's glorious purpose? Is the Law not still a "schoolmaster unto Christ"? Indeed it is, for does Paul not say, "the Law was OUR schoolmaster unto Christ"? The Law - the 'moral' Law - is 'moral' for the very reason of its being <<'a shadow of good things to come'>>! The shadow of God's promised future is better than the sun of God's forbidden past - the New Covenant better than the Old. The things revealed are for us; no one can see God and live. But we live by beholding, says Paul. To be the shadow of the Body that belongs to Christ is to be endowed with the ability to show good things to come. It is the spectre created that holds the promise, as to shine forth the glory of God in the face of Jesus. The Sabbath is such a creation of God, in fact is the creation of God that promises Jesus to come! He is the nearing God as He was the nearing God: TO PROCLAIM IS THE SABBATH'S BEING! See that shadow float? It is God's Sabbath-shadow, the shadow of the Body that belongs to Christ. He, the Light and Life of His People, is coming. Between shadow and Source of Light is the Body! He is coming. See that Body celebrating Sabbaths? It is the Body that "increases with the increase of God" - growing towards the coming of the End. See that shadow float? It is that good part of the moral law of Ten Commandments that Paul speaks of as "a shadow of good things to come"!

<<No part of the moral law - no one of the ten commandments could be spoken of as 'a shadow of good things to come'>> yet Paul maintains it is just and good and holy? Wherein does the Law find

its goodness, its righteousness and its holiness if it weren't <<'a shadow of good things to come'>>? If it weren't <<moral>> for the very reason it is <<'a shadow of good things to come'>>? Would it be because the Law is nature's and not God's Law? Would it be the TEN COMMANDMENTS are laws of natural propensity and inclination and not AGAINST natural propensity and inclination?

So far is Barnes off the mark, for Paul in Colossians 2:16 does not even speak or think of the Law but of the Church redeemed, and of its Redeemer God adored and worshipped! And he thinks of <<'a shadow of good things to come'>> not as being or for being the Law, but as being and for being the Body that is Christ's "grown by and to the increase of God" because "holding to the Head ... having nourishment ministered". Its "nourishment"? By "eating and drinking" the Word of God of course! And its means for "nourishment ministered"? Every "joint and band", says Paul! Here we have a shadow out of the ordinary - the for God only possible, impossibility: The unmistakably distinguishable "shadow" is the Body's "Sabbaths' celebration". Solemn thought, for who sees Sabbaths' celebration? Only an all out effort with sloppy sacks to quench the shadow as if it were a consuming fire! But this shadow moves, and forward, as every antagonist must discover. Its cool against the toil and blister of life's imposing beckons the pilgrim to follow after the Cloud by day and the Pillar of fire by night. Drink and eat! For it is my body, and it is my blood. The foolishness of the world prevents, and disdains, and judges the Church that is eating and drinking to its Lord and Saviour in faith, in happiness, and in ceasing from own laborious attempt at rest and righteousness. Enter into the rest into which God entered in Christ! "Seeing therefore it remaineth that some must enter therein ... today, after so long a time ... if ye will hear His voice, harden not your heart. For if Jesus had given them rest ..." then the spectre is the Future of the Church, and its shadow

its Sabbaths' celebration - believers admitted to blessed co-existence with God "in Christ"!

It is not a Christian who does not believe in sacrifice and the shedding of blood for the remission of sin and obtainment of eternal life. It is not a Christian who does not believe and who does not plead the blood of Christ before the Throne of Grace. It is not a Christian who does not for Christ's sake celebrate sacrifice and obtainment, death and resurrection and does not as the Body celebrate the Sabbath for it. In Christ all sacrifices are contained and perpetuated and observed; In Christ all Sabbaths are contained and perpetuated and observed. His blood had been shed once for all; His Rest had been entered into once for all. Without its Sabbaths' celebration there HAD BEEN, and there WILL BE, no Church, no Church LIFE - not a shadow of it; nothing coming - for must needs it lost its Head of Light!

Conklin:

<<... It is interesting to note here that Deck, << an anti-sabbatarian, may have supplied us << with the key to solving our dilemma. He notes << that the word "sabbatwn", which he takes to << refer to the seventh-day Sabbath, is placed << by Paul in the "same category" as other ceremonial days.>>

Conklin here supplies us with a beautiful example of ourselves having created <<our dilemma>>. We presume our <<categories>> of Sabbaths, <<the seventh-day Sabbath>> in a <<category>> all of its own, and the others, all in the <<category>> of <<ceremonial days>>. Well, without having done so, we might not have had a word to say on this Scripture. The exegetes and the judges and the good pastors would be unemployed and the unscrupulous whose merchandise is the Gospel, bankrupt. Neither those who hate would have had their pleasure, nor the infidels their glee. The Sabbath has seen to it that many work on the Sabbath Day like on no other day except perhaps the First.

I ask, just tell me what in reading Paul makes it necessary for the Sabbath to be <<placed by Paul in the "same category" as other ceremonial days>>? Anyhow, it is questionable whether <<an anti-

sabbatarian>> will supply us with the right key to understand this Scripture faithfully. Predisposition guarantees wrangling of the true meaning somehow. And he wrangles the meaning if he says that <<the seventh-day Sabbath, is placed by Paul in the "same category" as other ceremonial days, for Paul puts the Sabbath in no category but in the category under Christian worship. Its category is that of "feasts" - free, sovereign, unbounded, un-prescribed, spontaneous, joyful, Christian "feasting", by FAITH "eating and drinking" the Word of God, His body and his blood, by congregational and Sabbathly, un-judge-able, 'ceremonial', liturgical, 'observance'. I prefer to say, "celebration", or, "spiritual enjoyment". These Sabbaths, feasts and new moon in fact are by Paul placed in a category all of its own and by itself - the Christian category - the New Covenant, the New Creation, the eternal Covenant of Grace "category". O yes, he does for he dares, defends and encourages the Church of the latter days saints not to be judged by anyone in regard to it, because, says he, "these are a spectre indeed of good things to come, in fact the Body that is Christ's" under auspices of the Holy Spirit of Christ through the apostle Paul on the grounds of what God had done through Jesus Christ unto an increase that can be approached only as an "increase by the increase of God"! Fabulous stuff! And fabulous stuff awaits Jesus' Church just don't you give up your Sabbaths' celebration! In surrendering your Sabbaths' enjoyment you WILL surrender your freedom and sovereignty earned at divine cost: Christ's death and resurrection.

The cerebral, rationalist Sabbatarian objects: It is impossible that the words "eating and drinking" can refer to the Lord's Supper, because it does not really mean "eat, drink" like "bread and wine". But if not an "eating and drinking" of faith by faith, in other words, if not an "eating and drinking" spiritually, then we must be Romanists who say the bread changes into the body and the wine into the blood - then we must be idolaters.

Neither the fact Paul puts the Sabbath in no category but in the category under Christian worship, nor the fact the Old Testament places the Seventh-Day Sabbath in a category all its own, opens the way by which for Conklin or Deck to fetch the conclusion of <<ceremonial days>> of feasting <<OR FASTING as the case may be>>. It shuts out every imaginable opportunity whereby the ascetics and body-idolaters could enter into this closely "knit together" spiritual Body of Faith in Christ.

Deck's observation doesn't help to solve a dilemma that does not exist. It creates one.

Conklin, <<Summary>>:

<< Perhaps, however, it is not the exact
<< sequence that is important here. That is,
<< it doesn't really matter if the sequence
<< is a progressive one or if it is regressive.
<< For as Richardson points out, "it does seem
<< safe to say that there is an apparent
<< relationship" The question really is:
<< What is the nature of the relationship?>>

The <<sequence is neither <<progressive>> nor <<regressive>>. It is comprehensive: The Christian 'observance' is to regard its Sabbaths as "Feasts", "whether of monthly, or of Sabbaths". The literal gives the total and exhaustive meaning. The context supplies the situational significance. The Christian's "feasting" of its Sabbaths "whether of monthly, or of Sabbaths" IN THE FACE OF AN IMPOSING, ENTICING AND JUDGING WORLD receives so much greater importance. It becomes the symbol, sign and banner of the freedom and sovereignty under which the Body marches forth to victory in and under its Head and Lord Ruler Jesus Christ.

<< Gunther states that the sequence "implies
<< annual, monthly and weekly observances".>>

Why should "feasts" represent "annual" feasts? For the Christian each occasion of Worship and of Worship-Rest, is a "feast"! And the issue here in Colossians concerns Christians - not Old Testament believers. For the Christian each occasion of Worship and of Worship-Rest, is a "feast" - not just once a year. Both the ideas, 'annual, monthly and weekly observances', 'annual, monthly

and annual observances', are arbitrary. Neither the text nor the context asks for it. The sequence implies that everything, which Paul particularly names, should be appreciated collectively - as the CHURCH actually, that celebrates the Redemption of Christ. This is the New Testament Passover of Yahweh; these are the New Testament Sabbaths of Yahweh.

<< Scott states the matter more bluntly:
 << "Three kinds of festival were recognized
 << in Judaism - annual, monthly, weekly".>>

So what? Why would anyone object? But of what concern is this for us, or was it for Paul? None whatsoever. Christianity has nothing to do with Judaism. In Colossians 2:16 it's "you" the Church and your eating and drinking of your feasts "concerning" - which exactly the world outside finds so unlike its own. ...

<< However, since Sabbath critics have made a great deal
 << about the precise nature of the sequence ...>>

of "feasts, new moon, Sabbaths", they have lost sight of this, its essential and <<precise nature>> - its Christian nature.

Besides and in any case, as Conklin says, <<we have seen it [this 'sequence'-preoccupation] does NOT hold up under close examination>>

I am uneasy with exactly the conclusion Conklin reaches, who says,

<<... then I am uneasy in claiming that "sabbatwn" here definitely means
 << the seventh-day Sabbath to the absolute exclusion of all other possibilities.>>

Paul who as a Christian encourages the Christian Church in its Christian setting and practice exactly where it is menaced most by the "philosophy" and "wisdom" of the "world", won't be concerned with <<Judaism>>, won't be concerned with paraphernalia like <<sequence>> or <<listings>>, won't be prescribed by long since forgotten 'ceremonial' aspects and attributes of Old Testament institutions. Paul is the pastor before he is the theologian, and when he indulges in theology it without exception is in the field of practical theology. Here he tells the Church, consider your freedom won by Christ, and don't you be intimidated: live your life like redeemed followers

of Jesus Christ. PAUL HAD NO PROBLEM WITH THAT OR WITH THE CHURCH – HE HAD A CASE AGAINST THE “ANYBODIES” of the “first principles of the world”.

Conklin:

<<... We should here note that
<< many commentators never even consider
<< any of the other possible alternatives.>>

They never have concerned themselves with the text or context properly, but has always found it imperative to IMPORT all sorts of fanciful propositions just to CONJURE matter, or issue or problem where none exists but is needed in order to discredit the Day of the Christian Church’s celebrating its redemption in Jesus Christ.

For example, no less than Conklin’s own impossible

<<alternative>>:

<<... couldn’t the calendrical aspect of the
<< listing of times be in the form of
<< yearly – monthly – yearly chiasm?
<< Why isn’t this possibility even considered
<< much less analysed?>>

Why should it? First ask whether the text and context ask for it.

Conklin invites <consideration> and <analysis> of his proposed <<alternative>> <<possibility>>.

His thesis is: <<the listing of times be in the form of yearly – monthly – yearly chiasm>> – which is only possible if Paul’s third ‘kind of festival’, the “Sabbaths” – in the wider sense ‘properly so called’ in the Old Testament – are more strictly understood as the Day of Atonement and the Feast of Trumpets. As Conklin has found, these are not called “feast” <heorteh> in the Old Testament, and were not days of celebration (“eating and drinking”), but were days of fasting. In other words, according to Conklin one should understand while reading Paul, “feasts – new moon – Day of Atonement and Feast of Trumpets”, so that Paul’s word “Sabbaths” accommodates these, <<yearly>> ‘ceremonial’ FEASTS because they weren’t called Feasts but must be accounted for as ANNUAL “Sabbaths” – no EXCEPTION – no Sabbath properly so called, allowed.

But why, so that the weekly Sabbath could evaporate and one no longer needs fear the anti-sabbatharian onslaughts using this text? If that is what is desired, one must accept Paul speaks and means Old Testament, absolutely Jewish, ‘ceremonial feasts’ THAT DOES NOT SUIT OR BECOME Christian Faith or practice. It would mean that Paul stood up against the enemy of the Church and defended

the Church in its practice and persistence in things that were spent and as such were useless and in fact had become contra-productive to the Faith of the Gospel and the spirit of God's Sabbath-rest provided through Jesus Christ for the Body that belongs to Him.

So the issue is returned to the <<alternative>>: Is Paul condoning or condemning whatever the Church was busy doing? If condoning, and condoning the things Conklin proposes, Paul had thoroughly been a Judaist - like no one until Conklin could ever have thought!

Conklin says that to his own knowledge he has been the first person who must have noticed the peculiarity the Day of Atonement and the Feast of Trumpets are not called "feasts". And they - although they really were "feasts" - have to be recognised by the word they are described with, the word "Sabbaths". Only question of worth is, what on earth makes Conklin think this information applies in Paul's Letter? Another question of less worth is, were these days truly days of fasting?

Christians are not Jewish although they are Jews spiritually! They need not protect the Sabbath from the anti-Sabbatharians or from the Sabbatharians. And this supposition exactly forms the foundation on strength of which Paul measured his defence against the anti-Sabbatharian anti-Churchmen of his day and situation right here in Colossus. Leave the Church in peace, says Paul, it enjoys its Christian freedom. She celebrates HER OWN, her "feasts, new moon, Sabbaths' celebration". The fact is enough - she belongs to Christ and so all of her enjoyment. The New Testament Sabbath ENTIRELY rests upon the "first principle" of the "dominion of Christ". It needs no human effort or protection - we may deduce from the interplay of events - it is NOT the <<matter>> here; it is its "situationation", its "Sitz im Leben". The Church, its faith, its practice, its solemnity and its enjoyment have but this grounds, this strength, this driving force, this motivation and

this thorough enjoyment, that it is the Body that belongs to Christ its "Sabbaths' celebrating".

Conklin:

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<<... As another example of the kind of
<< "tunnel vision" that can occur on this issue
<< is when Thompson states that the "keeping of
<< the Sabbath or seventh day of the week was
<< a leading feature of the Jewish religion...".
<< While it is certainly true that the Sabbath
<< was "A leading feature" it was also
<< by no means the only one.>>
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Again <<the kind of "tunnel vision">> prevents the seeing of anything but <<the Jewish religion>>, if only of the Sabbath, or if of by no means only the Sabbath. Only thing that puzzles me is how <<the Jewish religion>> got into the tunnel and ever obscures the vision? Where in Colossians does Paul occupy himself with the question of <<the Jewish religion>>? In chapter 2 verse 16? I used to travel by those gig-lamps specially design for tunnel vision myself. One day I took them off to clean, and noticed the glasses were engraved: Judaism! I was lucky to "buy into" a better type of spectacles. It is trade-marked, "Subject-matter: pure sight".

Conklin has almost come to the same discovery as I did, where he says,

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<<... even if I were to say that the word
<< "sabbatwn" here does refer to the seventh day
<< Sabbath the text definitely DOES NOT SAY
<< that they were done away with;
<< nor is Sabbath observance condemned.>>
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Unfortunately Conklin does not see that his view cannot be seen in <<the text>>, for <<the text definitely DOES NOT SAY 'feasts - (<<yearly>>) - new moon (<<monthly>>) - Day of Atonement (<<yearly>>)'>>. Otherwise he is spot on: <<the text definitely DOES NOT SAY>> that the "feasts, new moon, Sabbaths" <<were done away with; nor is Sabbath observance condemned>>. But Conklin does not see that the text IMPLIES that the "feasts, new moon, Sabbaths" are DEFENDED; that the Sabbath is "FEASTED", that it is the CHRISTIAN CHURCH that so "regarding the feasting of (her) feasts, new moon, Sabbaths", was condoned, defended and encouraged by the apostle Paul. Conklin does not see that the text IMPLIES that the "feasts, new

moon, Sabbaths” were ATTACKED; that the Sabbath was ridiculed, that it was the CHURCH so “regarding the feasting of (her) feasts, new moon, Sabbaths” condemned, offended and enticed by the “wisdom” and “philosophy” of “worldly first principles”. In a word: Conklin – like the others – fails to see the Christian character of the whole passage and of the whole issue.

<<Also>>, Conklin opportunistically claims,

<< we should note that the interpretation that
<< “sabbatwn” could here refer to the feast of
<< Trumpets and to the Day of Atonement, as
<< well, is certainly a more legitimate
<< alternative based on the total context
<< - see below for detail.>>

<<That “sabbatwn” could here refer to the feast of Trumpets and to the Day of Atonement>>, says Conklin, <<is certainly a more legitimate alternative>> than <<to say that the word “sabbatwn” here>>, <<refer(s) to the seventh day Sabbath>>. When he conditionally admitted the <<possibility>> of the latter, he did so because <<the text definitely DOES NOT SAY that they (the Sabbaths) were done away with; nor is Sabbath observance condemned>>. The <<text>> naturally uses the word, “Sabbaths”. The next few lines, and Conklin says <<the interpretation that “sabbatwn” could here refer to the feast of Trumpets and to the Day of Atonement, as well, is certainly a more legitimate alternative>>. Than which <<alternative>>? Than the one he just has conditionally admitted – the one of the Sabbath being meant where Paul writes, “Sabbaths”. Now what could have made <<the feast of Trumpets and the Day of Atonement>> – which Paul does not here write – <<a more legitimate alternative>> than the Sabbaths which Paul does here write? Says Conklin: it is <<based on the total context>>. But does not the <<total context>> – I assume the <<total context>> of verse 16 – in the first place take the precise words for serious? Then on what ELSE in the <<total context>> of verse 16 than the “Sabbaths” (which Conklin supposes do NOT succeed the test of <<alternative possibility>>) are the Day of Atonement and Feast of Trumpets <<based on>>? The fact they were “feasts”? “Feasts” is the only element in <<the total context>> that could relate to what is meant in the <<listing>> if “Sabbaths” could not. So the Day of Atonement and Feast of Trumpets must be represented by the concept in Colossians 2:16 of “feasts”. Yet these two institutions of Old Testament Law are those which Conklin himself has discovered, are NOT called “feasts”!

Admitted, Conklin writes: <<- see below for details>>. I looked for those details <<below>>, but could only find ‘Endnote’ 26. In

'Endnote" 26 Conklin refers to <<Jewett>> who <<attempts to dispel this possibility>> by yet another speculation

<< by noting how each (the Day of Atonement and the Feast of Trumpets)

<< is referred to individually in the LXX - the
<< key here is that Paul is referring to both!>>

The key here that can close but cannot open is, that the LXX is used as a commentary on the New Testament. Meanwhile the key that can close as well as open, is, that Paul neither refers to the Day of Atonement nor to the Feast of Trumpets, but to, namely, "the Sabbaths" - "the Sabbaths" in the New Testament and in the Church of Christ End Time.

Sabbatharians surrendered everything of faith the Sabbath's when subjected "Sabbath's feasting" was to wisdom's jest, judged "eating and drinking pertaining to either Feasts: of month's Lord's Supper, or, of Sabbaths", unbelievers' rest. Sundaydarians gloat, Sabbath's heart and soul they boast - stole they did Christ's Resurrection Day ... and to the sun offered up the Son.

<< Richison claims (without supplying any
<< supporting references) that "the Gnosticism
<< of the Lycus Valley had its systems of new
<< moon worship". If that were the case then
<< perhaps Paul isn't referring to exclusive
<< Jewish ceremonial days in this verse.>>

<<If that were the case>> ... as if it could be yet another of those impossible <<possible alternatives>>! Does one in Colossians read about <<Gnosticism>> and its <<systems>>? 'Perhaps' where Paul describes the "world's" "wisdom" and "principles", gnosticism might have been implied. But when he mentions "new moon" by word, Paul places it right in the heart of Christian worship and as the exact opposite and antagonist of whatever might have been <<Gnosticism (with) its systems of new moon worship>>. This is but yet another of those purely imagined <<alternatives>>.

<<... Havener expresses a similar view about the
<< whole verse when he writes, "As members of
<< the body of Christ, the author's community is
<< not subject to regulations about food, drink,
<< festivals, new moons, and Sabbaths which
<< are associated with cosmic powers and
<< astrological signs. However, these
<< suggestions are highly unlikely.

<< It is really inconceivable that Paul would
 << have reacted so gently with the believers at
 << Colossae if they were mixing in pagan rituals
 << and beliefs into their Christian life.
 << Witness the vigor of the language he used
 << on the believers in Galatia for
 << wondering after purely Jewish practices!>>
 <<... regulations ... associated with
 << cosmic powers and astrological signs...>>

This is a most important observation distilled from much inadmissibility. (<<Astrological signs>> - there's just nothing about it in Colossians.)

In Colossians Paul mentions - and actually describes - "regulations" associated with "cosmic powers". In 2:20 he calls it "dogmatisms" (from <dogmatidzoh>) as the equivalent or even synonym of "first principles of the world" <stoicheia tou kosmou>. In verse 15 Paul bears witness: "God having spoiled principalities <archas> and powers <ecsousias> put them to shame publicly, having triumphed over them in it" - that is, in "the operation of God who hath raised Him from the dead" - verse 12. GOD HAVING DONE THIS, says Paul, "Don't you then be judged by any man regarding your feasting of ... Sabbaths". So the Church celebrating its Sabbaths stands: the cosmic eschatological sign of God's victory over "regulations" associated with "cosmic powers". Yet the world - yea in fact the Church itself - thought fit to make of the Christian believers' Sabbaths' celebration a representative case of "regulations" associated with "cosmic powers" ... like here in the lines quoted from Havener above. God, be merciful upon us! We say with Conklin: <<It is really inconceivable that Paul would have reacted so gently with the believers at Colossae if they were mixing in pagan rituals and beliefs into their Christian life>>. It is really inconceivable what God must react like.

In having said, <<It is really inconceivable that Paul would have reacted so gently with the believers at Colossae if they were mixing in pagan rituals and beliefs into their Christian life>>, Conklin knowingly or unknowingly makes one of the most important

recognitions in his entire treatise. What Conklin here says directly implies the things specified in verses 20 to 23 of chapter 2 are <<pagan rituals and beliefs>>. What Conklin says directly implies that these things the world wanted the Church to <<mix into>> its <<Christian life>>. Indirectly what Conklin has said, must also imply that the Church while <<mixing in pagan rituals and beliefs into (its) Christian life>>, must SURRENDER, RENOUNCE AND FORSWEAR its OWN freedom, sovereignty and celebration attained and obtained for it by God in Christ. This is the great tragedy, that it exactly so happened, and especially so happened with its Sabbaths' celebration because it so pertinently is the sign of its OWN freedom, sovereignty and celebration attained and obtained for it by God in Christ.

The consequences so obviated and confirmed by history explain what sort of "Sabbaths" are involved in our Scripture. They were not the ceremonial Sabbaths of the Old Testament, but the Christian Sabbath Day taking the brunt of apostasy and heretical assault. It is urgently necessary at this point - having noticed the fruit the disregard to Paul's warning has yielded - to stress the gravity of it. He didn't mean to be <<gentle>>. One could scarcely find Paul sterner. TAKEN THE IMMEDIATE, INDISSOLUBLE CONNECTION of his warning with God's triumph through Jesus Christ in resurrection from the dead over cosmic powers, the world and its principalities and rule, and over the Law with its charge against us, Paul's admonition, "Don't you be judged by anyone ...", is his zero-tolerance, final and condemning word against downplaying of any kind of the Sabbaths' celebration of the Church. Paul deals with the world without mercy, while his sympathy unconditionally rests with the Church and with its freedom and the exercise of its freedom in Sabbaths' celebration. He would defend it with his life - like the hen her chicks. <<Gently>> with God's own; relentless with their persecutor. What greater Christian respect could the Sabbath be shown, what greater respect than this its fastening

onto God's finishing of all his works in the Son and onto the enjoyment of his Body the Church?

The community is not subject to regulations which are associated with cosmic powers and astrological signs. It is true - it wasn't the case with 'Paul's' Church at Colossus. So what's the point with bringing up the point - only to wedge apart another impossible <<possibility>>? <<As members of the body of Christ>>, "knit together", the believers weren't subject to ANY 'regulations' - that's the point Paul makes. Warns he the Church not to let go of <<their Christian life>> - "Don't let yourselves be judged by anyone"! The very fact Paul vents this admonition proves the Church did not succumb to the world's pressures and lures (at first). The situation here in Colossians wasn't like that in Galatians at all. Here the Community - unlike the Community of the Galatians Letter - returned not to the world they had been turned from, but by "every joint and band" "in Christ", they were not of the world, yet accepted the challenge of being physically in the world, and spiritually "eating and drinking", practically kept "Sabbaths' feasting" right in the middle of the world. They served and celebrated under "GOD'S RULE OF PEACE" - 3:15, over against the world's rule of subtlety and faking. In contradistinction those who were of the world spiritually - the ascetics and their likes - shied the challenge of being in the world physically. They were "the children of disobedience" upon whom "cometh the wrath of God", 3:6.

<<... It is really inconceivable that Paul would
<< have reacted so gently with the believers at
<< Colossae if they were mixing in pagan rituals
<< and beliefs into their Christian life.

It also is really inconceivable that Paul would have reacted the way he did, <<so gently with the believers at Colossae>>, had the issue been that instead of the Day of Atonement, and instead of fasting, the Church feasted, and celebrated Sabbaths. What then, would have been the matter with their observance but that they weren't Jewish ENOUGH? Had the Colossians instead of to keep the Sabbath been mixing into their Christian life Jewish rituals and beliefs like to fast on the Day of

Atonement, it is impossible to imagine Paul would have reacted the way he did here in Colossians – it is impossible he would nearly have said the same words. <<Witness the vigor of the language he used on the believers in Galatia for wandering after purely Jewish practices!>> – is Conklin’s (like so many others’) own conclusion. Yet he (like so many others) insists the word “Sabbaths” represents <<purely Jewish practices!>>?

<<... Witness the vigor of the language he used on
 << the believers in Galatia for wandering after
 << purely Jewish practices!>>
 << Note that Paul does not say that the members
 << of the Church in Colossae should not, or must
 << not, keep these days. The text basically
 << declares that they were observing the feast
 << days, new moon and the Sabbath day(s)
 << without any reproof from Paul for doing so.>>

Conklin basically declares there’s no issue to discuss. One may only speak well – like Paul does – of what one reads here in Colossians 2:16. Truly man isn’t able to appreciate to deserving its beauty and value.

<<... As De Lacey has very clearly pointed out:
 << the “most natural way of taking the rest of
 << the passage is not ...>>

... the usual negative protests encountered in commentaries that confuse Paul’s appreciation of the Church’s spontaneous and faithful response to the Gospel for the hypocrisy and superstition of the world. Unfortunately De Lacey walks straight onto the pitfall. Then he starts to dig further down in order to find his way out:

<<... the “most natural way of taking the rest
 << of the passage is not ...
 << that he [the ascetic] also imposes
 << a ritual of feast days, but rather that he
 << objects to certain elements
 << of such observation.>>

De Lacey, <<without presenting even a scintilla of evidence to support>>, avers: Paul objects to certain elements of observation of a ritual of feast days.

<< What exactly that element is>>,
 Conklin embroiders,

<< is the real question here>>.

The fact one already finds oneself inside a hole awakens no thought that the way out is the same as the way in. One must now only determine whether digging sideways or down will get one out.

BOTH <<possibilities>>, that <<a ritual of feast days>> is being <<imposed>>, as well as that <<CERTAIN ELEMENTS of such observation>> are being <<objected to>>, are IM-possibilities.

<<The critics of the Church in Colossae>>
 <<MAY>> not only have
 <<condemned the Colossian Christians>>.

They undoubtedly did. And <<the critics of the Church in Colossae>> were not OF the Church - members of the Faithful. They were "of the world"! And they "judged" - in order to <<condemn>> the Church - NOT for <<engaging, not engaging, or engaging incorrectly>>. They didn't judge the Church for democratic values or lack of democratic values. According to Paul the world judged the Church for engaging for and by the very reason of its existence and for and by the very way of its existence. The <<CRITICS>> JEALOUSLY judged the Believers of the Church in Colossus - capital of the world's wisdom and philosophy - because they were content and perfectly happy "in Christ" and in being "perfect in HIM", "eating and drinking" to His redemption provided. They enjoyed "feasts, month's (Lord's Supper)". In fact, they "feasted their Sabbaths". These were the Church's <<practices>> they <<engaged in>> being totally dedicated and committed to God's cause on earth through Christ.

The critics HAD NOTHING TO OFFER TO THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE CHURCH!

<<... As Walker points out: "Paul is not
 << condemning "Jewish" customs but the manner
 << in which they were being observed.>>

To think so is to miss the whole point. Paul in no way condemns customs of the Church; he doesn't concern himself with <<Jewish customs>>; he bothers not about the manner in which the Church observes its "eating and drinking" or "feasting", or the manner in which the Church observes its "feasts, whether month's (Lord's Supper), or, Sabbaths". Paul condemns the fact the world judges

the Church in these its Christian values, its practical theology and its applied ethics – its normal and moral LIFE.

The consequences so obviated and confirmed by history explain what sort of "Sabbaths" are involved in Colossians 2:16. They were not the ceremonial Sabbaths of the Old Testament, but the Christian Sabbath Day taking the brunt of offended humanism. Considering the fruit the disregard to Paul's warning has yielded – namely the idolatry of Sunday-worship – it is urgently necessary to stress the gravity of the fact Paul didn't mean to be gentle. TAKEN THE IMMEDIATE, INDISSOLUBLE CONNECTION of his warning with God's triumph through Jesus Christ in resurrection from the dead over cosmic powers, the world and its principalities and rule, and over the Law with its charge against us, one could scarcely find him sterner. Paul's admonition, "Don't you be judged by anyone ...", is his zero-tolerance, final and condemning word against downplaying of any kind of the Sabbaths' celebration of the Church. Paul deals with the world without mercy, while his sympathy unconditionally rests with the Church and with its freedom and the exercise of its freedom in Sabbaths' celebration. He would defend it with his life – like the hen her chicks. Gently, with God's own, relentless with their persecutor, the world. What greater Christian respect could the Sabbath be shown, what greater respect than this Paul's fastening of it onto God's finishing of all his works in the Son and onto the enjoyment of it by his Body the Church?

Robert Parker wrote, Fri, 13 Dec 2002,
 >> What a shame: it looks like I will have
 >> to give up Sabbath keeping since it is
 >> declared by some that God did not make
 >> heaven and earth, and all
 >> that is in them ... >>

Answered Tony Zedbaraschuk,
 >> This is a valid theological concern:
 >> what do we do with the Sabbath if there
 >> was not a literal creation week?
 >> I am not going to pretend I have an
 >> answer to this question, except to note
 >> that
 >> (a) the Deuteronomy version of the Ten
 >> Commandments doesn't quote creation as the
 >> reason for the Sabbath, and
 >> (b) we can still model ourselves after the
 >> example of Jesus, who did keep the Sabbath
 >> himself (and, indeed, "rested" on it in a
 >> very profound sense after his death on the
 >> cross.)
 >> I don't know if you find those
 >> satisfactory answers, but I'm not sure I
 >> have one either."

I haven't read anything in SDANet so exiting for months! First, Robert Parker showed the creation per se leaves at least some persons dissatisfied with it as reason for Christian belief in the Seventh Day Sabbath.

Then Tony Zedbaraschuk proposed two reasons to supplement the creation-motive, and astonishingly did not give the Law per se as reason at all! Instead of the Law, we read he suggests the redemptive nature which the Sabbath received through the Passover event and the example Jesus gave us.

For three decades I have been working on my thesis that The Seventh Day Sabbath always had been and always will be a thoroughly Christian institution - with everything that that is going to imply for the theology of the Sabbath. For the past three months I have with the same purpose been working on 'A Positive Re-Assessment of Colossians 2:16-17'. And I have found that especially under the New Covenant - which is the Eternal Covenant of Grace in historic reality by virtue of the Christ-event - the believer, who is the Christian, is no longer going to believe or to keep the Sabbath Day because the Law tells him to. If he would keep the Sabbath because of the Law he still does what makes a person a Jew and not a Christian. But this fact and unassailable truth doesn't mean the Christian no longer believes and keeps the Sabbath. On the contrary it means for the first time in its history - that stretches from the creation to the Second Coming of Christ and the New Earth - the Sabbath from God's own working of love and righteousness in Christ Jesus, received its first and formal, primary, fundamental, essential and ultimate making, meaning, worth, virtue, blessing, sanctification, completion and rest by the working of God in Christ unto His Rest in Christ "to us-ward". Centrally God finished "ALL HIS WORKS" "IN THE SON", "IN SABBATH'S-TIME". The Christ-event is the Sabbath's creation and institution - not the creation; not the Law; not the redemption from Egypt. The resurrection of Christ is the finishing of all God's works - not the creation; not the death of Christ. For by the death of Christ God in the resurrection of Christ, rested - not before for that would mean God rested in the creation; not in the here-after, for that would mean God did not avail his Rest in the Son in the event of the working of the "exceeding", greatest and once-for-all-working "of his power which He worked in Christ Jesus when He raised Him from the dead". (Eph.1:19, et al.)

Therefore I say to Robert and Tony: Don't rest on the Sabbath but keep working on it! God will not forsake you in your quest for satisfaction and peace and rest on His Sabbath Day THROUGH AND IN JESUS CHRIST ONLY!

Robert Parker wrote, Fri, 13 Dec 2002,

- >> What a shame: it looks like I will have
- >> to give up Sabbath keeping since it is
- >> declared by some that God did not make
- >> heaven and earth, and all that is in them ... >>

Answered Tony Zedbaraschuk,

"This is a valid theological concern: what do we do with the Sabbath if there was not a literal creation week? I am not going to pretend I have an answer to this question, except to note that

(a) the Deuteronomy version of the Ten Commandments doesn't quote creation as the reason for the Sabbath, and

(b) we can still model ourselves after the example of Jesus, who did keep the Sabbath himself (and, indeed, "rested" on it in a very profound sense after his death on the cross.)

I don't know if you find those satisfactory answers, but I'm not sure I have one either."

Both question and answer concern the same challenge: God's revealing of the Sabbath has been progressive. No one revelation contradicts another – but each complements the other, so that the Sabbath's first revelation – creation – was supplemented with God's revelation of the Sabbath Day by redemption from Egypt, and later on again by redemption from the tyranny of even worse idolatry than that of Egypt, namely from the tyranny of the idolatry under Ataliah, and of that under the later kings, till eventually God's revelation saved us from the idolatry of self and sin, in that Jesus had to die for our sins and had to be raised for our justification. Where sin abounded, grace abounded the more, and God's revelations of the Sabbath Day kept pace with his revelations of mercy. The Sabbath comes to nothing comes it not to something in the Living and Abiding Word of God Jesus Christ. The glory of the previous dispensations – whether that of creation, or of the law, or of the prophets – against the glory of the present dispensation, says Paul (or rather, says God through Paul) is like NO glory, for at present we live and believe by the Faith and dispensation of Jesus – in whose face we behold His glory as of God's! What other reason, what other motive, what other inspiration, what other LAW does the believer or the Church NEED, to keep Sabbath?

In Colossians 2:16 Paul says: Church: Keep your Sabbaths! He says: World: Stay out of this! The Body that is Christ's is celebrating its feasts, its monthly Lord's Supper, its Sabbaths' feasting of salvation unlimited through the works of God and through his finishing it all in having raised Christ from the dead! World, with your dead works of subjection of the flesh and with your wisdom of philosophy, see this Body sovereign and free: It feasts its Sabbaths, spectre of the growth awaiting it – which is in fact the growth by the increase of God!

Paul places the Church and the Church's Sabbaths' celebration IN BETWEEN God's attainment of full and final redemption in and through Jesus Christ – verses 12 to 15 – and God's future attainment to full and final redemption in and through his Church – verses 17 to 19. And Paul does this ALLOCATION of the Sabbath Days in direct confrontation with all evil assault and subversion embodied in the WORLD.

Just see the Sabbath and its celebration in THIS MIGHTY CONTEXT, and see the CHRISTIAN REASON for believing the Sabbath and for living the Sabbath Day: Here, it FIRST TIME FOR ALL TIME is the Sabbath of the LORD your God – "the Lord's Day"!

I say the Church – Sunday-keeping as well as Sabbath-keeping – has all the while wasted its time and energy trying to explain what kind of non-Sabbath the Sabbaths mentioned are, while all the

while divesting it of every excellence Paul invested it with, with so placing it in association with its past and future in Christ and in the Church.

Continues Conklin:

<<... Or, alternatively, as O'Brien has suggested:
 << "Paul is not condemning the use of
 << sacred days or seasons as such;
 << it is the wrong motive involved ...".

If it had been <<the wrong motive>> that Paul 'condemns', it would not be the believers', but the world's - the motive behind the "philosophy" and "wisdom" and "basic principle" and "powers" of an opposing and "imposing" and "enticing" "WORLD"! For Paul is at one with the motive the Believers entertained. He shared it. He advised its promulgation and indulgence. He adored the Great Motive as he adored the work and purpose of God "in it" - in Christ.

Conklin:

<<... We should note that Paul, himself,
 << kept a feast day in Jerusalem (Acts 18:21;
 << see also 1 Cor. 5:8) long after
 << (Colossians being written between 57-62 AD)
 << the crucifixion in 30 A.D. supposedly
 << rendered them all void according to the interpretation
 << given to the NT by some interpreters.

We should note far more that that. Because so natural, so matter of course the Church kept and celebrated its Sabbaths - and Paul too - the New Testament supposes, implies, suggests, or mentions NO SINGLE INCIDENCE of her worshipping, of her worshipping congregationally, worshipping celebrantly, worshipping observing Lord's Supper, worshipping for the sake of God's great deeds of working and completing salvation according to verses 12 to 15, OR IT PRESUPPOSES the involvement and celebration of the Seventh Day Sabbath of Yahweh's Passover!

Paul too - as member first and as Apostle after - of this Body that is Christ's, <<kept a feast day in Jerusalem>> - which was no exception and which is unimaginable other than as and for having

been a keeping of the Seventh Day Sabbath instituted and used customarily for to "REMEMBER", FOR TO "CELEBRATE", FOR TO "FEAST" "unto the LORD, for He has triumphed gloriously"! The very life-blood of the Body pulsates by the rhythm of its "Sabbath's celebration". To think of the NEW Testament Church then - which had witnessed these deeds of God come true through and in Jesus Christ - NOT "observing" her "Sabbaths"? It is the joke of jokes, the most face-saving apologetic of the entire history of Christian dogmatics and theology.

Continues Conklin,

<< It may be, although not likely, that the
<< ascetics were judging the members of the
<< church at Colossae for not celebrating these days
<< in the manner that was "distinctively Jewish.">>

Again Conklin not saying so supposes the ascetics who judged the members of the Church were also members of the Church. At least he has seen that it isn't Paul who as a member of the Church judges the Church. But to think the judges or critics were themselves the Church, is incomprehensible and contradictory to the full scope of Paul's Letter - which presupposes two distinct, hostile and mutually exclusive "bodies" opposing each other.

To suppose the critics were the Church presupposes the Church had to do with a 'Judaistic' issue.

<<... Some customs of the Jews, while either
<< innocuous or even beneficial in themselves,
<< were considered part of the "national and
<< ethnic consciousness" of the Jews.
<< For example, [says Conklin,]
<< Thompson observed that the
<< keeping of the Sabbath "was a leading feature
<< of the Jewish religion" and that these
<< "regulations, as he [Thompson] understands
<< the terms mentioned in vs. 16 to be,
<< formed the basis of Jewish loyalty to God".
<< Thus, these things could then be used as
<< badges of how Jewish one was.>>

Both scholars take for granted an issue not identified by Paul himself; Both take for granted the issue had been one within and

of the Christian Community – not against the Church; Both take for granted the issue had been exactly the Christian Community wasn't Christian enough – in that it <<used>> <<things>> <<as badges of how Jewish>> it was. They only differ on the <<nature>> of <<these things>> – whether they meant "regulations", or whether they meant "annual Sabbaths".

It is much ado about nothing. Paul certainly had not been intrigued by any of these not so 'seeming' <<possibilities>>.

As Thompson understands the terms mentioned in vs. 16, the 'regulations' they supposedly implied formed the basis of Jewish loyalty to God. <<Thus, these things could>> IN and BY the Christian Church <<then be used as badges of how Jewish one was>>. Conklin protests,

<< This, of course, then points the individual
<< away from Christ and fixes the focus
<< on self – both of which Paul would fight
<< against repeatedly in his ministry.>>

Though a valid objection from the broader framework of Paul's type of Gospel, it does not address the contextual reasons for invalidation of Thompson's view. Says Thompson, <<Thus, these things could>> IN and BY the Christian Church <<then be used as badges of how Jewish one was>>.

Paul though accepts <<these things>> were signs – <<badges>> – of one's affiliation. Only for Paul they weren't signs of <<how Jewish one was>>, but that this People celebrating them – celebrating her Sabbaths – was Christian! And in fact these things also showed how Christian one was, seeing how against the worldly norm and rule and regulations their celebration was. So against the grain of the world were <<these things>> and the feasting thereof, that the world "judged" any who celebrated them, and especially that Body that celebrated them. Here were they that found joy in suffering at the hand of the world for the Faith of Jesus.

<<... Keeping of the Sabbath "was a leading
<< feature of the Jewish religion" and that
<< these "regulations, ...
<< formed the basis of Jewish loyalty to God".

It may have been a leading feature of the Jewish religion that "regulations" formed the basis of loyalty to God. Nevertheless in the Colossians Letter, the <<basis>> built upon "regulations", will not be traced pertaining the Christian Faith – not even pertaining the Jewish religion; it can only be

traced pertaining the <<religion>> of the “world” and its “wisdom”, “first principles” and “domain”. In Colossians Paul keeps no one guessing at what the basis of the Christian <<religion>> might be. He also keeps no one guessing at what the basis might be upon which he grounds his admonition to the Church not to be judged by anyone concerning its feasting, whether of monthly Supper, or of weekly Sabbaths’ celebration. For the Body the basis of both <<religion>> and Sabbaths’ celebration is the same: What God had done having raised Christ from the dead! For Paul the basis of both assurance and admonition is one: What God had done having raised Christ from the dead!

Paul protests against ‘regulations’ specifically here in Colossians. In 2:20 he uses the word <dogmatidzesthe>. Now it’s not to say when this word is used it must refer to the Old Testament ceremonial laws. The basic word is used also for New-Testament ‘instructions’, as in Acts 16:4. Everybody will agree it has a vastly different meaning than the thing Paul refers to in Col.2:20. The word is also applied for “decrees”, as in Lk.2:1 and Acts 17:7. No one will deny the word in Colossians not at all has to do with decrees of state. The word’s meaning MUST be inferred from its CONTEXTUAL appliance.

In Col.2:20 Paul connects the “ordinances” from the word <dogmatidzoh> with the “rudiments of the world”, with “living in the world”, with “subjection”, which the Christian has “put off” “being dead with Christ”. Clearly, yes distinctly, Paul puts forth OPPOSITES that have nothing in common. The “ordinances” he has in mind in Col.2:14 IN NO WAY correspond with or resemble the “regulations” of “subjection” in 2:20. In the fourteenth verse Paul refers to God’s holy and just Law whereby all men are brought up against the curse of death, which record of debt and death itself, Christ has blotted out, has nailed to the cross, has taken out of way as it blocked blessed fellowship with Him. Christ has not taken out of the way though, and has never done away with man’s subjection to “the commandments and doctrines of men”, 2:22. Jesus never atoned for transgression of human, worldly laws. Man

is his murderer by own hand. So distinctly different are the things the world and the Christian believe, adhere to, love, protect and defend! For the Christian, righteousness and life are by the law of God's free choice and gift of grace through faith alone; for the man of the world, righteousness and life are earned by the law of free choice all his own - by the law of works alone. Like the two dominions in the Letter, like the two wisdoms, the two principles, the two rules - on the one hand the one of the world and on the other the one of the kingdom of Christ - so in the Letter there are the two "dogmatisms": that of the world from 2:20 on, and that of divine rule and judgement - God's rule and judgement through Christ - whereby the Church is judged and sentenced, and in and through Jesus Christ is found blameless and spotless! God does not measure the Church by the world; He measures her by the rule of Christ - against which even the rule of His holy, just and good Law comes short.

God has made the laughing stock of all principalities and powers BECAUSE He has "forgiven YOU, all trespasses by having blotted out the authorisation by Law to judgement against us" ... for which precise reason (says Paul in Holy Writ) "Let no man judge you" further - you have been judged, you have been found guilty, you have been passed sentenced upon, you have been sentence executed, you have been punished, you have been put to death: "in the putting off of the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ" by the death of Christ! Yes, indeed, you have even been buried! Your sin with you in Christ had finally CEREMONIOUSLY been put away and sealed away for ever in the heart of the earth "with Him in baptism (of His death) wherein ye also are co-risen through that faith of the operation of GOD who raised HIM from the dead, so that YOU - while you were dead in your sins and the uncircumcision and heathenish nature of your fleshly heart - He together with HIM, quickened!" Rejoice! Call the Sabbath a

delight, the holy of the LORD, honourable, to HIS honour ... then delight thyself in the LORD."

Finally one will re-read Isaiah the 58th chapter and read CHRIST there addressed in the eternal council of God, and God and Christ entering into the Covenant of Grace by oath, "for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken". And there one will find God's word concerning his Sabbath Day speaking. Paul speaks of this Sabbath in Colossians 2, and he places this Sabbath of the LORD within the very same context as did Isaiah the prophet. It is the celebration by feasting, by spiritually eating and drinking of Jesus Christ! "Is not this the Fast that I have chosen? To loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye brake every yoke?" Of Christ Isaiah wrote, saying, "Then shalt Thou delight Thyself in the LORD; and I will cause Thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed Thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father." That heritage Paul called the Body that is Christ's! And we see in Isaiah, Christ, how He celebrates the holy of the LORD, doing the LORD'S pleasure on His holy day, honouring HIM, and speaking words of God and life. Luke 4 tells the same story in precise fulfilment in Jesus Christ. It became the liturgical theme of Christian Sabbaths' celebration – "IN IT", the salvation of the LORD made great and beautiful through Jesus Christ. Such was the early Christians' Sabbath and its keeping.

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<<... Keeping of the Sabbath "was a leading
<< feature of the Jewish religion" ...
<< these "regulations, ...
<< formed the basis of Jewish loyalty to God".
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So ends the section, <<"an holyday, or of the new moon, or">>, of Conklin's "In Depth Look" – a statement which to most expositors reflects the core of Colossians 2:16, but which to us is totally irrelevant and a misguided comparison.

"or in respect of"

We above quoted Conklin as having observed that:

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<< "(Eadie ... goes on to claim that Chrysostom
<< and Theophylact "take it (en merei)
<< as denoting a partial observance".
<< Could this indicate that it was some
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<< portion of these days that was being judged?
 << That is, could it be the feasting / fasting
 << on those days that was being judged?" ...
 << "Walker notes ... Paul was talking about
 << some "portion" of days.
 << He also notes ... this implies that it was
 << the "quality or nature [of the days]
 << rather than the identity" of the days
 << that was in question.">>

Conklin first referred to the copulative, "or", that is used in 2:16 three times with reference to the Church's "celebrations of feasts":

<< The first "n" [eta] of Col. 2:16 should be
 << translated as "either" ... >>

In Afrikaans we have the perfect equivalent of the three "or's" of the Greek: "Moet julle nie deur iemand laat oordeel oor wat julle eet- en drink-viering aanbetref nie: óf oor wat julle viering van feeste aanbetref, óf oor wat julle maandsviering aanbetref, óf oor wat julle Sabbatsvieringe aanbetref nie".

In English that could translate WITHOUT the middle "or": "Do not let yourselves be judged by anyone as concerning your **eating** and drinking: whether/either as concerning your feasting of feasts, ... of monthly feasting, or, of Sabbaths' feasting". It could just as well be translated without the first "or": "Do not let yourselves be judged by anyone as concerning your eating and drinking (=celebrating): ... as concerning your celebrating of feasts, whether/either of monthly feasting, OR, of Sabbaths' feasting".

Only after the "or", <ehta>, had been explained, does Conklin proceed with analysing the phrase "as concerning", <en merei>. For this, consult 'The Lord's Day in the Covenant of Grace', Par. 8.2.2, p. 73f. There it is indicated the combination <en merei> being Dative only means "with regard to" and that the meaning of "a part of" requires the Genitive.

<<... Lohse indicates that "[t]he Greek phrase
 << [en merei] has a technical meaning:
 << "in the matter of," or, "with regard to."
 << Barth suggests: "respectively, because of, concerning."
 << Lightfoot makes the following suggestions:
 << "in the division or category," "in the
 << capacity of," "with respect to," "by reason of."
 << One online writer who created
 << "An Understandable Version" mis-interprets
 << this as "your non-observance of".
 << See, also Yates' use of
 << "as well as the observance of ..."
 << in his commentary on Colossians. Or,
 << Wuest's "in the matter of."
 << Eadie notes that this "gives a specialty to
 << the theme or sphere of judgment,
 << by individualizing the topic or occasion."
 << He goes on to claim that Chrysostom and
 << Theophylact "take it as denoting a
 << partial observance".
 << Could this indicate that it was some portion
 << of these days that was being judged?
 << That is, could it be the feasting/fasting
 << on those days that was being judged?
 << This was noted by De Lacey:
 << The most natural way of taking the rest of
 << the passage is not that he [the ascetic
 << judge] also imposes a ritual of feast
 << days, but rather that he objects to
 << certain elements of such observation. >>

Consider:

<< Eadie ... claim(s) that Chrysostom and
 << Theophylact "take it as denoting a partial observance". >>

Asks Conklin,

<< Could this indicate that it was some portion
 << of these days that was being judged? >> ,

and concludes,

<< That is, could it be the feasting/fasting
 << on those days that was being judged? >>

Conklin in this manner defines what he thinks should be understood as <<partial observance>>, or
 <<some portion of these days>>: <<That is ... the feasting/fasting on those days.>> But actually,
 what Conklin tries to prove, is that Paul in Colossians 2:16 with using the word "Sabbaths", meant
 the two feasts of the Day of Atonement and the Feast of Trumpets, and that he meant these two
 feasts in full – not partially or just a portion of – in the "Sabbaths" stead! Conklin's

argumentations not only demand some linguistic fluffs, but essentially are self-destroying. Worst about these arguments for <<partial observance>> isn't that they're just half-empty, but that they are as empty as the Phoenix' hatch-shell. They from their nature – being introduced artificially – can bear no relevancy to the context and whole of the Letter. One cannot say a positive word about them. What difference would it make were these arguments true? What difference would it make had Paul said: Don't you be judged by anyone about an aspect or portion of your observing these feasts? Or what difference would it have made had he said, Don't you be judged by anybody regarding your observance of annual feasts like the Passover, or, of the new moon, or, of annual feasts like the Day of Atonement? Would that have vindicated the observers? It only would have vindicated them in their Judaism, for it would have meant Paul said go on keeping them, and go on keeping them with their eating and drinking-related matters specifically. For Paul to have re-introduced the sacrificial system would have been as good as to have condoned heathen worship. It would have made of Colossians 2:16-17 an equivalent or "parallel" text of Galatians 4:9-11. Conklin would have confirmed the very error he set out to refute!

Consider: Under <<Endnotes>>:

<<... Bowman ... quotes the verse as
 << "in eating and drinking or in a festival
 << or a new moon or sabbaths"
 << and yet on the next page correctly notes
 << that "*en merei*" "may be paraphrased
 << 'in taking part in.'">>

I cannot understand why Conklin says <<and yet>>, or how he finds contradiction in Bowman's two remarks? "In eating and drinking or in a festival or a new moon or Sabbaths don't you be judged by any!" ... "In taking part in eating and drinking or in a festival or a new moon or Sabbaths don't you be judged by any!" – what's the difference? I find Bowman's rendering the best of all referred to by Conklin including his own! Bowman's is simple, perceivable, in tune with the general thrust of the context and true to the nature of the overall message of Paul's Letter.

<<... Armstrong has aptly noted the use of this
 << phrase proves that the believers at Colossae
 << were keeping the days that are mentioned.
 << He then asks: "How could they be criticized
 << "with regard to" days they were not keeping?"

Unfortunately Conklin doesn't give the historic background of Armstrong's seeming correct inference. For Armstrong Colossians 2:16 implied that Christians are obliged to keep each and every Old Testament Feast Days to the day, date and hour like old Israel used to. Only difference

he made was to empty those days of the only thing that gave them meaning, their sacrifices! So he sat with a fake Judaism and a fake Christianity.

The lesson to be learnt from Armstrong is that to make an admission of truth demands the admission of and submission to its full impact and widest implications. To ask, <<"How could they be criticized 'with regard to' days they were not keeping?" inescapably implies that Paul's use of this phrase proves that the believers at Colossae were keeping the days that are mentioned. So they HAD TO be days of CHRISTIAN "celebration" – exactly what Paul takes them for, defends them for, and indirectly explains them for. So they HAD TO be days of CHRISTIAN "celebration" their 'keepers' had to be <<criticised 'with regard to'>>. They HAD TO be days of CHRISTIAN "celebration" that a party OTHER than the Church could judge her for! Which further implies these days were CHRISTIAN and were DEFENDED by Paul for being CHRISTIAN. Every possible or imaginable difficulty with understanding both the passage and its context vanishes! Every objection against such CHRISTIAN understanding of the feast-days is muted even before conceived!

Consider,

<< "Meros" is a noun>> ,

asserts Walker,

<< and not a preposition as in: "with regards
<< to" objects of the preposition>>.

On strength of this assertion,

<<... Walker notes, since the words for
<< festival, new moon, and Sabbath days
<< have a genitive case ending,
<< and that [since] "meros" is the object
<< of the preposition "en" ("in")...
<< ... this means that Paul was talking about
<< some "portion of" the days.>>

Walker's looks like reasoning in a circle. However, <<"Meros" is a noun>> proper IN NO WAY in this construction in Colossians 2:16, "with regard to" <en merei> and the Dative following it moreover! RELATION and NOT SEPARATION is its presupposition as well as its impelling. IMPLICATION and NOT PARTITION is its presupposition as well as its impelling ELLIPSIS: "*With regard to eating and drinking/ feasting/ celebration "of feasts: Whether of month's" (Lord's Supper/Feast), _"or, of Sabbaths' (Lords Day)"_!* <Meros> "regard", is a noun proper in this construction and context and

application as much or as little as in English the "regarding..." in this construction and context and application is a noun proper.

Informs Conklin the reader:

<<... Other verses in which "meros" is used are:
 << Mark 8:10; Luke 15:12, 24:42; John 19:23;
 << Acts 2:10, 5:2, 20:2, 23:6; Rom. 11:25;
 << 1Cor. 13:9, 10, 12; 2 Cor. 1:14, 2:5, 3:10;
 << Eph. 4:9; Rev. 20:6, 21:8, 22:19.>>

Concludes he for the reader:

<< It is obvious then that when Paul used
 << the word "*meros*" his readers knew that he
 << was talking about a "part" of the days
 << that then follow [in verse 16]
 << and not simply the days themselves.

Conklin employs the very power of association which Paul employed in Colossians 2:16 by using the words <en merei> with the meaning of "pertaining to", "with reference to" etc. He says: Here is the cause or reason ... here is the present situation the perfect image of ... the prospective end-result perfected. The present, "mid"-section [<meros> – <mesehs> – mid-day] or mid-situation, not only reflects both past and future perceptions – it completely depends on both, like a shadow depends upon or relates to, or pertains to, or concerns, its cause or causes. Paul says: Don't try to sever things that cannot be put asunder but by destroying all. That's the meaning with which Paul used the words "with regards to" <en merei>. Everything is interdependent.

So Conklin above employs Paul's tactics of linguistics. He associates – which is the meaning of <en merei>. And he associates with many Scriptures which is very impressive. Now how Conklin could insinuate to his readers with this very method – with reference to these quite many Scriptures – that it is <<obvious then that when Paul used the word "*meros*" his readers knew that he was talking about a "part" of the days that then follow and not simply the days themselves>>, only he would know. Could Conklin really have thought his readers wouldn't check up his list?

Here are those verses in which "meros" is used, again:

"Part" (Noun), with Accusative:

Jn.19:23, Acts 5:2, 20:2.

"In part" (Noun), with Nominative:

Acts 23:6.

"Part in" (Noun), with Dative:

Rev.20:6, 21:8.

"Part/portion/piece of" (Noun), with Genitive:

Lk.15:12, 24:42, Acts 2:10, Eph.4:9, Rv.22:19.

"Part/s of", with Accusative, <eis ta mereh>:

Mk.8:10.

"In part" Accusative <apo merous>, with Dative:

Rom.11:25, 2Cor.2:5.

"In part" Accusative <ek merous>, with Accusative:

2Cor.1:14.

"In part" Accusative <ek merous>, with Nominative:

1Cor.13:9, 10, 12.

"In this regard" <en merei> with Dative:

One instance: 2Cor.3:10.

"Portion of": "In" with genitive <en merou>:

No single instance in the New Testament!

To conclude from the above reasoning <<that Paul was talking about some "portion of" the days>> is linguistically totally unwarranted. Paul wasn't talking about some portion of the days or of certain other unmentioned days - which to infer eventually is what Conklin aims at.

Paul, when speaking "with regards to eating and drinking", speaks "with regards to", speaks while having in mind, the Church's "feasting: manner of 'keeping' by celebrating" - while having in mind the Church's "feasting OF her feasts: whether her feasting OF month's feasting (Lord's Supper), or, OF Sabbath's (weekly) feasting".

This, in fact by grammatical and syntactical aptitude, LITERALLY PRECISE <<talking>> of Paul's, supplies the exact, the simplest, the deepest, widest and fullest possible, limited, CHRISTIAN meaning and significance "regarding" the <<days>> and "regarding" their "feasting". This is what the words <en merei> singly and ultimately bring over. The most impossible thing they could

indicate is something less than the totality, anything like only part or portion of the whole.

Consider,

<<... (Walker) also notes that since the nouns
<< are anarthrous, this implies that it was the
<< "quality or nature [of the days] rather than
<< the identity" of the days that was in question. >>

Absolutely not! Nothing <<was in question>>! Every time the scholars, introduce strange, irrelative, contradictory presumptions, and for no reason whatsoever.

<<... (S)ince the nouns are anarthrous, this implies that it was the "quality or nature [of the days] rather than the identity" of the days>> that was the point which Paul emphasised, the scholars say. But the identity of the days had been no issue - every Christian and every man of the world knew which days were the days or specific single Sabbath Day of Christian worship. What the world did not understand - and the believers might have taken for granted too easily - was the magnificent relation these days enjoyed with the core and essence of the Gospel! Paul stressed this relationship. By <<quality>> and <<nature>> the days <<kept>> or <<observed>> were "feasts", and they were "feasted" or "celebrated" a FEEDING AND "NOURISHMENT" UPON CHRIST THE HEAD "by bands and joints" of FAITH. Paul reminds and admonishes the Church concerning this truth and worth of Christian worship and days of worship: "Don't you be judged by anybody not believing your eating and drinking, whether your celebrating of month's Lord's Supper, or celebrating of Sabbaths' Lord's Day!" (... paraphrasing a bit there! I have not hesitated to alter and to supply the obvious words so firmly do I believe this was Paul's idea!) Nobody but the un-believers, judged the Church in her sovereign and free "eating and drinking or feasting of her Sabbaths".

Conklin,

<<... It is disappointing to see that
<< high-powered professional scholars like
<< Melick and others could ignore either of

<< these points. What is obviously worse is
<< when they ignore the words altogether! >>

Concludes Conklin,

<< The combined effect of these two points
[of the use of "or" and "regarding"]

<< is that Paul is not condemning the keeping
<< of the holy days; but is rather, referring to
<< the "how" they were being kept.>>

Conklin, with <<the "how" they were being kept>>, intends a part or a certain aspect of merely some of, and not all of, <<the holy days>> of worship, as by a Body divided and not "knit together", as belonging to both Christ and Jew. While we, with <<the "how" they were being kept>>, intend the greatest possible scope and deepest source and inspiration of every one of Christian days of holy worship, undivided and "in Christ", "perfect", as belonging to Him ONLY – as belonging to "the Body that belongs to Christ". No body but the body itself could cast its own shadow, and cast it always right beneath on the very solid foundations of its own standing, because that shadow is cast by Christ who is the Head and the Light of the Body. The Sabbath can't come from anywhere but from its Lord, can't go but with its keepers the Church. SO, <<the holy days>> of Christian worship <<were being kept>> in the Apostolic Church. There's no semblance or correlation except the hours of day and the letter of the Law with the Sabbath of the Jews.

Another

<<... possibility>>,
of the meaning of the "Sabbaths" in Colossians 2:16, says Conklin,
besides

<< the "how" they were being kept>>,
<< is that Paul is talking about
<< the "why" these days are kept.
<< Or, maybe even both!>>

To this proposal of Conklin's we can but again offer our reply on <<the "how">> above. There's in effect no difference whether seen as "how" or as "why" if these <<holy days>> are understood for what they primarily and ultimately, ARE: "SABBATHS", "CELEBRATED" BY "THE BODY THAT IS CHRIST'S".

Conklin,

<<... It thus seems most likely to me
<< that what the ascetic is objecting to is the
<< feasting (or even just the acting of eating)

<< on these specific days of verse 16 and not
<< the days themselves.>>

Conklin separates <<the days themselves>> from <<the feasting>> as though the one exists independently of the other. Conklin says <<the feasting>>, <<OR even just the acting of eating>> as though there's a difference. But the <<ascetic>> judges the Church concerning the feasting not only ON these days, but concerning the feasting OF these days. It's the feasting or even just the act of eating that MAKES THE DAY! <<The ascetic is objecting>> to the very CELEBRATION OF THE DAYS! This at least is logical and the natural reaction to expect of the adversary of a Church that celebrates its Sabbaths. To the adversary (Conklin's 'ascetic'), the existence of the Church celebrating its Lord's Days – its very presence and life within the dominion of darkness and of the world – is intolerable and unacceptable. He wants it wiped off the face the earth and from the besieged mind of mankind.

From the viewpoint also of the adversary, it's ludicrous to suppose mannerisms and fractions are the issue and not domains of totality and sovereignty – the Sabbaths' celebration standing as sign and emblem of the unchallenged rule of Christ, and of His eventual and triumphant victory in the Body.

While we speak of these two things, the unchallenged rule of Christ and His triumphant victory in the Body eventually, we constantly have before the eye the Scripture preceding, and following on, verse 16. This contextual relation (verse 16 in between verses 12 to 15 and 17 to 20), that reflects the in-real-life-situation of the Church between God's accomplishment in and through Jesus Christ, and God's accomplishment in and through the Body that is Christ's, IS WHAT GAVE IMPETUS TO PAUL'S USE OF THE WORDS "PERTAINING TO". Nothing could give the Church's celebrating of her Sabbaths greater significance, better improvement, more virtuous serviceability than this its placement within this its context of RELATION. Its Sabbath stands, a firm bridge between past and future, and hangs a ready bailer between well and pilgrim. It stays the road-sign to the Kingdom for the marching host and recurs the shading tree besides the steep and rocky ascent to the eternal City. It prompts as well as beckons: There! Here! The Body that is Christ's!

"in meat or in drink"

Conklin,

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<< The first thing we should note here is that
<< the Greek word here is "kai" not "n"
<< (I'm using the UBS 4th revised edition text
<< for the Greek and the Nestle-Aland 3rd
<< edition which is based on the 26th edition of
<< the Novum Testamentum Graece).
<< We should also point out that some
<< commentators miss this fact.>>
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Conklin has a point of importance here in fact. Colossians 2:16 should not be translated "in meat or in drink", not even, "in eating or drinking", but should be translated, "in eating AND drinking".

"Eating and drinking" is a way to say: "feasting". To say "eating OR drinking" destroys the idea of "feasting". Therefore - in order to preserve the thought of "feasting", <<The first thing we should note here is that the Greek word here is "kai" ["and"] not "n" ["or"]>>. We should also point out that some commentators like Conklin miss this fact.

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<<... The phrase "in meat or drink" can refer
<< to a number of possibilities.>>
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<< a number of possibilities . . .
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Conklin treats every suggestion as if it were a <<possibility>>. We won't, for want of space, time, and interest. We from the outset must treat all these supposed <<possibilities>> for what they are in the light of what the only possibility is - we must treat them all for being impossibilities. Says he,

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<<... It is either: what is being eaten or drunk that is
being
<< considered here, as in the NIV, Beck or
<< New American translations,
<< "what you eat or drink" ...
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Refers Conklin, <<Endnotes>>,

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<< Peake, notes that "Paul would have used
<< [broma] and [poma]" if he had meant to refer
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<< to simply food and drink. He continues with:
 << "Ascetism rather than ritual cleanness is in
 << his mind. The Law is not ascetic in its
 << character, its prohibitions of meats rest on
 << the view that they are unclean and drinks are
 << not forbidden, save in exceptional cases,
 << and then not for ascetic reasons."

Peak has said it all.

<< It is also interesting to note,

Says Conklin a bit further on,

<< how many talk about unclean meats and
 << then skip the "drink" entirely!
 << And I certainly can't blame them for that!
 << However, Bowman correctly notes that
 << "the Law did not declare any drinks
 << unclean." This particular point was noted
 << by Olshausen back in 1851!
 << O'Brien points out that while there were
 << some minor exceptions there was
 << no prohibition concerning drinks.
 << Ash points out that Lev.10:9; 11:34, 36 and
 << Num. 6:3 "were special cases."
 << One unique suggestion in an email message
 << about this verse was that possibly Paul was
 << talking about "blood drinks" that some pagan
 << rituals required. Of course, it is highly
 << unlikely that Paul would then admonish them
 << to not let others judge them for doing so;
 << he'd probably use even stronger language
 << than he used in Galatians!

Says Conklin elsewhere,

<< Are we really to believe that the same
 << Paul who used the strong language of
 << Galatians when they were reverting to
 << Judaistic practices would now write
 << in such a gentle and mild manner to a church
 << that was consorting with paganism?

Only mistaken presumption yet again! Conklin takes for granted the <<Galatians ... were reverting to Judaistic practices>> while they actually were reverting to their old pagan practices. But the objection is valid: Are we really to believe that the same Paul who used the strong language of Galatians when they were reverting to the first principles of the world, would now write in such a gentle and mild manner to a church that was consorting with paganism?

Tries Conklin yet another <<possibility>>,

<<... or that, Paul is talking about "dietary regulations."
 <<Endnotes>>,

<< MacDonald ... while correctly noting the
 << literal meaning of the words goes on to say:
 << "but it is clear that dietary prohibitions are involved"!

Answers Conklin,

<< What was really clear was the absence
 << of any sort of proof in the matter.>>

<< We can safely say>>, says Conklin,

<< that Barclay exceeds the bounds of
 << the evidence when he says that
 << Gnostic asceticism "is a return to all
 << the food laws of the Jews, with their lists
 << of things clean and unclean." Likewise,
 << Yates when he claims that this is about
 << "abstention from food and drink."

Protests Conklin quite legitimately,

<< The weakness of these claims can be very
 << quickly seen by asking:
 << In what way would the unclean food laws,
 << or abstaining from food and drink,
 << be a "shadow of things to come"?>>

But he not so legitimately, objects to Bengel, who

<<... simply states: "meat, drink, etc.,
 << are the shadow of things to come">>.

If "eating and drinking pertaining feasts Christian whether of
 month's celebration or of Sabbaths' celebration", PAUL calls
 "these things", "the shadow of things to come - (the shadow of)
 verily the Body that belongs to Christ".

<<... Cannata ... claims that the believers
 << "were being judged, first of all, for not
 << maintaining a strict dietary code."

Answers Conklin,

<< At this point we should ask:
 << "Who's dietary code?">>

and answers himself with reference to

<<... Hendrickson ... (who) suggests that
 << "the false teachers seem to have superimposed
 << their own regulations upon the Old Testament laws

<< regarding clean and unclean animals (cf. Lev. 11).">>
 <<The false teachers>> are those we must be on our lookout for.
 Who were they? They were the 'enticers', the 'beguilers', the
 'judges' of the WORLD AND ITS WISDOM!

<<... An interesting alternative here can be
 << found in Knight's suggestion that the
 << "Gnostics wished to lay down ascetic rules
 << and regulations about
 << what a man could eat and drink ...".>>

One cannot find any of this in the whole of Colossians – not even in 2:20-23! For there Paul warns not to be taken in by the dogmatism of the world that prohibits: “Don’t touch! Don’t taste! Don’t handle!” “Don’t taste” doesn’t say don’t eat; its context demands three “principles” of “philosophy” – “principles” of “experimentation”. “Don’t taste!” simply means, “Don’t experiment”, just like “Don’t touch!” and “Don’t handle”. But it also means: “DON’T ASSOCIATE!” “Don’t be reckoned or seen or associated with the despicable Christians!” is one of the “first principles of the world”!

<<Endnote>>:

<<... Vaughan, Curtis ... refers to the
 << "peculiar ascetic tendencies of
 << the Colossian heresy.">>

Objects Conklin,

<<... If one were to take "meat" to be
 << referring to clean or unclean foods
 << then one has to explain, as virtually all
 << commentators that I have seen have failed
 << to do, what is clean or unclean about
 << what is being drunk?

<<Endnotes>>,

<<... Thompson ... claims that "what you eat or
 << drink is reminiscent of Jewish rules
 << about distinguishing between what is
 << unclean and clean";
 << Clarke's Commentary ... boldly states that
 << this refers to "the distinction of meats and
 << drinks, what was clean and what unclean,
 << according to the law ...";
 << Tyndale New Testament Commentaries ...
 << "ceremonially eating or drinking

<< unclean foods or drinks".

Objects Conklin,

<< To which we can then ask: What was ceremonial
<< about eating unclean foods?>>

<<... Lightfoot ... the "rigour of the Colossian
<< false teachers ..., like that of their
<< Jewish prototypes the Essenes,
<< went far beyond the injunction of the law.
<< It is probable that they forbade wine
<< and animal food altogether ...".>>

<< Yates ... note(s) that
<< "it is noteworthy that the Jewish law
<< contains little about abstinence from drink.">>

Agrees Conklin, despite the fact he himself insists on

<<feasting/fasting as the case may be>>,

<< Shouldn't that in and of itself be
<< a good hint that this isn't talking
<< about abstention then?>>

Conklin provides many more such pre-disposed and irrelevant, often nonsensical and self-contradictory assertions from others in his <<Endnotes>> not worth repeating here.

Let an innocent child read Colossians 2:16 and context, then let him read all this here about unclean food and so forth (like fasting), and ask him if he finds it also in Paul's letter? What would the child have answered? Then one day perhaps God in judgement will order the reading of these together, and will ask what have you done to truth?

One cannot find one word or suggestion to the subject of clean and unclean foods in Colossians, and that's a fact at the knowledge of which these learned gentlemen - as the Church - should submit. One cannot reduce one positive thought from these presumptuous surmising, until at last comes this,

<< Matthew Henry's comment on this verse
<< refers to the ceremonial laws which
<< "consisted in the distinction of meats and days."
<< To which we can ask [says Conklin]:
<< Where's the distinction about drinks?
<< Note instead the astute observation by
<< Walker, that "the topic in question was
<< decidedly not clean and unclean meats
<< but asceticism versus

<< Christian rejoicing and feasting.">>

Let me write it in bold letters, for this is for rejoicing:

<< the topic in question was
<< decidedly not clean and unclean meats
<< but asceticism VERSUS
<< CHRISTIAN REJOICING AND FEASTING>>!

Walker still maintains though,

<< Paul is not condemning "Jewish" customs
<< but the manner in which they were being observed...>> -

which unfortunately is in conflict with that courageous remark of his, <<the topic in question was decidedly not clean and unclean meats but asceticism versus Christian rejoicing and feasting>>.

The problem lies therein that Walker doesn't realise yet that the topic in question was decidedly not clean and unclean meats OR the manner in which the customs were being observed, that the issue was decidedly not <<Jewish>>, but was the worldly philosophy and wisdom of...

<< asceticism versus
<< Christian rejoicing and feasting>>.

I cannot see why Conklin protests to the following:

<< Harris claims that "by metonymy"
<< the Greek words here "can be equivalent"
<< to "food" and "drink."
<< Unfortunately, there is no way we can tell
<< if this is so in this particular context
<< nor does he offer any proof for it.

Just look what becomes the thing Paul warns about without metonymy, synecdoche and ellipsis:

“Do not you allow yourselves to be judged by anybody with regard to your eating and drinking; or do not you allow yourselves to be judged by anybody with regard to your eating and drinking of feasts; or do not you allow yourselves to be judged by anybody with regard to your eating and drinking of feasts whether you not allowing yourselves to be judged with regard to your eating and drinking of month's Lord's Supper, or whether you not allowing yourselves to be judged with regard to your eating and drinking of the Lord's Sabbaths Days” while still it is a matter of “do not!”

Paul speaks to people with some intellect, so in this particular context he offers proof of metonymy, synecdoche and ellipsis almost at every second word!

<<... Barth (says Conklin) ... claims, also without offering
 << support, that these words can
 << "designate not only food and drink
 << but also the act of eating and drinking."
 << Note that this interpretation does not escape
 << the dilemma we have already noted about there
 << being no law about clean/unclean drinks.
 << I think we can consider this option as not very likely. >>

Elsewhere in his treatise Conklin accepted the explanation that the words <en brohsei kai en posei> "in food and in drink" can designate not only food and drink but also the act of eating and drinking - in fact better designates the act of eating and drinking - which is "feasting"! Why Conklin in connection with <<these words>>, <en merei> "with regard to", <<consider(s) this option as not very likely>> is excused by the nonsensical reminder,

<< that this interpretation does not escape
 << the dilemma we have already noted about
 << there being no law about clean/unclean drinks>>.

Barth needs offer no support for pointing out the basic and essential meaning these words can designate and which all having come together amount to "celebrating", "feasting". "Feasting" was the thing "regarding to" which, "concerning" which, "pertaining to" which, Paul 'DECIDEDLY', wrote, and admonishingly, wrote. Take away the RELATIVITY of Paul's whole conversing here - that exacted the Dative and the words "with regard to" - and it's whole tenure of being a WARNING "regarding" the relevant matter, disappears.

As from nowhere Conklin repeats his own stance, and the argument from where it began, is started over again at the hand of unconcerned, irrelative trivialities,

<< However, there is another possibility here:
 << is it possible that these words could,
 << at least in part, concern feasting/fasting
 << and/or ascetic practices were normative
 << to Judaism at that time?
 << (D)does the "eating and drinking" refer, as
 << Mansell suggests, to what is being offered

<< "unto the Lord" (Lev. 23:37)?
 << It has been noted that according to
 << Num.28:9-10 meal and drink offerings
 << were offered every Sabbath.
 << So, according to the SDA Bible Commentary:
 <<>These words doubtless refer to the meal and
 <<>drink offerings presented by the Israelites in
 <<>compliance with the sacrificial system, which
 <<>was codified in the ceremonial law.
 << After looking at all the verses that mention
 << the series of calendrical occasions that are
 << either exactly or relatively identical with
 << those given Col 2:16 Gien concludes that
 << these are "a way of describing those
 << offerings" that would have been made on
 << those days. However, Richardson notes that
 << then the correct terminology would have been
 << "*thusia*" and "*spendo*."

Then of a sudden appear these exiting references:

<<... Or, it has been suggested that the food
 << and drink refers to the communion service
 << with its bread and drink (citing 1Corinthians
 << 11:23-26 and John 6:52-57) as support.
 << Bowen notes that these while symbolizing the
 << death of Christ "foreshadow things to come,
 << i.e., eternal life."
 <<... Walker notes that the topic in question
 << here is not the what is being eaten
 << "but asceticism versus Christian rejoicing and feasting".
 << And Richison who notes that the "terms
 << "food" and "drink" refer to the acts of
 << eating and drinking. It is not a question
 << of food and drink; it is a matter
 << of ascetic attitudes toward them.">>

As also referred to by Troy Martin,

<< 'By Philosophy and Empty Deceit: Colossians
 << as a Response to a Cynic Critique'.
 << (Sheffield Academic Press, 1996): page 117.
 << Martin suggests that the relative clause
 << "a shadow of things to come"
 << "limits the eating and drinking to the
 << Christian celebration of the Lord's Supper
 << since this meal in contrast to ordinary meals
 << was considered a shadow of things to come.">>

Emphasis CGE)

Conklin protests,

<<... Unfortunately for this unique approach
 << to the problem at hand>>,
 << in 1 Cor 11 Paul doesn't use the same
 << terms as found here; there
 << bread is "arton" and drink is "pino".
 << Or .. the act of eating and drinking
 << (could it be a short-hand for
 << "feasting or fasting as the case may be"?)>>.

We maintain, "(whether pertaining) in eating and drinking" <(eh en merei) en brohsei kai en posei>, or, "as often as ye eat <esthiehte> this bread <arton>, and drink <pinehte> this cup <potehrion>": "ye do show the Lord's death TILL HE COME" BECAUSE "IT IS THE EATING AND DRINKING OF THE LORD'S SUPPER" <estin kyriakon deipnon phagein> - verse 20! In Corinthians, Paul supposes a "feasting", "as often as ye do" <ean>, of the Lord's Supper; in Colossians he supposes "month's feast" <heortehs neomehnias> of the same Lord's Supper! In 1Corinthians 11, bread is "arton" and to drink is "pino"; In Colossians 2 it is the act of eating and drinking. Or, shall we say, in both Scriptures Paul uses a short-hand for "monthly feasting the Lord's Supper". Never though, could it become <<a short-hand for "feasting or fasting as the case may be">>! Never! because it would mean the negation of everything so festive about the whole of this characteristic of Christian Church life. Never! because it would mean the negation of Christian sovereignty and freedom in <<Response to a Cynic Critique>> of the world - because it would mean the negation of Christian Church life in the face of <<Philosophy and Empty Deceit>>!

No, Paul means what he says, and says what he means, when he says, "Don't you be judged by anybody concerning your feasting, whether concerning your feasting of month's (Lord's) Supper, or, of (Lord's) Sabbath Days!" Paul presupposed the Church celebrating its Lord - celebrating its Lord in its life in time on earth "TILL HE COME"!

These commentators - Walker, Richison, Troy Martin and Bowen above - have a point! Would they have known the significance of it! It would depend on whether they realise that Paul in Colossians stands in defence of the Church in its every action of celebration and keeping Sabbaths!

<<... Blair points to verse 21 as well noting
 << that verse 16 here refers to prohibitions or
 << taboos "of human origin" and that Christians
 << "are free from ascetic regulations".
 << Also, Richardson notes that the words used
 << here "*brosei*" and "*posei*" have
 << action endings. De Lacey concurs that it is
 << the acts of eating and drinking that are
 << in view here and not the
 << "foodstuffs and liquids themselves".>>

All well, but then Conklin again interrupts,

<<... We also need to consider whether it is
 << the feasting on the specific days which
 << are then mentioned, or is it, feasting
 << vs. fasting as per the ascetic regimen
 << "to serve the purpose of chastising the body"...>>

Why should <<we also need to consider whether it is the feasting on the specific days ... or ... feasting vs. fasting as per the ascetic regimen "to serve the purpose of chastising the body">>?

Why should we if it is a "feasting" here that is Christian and the act of faith - that is a celebrating in direct distinction from and in opposition to fasting as per the ascetic regimen to serve the purpose of chastising the body? Why should we need to consider anything but the glorious Christian freedom wrought by God in and through Jesus Christ, "feasted" by "Sabbaths' celebration"?

Why should we at all consider

<< the purpose of chastising the body"
 << and/or as "preparation for a visionary
 << experience (cf. 2:18) and evidently ...
 << had become part of the cultic
 << celebrations being advocated in Colossae
 << in order to appease the "elemental
 << spirits of the universe" (2:8, 20)"

while these are the "mind" and "wisdom", the "philosophy", of the "dominion of darkness"? Paul here in Colossians 2:15 to 19 writes "concerning" Christian "principles" and of the "dominion of

Christ", except in 2:18 the latter part, where he, as in <<2:8, 20>>, indicates its opposing parallel in and of the world.

We must TOTALLY reject Conklin's assertion that

<<... this interpretation
[that 'chastising the body evidently had become part of the cultic celebrations']

<< has the obvious and distinct advantage
<< of paying attention to the immediate
<< context>>.

It evidently pays the immediate context neither attention, nor respect!

It at this stage might be a good idea to present Conklin verbatim in order to supply background against which to highlight specific points:

"of the sabbath days:"

"We should first take note of the alternatives that have been proposed. Fortunately, these have been summarized by Hasel in his article on "Sabbath" for the Anchor Bible Dictionary:

- 1) the seventh-day Sabbath
- 2) ceremonial sabbath of the Jewish cultic year
- 3) some Jewish aspect of the sabbath without denying true sabbath-keeping
- 4) perverted sabbath-keeping in honor of the elemental spirits of the universe
- 5) weekdays that were designated to be sabbaths
- 6) sabbath sacrifices prescribed in Num 28:9-10

If we were to take "sabbatwn" to be a sort of short-hand form of "sabbata sabbaton" which the LXX uses to refer to the Day of Atonement (Lev. 16:31; 23:32; in the last verse the last phrase describes the Day of Atonement as simply "sabbata") and if it included the other ceremonial sabbaths as well this would then give us a uniform text. So then, what is being condemned by the

Gnostic Jews, who were also ascetics, is the feasting on the ceremonial feast days. But, Richardson **seems** to make the excellent point here that if this is the case then Paul seems to be "needlessly repeating himself".

(Unfortunately, the points above about "feasting" ignores the fact that the Day of Atonement isn't a feast day; it is a day of fasting. This fact is important and should not be forgotten. It may also be that the ascetics were just objecting to the feasting on that day. They could also be objecting to the rationale for fasting on the Day of Atonement.)

We should also note that it is only certain feast days of the ceremonial laws that are denoted as "heorte" in the LXX. These feast days are:

1) the Festival of Unleavened Bread (or Passover): Exod. 13:6; 23:15; 34:18, 25; Lev. 23:6; Num. 28:17; Deut. 16:8, 16; 2 Chron. 8:13; 30:13, 21; 35:17; Ezek. 45:21, 23.

2) Festival of Booths (or Tabernacles): Lev. 23:34, 39*, 41; Num. 29:12; Deut. 16:14, 31:10; 2 Chron. 5:3, 8:13; Ezra 3:4; Neh. 8:14, 18; Ezek. 45:25; Zech 14:16, 18-19. *We should note here that in this verse only the 1st and 8th days of the festival are called "sabbaths."

3) Feast of Weeks: Deut. 16:10, 16; 2 Chron. 8:13.

Whereas, in Lev. 23:24 the Festival of Trumpets is called a "sabbath" and a time for "holy convocation" (see also Num 29:1). A thought occurred to me as I progressed in this study that perhaps it is our "Greek," or Western, minds which see this phrase "an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days" as "denoting a time-progression." But, what if it isn't a "time-progression" per se but is rather a listing of ceremonial days? As Dunn has observed: "the three terms together, "sabbaths, new moons, and feasts" was in fact a regular way of speaking of the main festivals of Jewish religion." Bacchiocchi suggests that it is both a time sequence **and** a listing of festivals. Then when the two points above are tied together then what we have in vs. 16 is

a listing: the feasts, the new moon and the sabbatical days of the feast of Trumpets and the Day of Atonement. To me this is the only option that answers all the objections given above and below.

If the Greek word "sabbatwn" is taken to be the seventh-day Sabbath then one has to explain what it is about the Sabbath that points to the future (see the future aspect to the present tense in vs. 17); whereas all previous mentions of the seventh-day Sabbath (in the Ten Commandments) point to the past. Giem makes two points relative to this: 1) "in Heb 10:1 the law is spoken of as having a "shadow" (skian) of "the good things to come" (ton mellonton agathon)." and 2) "if the Passover also had a dual function, pointing both backwards (Exod 12:11-17) and forwards (1 Cor 5:7), so why not the sabbath?"⁹ Of course, the burden of proving this would lie with those making the claim. To date the continuous and conspicuous absence of evidence is quite compelling.

However, as Burnside has noted, almost two hundred years ago, the seventh-day Sabbath "never was a shadow, of which Christ was the body, as the new moons and all the ordinances of the ceremonial law were; and therefore it is of these, and of these only, that the apostle shows himself to be speaking." Gill, commenting on verse 17, points out that these ceremonial sabbaths were shadows of future things; this observation is of great importance to understanding what days are being referred to by the word "sabbatwn." Gill then claims that the seventh-day Sabbath is a "type of that spiritual rest we have in Christ now, and of that eternal rest we shall have with him in heaven hereafter." While he provides no textual support for any of these claims it seems safe for us to assume a reference to such texts as Heb. 4:9. But, it should be noted that the seventh-day Sabbath was instituted before the fall, that is, "before types were necessary or possible".

However, couldn't it be possible for the seventh-day Sabbath to "pick up" such a "role" at a later date? Of course, the onus of

proving such a point would lie with those making such a claim and they would have to present concrete evidence to support it. But, if "sabbatwn" is referring to the ceremonial sabbaths of the feast of Trumpets and the Day of Atonement then there is no problem. Wood cites the commentary by Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown which noted that the annual sabbaths "of the day of atonement and feast of tabernacles have come to an end with the Jewish services to which they belonged (Leviticus xxiii. 32, 37-39)," but "the weekly Sabbath rests on a more permanent foundation, having been instituted in Paradise to commemorate the completion of creation in six days." The J-F-B Commentary states that "sabbatwn" refers to the sabbaths "of the day of atonement and feast of tabernacles". Fausset then goes on to state that "Lev xxiii. 38 expressly distinguishes "The Sabbaths of the Lord" from the other Sabbaths."

It should also be noted that while the word "sabbatwn" is plural here it often stands for the singular; this brings it into line with the words "eating," "drinking," "holy day," and "new moon" all of which are in the singular.

Buzzard has astutely observed that "[i]f it is to be argued that Paul was warning the Colossians against a perversion of the days and not the days themselves, then the fact must be faced that all three types of days are equally relevant to Gentile Christians. The mention of all three forms of observance must, on the sabbatarian argument, mean that the Colossians were already observing all three types, and had therefore been taught to observe them by Paul. Only then could the heretics impose something in addition to the days." "

Conklin in this section states his viewpoint clearly. Overall, his idea is to reduce the meaning of the <<listing>> in Col.2:16 to <<yearly, monthly, YEARLY>> <<holy days>>, none of which were still Christian, but which were all still, but merely, tolerated by Paul. Paul only really gets upset with 'certain members' that were obsessed with some <<Gnostic>> and <<ascetic>> 'perversions' of the <<observance>> of these days. Conklin wants to show "Sabbaths" meant that <<part of>>

Jewish feasts that were non-“feasts”, namely the Day of Atonement and the Feast of Trumpets, and then the further <<part of>> it, namely its <<part of>> <<fasting as the case may be>>.

Let the reader at the hand of the simplicity of the Scripture passage, decide for himself.

Observe,

<<Endnote 13>>:

“For instance Segraves, Daniel L. “Why Don't Christians observe the Jewish Sabbath?” page 8, claims that the Sabbath “was predictive of the coming Messiah”; the absence of proof is quite compelling.”

“Endnote 13” fits onto the following statement:

“Wood cites the commentary by Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown which noted that the annual sabbaths “of the day of atonement and feast of tabernacles have come to an end with the Jewish services to which they belonged (Leviticus xxiii. 32, 37-39),” but “the weekly Sabbath rests on a more permanent foundation, having been instituted in Paradise to commemorate the completion of creation in six days.”¹³”

Notice the statement that isn't just an assumption or only a supposition, but a presumption: “Why Don't Christians observe the Jewish Sabbath?”

Who says Christians did not “observe” the Sabbath? Who alleged “Christians observe(d) the Jewish Sabbath”?

Not a single pre-supposition is based on anything material in Colossians 2:16-17. THEY ALL DEPEND ON APPEARANCE - the appearance in PRESUMED “order”, “sequence”, “listing” or whatever. This ARTIFICIAL association ONLY, supplies the exegetes reason for their presumption, “Christians observe(d) the Jewish Sabbath”.

In contradistinction to this amazing and almost comical ability to discern proof or intimation where there exists no proof or

intimation, Conklin finds "the absence of proof" that the Sabbath had **NOT** been "predictive of the coming Messiah", "... quite compelling". It's ALSO easy to presume an absence of proof and then to find it quite compelling! Only shut the eyes for the "proof", and one has proven the absence of it.

However, the cited commentary also without ado just presumes and then concludes from its presumption: "the weekly Sabbath rests on a more permanent foundation, having been instituted in Paradise to commemorate **the completion of creation in six days.**"

*The weekly Sabbath had been instituted in Paradise to commemorate the CREATION of creation in six days and its completion "on the **Seventh Day**" - "Remember the SABBATH Day to keep it holy" - Not, "Remember the creation"! And "Remember the Sabbath Day **to keep it, holy**"! - which unmistakably means the Sabbath should be remembered for its "predictive" nature or **OWN, INTRINSIC** quality. God sanctified the Seventh Day "**HOLY**" meaning - **WHICH IS**, a meaning **OF FUTURE SIGNIFICANCE**. "**HOLY**" is the Sabbath's "sanctity" or "holiness": its availability 'TO GOD FOR USE' - future use! Man's keeping is not what hallows the Sabbath - it is its being separated for the specific purpose of <<pointing to>> THE ONE, namely, GOD, who sanctified it for use unto Himself. The Sabbath in other words from the beginning held the promise of God's revelation of Himself through mercy and holiness - that is, through Jesus Christ!*

Therefore: What if the weekly Sabbath rests on a more permanent - holy - foundation, having been instituted in Paradise to look forward to the completion of creation in the Seventh Day by God's act of redemption in Jesus Christ through resurrection from the dead? And what if the weekly Sabbath rests on a more permanent - holy - foundation, having been instituted in Christ in resurrection from the dead to look forward to the completion of

creation in the **Church** by the increase of it that is of God through Jesus Christ?

ONLY by before-hand-dismissal could this, 'holy', proleptic essentiality of the Sabbath Day be disregarded - could its **prophetic** characteristics and indeed the prophetic **promise** it holds by divine institution and constitution, be derogated.

"Derogated", in fact, for example by saying: "the weekly Sabbath rests on a more permanent foundation, having been instituted in Paradise to commemorate the completion of creation in six days" instead of to say *the weekly Sabbath rests on a more permanent foundation, having been instituted in Paradise to commemorate the completion of the creation on the Seventh Day.*" Consistently as only God is consistent do we find in the New Testament at the moment of this very completion of the creation "by the exceeding greatness of his power when He raised Christ from the dead": "**In the Sabbath ... there was**". "In the Sabbath ... there was" **this**, God's "Word", that "in the beginning was", that "in the beginning created the world" and "is the **beginning** of the creation of God": that also is "the **END** of the creation of God" - its "Alpha AND Omega".

THIS WAS THE SABBATH'S RESERVATION OR HOLINESS SINCE ITS CREATION OR INSTITUTION BY GOD "in paradise".

Of course "Christians don't observe the Jewish Sabbath", because they 'observe' the **Christian Sabbath - the real creation-Sabbath** - for the very reason it "was predictive of the coming Messiah" - and the "proof is quite compelling". The Church celebrated the Sabbath's intrinsic association with God's "coming" or "revelation" or "appearance" OR GRACE in redemption "to-us-ward" through Jesus Christ. This is what it means that God "sanctified the Seventh Day".

In fact, the unbelievers of the ('Gnostic') "WORLD" so detested this "holy" "predictive" attribute of the Sabbath Day so celebrated by the Christians of Paul's day, they judged and

condemned them for joyfully celebrating it in fact by holy and spiritual "eating and drinking".

Then, although Paul emphasises the prospective, future aspect of the Sabbath by its association with the Church - as "BEING a shadow of things yet to come indeed of the Body that belongs to Christ" - it doesn't mean he restricts it to this. On the contrary, its future as spectre of the CHURCH'S future, for no moment can let go of the Sabbath's PAST futurity exactly by association with God's People through the Man of men the Head of his Body the Church! This the Sabbath's future as spectre AGAIN HOLDS THE UTTER INTENSITY OF ITS HOLINESS! Paul does not exclude, but include, also the Sabbath's historic or 'creational' prospectivity and predictivity - to so call the function and service the Sabbath has rendered all previous believing and hoping generations and dispensations - as "HAVING BEEN a shadow of things yet to come indeed of the Body that belongs to Christ". WE HAVE NOT SEEN THE SABBATH'S SANCTIFICATION BY GOD UNLESS WE HAVE WITNESSED THIS ITS SANCTIFICATION IN AND THROUGH CHRIST AND THE CHURCH.

Why do exegetes shy away from the Sabbath's PAST futurity? For the Sabbath in Paul's use of the PRESENT tense, certainly by association with the CHURCH, holds both its past and future futurity. What would the exegetes have lost had they maintained the Sabbath's PAST futurity? They only by maintaining the Sabbath's PAST futurity would have gained what the anti-Sabbatharians intended they should lose, namely the LORD'S very own Sabbath Day of the Seventh Day of the creation. That's why even Sabbatharian exegetes shy away from the Sabbath's PAST futurity in Colossians 2:16-17.

Most intriguing is the question, Why would Sabbatharian exegetes not permit the Sabbaths of Colossians 2:16-17 be simply what the word "Sabbaths" firstly and lastly indicates - that it means the Seventh Day Sabbath of the creation-week, which, in context,

indicated the Church's "feasting" - the Christians' "feasting" THEIR Sabbaths?

The exegetes have everything to gain by permitting? Or do they think Paul condemns and does not condone and defend the Church, its practice of celebration and its Days of celebration? If they thought Paul condemns and does not condone and defend, they feared for no reason and went to great lengths to so distort this Scripture only to appease their frightened minds. Have they ever given it a thought that in so fearing they actually have put Paul in opposition with the Lord of the Sabbath, its Creator, Sustainer and Protector? Have they ever thought they pit Paul against the Scriptures? Have they ever thought they by making of the "Sabbaths" "Jewish holy days" and not God's "Holy", have made of the Christian Church, the den of Judaists? Or if not the den of Judaists, then a bunch either of hypocrites, or, of cowards? Or if "Sabbaths" were pagan "holy days", they made of the Christian Church plainly idolaters and Paul their chief?

It throughout its history has been a case of sorry apologetics, this pre-occupation with Colossians 2:16-17 ... and I used to be a conceited.

Consider,

"We should first take note of the alternatives that have been proposed. Fortunately, these have been summarized by Hasel in his article on "Sabbath" for the Anchor Bible Dictionary:

1) the seventh-day Sabbath

2) ceremonial sabbath of the Jewish cultic year

3) some Jewish aspect of the sabbath without denying true sabbath-keeping

4) perverted sabbath-keeping in honor of the elemental spirits of the universe

5) weekdays that were designated to be sabbaths

6) sabbath sacrifices prescribed in Num 28:9-10¹"

Of all these "proposed ... alternatives", none except the first in context or detail fit the 'scenario', the 'logics', the 'rationale', the 'thrust', of Paul's Letter. But the only real possibility, namely "the seventh-day Sabbath" of Christian feasts' feasting, is out of hand rejected, and being disproved!

Just see what is necessary for to conclude what Conklin would love to be concluded, namely "a uniform text" by which it would be 'proven' "Sabbaths" don't mean "Sabbaths":

"If we were to take "sabbatwn" to be a sort of short-hand form of "sabbata sabbaton" which the LXX uses to refer to the Day of Atonement (Lev. 16:31; 23:32; in the last verse the last phrase describes the Day of Atonement as simply "sabbata") and if it included the other ceremonial sabbaths as well this would then give us a uniform text."

What makes Colossians 2:16 and context not "a uniform text"? The fact asserted it is incomplete. It is incomplete asserted in: 1, That it does not have "sabbata sabbaton" - but only, "sabbatwn"; 2, That it does not directly "refer to the Day of Atonement" - but by only saying "sabbatwn", "describes the Day of Atonement as simply "sabbata""; 3. It does not word for word "include the other ceremonial sabbaths as well" - but because it uses the word "sabbatwn", must include them.

First the assertion the text is incomplete is presumed proof it is incomplete. Then it is assumed, "If we were to take "sabbatwn" to be a sort of short-hand" or incomplete form of text, "this would then give us a uniform text" - or the complete text and complete information that will inform us The Day of Atonement is actually meant!

I could have told what Conklin's reasoning is, but not what his finding.

"So then, what is being condemned by the Gnostic Jews, who were also ascetics, is the feasting on the ceremonial feast days. But, Richardson **seems** to make the excellent point here that if this is the case then Paul seems to be "needlessly repeating himself"."

Consider,

"... what is being condemned by the Gnostic Jews ...".

Here Conklin supplies another instance of a "text" that is not "uniform" or that is incomplete: Understand, the "text", doesn't inform us Paul actually speaks of "the Gnostic Jews" who "condemned" "the feasting on the ceremonial feast days".

Who spoke of "Jews"? Paul? Where? How? Where and as he speaks to the Church not to let anybody judge it for the fact it feasted its Sabbaths? Would Jews "condemn" anybody for keeping their Sabbaths? No! But would Jews "condemn" anybody who keep their Sabbaths but not in their way? If it had been Christians who "feasted" the 'Jewish' Sabbaths by reason of Jesus Christ the Jews would have disapproved! So if it were Jews who disapproved and condemned others for keeping the Sabbath - for to them the wrong reasons and the wrong way - it would have been Christians whom they condemned for keeping the Sabbath Day for the sake of Jesus Christ! And Conklin's argument would fall short of its hopes.

"So then, what is being condemned" is not "what", but WHO. "What is being condemned" is the Church - the CHRISTIAN Church. And they were "condemned" all right, or, "judged", as Paul put it. But not by "Jews", whether "Gnostic Jews", just ordinary "Jews", or Christian Jews, because the Church is judged by "anyone" of the "world" and its affiliates and allies, whether Jews or Gentiles, whether of Gnostic or of other "wisdom", "principles", "rule", "dogmatism", "dominion" or "philosophy", whether "ascetics" or in other respect the "world" "after the commandments of men". As long as they were the "world" of which Paul speaks as over against the Body that is Christ's.

"The Colossian heresy" proves to be the first manifestation of the idolatry of "humanism" and proves to be no first manifestation of the "heresy" of Sabbatharian Judaism!

Consider,

"... Richardson **seems** to make the excellent point here that if this is the case then Paul seems to be "needlessly repeating himself."

"If this is the case"... Conklin seems to be needlessly repeating himself and Richardson clearly makes the poorest of points.

Conklin,

"... (Unfortunately, the points above about "feasting" ignores the fact that the Day of Atonement isn't a feast day; it is a day of fasting. This fact is important and should not be forgotten."

Consider,

"The Day of Atonement isn't a feast day; it is a day of fasting"...

From verse 24 of Leviticus 23 to verse 32 there's no word about "fasting (as the case may be)", of fasting either on the first day of the month - Feast of Trumpets -, or of fasting on the tenth - the Day of Atonement. Of the tenth day of the seventh month Leviticus 23:32 commands, "It shall be unto you a Sabbath of rest, and ye shall afflict your souls; in the ninth day of the month at even, from even unto even, shall ye CELEBRATE your Sabbath" - which is the same as saying, "ye shall by eating and drinking feast your Sabbath" of the Day of Atonement. These facts are important and should not be forgotten because they show the Day of the Atonement and the feast Day of Trumpets were no days of fasting, but of "feasting", that is, of "eating and drinking"-observance. And the fact these two "feast-Sabbaths" were only called "Sabbaths" and not "feasts" becomes pointless in this

regard. "As Dunn has observed: "the three terms together, "sabbaths, new moons, and feasts" was in fact a regular way of speaking of the main festivals of Jewish religion"". The three terms together, "feasts", "new moon", "Sabbaths", here, in Colossians 2:16, have in fact become the regular way of speaking of the main festivals of Christian Church life. *To me this is the only option that answers all the objections given above and below.* It is vain to suggest that the three terms together make up "both a time sequence **and** a listing of festivals, and then to tie the two points together in order to get "a listing: the feasts, the new moon and the sabbatical days of the feast of Trumpets and the Day of Atonement". What for? So the ascetics could object to the feasting on those days? So they could also object to the rationale for fasting on the Day of Atonement?

Why can't the "Sabbaths" simply be what they are, "Sabbaths", so that then one gets Sabbath's feasting, whether of month's Lord's Supper, or, of Sabbaths' celebration each week. Then one gets what Paul speaks about: Christian celebration, the Church's sovereign and free feasting of its CHRISTIAN, GOSPEL "Sabbaths"!

Consider,

"If the Greek word "sabbatwn" is taken to be the seventh-day Sabbath then one has to explain what it is about the Sabbath that points to the future (see the future aspect to the present tense in vs. 17); whereas all previous mentions of the seventh-day Sabbath (in the Ten Commandments) point to the past."

"What it is about the Sabbath that points to the future? Rather should it be asked, *what it is about the Sabbath that does not point to the future, because there is not a thing about the Sabbath that does not point to the future as it points to the past while pointing to Christ - who is the Beginning and the End of the creation of God..*

"All previous mentions of the seventh-day Sabbath (in the Ten Commandments) point to the past"... We all along have been considering this aspect of the 'Sabbath-question' in *The Lord's Day in the Covenant of Grace*. This we'll say here though, that to claim as is here claimed, one only exposes one's lack of insight into the meaning of the Sabbath Day and into the meaning of its being contained in the Law. Well might one with Conklin say, "see the future aspect to the present tense in vs. 17". It will be enough - the Sabbath holds to the Body that is Christ's no matter how rough the terrain over which it goes. "What it is about the Sabbath that points to the future"? It is the Body above, above which is the Head, the Light and Life of the Body, joined and "knit together by joints and bands" of love, faith and hope - joined upon and joined together by all things pointing to Christ. Christ, "the Alpha and the Omega of the creation of God" - is the thing about the Sabbath that points to the future as well as to the past.

Consider,

"Giem makes two points relative to this: 1) "in Heb 10:1 the law is spoken of as having a "shadow" (skian) of "the good things to come" (ton mellonton agathon)." and 2) "if the Passover also had a dual function, pointing both backwards (Exod 12:11-17) and forwards (1 Cor 5:7), so why not the sabbath?"

"Of course", says Conklin, "the burden of proving this would lie with those making the claim. To date the continuous and conspicuous absence of evidence is quite compelling."

We would rather say, that to date the continuous and conspicuous predisposition against the Sabbath for having such "shadow"-meaning of "future things", has been the only - yet compelling in no wise. How predisposed exegetes are cannot be illustrated better than by this incidence here quoted. The "two points relative" Giem

makes, are clear and self-explanatory, yet Conklin summarily dismisses of them as not to the point or "relative". We might add another "two points relative" that will confirm the Law and the Sabbath's "dual function, (of) pointing both backwards and forwards". These are: The very instance which Paul uses in Colossians 2:16-17! "These things", says he, referring to the "feasts, whether of month's, or, of Sabbaths" - "things" of the LAW - "are a spectre of things approaching, namely of the Body which is Christ's!" What plainer and more definitive statement could one ask for that the Law "point(s) both backwards ... and forwards"? (Compare Conklin's own admission above, "see the future aspect to the present tense in vs. 17".)

But to show the Law and especially the Sabbath's intrinsic cosmic-eschatological nature further, we may refer to the fact the Passover is in the Decalogue supplied as most important basis and reason for being of the Sabbath Day and its observance. (Giem hints at the Passover by way of reference: "1 Cor 5:7".)

Who but the blindly obstinate would refuse to admit the Passover's prophetic essentiality? Incomprehensibly strange is the phenomenon it is the Sabbatharian exegetes who disclaim the MIGHTY WITNESS of the Sabbath's indestructible prophetic essentiality TO ITS CHRISTIAN OBLIGATION! Sabbatharians like sheep follow the he-goat of Sunday-worship across the fence without having a clue where they might land on the other side. They blindly imitate every argument against the Sabbath allegedly derived from Colossians 2 and in the process destroy instead of cultivate the grounds of Christian Sabbath's enjoyment. Instead of imitating the Sundaydarians the Sabbatharians should - like Paul did - have exploited the kaleidoscopic reach of Colossians 2:16-17 and should have defended and celebrated the Sabbath for its eschatological, that is, its Christian past and future. (Sabbatharians would have done better to imitate Ignatius who treated on the Sabbath in just such a way.)

Consider,

"However, as Burnside has noted, almost two hundred years ago, the seventh-day Sabbath "never was a shadow, of which Christ was the body, as the new moons and all the ordinances of the ceremonial law were; and therefore it is of these, and of these only, that the apostle shows himself to be speaking."

To say, "it is of these (the new moons and all the ordinances of the ceremonial law), and of these only, that the apostle shows himself to be speaking" WHILE NOT OF "the seventh-day Sabbath" which, allegedly, "never was a shadow", amounts to contradicting Paul. "The seventh-day Sabbath" has always been a 'shadow', has been a 'shadow' also before "almost two hundred years ago", and in the Christian era has all along been "a shadow of things - of even better things - approaching" - that is, yet to come, future things which every moment towards that future, intimately is connected with, relates to and wholly depends upon "what/which is Christ's" - namely "the Body that belongs to Christ".

Paul says, "these things" - referring MAINLY to the "Sabbaths" "WHICH" he himself spoke of - "IS - COLLECTIVELY SINGULAR - a shadow". Paul treats the "Sabbaths" no different than he treats the "feasts" and the "new moon" he in this same place, treats on. Paul defends the Sabbath's "shadow"-character - he is not ashamed of it like the Sabbatharians are. He treats everything "concerning" which he speaks, as having come under the same "judgement" of the "anybody", the world, who "judges" the "YOU", the Church! It means everything which like everybody whom Paul supposes had come under the world's vengeance, had been Christian! The "Body", the "feasts", the "new moon", the "Sabbaths" "that the apostle shows himself to be speaking" of, whether "ordinances" or "ceremonial" or "law" or not, were of Christian nature and meaning, of Christian practice and custom! So was the "shadow". But Jewish "ordinances" or Jewish "ceremonial" or Jewish "law"

neither was! Not even of Jewish origin were any, but of divine! The festive nature and quality of all and each, the "eating and drinking" whether of foodstuff and cup of drink, or of spiritual enjoyment by faith only of all and each, were Christian no less than Lord's Day and Lord's Supper were Christian - no less than the baptism of which in fore-going context *the apostle shows himself to be speaking* had been Christian. Paul conceives of a Body that from its derivation to its consummation, in its being and growth, by its suffering, joy and enjoyment, to its very movement and even shadow is the Body that belongs to Christ. As this Body singularly and wholly stands the assaults of the imposing and austere world, its status and statutes, its values and ethics, its every practice, custom, use and expression of faith - its total life and way of life - stand the assaults of the imposing and austere world. It withstands its blows of scorn and judgement and conceit, of beguiling, alienation and spoiling, but withstands it by the Faith of the Lord Jesus Christ. Not the least aspect of this Body's existence in the world may be dissected as being "left behind of the afflictions of Christ for his body's sake which is the Church". (1:24) And that, at the hand and judgement of the WORLD. By the measure of the judgement and suffering the Body is undergoing is its Christianity measured - every bit of it. Paul with Jesus Christ swing the Sword of God's Word and Judgement at the world while comforting the suffering Body: "Do you not be judged by anybody regarding your eating and drinking, whether with regard to your feasting: both of Month's Feasting the Lord's Supper and of Sabbaths' celebrating the Lord's Day!"

By this imperative I shall abide, this "interpretation", shall consider a "translation" for the want of a better, for expressing nothing against the text, and for expressing the agitation of both text and context.

I find no reason not to agree with Giem and to differ with Conklin, except to go further than Giem and carefully maintain,

"that these ... sabbaths were" ONE, and were a "shadow of future things", BY CHRISTIAN CEREMONY, HABIT AND CUSTOM - in fact by strongest possible Christian ethics and logic - which is the "logic" of Jesus Christ Sovereign Lord of the Church and of her Sabbath Days.

"Gill, commenting on verse 17, points out that these ceremonial sabbaths were shadows of future things; this observation is of great importance to understanding what days are being referred to by the word "sabbatwn." Gill then claims that the seventh-day Sabbath is a "type of that spiritual rest we have in Christ now, and of that eternal rest we shall have with him in heaven hereafter." While he provides no textual support for any of these claims it seems safe for us to assume a reference to such texts as Heb. 4:9. But, it should be noted that the seventh-day Sabbath was instituted before the fall, that is, "before types were necessary or possible"."

By any means Conklin must find some objection to the plainest truthful meaning of our text. And how can anyone just claim "the seventh-day Sabbath was instituted before the fall" or "before types were necessary or possible"? The Lamb of God was slain before the foundation of the world, so the Anti-Type was offered up before the fall of man and made possible and necessary all future types that would point to Christ. The Sabbath though the first in this line was not the least of these 'types'. There is much greater truth in Christ's saying, "Therefore the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath" than generally accepted. Jesus, here, "theologised" in most proper sense. And it implies God in the council of His Grace, provided for sin in Himself - even before man had fallen from grace. It implies that afterwards everything created would be with the eye on grace - for the benefit of the elect redeemed, to serve their interest in God as the Body that is Christ's, and forward to the greater glory in the

face of Jesus in the end of time. Which is the Christian era, and time of God's Sabbath for to enter into its celebration. It is our day the Christian era, and the day of the well pleasing of God in Christ. So, NOW, TODAY, if ye hear His voice, harden not your heart, but be glad, and enjoy the peace of God that surpasses all understanding. Enjoy and celebrate what is understandable - enter upon the Sabbath-keeping that is the enjoyment of God in Jesus Christ. Be you not intimidated, incriminated, judged, despised or condemned by the man of the world, for to him God's wisdom is foolishness and an offence - a killing stench, but for those known by God and received in grace, it is the odour of eternal life - their present pleasure and gladness in and through Jesus Christ. It is the Body, having entered upon the Lord's Day in celebration of just a spectre of the ultimate promise: the eternal life that awaits and beckons in glory, but which by faith PRESENTLY is become true and real.

We must change Gill's "commenting on verse 17, ... that the seventh-day Sabbath is a "type of that spiritual rest we have in Christ now, and of that eternal rest we shall have with him in heaven hereafter"", a little, and say: "Remember the Sabbath Day, to keep it holy" for, and as being, an enjoyment of that eternal rest we have with him in and through and for the sake of Jesus Christ on earth, and today. "Remember the Sabbath Day, to keep it holy, for..." - by reason of... that eternal rest we have with him here and now - by reason of the Body that is Christ's! The Church, for being Christian, attaches great trust and value to God's Word to us in the Son in these last days, which "He concerning the Seventh Day thus spoke: And God upon the Seventh Day did rest from all his works". Paul in Colossians 2 says no different! Solely because both the Preacher to the Hebrew Christians and Paul to the Colossian Christians, speak of God in Christ in his suffering and death for us, and of God triumphant in Christ in the raising of Him from the dead. The congregating and celebrating People of the

risen Christ - the Sabbath's feasting Body that is Christ's - presently surrounds Jesus the Christ and is enfolded by Him. This is the Christian Church. This is, 'in heaven' - by faith, and by faith only! This Sabbath-keeping - by faith, and by faith only! To remember the Sabbath Day requires the Sabbath holds the promise of faith's expectancy - that it points to Christ and the eternal Rest God provided his People with "in the Son".

The onus lies with those who would not have the Sabbath be a "type of that spiritual rest we have in Christ now", to prove their point or claim with concrete evidence. They cannot simply pass the bucket and feel they have quenched the fire. The very text of the Sabbath's creation-involvement - Genesis 2 and 3 - portrays and proves exactly its New Testament significance for the People of God. For whereas the Sabbath with "reference to such texts as Heb. 4:9" - and Colossians 2:16-17 - is pivotally placed right central midst the redemptive acts of God through Christ and the future of the Church, it in the Genesis story - and in every other Old Testament incurrance of it - is placed pivotally right central midst the redemptive acts of God through Christ and the future of the Church. That in fact, is the only possible alternative for an evangelical understanding of the so-called two creation stories. They are not two stories, but one, that tells of man's creation and his fall from grace into sin and God's eternal providence towards man's salvation that immediately on the Seventh Day of the creation begins to unfold in and through the Church. Just like for us, "now", the Sabbath for Adam and Eve, was a "type of that spiritual rest we have in Christ now".

The Sabbath's receiving from God, blessing, sanctification, completion and rest, "proves" its blessing, sanctification, completion and rest intrinsically aren't the Day's, but God's, for only God is holy, blessed, fullness, and rest, in Himself. These,

the Sabbath's blessing, sanctification, completion and rest "point to Christ", for only in Christ, God in Himself is holy, blessed, fullness, and rest. The Sabbath not for a single moment existed in creation but by virtue of God in his Self-revelation in and through, and for the sake of, Jesus Christ. The first mentioned "covenant-token/-sign" in the Bible isn't the "mother-promise", but the Seventh Day of God's creation. That supplies the explanation how Jesus could speak of man as being involved in the Sabbath's being "made for man" despite the fact "man" isn't so much as mentioned in the creation-story of the Sabbath Day - in fact was wholly absent on the Seventh Day of creation except by representation through Christ. The Sabbath thus, directly falls under the heading of the whole creation-story, "In the beginning God . . .". The story included the redemption of all creation.

Actually there's nothing for the Sabbath's 'post-lapsarian' impression to be "proven" - it speaks for itself. It speaks for itself both prospectively as retrospectively: The Sabbath by design of God before man was created, "was made, for man", i.e., was decided upon IN CHRIST with the view to man and with the view to the great and sole need of man - his salvation through Jesus Christ. "The Sabbath was made for man; not man for the Sabbath"! Salvation-history - God's revelation - interprets itself. It is not the person who imports these meanings into the Sabbath's history. But the Sabbath-history of the Scriptures presupposes and applies these meanings and implications to itself by itself. It is the Text that - while maintaining itself as the Story of Redemption told by God through Jesus Christ - so explains the Sabbath to the person. In the words of Hebrews the first chapter, "God in these last days in the Son did speak". (Here's the first 'higher criticism' of the Scriptures and as far as I am concerned, the last!)

To say it to the point: The Sabbath is a shadow of future things; this observation is of great importance to understanding what "Sabbaths" are being referred to by the word <sabbatohn> in

Colossians 2:16. The Seventh-Day Sabbath was a type of that spiritual rest, blessing, sanctification and fullness which we have in Christ now, and which we as the Christian Church, have in and with Christ on earth today - "The Kingdom Of Heaven". This truth has every Textual support for it claims every reference from the whole Bible to the Sabbath Day such as Heb. 4:9. It for this reason should be noted that the Seventh-Day Sabbath together with the creation was virtually instituted before the fall by the decision and will of God in Christ, and that it by Him was created and "was made" in reality as a type-necessary "unto Christ" and "for man". The Sabbath is cosmic-eschatological sign of the Covenant of Grace and its beneficiary and bearer, the Church-eschatological.

On Gill's "claim",

"that the seventh-day Sabbath is a "type of that spiritual rest we have in Christ now, and of that eternal rest we shall have with him in heaven hereafter"", and

after his own comment, that

"it should be noted that the seventh-day Sabbath was instituted before the fall, that is, "before types were necessary or possible"",

Conklin asks,

"However, couldn't it be possible for the seventh-day Sabbath to "pick up" such a "role" at a later date?"

On which question, I think, we have answered well enough above in order to be able to maintain, that although the Sabbath has enjoyed "such a "role"" of thorough eschatological significance since it "was made" at the creation, it since creation and throughout revelation, has progressed with God's revelation in and through Jesus Christ, so that finally it "pick(ed) up", and "was instituted" in the Christ-event "once for all" as "that spiritual rest we have in Christ now"; so that from the Christ-event, the Sabbaths have obtained firstly and lastly point of gravity and

centrality and rest in the revelation of the coming God. This is where Paul places the Sabbaths in his Letter to the Colossians. We must discover the "Sabbaths" of Colossians 2:16, and capture their significance, in the context of the eschatological centrality of the Christ-event - in Jesus' resurrection from the dead. To what and to whom that which proceeds from the grave of Joseph "in Sabbath's-time", every sign and type and figure returns - from the past as from the future: "These things are but a spectre of the approaching and near - to Christ indeed belongs the Body". Nobody better than Paul here in Colossians 2:16, could have "proved" the Sabbath is a type that, like it "now" points to future things, it points to Christ, also in the past, like it pointed to future things, it pointed to Christ.

Against this point of view or perspective of the Sabbath's eschatological essentiality, Conklin still maintains, "... But, if "sabbatwn" is referring to the ceremonial sabbaths of the feast of Trumpets and the Day of Atonement (and not to the Sabbath) then there is no problem" . . . because it was no longer "before the fall" but it by the time of their institution was after the fall, when "types were necessary" or had become necessary. The two "feasts" are the 'sort of Sabbaths' that weren't the true or weekly Sabbaths, but yearly 'feasts' that weren't really 'feasts so-called', but only 'so-called' Sabbaths. "Then there is no problem", says Conklin while he has made the whole passage pointless and forceless.

Of course then there cannot be any problem, but there also cannot be real meaning.

No, this Scripture is about facing a challenge, about accepting the enormous problem of an accusing and judging world - about accepting the ultimatum delivered to the address of the Church to conform to the world and dominion of unbelief and darkness, and to defend and uphold Christian sovereignty and freedom - Paul's sole purpose in saying, "Let no man (of the world) therefore judge you

as to your (festive and spiritual) eating and drinking (of Christ), whether as to your feasts of new moon, or of Sabbath's! For these are the very spectre of what awaits you as the Body that is Christ's by the growth (proportionate) to the increase of God . . . your reward in having held fast to the Head . . . Let no man beguile you!"

Just see by what the Church is intimidated in 2:18 - is it Judaism? Too small a thing is Judaism to compare with the monster there portrayed. Paul in verse 18 describes in main features, the gross idolatry of humanism! This is Goliath in verse 18 against David in verses 16-17; not Israelite against Jew.

We on strength of this conclusion, must adapt what Buzzard says in the following and last quotation from this section of Conklin's "In Depth Study":

"Buzzard has astutely observed that "[i]f it is to be argued that Paul was warning the Colossians against a perversion of the days and not the days themselves, then the fact must be faced that all three types of days are equally relevant to Gentile Christians. The mention of all three forms of observance must, on the sabbatarian argument, mean that the Colossians were already observing all three types, and had therefore been taught to observe them by Paul. Only then could the heretics impose something in addition to the days" ",

It is NOT to be argued that Paul was warning the Colossians against a perversion of the days, OR, against the days themselves. The fact must be faced that Paul does NOT speak of "days" in Colossians. The fact must be faced that all the **"feasts, whether of new moon, or, of Sabbaths' celebration"** themselves, are equally relevant to **Gentile Christians**. The mention of the **"Sabbaths"**, on the sabbatarian argument, mean that the Colossians were **already** observing them as **Christian, "feasts"**, and had therefore been **taught** to observe them, **by Paul. Only then** could the **"world"** of

"philosophy" and "of the first principles" of "wisdom" i.e., the "world" OF HUMANISM, impose something upon Christianity the opposite of Christianity and meaning the end of Christianity. Will the Church be able to withstand the "world" and its "beguiling"? Not while Paul is its Apostle and not while Christ is its Lord! Not as long as "holding the Head, being closely bound together all the Body by joints and bands is ministered nourishment, and will grow with the increase of God"! That is the sure future Paul envisages for the Church for as long as she will not let herself be judged for her very freedom and sovereignty in feasting her Sabbath Days.

Only at this point are we able to return to Conklin's "Introduction" - Point 6 of his "real high points" - where he in effect denies this our finding that the Sabbath is proleptic in essence, and by nature of its very creation, is eschatological. Says Conklin:

"Another key to understanding what Paul meant by "sabbatwn" is given when Paul appears to refer to it as a "shadow" in vs. 17. When compared with the facts that a) the seventh-day Sabbath was instituted before sin and thus before any shadow was necessary and b) in both accounts of the Law it is explicitly given as a memorial and not a shadow or type of something to come. Thus, it would be misleading, at best, to refer to the seventh-day Sabbath as a "shadow-sabbath". The reasons just given alone, at a minimum, strongly imply that Paul is not talking about the seventh-day Sabbath in verse 16 but rather the ceremonial Sabbaths".

I think it a strange thing that first Conklin has to argue the "listing" in 2:16, "feasts, new moon, Sabbaths", doesn't mean "Sabbaths", but "yearly" Sabbaths, then not all "yearly Sabbaths", but only the two: The Day of Atonement and the Feast of Trumpets, but then again, not all about these two "yearly Sabbaths", but only the "part of" them that allegedly had to do with an aspect of "fasting as the case may be". For not the aspect of "fasting" as

such was the matter, but some unidentified "part of" it, namely some kind of "perversion" of it, was meant. We are left with an option between this perversion "meant" in the last analysis, and the "Sabbaths" "meant" by Paul as having been "shadow-Sabbaths". The question why we should at all be confronted with a choice has disappeared in the smoky atmosphere of all the 'burning questions'. We cannot breath freely so how could we think clearly? The question why we should at all be confronted with a choice between NO MATTER WHAT, is answered by the bare fact there's no need for. Paul doesn't weigh different Sabbaths or differences about or within the Sabbaths the one against the other. Paul - the only person whose opinion here is legitimate - accepts the Sabbaths he is talking about, *per se*. No wait! He actually takes these Sabbaths for granted as the most natural practice and belief of the Christian Congregation and defends it for the fact of it! He has no problem with the Sabbaths of the Church AS SUCH, that is, as being Christian. He in fact uses these Sabbaths as Christian practice and belief as the testing point "concerning which" <en merei>, "NOBODY BUT NOBODY IN THE WORLD SHOULD JUDGE YOU". And from this constitutive a priori - from this axiom of Christian Faith - Paul draws his further conclusions pertaining the very Sabbaths he is writing of - that "THESE are a shadow of things approaching, things awaiting the Body of Christ, "IN CHRIST"! It is simply impossible Paul could thus have written of "shadow-sabbaths" that like the Day of Atonement or Feast of Trumpets already had received their fulfilment of typological function in Christ. Conklin himself stresses the fact Paul writes in the Present Tense of future connotation. Paul could write of Sabbaths such ONLY as have PRESENT, CONSTANT AS WELL AS FUTURE typological function that never could become obsolete and unserviceable. There is only one Sabbath of such nature - it is "the seventh-day Sabbath". At the time of his writing - when Christ had come, had been sacrificed and had been raised from the dead - Paul supposes Sabbaths of future significance, and they

could not have been the ceremonial "Sabbaths" of the Old Testament that by then have had their typology fulfilled in Jesus Christ. Only the Sabbath of those ceremonial "Sabbaths" of the Old Testament STILL POSSESSED and in fact in and through Jesus Christ ONLY NOW has received FIRST, FULL and FINAL typological significance. For only NOW, in Christ, has the Sabbath as typological ceremonial day, received its Sacrifice and reason for being - the finishing of all the works of God in the Sacrifice having been raised from the dead.

Moreover by this Sacrifice of the Sabbath Day whereby it is made a typological, ceremonial day - a difference is created between it and all other and previous typological "Sabbaths" and "feasts". Like all other typological ceremonial "holy" DAYS, also the Sabbath received its meaning from its SACRIFICIAL TYPE. Like all SACRIFICES were killed but were unable to rise and live again, so all their "holy DAYS", abided until they in the DEATH of Jesus would find their fulfilment, AND THEN CEASED.

But UNLIKE all other types or sacrifices, this one Sacrifice is the Blessed, the Holy, the End and the Rest of the works of God. By this ONLY Sacrifice that was offered up by God, that was killed, and that was ABLE ALSO TO RISE from the dead again, the Sabbath received its holiness - which is its typological meaning. By the contrariness of its Offer to all other sacrifices, of being able to also rise from the dead, the Sabbath "in Sabbath's time" bore witness to its Sacrifice of fulfilment and life, and thus ceased not, but received perpetual blessedness, everlasting holiness, eternal completion and final rest.

From the fact the Sabbath lives by the RESURRECTION AND NOT FROM THE DEATH OF CHRIST ONLY, it received its primary institution and permanent holiness, its PERPETUAL typological, ceremonial significance and validity, in view of the fact CHRIST "FOR EVER LIVES TO MAKE INTERCESSION FOR US". All days of sacrifice, type and ceremony, by the DEATH of Christ, ENDED, but the Sabbath, by Jesus having been RAISED from death, "was made" to last, FOREVER.

All other "holy" days of sacrifice, type and ceremony ended in the death of Christ, but the Sabbath Day only, in the suffering and glorification of Christ, BEGAN. Having been created "in the beginning" to this end, the Sabbath "in Sabbath's time" "was made" "the Lord's day", "for man" in the redemption that there is in Christ Jesus.

In stead of presupposing the Sabbath's "predictive", eschatological meaning first needs to be "proven", we take the Sabbath's proven "predictive" meaning as the a priori fact and basis of its least and last, first and greatest established significance. We take the Sabbath's eschatological proven-ness as axiom of its totality being contained in and being worked out by Jesus Christ through death and resurrection. Otherwise the Sabbath for us is empty and senseless and useless form - is an object of idolatrous worship. No wonder then that one should try to find any sort of <<alternative>> for the weekly Sabbath in Colossians 2:16 when it is bereaved of its cosmic-eschatological significance.

That brings us to the next section of Conklin's "In Depth Study",

"A Shadow of Things",

"An interesting dilemma here is what is the "shadow"? As, Buzzard notes, "[t]he all-important question is, what in Paul's view is designated "shadow"?" And how does it relate to the "body of Christ" if at all? There seems to be several options:

a) The shadow points only to the feasting in vs 16. But, as Richardson has noted: "there is nothing in the construction of verse 16 and 17 which requires that verse 17 must include the beginning of verse 16, "eating and drinking." We could ask how the "eating and drinking" would be, or are, shadows of Christ? One should take careful note of the fact that this is **never** answered. If the "eating and drinking" is a reference to "feasting or fasting as the case may be," as I have suggested above, then what exactly is it a shadow of? Or,

b) The shadow points to only the days that are mentioned in

vs. 16. As Richardson also points out "it would not be grammatically incorrect for the phrase "which things are a shadow of the things to come" to refer only to the immediately preceding and obviously Judaistic phrase "feast day ... new moon ... sabbath day."". We should, however, note that "shadow" is in the plural and the only element in the plural in vs. 16 is "sabbatwn". Eadie simply claims that it is not to be restricted solely to "sabbatwn" but he doesn't offer any reason(s) why. He thinks it refers to the "entire ritual". Buzzard, likewise, assumes that the "shadow" refers to "festival, new moon, and Sabbath", "the holy days are a shadow by contrast with Christ ...". Waldron also declares that the "seventh day Sabbath was such a shadow". If the days were a "shadow" of the coming of Christ then wouldn't Paul have "lectured" the believers at Colossae for keeping those days instead of telling them not to let others judge them for keeping, or how they were keeping, the days? And wouldn't he have said that they were shadows of what had come, instead of saying "to come"? Note that none of the anti-sabbatarians consider this fact. Or,

c) The shadow points to all five of the elements mentioned in vs. 16. Or,

d) The shadow is being contrasted with the "body of Christ". It is interesting here to see how quickly some commentators insert the word "is" into the translation without noting that it isn't in the Greek! If Paul had meant "is" wouldn't he have used the Greek word for it ("estin") in the first place? This common way of looking at this verse has been voiced by De Lacey who states that "Paul, like others before him, is contrasting [skia] with the [soma] ("reality")." "

b) "At this point, De Lacey raises an interesting question:

"is he [Paul] (as most earlier commentators assumed without question) like Plato encouraging his readers to seek the substance to the abandoning of the mere shadow?"

In answer to De Lacey's question see Blair's suggestion that "Paul (and other Christian teachers) adapted the Platonic idea earthly shadows represent heavenly realities to his view of the succession of ages (this age and the age to come)." Or, is it more likely that we are reading the Greek way of looking at things into the text?"

Thomas states that the "feast days are a type of that continuous festival that is ours in Christ (1 Cor. 5:8, Gr.), for all of them were, like the Passover, anticipatory of Christ (I Cor. 5:7) in some significant way." But, a closer analysis of the feast days reveals that the spring festivals pointed to the first coming of Christ; but the fall festivals point to the second coming (which fits well with the future aspect of the words "to come").

.....

...
If "all of the shadows, types, and prefigures of Christ have come to end" then how does one explain the significance of Pentecost (which was after Christ died on the cross and rose to heaven) and the feast of Trumpets, the Day of Atonement, and the Feast of Tabernacles? But then one should also inquire as to what the new moon is a shadow of? Likewise, the Sabbath? One should note that the typical anti-sabbatarian critic in their haste to link the seventh-day Sabbath with "sabbatwn" of Col. 2:16 **never** answers these questions.

Pokorny claims that "the rules and regulations cited in 2:16 are but a shadow of what is to come. That which is to come (ta mellonta) is the designation for the future age." However, as Richardson points out, while the word "skia" appears frequently in the LXX "not once is it used specifically as a definite foreshadowing of some future event."

On this verse the NIV Study Bible text note reads:

"The ceremonial laws of the OT are here referred to as shadows (cf. Heb 8:5; 10:1) because they symbolically depicted the coming of Christ; so any insistence on the observance of such ceremonies is a failure to recognize that their fulfillment has already taken place. This element of the Colossian heresy was combined with a rigid asceticism as vv.20-21 reveal."

The only problems here that I can see are:

- 1) that there is nothing ceremonial about the food laws, and,
- 2) there is nothing ceremonial about the moral laws, and,
- 3) there is nothing in the food laws or in the Sabbath that points forward to the coming of Christ.

... Thomas ... rather weakly, says that the "Jewish Sabbath is a suggestion of both the day that we call the Lord's Day, which is the believers privilege now, and also of the eternal rest of the soul here and hereafter for the people of God (Heb. 4:4:1-11)."

The major weakness for this can be seen by noting that according to the prophet Isaiah (66:23 "And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the LORD.") we will be keeping both the new moon and the Sabbath in the hereafter. Buzzard, in his Law pamphlet, [page 12] writes: "The law prescribing the observance of holy days, new moons and Sabbaths foreshadowed the reality of Christ and his kingdom--the good things coming."

We can say after looking at the table above that it is this and more and the table suggests that some of the feasts have a continued, or abiding, validity for us today as well. We should also note that there is nothing in these verses which say that just because something is a shadow that doesn't mean we shouldn't be practicing them.

Consider,

"... (H)ow does it(the "shadow") relate to the "body of Christ" if at all?...".

"If at all?" What question to ask! By every possible intimation it proves the "shadow" belongs to "the body of Christ" and to nothing but it.

Paul in verse 16 **qualifies** the Sabbaths he had in mind as of one type: "Feasts"! And Christian Feast-Sabbaths they were, "whether month's (Sabbaths), or of (weekly) Sabbath's" - "with regard to your eating and drinking" of **THESE**, "don't let yourselves be judged by any man (of the world)!"

The demonstrative pronoun for **THESE**, is <ha> "which" - neuter plural, refers to everything before-mentioned, namely, "eating and drinking", and, "feasts, whether of months' Sabbaths, or, of (ordinary) Sabbaths". **THESE**, then, says Paul, directly referring, "collectively is a shadow of approaching things".

THINGS" inferred from the possessive article <tohn>, and "approaching", or, "near", or, "coming", from the Present Participle masculine and neuter, <mellontohn>, which Paul immediately defines himself as "(being) indeed the Body of Christ" <to de sohma tou Xristou>. This should tell *how the "shadow"* undeniably *relates to the "body of Christ"* and to nothing else.

This should be enough reason to reject both notions "There seems to be several options", and, "The shadow points only to the feasting in vs 16". There is but one option: The "shadow" of verse 17 points to the whole and all "things" collectively, mentioned before in verse 16. Of "these things" the "Sabbaths' celebration" is the prominent and primary.

This should be more than ample reason to reject Richardson's blunt assertion, "there is nothing in the construction of verse 16 and 17 which requires that verse 17 must include the beginning of verse 16, "eating and drinking." " The "eating and drinking" is the "thing" that made the Sabbaths what they were: "Sabbaths of

eating and drinking", namely Sabbaths of feasting or celebration! And Sabbaths they were that gave meaning to "eating and drinking", namely an "eating and drinking" of Christ by faith - a "feasting" in the spirit of rest and enjoyment! There's no grounds for suggesting the "eating and drinking" should be separated from the "Sabbaths". On the contrary, *in the construction of verse 16 and 17* the language used not only suggests, but structurally and linguistically in every respect, *includes the beginning of verse 16*, "eating and drinking" as "a shadow of things to come". What is it "in the construction of verse 16 and 17" that **prohibits** that verse 17 includes the beginning of verse 16, "eating and drinking"? *Nothing!* And what is there that "requires that verse 17 must include the beginning of verse 16, "eating and drinking"? Everything just said above! Plus "the construction of verse 16" specifically, as earlier discussed under the phrase "with regard to" <en merei>, and with regard to the Dative of <en merei> found in "in eating and in drinking" <en brohsei kai en posei>, and with regard to the Genitive of <heortehs eh neomehnias eh sabbatohn> "of feasts ... of new moon ... of Sabbath Days" (which we won't repeat here).

Asks Conklin, "We could ask how the "eating and drinking" would be, or are, shadows of Christ?" We answer, first by correcting the question, in that the text doesn't say "the "eating and drinking" would be, or are, shadows of Christ", but of "the Body which is Christ's", to be exact. The Body and the shadow go together, and both with the Head, go together. But "these things are a shadow of things approaching, the Body namely, that is of Christ". This is the text. It prompts no confusion but is straight to the point. This is the fact exegetes don't like because it makes all their toils superfluous and this is the explanation for Conklins reaction, "One should take careful note of the fact that this is **never** answered." Conklin as well doesn't answer it. He insists the shadow derives from the two "holy days" of the day of Atonement

and the Feast of Trumpets exclusively while presupposing these days weren't days of "eating and drinking", but of "feasting or fasting as the case may be". Because days of "fasting" then are the "shadow"-days, "eating and drinking" by nature of its feasting characteristic, cannot also be a "shadow".

"If the "eating and drinking" is a reference to "feasting or fasting as the case may be," as I have suggested above, then what exactly is it a shadow of?"

"What exactly is it a shadow of?" To illustrate graphically: WITH the day of its feasting the "eating and drinking" are the shadow underneath the BODY, of the HEAD, which is the LIGHT of the Body. "Eating and drinking" IS NO "reference to "feasting or fasting as the case may be"". It neither "is a reference to" to itself, nor to something non-existent like "feasting or fasting as the case may be".

Conklin's next "option", is,

"b) The shadow points to **only** the days that are mentioned in vs. 16." (Emphasis CGE)

Again, the shadow doesn't point to itself. The days are the shadow, and therefore the shadow is the days. Whether one deny the Sabbaths were 'shadow-Sabbaths', or not, one is forced to accept the Sabbaths are the shadow by the text and context in which Paul HERE writes about the shadow and the Sabbaths.

"As Richardson also points out "it would not be grammatically incorrect for the phrase "which things are a shadow of the things to come" to refer only to the immediately preceding and obviously Judaistic phrase "feast day ... new moon ... sabbath day.""

It would not be grammatically incorrect provided the immediately preceding phrase "feast day ... new moon ... sabbath day" could be isolated from the "eating and drinking" that in context "CONCERNS" it in a triple manner, namely by way of the referral, relative phrase, of the referral, relative grammatical construction of the Dative, <en merei> "with regard to", and the Genitive of the words

"OF feasts ... OF the month ... OF Sabbath (Days)". If ever two things had been connected undividable and encompassing, it would be these two: the "eating and drinking" of the "feasts: whether of month's celebration or of Sabbaths' celebration".

It would be grammatically incorrect for the phrase "which things are a shadow of the things to come" to refer only to the preceding phrase "feasts ... new moon ... Sabbaths".

Further: It would be exegetically *incorrect* to refer to "feast days ... new moon ... sabbath days" as "obviously Judaistic".

There absolutely *obviously* is nothing "Judaistic" about these Christian celebrated "feast days ... new moon ... Sabbath days". But so suggestive "misleading" or 'brainwashing' works. The unprovoked, irrelevant and pre-disposed idea of "obviously Judaistic" things gets introduced unnoticed; then prejudices the mind; then without question or realising is associated with whatever comes to mind, and at last becomes the criterion of right or wrong.

Conklin argues that the clause "which things are a shadow of the things to come" should "refer only to ... the only element in the plural in vs. 16 ... "sabbatwn"". His argument is worthless, taken into consideration that just two single items regarded together would correspond to a plural demonstrative pronoun. In our passage we have two plurals - "feasts", "Sabbaths"; one singular, "new moon", and one synecdoche, "eating and drinking". These Paul refers to collectively with the appropriate neuter plural demonstrative pronoun <ha> "these / which / which (things) are a shadow".

We agree with Eadie, who "... simply claims that it ("shadow") is not to be restricted solely to "sabbatwn" but he doesn't offer any reason(s) why. He thinks it refers to the "entire ritual"." "The shadow points to all five of the elements mentioned in vs. 16", is Canright's conclusion. And that is ours.

But why should we accept Buzzard's assertion "... that ... "the holy days are a shadow by contrast with Christ ..."? Or Waldron's, who "also declares that the "seventh day Sabbath was such a shadow"" "... by contrast with Christ"?

The holy days are a shadow cast by the **Body** by contrast with Christ as being its **Head and Light**. The shadow implies the kingdom of heaven wherein the light of Christ creates the moving image caused by the living organism of the Body the Church. No shadow-image and no light-spectre can exist in the dominion of darkness with which Paul in his Letter to the Colossian Christians contrasts the dominion of Christ.

If the days were a "shadow" of the coming of Christ then wouldn't Paul have "lectured" the believers at Colossae for keeping those days ..."

Does Conklin with ""lectured"" mean, Paul would have rebuked and opposed "the believers ... for keeping those days"? If Conklin does mean rebuked and opposed, he must misinterpret the meaning of Paul's use of the word "shadow" as being of dark and sinister nature - which is completely unwarranted. "Shadow" if it meant something bad would have caused Paul to use different language than he actually does. "Shadow" in its context here in Colossians has an entirely good meaning. Paul unhesitatingly uses the word to indicate sure Christian value attached to the Church's festive Sabbaths. There's nothing obscure or cynical about Paul's use of the word and concept of "shadow/spectre".

Consider,

"... If the days were a "shadow" of the coming of Christ..." ...

"(T)he days ..." - Paul doesn't speak or write about "days" - any "days" of fasting, of Jewish, or of pagan 'observance'. He writes what he means and which "days" are implied or were involved. He

speaks of "feasts: whether of month's or of Sabbaths' celebration".

Paul doesn't say "these thing" were a "shadow of the coming of Christ", just like he didn't say "these things" were a "shadow of Christ". In the very last analysis though, "these thing" concerning the Church's Sabbaths' celebration, are truly a "shadow of the coming of Christ". For Paul also says: The Church, "holding to the Head from which the Body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God ... If then ye be risen with Christ (by the forgiveness of sins - 2:13) seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God" - whence He shall come again to judge the living and the dead. So, yes, the "Sabbaths" of Colossians 2:16 also and indeed are a shadow of the coming of Christ for the coming of Christ is the consummation of all the near and good things the Law and the Sabbaths are foreshadowing and always have been foreshadowing. .

Consider,

"... instead of (Paul) telling them not to let others judge them for keeping, or how they were keeping, the days?"

Conklin mixes error with fact and once more creates unwarranted presuppositions. Once more: Paul doesn't speak of "the days", he doesn't speak of "keeping ... the days", and he doesn't speak of "how they were keeping, the days". Paul writes: "feasts, whether of month's, or, of Sabbaths' celebration (by "eating and drinking").

Consider,

"And wouldn't (Paul) have said that they (the "days") were shadows of what had come, instead of saying "to come"?"

In saying the "days" were shadows of what "is coming" / "is near", Paul does not exclude, but includes the fact the "days" were also shadows of what had "to come" - as we have all along

shown in this re-assessment of Colossians 2:16. Paul had no reason to believe that the Sabbath since the creation was so blessed, so sanctified, so finished and so enjoyed in resting upon by Him that thereby God meant: This now is all past and done away with! But that instead thereby God meant: This now is the beginning and the sign and promise of the whole future of My benevolence, mercy, goodness, and satisfaction in My creation through the Word of Mine, My Son. Paul now in the Gospel era had seen come true every reason and promise of God that confirmed true and trustworthy the eternal Word of God, and still could trust and hope on its further and future fulfilment through Jesus Christ the Head of the Body that is His. The eschatological meaning of the Sabbath Day isn't dividable or new, but natural and old. It doesn't come in parts, but like the Word of God Spoken Concerning the Seventh Day, lives and abides for ever. The only thing most glorious about it now by the pre-supposition of Paul's is that now this Word of God concerning this shadow-Sabbath is that it BY ASSOCIATION WITH THE CHURCH OF CHRIST receives its last envisaged and guaranteed fulfilment BY ASSOCIATION WITH THE CHRISTIAN ERA or "last days". By its association with the Body that is Christ's the Sabbath receives from God its last and ultimate blessing, sanctification, completion and rest. Here, "in the last days", the intrinsic eschatological meaning of the creation-Sabbath is fulfilled in the Christian Church. Here, "in the last days", the Sabbath is *promoted* no longer by its *association with the law*, but by association with the Church the Congregation of believers in Christ.

*" d) The shadow is being **contrasted** with the "body of Christ".*

In fact it is or it had to be the body – which it obviously, is not. "Which are a shadow of things to come, **BUT** the body *is* of Christ ." The contrast isn't just in the sense of comparing opposites but in the sense of association. This contrast happens by way of relation once more. (Cf. above, "with regard to" etc.) In verse 17 Paul contrasts while bringing things together. "*This common way of looking at this verse has been voiced by De Lacey who states that "Paul, like others before him, is contrasting [skia] with the [soma] ("reality")."*" The shadow belongs to the Body and the Body belongs to Christ. I cannot see how improvement on the KJV could be possible.

"It is interesting here to see how quickly some commentators insert the word "is" into the translation without noting that it isn't in the Greek!" Commentators and translators are perfectly correct in what they are doing. *It is interesting here to see how the Greek implies more than would the mere repetition of the verb.* The absence of the verb "is", not merely is elliptic, but becomes

emphatic through the continued applicability of the first-mentioned "is" <estin>: "These things are <estin> a shadow of those nearing / future, ARE in fact shadow of that thing that is coming, THE BODY, which, ultimately in fact, IS Christ's Body". Paul by omitting the implied second "is", shows how INSEPARABLE in the last analysis THE SHADOW AND CHRIST ARE - how inseparable the SABBATHS and Christ are.

"If Paul had meant "is" wouldn't he have used the Greek word for it ("estin") in the first place?"

If Paul had not meant to stress the inseparability of shadow and Body and of Sabbaths and Christ, he in the first place would have used "estin" a second time.

"In answer to De Lacey's question see Blair's suggestion that "Paul (and other Christian teachers) adapted the Platonic idea **earthly shadows represent heavenly realities** to his view of the succession of ages (this age and the age to come)." Or, is it more likely that we are reading the Greek way of looking at things into the text?" (Emphasis CGE)

Why make things so complex? Why could it not be more likely that Paul looked at the word "shadow" with the Christian idea **earthly shadows represent heavenly realities** of this age and the age to come? Thus seen, the "Sabbaths" of Christian Day and Worship-Rest while being the earthly "shadow", represent the heavenly reality of this age and the age to come.

"Thomas states that the "feast days are a type of that continuous festival that is ours in Christ (1 Cor. 5:8, Gr.), for all of them were, like the Passover, anticipatory of Christ (ICor. 5:7) in some significant way." But, a closer analysis of the feast days reveals that the spring festivals pointed to the first coming of

Christ; but the fall festivals point to the second coming (which fits well with the future aspect of the words "to come")."

Conklin has eyes only for the supposition: "the fall festivals point to the second coming (which fits well with the future aspect of the words "to come")." The spring-festivals are past in the history of Jesus, but the fall-festivals are still to be fulfilled in the future; the "Sabbaths" in verse 16 are future things: The Sabbath's are the fall-festivals of Day of Atonement and Feast of Trumpets. And what Thomas has found, "that the "feast days are a type of that continuous festival that is ours in Christ (1 Cor. 5:8, Gr.), for all of them were, like the Passover, anticipatory of Christ (ICor. 5:7) in some significant way"", fades into insignificance.

But, a closer analysis of the feast days reveals that the spring festivals pointed to **every of the three**: the first coming of Christ incarnate; the second coming of Christ resurrected from the dead, **and His Return in the last day**. But of the two seasons' feasts, the spring festivals or ingathering of the winter's harvest represents the redemption of the **just, in that day of Christ's Return**; and the fall festivals point to the judgement of the **wicked, in that day of Christ's Return** - so that both the spring festivals and the fall festivals point to the second coming and both fit well with the future aspect of the words "to come". Of all these feasts the Sabbaths stand first, central and last as the representing "holy day" of ALL festivals.

Conklin,

"... (O)ne should also inquire as to what the new moon is a shadow of? Likewise, the Sabbath? One should note that the typical anti-sabbatarian critic in their haste to link the seventh-day Sabbath with "sabbatwn" of Col. 2:16 never answers these questions."

Conklin's disappointment with "the typical anti-sabbatarian critic" is justified. But his disappointment shouldn't be a laughing in his jacket's collar. If they "never answer these questions" it doesn't mean they have no answer. In fact these "critics" accept what is the simplest of fact and truth that needs no proof "as to what the new moon is a shadow of? Likewise, the Sabbath?", etc. No day of Old Testament institution, festival or sacrifice was without future meaning; no one without meaning by faith of the coming Messiah Jesus Christ; no one was not fulfilled once, and, for all, by Christ, in Christ, through Christ, and, for Christ. They all were out and out eschatological - or the Christian 'religion' has no basis and no structure, no form and no content. The Christian 'religion' from start to finish is with the eye on Christ, with Him in view - from and to every direction. Christ is the centre and the circumference. Paul in Colossians calls Him the Head - without which the Body is unimaginable what real! Everything about this Essence and Content of the Christian Faith is but "shadow" and mere "spectre" until the day of beholding when He shall come and shall keep distance no more.

"Pokorny claims that "the rules and regulations cited in 2:16 are but a shadow of what is to come. That which is to come (ta mellonta) is the designation for the future age.""

Pokorny must know what he writes, but obviously doesn't care what he writes. I don't see "rules and regulations cited in 2:16" as I don't see anything Jewish or even Old Testament - as I have so many times stated and shown. But the Christian feasting and Sabbaths I do see there, "are but a shadow of what is to come" - or at the point in time of Paul's speaking - "were but a shadow of what was to come". Even today they still "are but a shadow of what is to come". The Christian Faith awaits no anti-climax! Although today and "on earth" it is "thy Kingdom come, thy will be done", it still is the prayer of faith. While it truly is the song of Moses and of the Lamb we, His Body, sing, it still is our song of hope. Therefore although it is the life of the Body that is Christ's we see in Colossians 2:16 and 17, we don't see it in isolation, for we also see that Body in verse 19 and 3:1 to 4 - as we have seen it in verses 2:12 to 15. "That which is to come (ta mellonta) is the designation for the future age." Amen.

We see the Church in three-dimensional time in Colossians 2 and 3. In the past of the Church's conflict and triumph in and through Christ – 2:12-15; in the present of Christ's conflict and triumph in and through the Body – 2:16-23; in the future of the triumph of "YE ALSO WITH HIM" – 2:1-4. "These things are a shadow – of things future – yet indeed the Body is Christ's" – the ultimate future!

Paul clearly uses the word "shadow" with his own meaning and for his unique application whereby it cannot help but get certain meaning and association it as yet has not received or has been used for. Let us offer this finding as an explanation of the following:

"Richardson points out, while the word "skia" appears frequently in the LXX "not once is it used specifically as a definite foreshadowing of some future event." " We see no need to check up on Richardson.

"On this verse the NIV Study Bible text note reads:
"The ceremonial laws of the OT are here referred to as shadows (cf. Heb 8:5; 10:1) because they symbolically depicted the coming of Christ; so any insistence on the observance of such ceremonies is a failure to recognize that their fulfillment has already taken place. This element of the Colossian heresy was combined with a rigid asceticism as vv.20-21 reveal." "

We have come to the point where we may without hesitation and with the disrespect it deserves, reject such stereotype obstinacy as this. NO "ceremonial laws of the OT are here referred to as shadows". The Christian life and activity of faith are here referred to as shadows. The shadows, as they, by virtue of Christ's death and resurrection, in Old Testament times in faith's life-activity "symbolically depicted the coming of Christ", so they, by virtue of Christ's death and resurrection, in New Testament times in faith's life-activity "symbolically depicted the coming of Christ". And this depiction went back as well as forward. The coming of Christ in the flesh of mortal man, the coming of Christ to the tree and the coming of Christ from the far land of the dead, and the coming of Christ from heaven Judge and King, "they symbolically depicted" – today, yesterday and tomorrow. The Christian Church lived so. They ate and drank, and "in eating and in drinking", "feasted", both "of month's feasting", and, "of Sabbath's feasting". Paul said: "Let nobody judge you with regard to", "THESE THINGS". So let nobody while deriding them judge the New Testament Believers that they 'observe' the Old-Testament Sabbath. The Old Testament Sabbath is the New Testament Sabbath not having come to perfection in and through Jesus Christ yet. New Testament Believers celebrate a far superior Sabbath than the Old-Testament Believers did. And

both celebrated a Sabbath the Jews know nothing of because they keep a Sabbath Day that has never looked forward to and has never expected or fore-shadowed the Sabbath of the LORD your God, the Lord's Day, and has never received through and in Jesus Christ its ultimate last and absolute first Fulfilment and Fulfiller.

*So any insistence on the non-observance of such New Testament and Gospel Sabbaths or their ceremonies, is a failure to recognize that their fulfilment has already taken place and has taken place in Jesus. This element of the Colossian Faith and Church was in rigid opposition with asceticism - as vv.20-21 **seen in the context of verses 18-19 and 22-23** reveal - and any insistence on the non-observance of such New Testament and Gospel Sabbaths or their ceremonies on insistence of the philosophers or "anybodies" of the "world" (or Church), is an onslaught against the sovereignty and freedom of the Body that belongs to Christ. Today as it used to be in Paul's day, the 'heresy' is not of the Church, but of the beguiling idolaters and haters of those "in Christ".*

Even so, Conklin is happy to conclude,

"The only problems here that I can see are:

1) that there is nothing ceremonial about the food laws, and,

2) there is nothing ceremonial about the moral laws, and,

3) there is nothing in the food laws or in the Sabbath that points forward to the coming of Christ."

Conklin cannot see the whole tenor of "the NIV Study Bible text note ... on this verse" is pointed at the Christian's freedom? That it actually attempts to do exactly what Paul warned the Church not to allow, that nobody should judge it with regard to its feasting and Sabbath Days? *The NIV Study Bible text note on this verse declares "the element" of the Colossian believers' worship "with regard to (their) feasting in eating and drinking of Sabbath Days", were guilty of "the Colossian heresy". And it declares "the element" of the Colossian believers' worship "with regard to (their) feasting in eating and drinking of Sabbath Days", "was combined with a rigid asceticism ...". In other words, their feasting in eating and drinking of Sabbath Days was a*

'syncretistic' "heresy" - which is nothing but a false accusation and the besmirching of the innocent worship of the Faithful. So there are gross *problems here that I can see*. The *problem* most serious and shameful is the authority of this 'source', being "the NIV Study Bible"! With the mighty machinery of the Church this "Bible" supplies millions upon millions of honestly searching people with what they accept to be the Word of God. To study it for them means to study the Bible and understand it more truthfully as the Word of God. Then this is what they are taught!

I can also see the old problem with Conklin's defence repeated, "... 3) there is nothing ... in the Sabbath that points forward to the coming of Christ."

Once again, the pointing forward of the shadow-Sabbaths wasn't only to the 'second' coming of Christ, but it was a pointing to Christ as the coming God - as from creation to the end of days and time. But most important and all encompassing it signified Christ's so-called "first advent" or "incarnation", his suffering, death and resurrection. It did so in the past, and in Paul's day, and so still does in our day the end of days or new earth dispensation, and so will continue to foreshadow the coming God in and through Jesus Christ till on the last day and day of judgement. Everything the Sabbath Day is, *points forward to the coming of Christ*.

So also everything *ceremonial about the moral laws* had no other meaning or value or service, but to point to Christ, and thereby, has all along pointed to the time and situation where the Sabbaths would all come to fulfilling confirmation and merge in "the Lord's Day" - "the Seventh Day concerning (which) God thus Spoke".

"... Thomas ... rather weakly, says that the "Jewish Sabbath is a suggestion of both the day that we call the Lord's Day, which is the believers' privilege now, and also of the eternal rest of the soul here and hereafter for the people of God (Heb. 4:4:1-11)."

Whether said "weakly" or not, Thomas says the truth. Only Thomas doesn't here say - or Conklin doesn't refer to his saying so or not - that the Old Testament Sabbath is that very day "we call the Lord's Day". But I think Thomas would not say so, because he calls the Old Testament Sabbath, "the "Jewish Sabbath", and, I think, might be one of those who revere the Day of the Sun as "the Lord's Day". I know of a theologian who, with so many words admits, the Sabbath of the creation is the Lord's Day, yet honours the Sun's holy day as if it is Christ's Day. So I don't think Thomas would recognise the Old Testament Sabbath for being the one and true "Lord's Day" thus revealed

in God's Covenant of Grace. Rather I think he would think in this vein, as before quoted, "that the feast days are a type of that continuous festival that is ours in Christ..., for all of them were, like the Passover, anticipatory of Christ", only then, "in some significant way", **not** to type anticipatory of **Christ**, but of the **First Day** of the week. But according to **Paul** in Colossians 2:16-17, it is the **Sabbath Day** that *in some significant way* by association with "that continuous festival that is ours in Christ" and with spiritual "eating and drinking", is celebrated a *continuous festival that is ours in Christ*. Weekly the Lord's Sabbaths – the day that we call the Lord's Day – and monthly for its eating and drinking of the Lord's Supper we call the Lord's Day. Or colloquially, "It is Lord's Supper!" – supposing it is the Lord's Day every month of Lord's Supper.

The pointing forward of the shadow-Sabbaths wasn't only to the 'second' coming of Christ, but it was a pointing to Christ as the coming God – as from creation to the end of days and time. One would not find written in stretched out letters on the road the sign to one's destination, but will find it periodically on one's way. Thus with the "that continuous festival that is ours in Christ" by faith and awaits us at the end of our journey: the Sabbaths being the continuous periodic signposts as it were on our way to our last and first assembling at the table of the Lord's Supper in the Kingdom of God. And how we need that sign seen our wayward nature! How we need that rest seen our feebleness! And how we need that recuperation seen our sloth! So let us not be judged or beguiled or enticed away from our Sabbaths' celebration a Lord's Day on every Sabbath of our Christian engagement. Expect written across the road the sign where roads cross and the enemy has set up decoy.

The "Jewish" Sabbath must fail as suggestion of both the day that we call the Lord's Day, which is the believers' privilege now, and the eternal rest of the soul here and hereafter for the people of God. The "Jewish" Sabbath cannot be associated with Heb. 4:4:1-11. Only the Sabbath Day of the Covenant of Grace fits the suggestion and suggests The Lord's Day in the Church's life on earth and in the Church's life on the New Earth – here and hereafter.

"The major weakness for this ...

... that the "Jewish Sabbath is a suggestion of both the day that we call the Lord's Day, which is the believers privilege now, and also of the eternal rest of the soul here and hereafter for the people of God",

says Conklin,

“... can be seen by noting that according to the prophet Isaiah ... we will be keeping both the new moon and the Sabbath in the hereafter.”

Isaiah only confirms the Sabbath and the monthly are a *suggestion of both the day that we call the Lord's Day, which is the believers privilege now, and also of the eternal rest of the soul here and hereafter for the people of God.* Isaiah confirms the strength of Thomas' observation and shows no weakness of it – except Isaiah doesn't speak of a “Jewish Sabbath”, but of God's Holy Sabbath.

Isaiah confirms the weekly and the monthly that belongs to the Lord Jesus Christ and which Paul speaks of as “feasts, whether of Sabbaths' or, of month's”, are a *suggestion of both the day that we call the Lord's Day, which is the believers privilege now, and also of the eternal rest of the soul here and hereafter for the people of God.* For “the hereafter” Isaiah speaks of, he calls “the new heavens and the new earth which I (the Lord) will make” – being precisely the accomplishment of the Messiah. “It shall come to pass” – “saith the LORD”. This is God's Word Jesus Christ being worshipped. “All flesh shall come to worship before me”, says Isaiah, so that God is worshipped through the only Mediator between God and man, Jesus Christ. Isaiah unmistakably prophesies the Christian era, the New Testament dispensation. We the Christian Church, *will be keeping both the new moon and the Sabbath in the here and now of the Kingdom of heaven by faith in Jesus Christ.* Isaiah's prophecy for us has come true already as it will come true again in the hereafter.

“(T)hen one should also inquire as to what the new moon is a shadow of?” – and find the answer in the fact it in the Messianic dispensation of the “new heavens and the new earth”, is dedicated to the Lord's service, and holy, being His Day of Worship. John in his Revelation of Jesus Christ also saw the tree of life in the midst of the waters of the river of life that bears fruit monthly, and the nations of the earth coming up to and assembling together in the new Jerusalem, eating of its fruit, celebrating the Lord's Day of triumph and eternal, healing, salvation. John also, like Isaiah, saw the Gospel era and the Christian Church that Paul saw, celebrating its Sabbaths in the fear of God without fear for men. “Let nobody judge you with regard to your feasting your feasts, whether of month's, or, of Sabbaths'”. “Buzard ... writes: “The law prescribing the observance of holy days, new moons and Sabbaths foreshadowed the reality of Christ and his kingdom--the good things coming.””

Says Conklin, “We can say ... that it is this and more and ... that some of the feasts have a continued, or abiding, validity for us today as well.”

Say we, That is fine but should be accepted qualified “the feasts have a continued, or abiding, validity for us today” not in the sense that we must observe them like they used to be observed

under the Old Testament – which everybody with the exception of the Judaists will admit. Also *“the feasts have a continued, or abiding, validity for us today”* not in the sense merely of their symbolism and metaphorical value – that they make good sermons. It is not a matter of likeness merely, but of experience. Christians experience each and all Old Testament figure of ceremony and sacrifice in that they believe in Christ THE SACRIFICE who before the foundation of the world and in the world of sin and corruptibility, was made an offering of God, of the Lamb of God. Christians believe and present before God their Offering according to “The Unalterable Law” of the shedding of blood – even that of Jesus, for the remission of sins. Christians by virtue of the Offering of their faith celebrate each and all Old Testament figure and ceremony “of Sabbaths” in that “IN CHRIST” they without exception have converged, not only in the blessedness, holiness, fulfilment and rest of the Seventh Day invoked upon it by God in, through, by and for Jesus Christ by the resurrection of Him from the dead, but also “IN SABBATH’S-TIME AT FULNESS, the First Day of the week preceding”. (Mt.28:1) So that the Christian Church in ‘keeping’ the Seventh Day Sabbath, ‘keeps’ each and every Sabbath of all dispensations of grace. By the same rule one could say, the Christian Church also ‘observes’ the Lord’s Supper “in Sabbath’s-time before the First day” of man’s own doings. The Lord’s Supper being a New Testament ‘institution’, the Christian Church distinguishes it as such, and celebrates it “month’s” “feast” of her “Sabbaths” – Col.2:16.

O I know this proposal to the interpretation or exegesis of this Scripture will be ridiculed and I shall have made of myself the biggest fool of fools. But I dare it be proved against it that it does not take Jesus Christ seriously, or that it does not take the Law seriously, or does not take seriously the Church, or its world it exists in – or does not take seriously both faith and obedience!

Only two sections now remain of Conklin’s “In Depth Study” which necessarily will have many things repeated. But we shall proceed through them patiently and eager to grasp every opportunity they may offer to extol the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

"to come"

Conklin,

"To what does the "shadow of things to come" (note the future aspect of these words) refer? A close parallel verse can be found in Hebrews 10:1

For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect.

We should note here that by context the laws that are being referred to here is not the Ten Commandments but rather the ceremonial laws relating to sacrifices. These sacrifices were truly a shadow pointing to the reality (Christ) which confirms the understanding of "sabbatwn" as being a reference to ceremonial sabbaths. "

"The Law" the Preacher to the Hebrew Christians refers to in 10:1 comprehends the whole dispensation of grace as before the coming of God in Christ Jesus. That becomes very clear if one starts reading from the two last verses of the preceding chapter. First the Preacher draws the line through all humanity in 9:27, and in verse 28 he draws the line through the believers of all times and worlds: So Christ was once (in all time) offered to bear the sins of the many (believers) – a second time shall He appear unto salvation – not to deal with sin again because the Law having a shadow of good things to come, being not the very thing imaged itself, can never with those sacrifices which they continually offered year by year, make the comers thereunto perfect" – it was an impossibility for the Law as for the dispensation of the Law in all. The whole era awaited Christ – as its Law and sacrifices most pertinently and representatively show. In Hb.10:1 all its "law" per se is meant. No law and no part of it, is not a shadow of this ONE and FIRST "Good Thing to come" – the New Law of the Blood of Christ. Bloodless or with the shedding of blood, every aspect and every part of the whole dispensation of the Law, promised with one voice the coming of God in Christ. Eschatology permeates the Old Testament – is the essence, fibre, content of it. And eschatology is of every form and superficial image of the Old Testament its depth and message – like a work of art on canvas that is "deep". Whether the "Sabbaths" and the "holy days" of the era of prophesy and promise had sacrifice or had to do with sacrifice or not, they in themselves were "given" by Law of God AS A DISPENSATION OF FORE-SHADOWING. "These things", WERE the dispensation; they WERE the LAW; they WERE the fore-shadowing.

Therefore there's no distinction to be made between "Law" of eschatological significance and "Law" of no eschatological significance; if it is "Law", it is eschatological - if it is the Law of God.

We should note here that by context the laws that are being referred to here in Hebrews 10:1, is the ceremonial laws relating to sacrifices as well as the Ten Commandments. The Ten Commandments and the Fourth specifically and especially, just like the sacrifices of the 'ceremonial laws', were truly a shadow pointing to the reality (Christ). Which confirms the understanding of "sabbatwn" (in Col.2:17) as being a reference to "Sabbaths", specifically and especially the weekly Sabbath, to which all other "Sabbaths" owe their existence and to which all other "Sabbaths" eschatologically were to return their existence.

Barnes observing: "No part of the moral law-no one of the ten commandments-could be spoken as 'a shadow of good things to come...'", is totally blind to the fact he himself observes, "... These commandments are, from the nature of moral law, of perpetual and universal application." Being "of perpetual and universal application" implies something "from (its) nature", is "a shadow of good things to come". It implies as well it is "moral". God's Laws - Biblical, Old Testament Laws - are "moral" and "good" in the sense and only in the sense they are "a shadow of good things to come", namely of the great Prototype and Anti-type of good things and morality, Jesus Christ. If God is love and the whole law depends on this one law to love God and one's fellow-beings, then fundamentally the morality of Law isn't the fact and truth it is "of perpetual and universal application", but the fact and truth it gives a spectre on the goodness and morality or love of God - which all is truth and reality and became truth and reality in and through Jesus Christ "once for all" - that is, eschatologically.

"Walker claims that 'the grammar makes a very decisive case for, not against, Christian observance of these occasions, not to 'earn salvation' (which is impossible) but to foreshadow events yet to unfold in God's master plan ...'"

"The grammar" complements and confirms the eschatological significance of the Old Testament Law, as legitimately applied in the New Testament in the Scriptures under discussion. The "case" though, so "very decisive for, not against, Christian observance of these occasions" is made "with regard to feasting ... of months ... of Sabbaths". "Of Sabbaths' occasions" were they. Each and all

“of these occasions” are, *very decisive for, not against, Christian observance of “Sabbaths”, of Christian observance “with regard to eating and drinking of feasts, whether of month’s, or, of Sabbaths”*. Full stop! It is the Church celebrating her “Sabbaths’ feasts” – not all the Old Testament feasts, holy days, ceremonial days, sacrificial days, moons to the new moons, days of convocation, or any of the many Sabbaths not the Sabbaths of the Church New Testament. These, the Sabbaths of the Church New Testament, as Paul in the words of Walker says, “foreshadow events yet to unfold in God’s master plan”. They are events yet to unfold and yet to be fulfilled in the Body that is Christ’s – in the Church – the last in the eschatological panorama of God’s Eternal Purpose in and through Christ.

Conklin,

“Note further on the future aspect of these “shadows”: Is it “future” relative to when they were given? This would lead to mis-translating what Paul had written to: “a shadow of things that were to come.” Reportedly, the New Century version has changed the text to read: “what was to come”. Likewise, Thompson renders it: “these are no more than a shadow of what was to come.” ”

Keeping in mind these explanations all have in mind to make the “Sabbaths” mentioned in Colossians 2:16, ‘ceremonial Sabbaths’ no longer valid under the Christian dispensation. What they say is not only “mis-translating what Paul had written”, but misleading, leaving a false impression of Paul’s intentions. Because their implication is, “these are no more than a shadow of what was to come” and now that it had come, is useless and of no interest whatsoever to the present age.

But it must be admitted that not even grammatically could there be an unconditional prohibition of a meaning of past futurity attached to “these things” of a ‘shadow’-nature in this Scripture. Hess, quoted by Conklin reaches conclusion far exceeding grammatical restriction, saying, “... this (past futurity of verse 17) seems to eliminate the latter option” of its present futurity.

If it could be an instance of ‘elimination’, it should have been the grammatically direct alternative that would eliminate the indirect and only implied alternative. In the case of Colossians 2:17 Paul employs the Present Tense and the self-explanatory Present Participle “the approaching / near / future (things)”

<estin ... tohn mellontohn>. By its very nature and constitution this construction and combination of factors cannot be restricted to a meaning of past futurity. Its present futurity could, and in fact is, also applicable in event of the past. But the opposite, that its past futurity 'eliminates' its grammatically built-in present futurity, is impossible. As Conklin says, "But, this seems to me to be an odd way for Paul to write."

What the 'shadow'-Sabbaths are like presently under the New Testament dispensation, they were like under the Old Testament dispensation. Nevertheless, relative to the time of their institution and continuity, the present futurity of the 'shadow'-Sabbaths is their primitive and therefore primary and basic meaning.

"but the body is of Christ"

Conklin,

"Note that the phrase "but the body of Christ" seems to be in contrast with the phrase "let no man condemn" producing a chiasmic structure. On the one hand then, the "man" who condemns would refer to the Gnostic ascetic who condemns the physical body as evil and thus also the feasting on the ceremonial days."

No objection, except: Why would it be "... the feasting on the ceremonial days"? Why "days" and not what the text says, "Sabbaths"? And why "ceremonial days" and not what the text says, "Feasts"? The "anybody" who condemns would refer to the "man" of the "world", of its "wisdom", "philosophy" and "doctrine", and he might be "the Gnostic ascetic" who condemns the physical body as evil and thus also the feasting on the **Sabbaths**.

Conklin's heading for this section is, "**but the body is of Christ**". I cannot see how it can be a problem to understand the word <sohma> in verse 17 to have its normal meaning in Paul's writings, that of the "Body" the Christian Church? "... Huie ... wrote: "the most common modern translations mask the fact that the

same term here is used elsewhere in Colossians to refer to the body of Christ and the church as the body of Christ."

Much of the following debate as will be seen, is simply redundant. The next unnecessary and contextually unprovoked question created solely by the ingenuity of the Sabbath-critics, is the question who acts, and what action is implied by the supposed absence of a verb in the "clause", "but the body is of Christ".

"... On the other hand what Paul then seems to be saying is that we shouldn't let these people determine how we are to worship God, we are to let the church (the body of Christ) determine what is, or is not, proper."

Paul says the Church should not allow itself to be judged by "anybody" not the Church. In so doing he pitches exclusive opposites. Paul doesn't plead for improved education or better pedagogies - for him it's a matter of life or death - as is very clear in verse 15 from the background or literary topography of the great controversy between the dominion of Christ and the dominion of darkness. Paul doesn't ask for other "people" or for their higher education in order for them to be able to train the Church "how we are to worship God". Neither does he expect of the Church to determine herself "what is, or is not, proper". Paul recognises the real issues the Church faces, and he addresses those. In this instance it is a whole world and universal system of destruction of the Church that is descending upon it. Paul admonishes: Stand firm! Don't be intimidated, despised, belittled, subjected - all in one word, "Do not you be **judged!**" Behold your Head - it is Christ through whom God has put the world of powers and tyrants to shame. They are the ones judged and belittled - not you! Consider the fact you are the Body belonging to the Head, Christ! So how can there be any problem with the Body belonging to the Head, Christ, in verse 17?

"... Note that elsewhere in this letter to Colossae (Col. 1:18, 24; 3:15) Paul refers to the body of Christ as the church (see also Eph. 1:22-3). Schweizer isn't sure if this is a reference to Christ Himself or the church "that is set as reality in contrast to the shadow". But, Thurston points out that Paul also uses the word "soma" for the church in verse 19 of this chapter.

Lenski agrees:

Christians are not to allow any man to judge them in how they observe the festivities of God's Holy Days, but are to let the church of God – the body of Christ – teach them how to properly observe them to the glory of Christ, the very Head of the Body, the Church.

Again the subtle watering down of the major issue confronts the reader:

"Christians are not to allow any man to judge them in how they observe the festivities of God's Holy Days", all right.

But that cannot be claimed from Colossians 2:16-17! It can and should be a principle of freedom generally for the Church "not to allow any man to judge them in how they observe the festivities". But Paul says in view of God's grand victory through Jesus Christ over the Foe of foes, sin and death and devil and devotees, eternal life as this Body representing the almighty Victor now faces you – this is your future and eternal destiny at stake! And here is a sign of it; here is that one thing that shows you belong, that you are a property, you are a protectorate, you are the Church of the great God! You are free! You are sovereign! Feast! Celebrate! Sabbath-Rest! Lord's Supper! No small issue this of "how"! "You need not that any man teach you". "And it shall come to pass that no man shall teach his fellow: Know the Lord!" Only live, and be joyous to the Lord you belong to; you are His Body; He your Head. Against this relationship the cosmic powers stand helpless and insignificant. Paul meant this, saying, "the Body is Christ's" – whether the verb is written or is active elliptically: "the glory of Christ, the very Head of the Body, the Church" so determined.

On the grounds of this pivotal finding, we reject the following:

"... Armstrong noted that in Col. 1:18 and in 2:19 the "body of Christ" is for the Paul the church. And he noted that the "missing verb [for the last clause of verse 17] should be supplied from the most logical and grammatically parallel clause" as Martin has convincingly demonstrated above. So, he suggests: "but [rather

let] the body of Christ [determine it]" or "Let the body of Christ judge [these matters]" .

"The "missing verb [for the last clause of verse 17] should be supplied from the most logical and grammatically parallel clause"
 ... Then why fetch it from verse 16 - from the verb "to judge"? Why not "from the **most** logical and grammatically parallel clause", right before, "these ARE a shadow of things nearing, the Body indeed IS Christ's"? That at least is "the most logical"? That also is "the grammatically (most) parallel clause"? Old Tyndale knew what he was doing, I'm happy to say. Everybody now a days is free to be a connoisseur, but he then must be prepared to be held responsible.

"... This of course means that any interpretation of this verse that is based on a **contrast** between the shadow and the substance would be in error."

Under any circumstance of grammar "a **contrast** between the shadow and the substance would be" only natural. Why should one be afraid of it? Without the contrast there would be no shadow, and were there no shadow, Paul would not have spoken of "... the Sabbaths ... (being) a shadow of things future - indeed of the Body that is Christ's" the Church. The whole logical pattern and interdependence of Paul's statement would be thrown out of frame and order, were the "contrast" removed.

More important is the fact without the Head or without the Head and the Body, there would be no shadow. It is because of Christ and for Him the Church exists; it is because of the Church and for it the Sabbath exists. Had the Head not been the light and the life of the Church, the light and the life of the Church would not have cast the spectre of its future - its shadow-Sabbaths. The Sabbath exists, being the shadow, and lights the spectre, of the future of the Church by its reflection of the light from the Head and by the passing of its life from the Head through the Body.

Paul's use of the shadow-metaphor for the Sabbath is most apt. It prevents both the under-estimation as the over-estimation of the Sabbath. The Sabbath follows, the loyal servant of both the Body and the Lord. It never allows veneration of itself, but returns all glory to its Source and all benefit to its substance, the Church of Jesus Christ. Be sure, went there no shadow along the rough road into the future, were there no Body, had there been no Head and no Light! The Sabbath serves, as served it did at the very first the very first Church of Christ, the man and woman formed from the dust of the earth, who, fallen from grace, by grace had to be returned home to grace. God, "for the sake of man", "made the Sabbath Day".

See how matter of fact gets twisted in order to reach conclusion it is not the Sabbath the Church in Colossians kept and Paul writes about:

"... as Troy Martin will show it is not a "forced and unnatural translation" to see "but the body of Christ" as the Church which should judge on these matters."

"... the Church which should judge on these matters" - This is not what Paul says! Paul says "the body of Christ" is the Church which should NOT BE JUDGED, and, that should not be judged, not "on these matters" - "matters" of "how", but it is the Church which should not let itself "be judged by anybody for the very FACT of", or, "with regard to", its "eating and drinking ... of Sabbaths" *per se*. It is the Church that should fight for its very existence! It was no case or matter of or for apologetics, conferences and councils; it was the moment of and for FAITH.

How despicable therefore the following remark for its intentions, not for its correctness:

"These things (the Sabbaths and its feasting) "are inferior to Christ since they are merely a "shadow of what is to come." "

I won't mention the name of the writer of this remark, for it is the intention behind I'm concerned with, that the Sabbath is

"inferior", not really in comparison "to Christ", but to the estimation of the Sabbath-despiser. The fact the Sabbath by Paul is in Colossians 2:17 reckoned and described a "shadow" means no permit to slander it and that by pitiful sinners who instead should be grateful for the Sabbath Day and obey God - should obey not the Sabbath or the Law - but God, therein.

To conclude:

Conklin in his "Introduction" proposes "7 short-cuts" with the help of which "to dig deep to find out the answer ... on this passage":

" 1. Look and see what kinds of sources and how many sources are used in the study you may be reading -- this helps to eliminate the threat that someone's "private interpretation" will be foisted on you as being the truth.

2. If the source ignores the fact that the Greek text says "eating and drinking" then they are probably wrong elsewhere as well.

3. If the source attempts to, or flat-out declares, that this passage is talking about eating unclean foods it is more than likely to be wrong elsewhere on this text.

4. If the source skips over the meaning of the words "in respect of" it is probably wrong elsewhere as well.

5. If the source ignores the meaning of the word "heorte" ("holyday" in the KJV) then it is more than likely going to be wrong elsewhere as well.

6. If the source changes the present tense and future aspect of 17a then it is probably wrong elsewhere on this text.

7. If the source attempts to change the text in any shape, manner, or form that in and of itself is a good hint that their explanation is wrong.

Of course, if they err on more than just one or two of the above that should really raise a red-flag in your mind!"

Consider,

" 1. ... what kinds of sources

... how many sources

... this helps to eliminate the threat that someone's "private interpretation" will be foisted on you as being the truth."

Quite true and helpful advice! Although the quantity of "sources" won't mean a thing if they all foist the same "private interpretation" or falsehood on you.

Consider,

"2. If the source ignores the fact that the Greek text says "eating and drinking" then they are probably wrong elsewhere as well."

Applied to Conklin's "study" this rule would disqualify it by its own standards.

If he ignores the fact that the Greek text says "eating and drinking" and not "eating and drinking or fasting as the case may be", then Conklin is probably wrong elsewhere as well.

Consider,

"4. If the source skips over the meaning of the words "in respect of" it is probably wrong elsewhere as well."

Again, if applied to Conklin's "study" this rule would disqualify it by its own standards.

If he **wrongly interprets** the meaning of the words "in respect of" and makes it say "part of" instead of "with respect to", Conklin is probably wrong elsewhere as well.

Consider,

"5. If the source ignores the meaning of the word "heorte" ("holyday" in the KJV) then it is more than likely going to be wrong elsewhere as well."

Again, if applied to Conklin's "study" this rule would disqualify it by its own standards.

If he makes **everything** of the word "heorte" ("holyday" in the KJV), and, ignores the meaning of the "Sabbaths" for being

"holydays" in the Old Testament by description, and, in Colossians, "feasts", by nature of their "eating and drinking", then Conklin is more than likely going to be wrong elsewhere as well.

Consider,

"6. If the source changes the present tense and future aspect of 17a then it is probably wrong elsewhere on this text."

Again, if applied to Conklin's "study" this rule would disqualify it by its own standards.

If he accepts the present tense and future aspect of 17a, yet refuses and dismisses of the Sabbath's "predictive" or future, "holy", eschatological, proleptic, prophetic essentiality and nature, then Conklin is probably wrong elsewhere on this text.

Consider,

"7. If the source attempts to change the text in any shape, manner, or form that in and of itself is a good hint that their explanation is wrong."

Again, if applied to Conklin's "study" this rule would disqualify it by its own standards.

If Conklin attempts to change the text in any shape, manner, or form - like in the cases where he changes "with regards to ..." to "in part of ..."; "eating and drinking" to "feasting or fasting as the case may be"; and "Sabbaths" to "the Day of Atonement and the Feast of Trumpets" - that in and of itself is a good hint that his explanation is wrong.

"Of course", says Conklin, "if they err on more than just one or two of the above that should really raise a red-flag in your mind!"

Poem by Horatius Bonar (1808-89)

Here, O my Lord, I see thee face to face;
Here would I touch and handle things unseen,
Here grasp with firmer hand the eternal grace,
And in my weariness upon thee lean.

Here would I feed upon the bread of God,
Here drink with thee the royal wine of heaven;
Here would I lay aside each earthly load,
Here taste afresh the calm of sin forgiven.

This is the hour of banquet and of song,
This is the heavenly table spread for me;
Here let me feast, and feasting, still prolong
This hallowed hour of fellowship with thee.

Mine is the sin, but thine the righteousness;
Mine is the guilt, but thine the cleansing blood;
Here is my robe, my refuge and my peace –
The blood, thy righteousness, O Lord my God.

Feast after feast thus comes and passes by,
Yet, passing, points to that glad feast above,
Giving sweet foretaste of the festal joy,
The Lamb's great bridal feast of bliss and love.

"Eating and Drinking"

"Do not you therefore be judged by anyone with regard to the eating and drinking of your Sabbaths', or of your month's (Lord's Supper) Feasts."

"(Your) eating":

In the Septuagint *bróhsis* normally simply means "food", as in Lv.19:7. In verse 23 *bróhsimos* is rendered "fruit". In Gn.1:29-30 and 2:9, 16 the original food of mankind - fruit - is described with the word *bróhsis* - the very best of food, for life's feasting!

Some food and combinations of foods are deemed of special value and significance, e.g., in 2Sm.16:2 and 19:42, "loaves and dates" and "oil", seem to have had been reserved for the recuperation of kings. These were 'royal', that is, 'festive', foods.

Bróhsis often has the negative connotation of a judgemental 'feast' for wild animals and birds. See Jr.19:7, 41:20.

Offerings and sacrifices are explained as "food" - spiritual food of course - for the spiritual House of Israel, the Church. See 1Sm.2:28 to 30. Offerings and sacrifices usually were associated with the feasts of God's People.

The word *bróhsis* as in 1Kings 19:8 can have prophetic - also 'spiritual' - meaning.

Compare verses 33 and 34 in Jr. 7, and see the relationship between *bróhsis* and the "mirth" and "gladness" of a wedding feast.

In texts like Mal.3:11-12 and Ez.29:5 the feasting congregation enjoys her *bróhsis*.

The eschatological return to the Edenic state will be feasted with the original wonder-food of the creation, or even better - read Ez.47:12. John's Revelation presents a similar picture of the tree of life with its fruit of life, *bróhsis*. The meaning, again, is purely 'spiritual'.

The absence of feasts of food, *bróhsis*, despite, Hab.3:16, "I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation", verse 17. The real feasts of the People are feasts of faith, the 'food' of their feasts being the essence and object of their Faith, "the LORD God", verse 19.

In Daniel 1:10 occurs the only true equivalent of the Col.2:16 *bróhsis* and *pósis*. Here, Daniel and his friends refused the king's feasts of "eating and drinking".

No doubt *bróhsis* and *pósis* in Colossians 2:16, are joined to the same, but spiritual meaning, as in Daniel 1:10.

The strongest evidence though that *bróhsis* and *pósis* in Col.2:16 have the meaning of spiritual "eating and drinking" or 'feasting', is presented by the context itself. The resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead by God is mightily described as reason for and impulse of the "feasts" of the Church or "Body of Christ", verses 12 to 15. Paul begins verse 16 with "Therefore", thereby referring back to these verses while creating immediate relation between Christ's victory and the celebration by the Church of her feasts of Sabbaths and months.

Colossians 2:16-17, Bob Ryan – 1

Reviewing the situation thus far ...

CGE in Arial.

Bob Ryan in Courier New, indented
others in Times New Roman, indented

**Gerhard Ebersöhn posted (Baptist Board),
proposing:**

Colossians 2:16-17 confirms the Sabbath Christian!

I'll try to explain some facets of the Sabbath Day I believe have been overlooked and neglected if not rejected for **no reason but to willy-nilly underscore Sunday-worship**. Colossians 2:16-17 serves this end well. ... Substantial portions from the Letter all confirm my stance that in this Letter we do not find internal Church strife, but this excellent "Body that in fact belongs to Christ" (*to de sóhma tou Christóú*, 2:17b) assailed by the exterior factors and dangers the "world" (1:6) and its "power of darkness" (1:13) posed. These were "philosophy" (2:8), "wisdom" (2:23, cf. 1:9, 28, 2:3, 3:16, 4:5), "authorities" / "principalities" (2:15, cf. 1:16, 2:19 = Titus 3:1 "**in mind** subject to") – the idolatry the world practiced and propagated.

Answered Alcott:

Romans 14:5-6 – One person regards one day above another, another regards every day alike. Each person must be fully convinced in his own mind. He who observes the day, observes it for the Lord, and he who eats, does so for the Lord, for he gives thanks to God; and he who eats not, for the Lord does he not eat, and gives thanks to God.

Colossians 2:16-17 – Therefore no one is to act as your judge in regard to food or drink or in respect to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath day – things which are a mere shadow of what is to come; but the substance belongs to Christ.

Answered Bob Ryan:

Romans 14 provides a **defense** of the one who "observes all the holy days" in the Lev 23 liturgical calendar as WELL as the defense of the one who "observes ONE above another". That is hardly a case for finding a way to do away with the 4th commandment.

Colossians 2 is speaking of the "shadow" ceremonial Sabbaths given as predictive laws pointing TOWARD the work of Christ in the future as high priest and atoning sacrifice.

By contrast - God's 4th commandment was given as a prescriptive law pointing BACK as a MEMORIAL of the creator's creative act. (Hence the 7 day cycle instead of yearly cycle).

In any case - the memorial aspect is explicit in the language of the commandment in Ex 20:8-11 as "spoken by God". A day that Christ said "was MADE for MANKIND" Mark 2:27.

G:

Why does Paul dare the world - or rather the Church - "NOT (TO) BE JUDGED with respect to (her) feasting ("eating, drinking") OF (her) Sabbaths"? Because of what Christ availed through resurrection from the dead, verse 15! It amounts to Paul saying: 'Feast your Sabbaths because of the fact Jesus conquered by having been raised from the dead and don't you be intimidated or denounced for it by anyone of / in the world'. Sunday could never have been implied, but the Sabbath must be. It is the redemption-reason for the Sabbath's keeping, just like in Deut.5 and just like in Genesis 2! You (Bob Ryan) yourself have quoted Mk2:27 "made FOR man" - man's NEED supposed its basis, and man's sole need after he had everything else perfect from the start, is redemption.

I quote you, Bob, where you answered Alcott,

"Romans 14 provides a **defense** of the one who "observes all the holy days" in the Lev 23 liturgical calendar as WELL as the defense of the one who "observes ONE above another". That is hardly a case for finding a way to do away with the 4th commandment."

What is it that Paul writes and does in Colossians 2, but "a **defense** of the one who "observes" the Sabbath? It hardly provides a case for negating Paul speaks of the Sabbath ordinary - the weekly Sabbaths! If God had spoken the Law at Sinai, how much more REAL and LIVING His Law when THE WORD Himself, Jesus Christ in God's doing of verse 15 - for which reason Paul virtually arraigns the world, assuring the Church: "As concerns your feasting your Sabbaths, whether of weekly or month's, **do not you be judged by anyone!**"

Bob:

Quoting G: Why does Paul dare the world – or rather the Church – “NOT (TO) BE JUDGED with respect to (her) feasting (“eating, drinking”) OF (her) Sabbaths”? Because of what Christ availed. End Quote

This is in fact an error. The abuse that Paul is correcting in Colossians 2 (meaning in verses 16-17) is ALSO condemned before the cross by Christ in Matt 7:1-3.

The abuse and sin did not suddenly BECOME wrong after the cross. It was always wrong.

Your argument is unique in that it is arguing for feasting on Sabbath as though this was the intent of the Cross. However it is clear in Colossians two that this “judging of others” was a problem – an abuse by those with false doctrine, and Christ makes it clear that they were doing this BEFORE the cross (Matt 7) and were condemned THEN for doing it as well as in Colossians 2.

G:

“This is in fact an error” says Bob with reference to my saying, “Why does Paul dare the world – or rather the Church – “NOT (TO) BE JUDGED with respect to (her) feasting (“eating, drinking”) OF (her) Sabbaths”? Because of what Christ availed”.

I am at a loss at how to answer such wild reasoning. I quote Paul verbatim – and the word ‘because’ (oun) is also verbatim: ‘therefore / because’. How is it possible this could be an error?

This, in fact is an error, to simply allege an “abuse” and “sin”, “that Paul is correcting in Colossians 2”, namely the “judging of others”, or of ‘one another’ “within” the Church. Nothing of the sort, no judging of one another of or in the Community can be found in the relevant verses. ‘As concerns Sabbaths’, none, “was a problem”, none, “an abuse”, none, a “sin”, and none coerced “by those (of or in the Church) with false doctrine”.

Paul, addressing the Church –the Church as over against and assailed and assaulted by the world– in this Letter stands in and stands good for the very fact of the Church feasting her Sabbaths, and writes boldly and not at all dubious or doubtful to the Congregation or Body of Christian Believers, “Be not you be judged by anyone (not of this Body) as with regard to your eating or drinking of your feasts (as this Body) whether of Sabbaths’ or of month’s feasts”.

Marshall renders the Active Imperative with Passive meaning, *meh humáhs krinétoh* – “Not you let judge” ... you yourselves. In verse 18 he renders a similar construction, *mehdeis humahs katabrabeuétoh*, “No one you let give judgement against” ... you yourselves. The Passive connotation is clear. “You”, the Congregation, is subject but also object of the action, “to judge”. Somebody else actually does the judging, and the Congregation bears the brunt of somebody else’s judging.

It therefore is not the Congregation “judging one another”; it is not a judging “inside” or “from within”, but from without!

When Paul wants to say ‘others’ or ‘one another’, he uses the word *allehlohn*, as often in his Letters. See 3:9, “Lie not one to the other”; and verse 13, which explains exactly how Paul would have written, wished he to say “Judge not one another” in 2:16. “Forbearing one another (*allehlohn*) and forgiving one another” (*heautóís* = ‘yourselves’) if anyone against anyone (*tis pros tína*) has a complaint”. Obviously this is not what he had in mind in 2:16.

Bob assumes “Paul is correcting ... an abuse” in these verses. He also maintains this supposed “abuse” or ‘error’ or ‘sin’ is “condemned ... by Christ”. Most commentaries do likewise. I have never come across any that would explain the ‘abuse’ or ‘error’. I have never seen one that shows how Paul ‘corrects’ or ‘condemns’ this alleged ‘abuse’. I haven’t seen Bob doing it either. Jesus tells us not to judge; Paul tells us not to be judged. Direct opposites! Through all the years everybody just took for granted in Colossians the same thing as in Matthew. I think though there were those who began this error with ulterior motive. Those were the translators who felt compelled to discredit the Sabbath. So it must be right, it is an ‘abuse’, an ‘error’, Paul is here ‘condemning’ or at best ‘correcting’ an abuse or error, and that error “concerned the Sabbath”.

It doesn’t help to meet these clever interpreters of the Scriptures half-way and admit Paul corrects an abuse or even a sin, but not concerning the weekly Sabbath – only concerning the ceremonial Sabbaths.

I don’t know if it is honesty or intelligence or the lack of both, but I could never discover such ideas in these verses.

The Scriptures Bob refers to are not in the least relevant. ‘Judging of others’ –judging between members of the Congregation at Colossus– **is not the subject** in Col2:16-17, or in the entire Letter. On the contrary: “But now ye also (have) put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy speech. Lie not one to another seeing ye have put off the old man and have put on the new man which is renewed in the knowledge after the image of Him that created him where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: BUT CHRIST IS ALL IN ALL.” (3:8-10) That was the condition in and of the Colossian Congregation

recognised by Paul. 'Lie not one to another – no one can deny the other also have received Christ.' Everybody feasting / celebrating the Sabbaths, no one judges another. It would be silly if any would.

How could it ever be "clear" that "this "judging of others" was a problem – an abuse by those with false doctrine" in this Church at this point in time of Paul's writing to them? A judging spirit with these people may have ruled before their Christianisation and while they were still heathens and pagans and outside the Church "but", not, "now", verses 5-7. It just is not true they judged each other "where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: BUT CHRIST IS ALL IN ALL"! Lie not about it, a judging between the brethren of the Colossian Congregation concerning their Sabbaths' celebrations did not compel Paul to write this Letter or the words of 2:16-17 to them. The world and Church, today, are quite delighted with the understanding he did, making of this passage the only in the entire Scriptures 'against' the Sabbath.

Colossians 2:16-17 has become the epic example of irony of how even Sabbatharians are tricked and entranced by Sunday-worship.

Bob Ryan:

The pagan world certainly had **many other gods**, and **many other holy days** to add to those that Christians observed.

Nothing would please the pagan world more than to have Christians **add** Christianity in among the pantheon of gods – as just **another god** and **another holy day**.

However – that is not the problem Paul addressed in Col 2. Nowhere does he mention **the world condemning the Christians over their Sabbath worship** NOR does he mention the world's desire that Christians add the feasts, food and drink requirements as simply **another set of rules** to the existing pantheon of gods, rules and feast days.

Rather – Paul addresses the Acts 20 problem or errors coming "from among yourselves", from within. The problem of criticism **inside the group** of Jews or Gentiles who were joining together as one body.

My reason for including the first 16 verses in the review of the context of Col 2 is to show

that this is very much an **in house** problem that Paul is trying to solve.

In Chapter 2 - Paul never speaks of 'the evil outside world'.

In fact we have no record of any kind - of the outside wicked world trying to edit or adjust or monitor the practice of Jews or Christians in regard to their own holy days, food, drink etc.

The outside world wanted to ADD to them - but the outside world never came in to say "hey! That is not the way to celebrate the Lord's table!" Nor did they historically argue "HEY observe Passover some other way".

The ONLY voices of judgement and censure on existing Jewish and Christian practice came from either Hellenistic Jews or Jewish-Christians seeking to make Jews out of the Gentile-Christians etc.

No context is given in all scripture for judging the way the Jews or Gentile-Christians celebrated any given feast.

And if we can see agree upon this point, I cannot see how we can differ on this subject.

Paul says that the annual ceremonial Sabbaths of Lev 23 are in fact "shadow Sabbaths" that point forward to the sacrifice of Christ. This is very true. Each of these annual Sabbaths pointed FORWARD to the work of Christ in sacrifice and in redemption.

As Paul says in 1Cor 5 "Christ our Passover has been sacrificed".

Quote:

Now, the Sabbath in the beginning is never said to have been a memorial of creation

"Remember" (memorialise) the Seventh-day to keep it holy ... FOR IN SIX days the Lord MADE ... Therefore the Lord BLESSED the Seventh day and MADE it holy.

Impossible to miss.

Think about it, the greatest heresy in Christendom today is to deny Christ the

Creator's role in creating mankind - in the form of the doctrines and myths of evolutionism. That would not even BE possible if the saints were still honoring Christ the Creator's memorial of Creation week in the memorial HE made and HE created on the 7th-day of that week.

G:

I quote Bob Ryan,

"My reason for including the first 16 verses in the review of the context of Col 2 is to show that this is very much an **in house** problem that Paul is trying to solve".

Bob, you must be referring to a (published) study of yours, I assume, which I unfortunately haven't read. It reminds me of a study by David Hill though.

Quote:

"Remember" (memorialise) the Seventh-day to keep it holy ... FOR IN SIX days the Lord MADE ... Therefore the Lord BLESSED the Seventh day and MADE it holy.

Impossible to miss."

Yes dear Bob, if one omit "God rested". Fill in where you have the dots, and "therefore" refers to God's rest and makes of it, the reason for remembering the Sabbath Day as "the Creator's memorial of Creation week". *The Creator's memorial of Creation week* was meant to be the memorial of **God's rest** wherein was contained also the rest of man. If that doesn't imply for you also primarily the work of Christ in redemption, what will?

I have nothing against remembering the Sabbath Day as a *memorial of Creation*. I do object though to making of it the only or the more important meaning of the Sabbath Day.

If anybody finds it difficult to believe the creation, how is he going to believe the Christ? But if a man received grace to believe Jesus Christ he won't find it difficult to believe the Creator or to believe His work. I can see much greater disbelief (= disobedience, 'heresy') nowadays in people's denial of Jesus Christ than in their denial of divine creation. One becomes rather irrelevant in comparison; the other of eternal consequence - decide for yourself which.

I think there is a gulf between your opinion and mine and perhaps between you and me, created by one's own inflexibility of opinion. I grew up with more or less your views on Colossians 2:16-17 and was unable to get a clear picture of Paul's true intentions. I have many friends who would rather die than part with those ossified ideas. What could one lose by sacrificing them? One could lose infallibility, truth that is no more than false surety, and such things. What could one gain by sacrificing one's own stereotype ideas? One could find Jesus Christ is of the essence in this very Scripture of Colossians 2:16-17 – as He is in that Scripture of Genesis 2. And that, allow me to witness, is what I have found through reading this Letter and to hear IT speak – and not my Church or Tradition.

I have answered all your objections in great detail in my book (Part Four) which you can download from www.biblestudents.co.za. I say "all yours" because yours differ in no respect from the usual which are ALL – intentionally or unintentionally– pro-Sunday worship.

(The newest or latest 'scholarship' is to read into this Scripture all sorts of 'how's' besides where in the past 'scholarship' read into it all sorts of 'Sabbaths' then all sorts of Sabbaths **except** the Seventh Day Sabbaths. The whole spectrum of views are equally unaccountable and unsatisfying.)

Quote:

... Nowhere does he (Paul) mention the world condemning the Christians over their Sabbath worship ...

Paul may not have said it in so many words, but he does imply it with equal force of having said it in so many words, exactly in our verses, 16 to 17! Paul, **because** of "the world condemning the Christians over their Sabbath worship", tells the **Church**: "Do not YOU be judged / condemned by ANYONE (tis – of the **world**) over your feasting ("eating or drinking") of (your) feasts, whether of Sabbaths' (weekly) or of month's (Lord's Supper?) (–observance)".

Quote:

... No context is given in all scripture for judging the way the Jews or Gentile-Christians celebrated any given feast. ...

In fact we have no record of any kind – of the outside wicked world trying to edit or adjust or monitor the practice of Jews or Christians in regard to their own holy days, food, drink etc. ...

And if can see agree upon this point, I cannot see how we can differ on this subject.

Dear Bob, if you can see this exactly is what I don't believe, but reject, there may be a better chance we could understand each other. If what you say could have been the scenario, it would have had to be an 'inside' issue anyway, it being an instance of "the outside wicked world" **within**, the Church, as members, "trying to edit or adjust or monitor the practice of Jews or Christians". No I say, it is not the case in Colossians. In Colossians it is the world non-Christian that assaults the Church with the view of obliterating it if then through corrupting it completely. Fortunately though, says Paul to the Church, don't you worry, Christ has obliterated everything that was "against us" –verse 15, and therefore, –verse 16, "Do not you be judged with regard to your feasting!" You won't be obliterated but rather established with Christ the guarantee of it. The world is of no account any longer, not even the Law with its regulations with which we were formerly yoked and which was to our condemnation only! You are "in Christ", and "in Him", "your life is hid with Christ in God" –3:3. "Therefore feast", "eating, drinking", of Jesus Christ spiritually – it is your very life you being the Body that is of Christ's, and your Sabbaths' feasting is the faithful shadow (sign) of this comforting and encouraging truth. You are His, "in Him" and could not be separated ever from Him, being His Body, the Sabbath following as a shadow impossible to be separated from THIS Body. I cannot help but think of Hebrews 4:9 in this context where it says that "because Jesus had given them (the Church) rest, therefore, there remains a keeping of the Sabbath Day for the People of God".

Quote:

... Paul never speaks of 'the evil outside world

...

Oh yes, he does –right here in this Scripture, and right through the Letter!

It is a distinct and basic difference between our viewpoints on this Scripture, that I take as presupposed in it the keeping of her Sabbaths by the Church as such and undivided, the Church-unison being "judged" or "condemned" for her Sabbath-keeping by the idolatrous opposing world of wisdom and philosophy. The Church in fact must suffer for her Sabbath-keeping and Sabbath-faith. (Rv14:12!)

You also take as presupposed the keeping of her Sabbaths by the Church as such, but, being "censured", "edited", "adjusted", or "monitored", in **part** it being a censuring, editing, adjustment, monitoring of "ceremonial annual Sabbaths" **only**, and having bearing on "another set of rules" and "requirements"; about an "error coming from among your own selves, from within ...

the problem of criticism inside the group ... who were joining together as one body”.

... Of THIS, in THIS Letter, “Paul never speaks”. Of course not! You yourself must have noticed just HOW ‘join(ed) together as one body’ the Church was, as Paul describes it in 2:19, “holding to the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, knit together, increaseth with the increase of God”!

B:

There are many cases where the NT authors use the term “anyone” to mean “anyone in the church” or “anyone among the people of God”. The reason for limiting it in that way – is because Christians ALREADY don’t listen to PAGANS. In fact these Christians were themselves pagans at one time – and had to STOP listening to pagan authorities LONG before they ran into false teachers WITHIN the church or within Bible believing people of the ONE true God.

I think we both agree there.

G:

Therefore no comment needed except that the observation is unnecessary. In the instance of its use in Col2:16 Paul by “anybody / anyone” (‘tis’) has in mind the (outside) foe in the likeness of the world as over against “YOU” the “Body that is (constituted) of those who belong to Christ”.

Thanks Bob for keeping up our discussion. Time is very little there for it. I feel this text is **most** important for a Biblical understanding of the NT’s Sabbath teaching, so will be most fruitful to unravel to its true consequences.

You write here as had there been a long history behind the Church when it received this Letter – which opinion I believe you will have to reconsider. You also think as were this, Paul’s Letter to the Galatians where he deals with the Church that **returns** to its former pagan practices and where it implies definite time to have elapsed since the start of that Church but obviously could not have been too long.

In the case of Colossians it looks like a much younger Congregation, and clearly in a quite different milieu than in Galatia. In Colossus the Church had to face the Hellenistic world and its subtleties like “philosophy”, “wisdom”, “first principles”, “power”, “dominion” etc. These manifested in the world through asceticism and hermit-lifestyle (2:18, 21) “to the satisfying of the flesh” (23). which **CONTRADICTED and THREATENED the very existence and lifestyle** of the (infant, young) **feasting**, Colossian Church. By accepting the world and its principles into it the Church WOULD cease to exist and

WOULD disappear into paganism. So WOULD its Sabbaths' Feasts. It for Paul was the logical possibility, not the actual reality. But the world is wiser than the children of God sometimes it might seem, so it doesn't attack the Church directly, but condemns her for her Sabbaths'-keeping / celebration / observance. The world was (and is) clever enough to realise that without her Sabbaths not even a shadow of the Body would remain! The Church's extinction is its aim – not the salvation or improvement of it as –although false– would have been the aim of supposed “false teachers”.

I plead: Get away from the ‘false teachers’ –the ‘translators’– perversion of God's Word in this very Scripture of Colossians 2:16-17. They aim at destroying the Sabbaths' Feasts of the Body of Christ's, just as did the world in Paul's day. They sever the Head at the “joint by (which) is ministered” by “eating or drinking” the Body's “nourishment”. It's as good as having one's throat cut – one must surely die! How is the Church going to feast on Christ were it not for her “Sabbaths' Feasts”? These truly were the ‘Love-Feasts’ of the early Church – Sabbaths'-Feasts they used to be after all, not Sunday-feasts as we are told by the false teachers of today. And just as would these false teachers today hate the idea, so of old the world hated the Church for celebrating her Sabbaths'-Feasts.

Paul in verse 19 gives a panoramic and eschatological view of both the Church and its “shadow” the Sabbath, it “holding” never to be separated to the Body as the Body to the Head. Thus “all the Body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered and being knit together (in perfect union), increaseth with the increase of God”. What a “spectre of the Body of Christ's!” The “shadow” serves as ‘joint and band” by which “nourishment” – “eating and drinking”– is “ministered”, the end-result being this Body, God's Elect, “growing with the increase of God”! It won't be destroyed, it shall not disappear, but will increase and grow and be noticed: the Body of this Head; “Christ's”! So also will this shadow be noticed as being the shadow of this Body, constantly ‘holding fast to’ and moving with, “the Substance”, even this “Body”, serving **its** purposes, serving **it**, a “spectre of things to come”, serving to **its**, “growing with the increase of God”, serving its indestructible life “in Him”, “hid in Christ in God”! “Because ye (singular in unity) be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world”! (20)

G:

What I want to tell you is that Colossians 2:16-17 has ever been isolated from its OWN context, and that it when appreciated in its own context shows no negative thing about the Sabbath, but everything positive – that is, everything Christian! The anchorage and grounding of verses 16 to 17 are the work of Christ through His suffering, death and resurrection –verses 12 to 15! Understanding verses 16-17 without constant connection with the before-going, is not to understand them at all. Paul does not denounce the

Church for anything here, but the world that judged the Church for its enjoyment of its CHRISTIAN (Seventh Day) Sabbath. I challenge the scholarship of the world to prove me wrong. Do not fall for the world's deception as far as these verses are concerned.

Post script: Did you know that Calvin believed Jesus rose from the dead on the Sabbath Day? And that that must be the reason he never accepted the First Day of the week is the Christian Sabbath? Calvin tried to solve his dilemma by saying that in His resurrection –not in His death as is usually maintained– Jesus made an end to the Sabbath. Logically if the resurrection abrogates, the Day of the Resurrection cannot be an institution. Therefore Sunday should be upheld for no reason but order in the Church – said Calvin the attorney, unusually clever!

G:

"I, Paul, write to you: Do not YOU (the Body that is of Christ's) be judged (incriminated or intimidated) by anyone (of the "WORLD") with regard to (your) feasting ("eating and drinking") OF (your) Feasts, whether OF (the) week ("Sabbaths") or OF (the) month's (Lord Supper)".

Please show me wrong in this interpretation?

Answered Terry Herrington:

I don't know where you got this, so called, interpretation from, but it appears to be diametrically opposed to what the Bible says.

Col 2:16-17

16 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:

17 Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ.
(KJV)

G:

"The Body belongs to Christ" –of which the Sabbath is but the shadow– o happy Day! No Christ no Church; no Church no Sabbath Day; no Sabbath Day not even a shadow of the Body that is Christ's!

Bob Ryan:

Paul argues that we are to "let no man condemn" or "judge" you regarding food or drink or a Sabbath day - "shadow sabbaths" that point to the work of Christ as the Messiah. Shadows of "what is to come" but the substance belongs to Christ.

Lev 23 lists the annual shadow Sabbaths that were given as part of the sacrificial system -

animal sacrifices and the annual feasts they were sacrificed at – they did point to the first coming of Christ. The fall feasts pointed to the second coming.

G:

Quote:

“Shadows of “what is to come” but the substance belongs to Christ.”

Paul doesn't deal with Old Testament institutions here. He deals with the present –contemporary– practice of the Church with which he finds no fault but encourages and defends, assuring the Church not to let herself be judged by anyone for practicing her very own feasts. “These”, writes Paul, “are a shadow of things a-coming, the Body in fact of Christ's”, which is the Church, this “Body”, further described in verse 19 according to this “prospect” or eschatology –‘skia’– as “holding to the Head from which all the Body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God”. The suffering Church will be the triumphant Church; the Sabbath being a spectre of this its future glory. For that reason the Church needs not be ashamed about feasting its Sabbaths'-Feasts, although the world may deride “you” the Church, or judge or persecute “you” for it. “Do not you allow it”, are Paul's words of encouragement to the Church as this Body. He addresses no factions (supposed) within the Church. Factions existed not in the Congregation of Colossus; they are fabrications of the scholars. The only relative faction in this Letter was that between the Church and the world.

All ‘feasts’ of the OT point to Christ, including the fall festivals. The whole Old Testament points to Christ because the whole OT is “The Law” – “The Law Task Master” that “brings us to Christ”. The Seventh Day Sabbath is no exception. If the Sabbath does not bring us to Christ –or does not ‘force’ or ‘discipline’ us towards and to Christ– it cannot be “Law” or “The Law”. The Sabbath must ‘point to Christ’ if ‘Law’ and faithful servant of God and to the servants of the Lord, the Church. Precisely this service which the Sabbath owes to and in fact renders the Faithful, is seen in Colossians 2:16-17. It is there seen with Paul its protector, acting faithful servant of the Lord of the Church, the Lord who is Lord also of the Sabbath Day. The Sabbaths serve the Church's feasting – its spiritual ‘eating and drinking’ of Christ – and thus are “Law”.

All “The Law” points to Christ; it has no glory or virtue than to point to Christ. Also the Sabbath. All “The Law” points to Christ as God's judgement and atonement from which even Christ's second coming derives every bit of meaning. In that way all OT feasts point to Christ's return. And each and every of these feasts were in reality and historically in time

PROVIDENTIALLY fulfilled “in Sabbath’s-time”. Nothing happened by chance; each incidence is a case of the fulfilment of the determinate council of God through Jesus Christ according to the everlasting Covenant of Grace. The Sabbath no different. Nothing by chance. It is specifically and especially the Sabbath that is realised by the determinate council of God through Jesus Christ according to the everlasting Covenant of Grace in the very act and in the very Day of **His resurrection** from the dead ... “in Sabbath’s-time”!

The continuation in the Apostolic Church of Sabbath observance stems from this, and from nothing else, for the Church NEVER assembled in worship but by the power of His resurrection, and NEVER assembled in worship but on the Sabbath Day. To discover all “Sabbaths” integral of the one and whole “Law”, is to discover Christ in them, and them, in Christ. And “in Christ”, is life! Said Christ: “I come to magnify thy law!” He is the Law of God in Person. Why then not accept Paul speaks of the Sabbath – straightforward– in Colossians 2:16-17?

Where, meanwhile, will the First Day of the week be found, if it is the Seventh Day of God’s Sabbath-Rest thus found in this Scripture, “in Him”, and He, in it? Demarcated and differently evaluated these days are for no uncertain reason. God has His Elect Day as He has His Elect People! The Body and the Shadow cannot –will not– be separated! They go together or not at all; and they “grow” together or must cease exist. But Christ annulled every contrary power, “Therefore let not you be judged ...”

(Is it not for the Head being the Light of the Body that it casts its shadow? Is it not for the movement by the Head and Light that the Body moves and with it its shadow? Is it not for the nearness of the Head and Light that the Body “increaseth with the increase of God”? Is it not then for this very nearness of the Light from the Head that the nearer to the Body, it casts the shadow larger and more solid? The shadow owes its presence to nothing but the Head which is Christ the light and Life of the Body His Church.)

Review to be continued, God willing.

2 Oct. 04

Thank you, Bob, for allowing our discussion on Colossians to proceed.

As to your last post through Baptist Board,

<Take a look at Gal 1:6-11. Here we find
 <Paul warning about a "different Gospel"
 <being preached. (Not by pagans).
 <So his warnings TO the Church are often
 <ABOUT factions IN the church.
 <See also 1Cor 3 for another example and

<Acts 20 for another and 2Cor 12 for
<another and Romans 14 for another etc.>

Sure! Yet none of these are from Colossians.

The central presupposition in Colossians is the faith and love of the Congregation. It was famous throughout the world and theirs certainly an example in one-ness "IN HIM" – used so many times. When Paul introduces the issue of false teaching in chapter two, he finds no internal issues to deal with. In fact, he departs from the standpoint of the unanimous baptism of the Congregation "WITH HIM in His death", and directly from this presupposition concludes that nobody should "judge you with regard to the feasting ("eating and drinking") of a feast (of yours)".

Therefore first of all the ONENESS of the Colossian Congregation should be taken cognisance of, and this oneness should be determinative for the interpretation of 2:16-17.

The second most important feature is the close relation -and proximity- of verses 12-15 as a pericope and verses 16-19 as a pericope. It means Paul takes Christ's work as basis to defend the practice of the Congregation in the face of the "world's" interference – or rather assault (verse 18).

The word "therefore (oun)" is conjunctive – not antithetical. "Because of (what Christ availed), therefore do not you be judged by anyone (from outside) ...".

The meaning of the word "judge" (krinetoh): It has NO negative meaning as far as the Congregation is concerned – Paul "condemns" the "world" who would "condemn" the Church. He is not

<correcting an "abuse of the Sabbaths"
<inside the Church related to "judging
<one another" ...>

He is defending "you" as one "Body of Christ's (own)", as he is defending the Sabbath as that of the "Body of Christ's (own)". Paul makes the laughing-stock of "anyone" (tis) who might try to "judge" Christ's Church while she is enjoying her "Sabbaths' Feasts of weekly or of month's (occasion)", just like he said Christ made the laughing-stock of "principalities" or "powers" or "authorities" "that were AGAINST US" this feasting crowd of Jesus Christ's!

Here –in Colossians 2:16f – Christianity held in possession her New Testament Charter for observing the Lord's Day of holy Sabbath for two millennia nevertheless scorned it and turned it "against" herself – having sorted it with the sophistries of the world, instead of having enjoyed it in the freedom obtained for her by her Head and Lord, Jesus Christ.

What is worse –far worse– is that this very Body of the Elect of God his Church has exchanged the recipient day of this honour and service to the Church, for another, strange, and idolatrous Day of worship – all in the Name

of Jesus and all on strength of His resurrection from the dead, "ON the FIRST Day of the week" (Mt28:1 perverted).

Thus, worst of all, this happy but so tragic Company of the Faith of Christ has fallen into disrespect even for the Scriptures the Word of God, and does not hesitate to manipulate it to suit its false case and false cause for Sunday-worship.

God, be merciful upon us!

9 Oct. 04
Colossians 2, Bob Ryan 2

G:

Erratum:

In my previous post I wrote, < Bob, you must be referring to a (published) study of yours, I assume, which I unfortunately haven't read. It reminds me of a study by David Hill though. >

I confused David Hill for David J. Conklin. Pardon!

Allow me to point out another aspect about the meaning of the word "let judge" –*krinetoh* in its syntactical and contextual use in 2:16, compared with "let judge" –*katabrabeuetoh* in verse 18, translated "let beguile".

"Lest any man should beguile you with enticing words", Paul admonishes in 2:4, using as logical and motivational grounds for his admonishment the truth that "in (Christ) are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge", verse 3.

Now is not that, exactly what he does in verses 16 –with reference to verse 15 and the fact Christ "triumphed in it (His resurrection, verse 12)– and in verse 18 –with reference to verse 17 and the truth "the Body is of Christ's"? Provocation: the availing of Christ, leads to provocative: the response of Paul. He in each instance is not at all defensive, but offensive, bidding the Church: Don't you budge for no one! "Rooted and built up in Him, and stablished in the Faith" (2:6), you have a sure foundation, and are building "things-a-coming" –*tohn mellontohn* upon this Rock, not with stubble, but a fast and sure building, the Body of which the Substance consists of Christ's.

This contextually and specifically is Paul's presupposition when 'admonishing' the Church in 2:16 or anywhere in this Letter. He not at all presupposes a flaw or deficiency in its constitution or practice. Even in an instance like where he admonishes the Congregation not to lie to each other, it is not to say Paul supposes a lying of theirs first. On the contrary, he takes for granted they did not lie to each other. Paul means don't you be taken in by lies; not, stop lying to each other. Paul's taking for granted is clearer in the instances where he admonishes the Faithful not to be "beguiled" or "judged",

because they rest their case "in Him", and upon Him, the Victor Jesus Christ. He is their Advocate, Guarantor and Guarantee in, and with, and for, their living and celebrating His availing on their behalf. Their Sabbaths' Feasts they undaunted feast, for the sake of their LORD. That's what 2:16 and further and before teaches.

By their Sabbaths-keeping the Church does not disappoint Him, but serve and worship their Lord pleasingly; as pleasingly to the Head as for the Body. To 'judge' from this Scripture the Sabbaths' celebrations was as undesirable to the Head as for the Body, is to wrangle it to suit Sunday-worship. Whether we like it or not, that's where a negative interpretation always ends up. I say, do not fall for these wranglers' sophistry! Paul first, warned the Church not to be beguiled by the world's sophistry about its Sabbath-enjoyment.

Sometimes I feel to bring into relation Paul's use of *hina*, like in 1:28b! I wonder if it would have been preposterous? Paul, "joying and beholding your order, and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ", 2:5. Again the same condition is a given: "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him." Man, it is the trend of the whole Letter, and how wholesome! 'Because Jesus triumphed over and vanquished the world and all its forces which were against us, do not you be beguiled of your Sabbaths' enjoyment!'

Would you not agree?

Have a festive Sabbath; have it based on Jesus' work!

Colossians 2:16-17, Bob Ryan – 3

Review Continues with reference to your post 01/10/04

Dear Bob,

Because your arguments in this post of yours are much like those of before, I would like to answer them right away; also because they are primary from your point of view. Once we could get past them, I think we might progress to reach who knows even consensus.

But first my appreciation for your patience and perseverance with me!

Wrote you:

Gerhard,

Good to hear from you. The discussion continues.

My post:

<Take a look at Gal 1:6-11. Here we find

<Paul warning about a "different Gospel"

<being preached. (Not by pagans).
 <So his warnings TO the Church are often
 <ABOUT factions IN the church.
 <See also 1Cor 3 for another example and
 <Acts 20 for another and 2Cor 12 for
 <another and Romans 14 for another etc.>

Your post:

<<Sure! Yet none of these are from Colossians. >>

That is true but exegesis demands that we look at similar work by the same author as well as context in the same book to determine meaning.

Gerhard answered,

< Good exegesis does not always demand that we look at similar
 < work. Sometimes it demands that we acknowledge the uniqueness of
 < a work to determine meaning.

< With that I say that Colossians is in a class of its own and
 < 'similarities' with e.g. Galatians and Romans should not be taken out
 < of context. Because Paul in other letters of his mentions factional
 < judgemental tendencies does not prove he speaks of the same thing
 < in Colossians 2:16-17.

< Also, as I have previously explained, Paul had a way of saying
 < things –specific things specifically– as legitimately discovered by
 < exactly your methodology of exegetical demand. When he wanted to
 < say 'judge one another', he says it with as many words.

< But here in Colossians 2:16f he addresses the Church as a whole
 < and undivided – not one or the other of any opposing sides.

< He presupposes the unity of the Body "in Him" as over against
 < a subtle yet monstrous foe – the "world" and everything that stands
 < for this world, like "philosophy" and "wisdom", "principles" and
 < "principalities" – also as a whole and undividedly, the enemy
 < number one to the very existence of the Church.

<

< At this premises we must reach understanding for sensible debate. >

Bob:

Gerhard said - "Good exegesis does not always demand that we look at similar work. "

Actually, it does. The rules of exegesis demand that we let the text speak for itself by noting the author's meaning to the primary audience, the

author's own context in the chapter, in the book and also the author's similar messages in other Bible books. And finally we add to it, the work of other Bible authors on the same topic.

The idea of ignoring the other writings of the author on the same or similar subjects, is not a part of exegesis. Paul's statements in Colossians 2 are in contrast to his Colossians 4:5 statement about "outsiders". So there you have Colossians two by contrast to Colossians 4:5. Same book, same author.

And clearly - nothing is ever said in all of the NT about pagans being considered as "the judging authority" on Christian faith and practice.

Sent: Wednesday, October 13, 2004

Dear Bob,

Alright, I accept your definition of sound exegesis, and I believe I apply your sort of exegesis pretty well in my dissertation on Colossians 2. In contrast, you have yourselves not properly applied your own method in that you have not taken account how Paul says "one another" / "between yourselves" - as I showed in a previous writing of mine.

Bob replies,

I pointed out Paul's own explicit reference to those outside the church in the same book - in chapter 4:5. Paul explicitly identifies them as "outsiders". Paul's recommendation is to lure them in "Making the most of the opportunity" to engage them in conversation and draw them in. The idea that Paul is preaching against outsiders and against a supposed practice of viewing outsiders as "scholarly authorities on the correct way to keep Sabbath" can't be found in all of scripture.

Gerhard said

< I never said or meant "that pagans tried to be better Sabbath keepers than Jews or Christians." I say the pagans -the world- judged < / condemned / the Church for celebrating their Christian Sabbaths. >

Bob replies,

In fact no such condemnation can be found - other than the fact that the pagans condemn Christianity in general - as they do Judaism and

they condemn the Bible and monotheism and the literal 7 day creation etc. However the idea of judging and beguiling assumes the role of authority and teacher.

This could only be a problem within - where those who were "Expected" to hold authority - actually teach error. There is no other possibility. Gerhard said

That means the world were not Sabbath-keepers, but the denouncers of the Sabbaths' keeping, and so denouncers of the Church for keeping the Sabbaths!

That is not at all odd? Since when would the world be bothered how the Church kept the Sabbath and not be bothered by the very fact they kept the Sabbath? The world simply thought of the Church and of its Sabbath-keeping humbug; thought it itself the sole possessor of wisdom, philosophy, power, dominion, even humility, because "vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind" (2:19).

Bob:

No. The visions the position of authority (puffed up) the idea of supposing to be accepted as a judge. All this is only possible of a "grievous wolf" as we see in Rev 20 that "arises from among your own selves" seeking to draw away disciples "after themselves". Assuming positions of authority but teaching error. As is still practiced today. The outside world never says "if only you would stop celebrating ceremonial Sabbaths - THEN we would all be Christians" ..

Gerhard said,

I also do not deny the world associated Sabbath-keeping with the Jews. It today still does. The world viewed the Early Church as Jews. Everybody knows. But the world viewed those Jews as Christians, don't forget. And the world knew those Jews / Christians kept the Sabbath - and hated and despised them the more for it.

Bob:

There is no place in all of scripture where we find "the world hates you because you keep the annual Sabbaths" being taught, supposed or suggested.

To Judge and mislead (beguile) is to assume a position of authority, to claim to evaluate and to correct someone else – as having more insight and better information than the one being judged.

Gerhard said,

But I would like to know why you would oppose these ideas? Is it because they are not to your traditional views? Or because they favour the Sabbaths of our text to be Christian? And cancel the need of them being 'ceremonial' – for no reason than, 'I have always believed so, and so, great champions of the Faith'?

Bob:

I oppose them because they do not fit with a sound exegetical rendering of the text. I oppose them because the views are indefensible. I freely admit that the Col 2 Sabbaths are the annual Sabbaths and that the text is formed in such a way that one can not rightly use the text as an argument against keeping those annual Sabbaths.

#1. There is no mention of the world condemning the Christian in Colossians for "incorrectly" practicing a specific Christian rite/ritual/ceremony.

Gerhard said,

< Certainly!

< But here in Colossians we find mentioned the world condemning the
< Christians for correctly practicing specifically the Christian Sabbath! It
< is my whole point that Paul means that the Church should not be so
< intimidated, incriminated, victimized and condemned by the world for
< doing what comes naturally by virtue of her freedom in Christ, which
< is to celebrate God's Sabbath Days! >

#2. There is no mention in all of scripture of the outside world "correcting" any one practice among Christians "as if " pagans were regarded by a few misguided Christians as the authority on Sabbath keeping.

Gerhard said,

< Again I disagree in no manner, except that I cannot understand
< how you could think that this is what I would propagate.
< There's no word in Colossians 2 of "the outside world

< correcting any one practice among Christians”,
 < not a word as though a few misguided Christians regarded pagans
 < as the authority on Sabbath keeping.

< I don't say it; I say the pagans judged = “condemned” /
 < “beguiled” the Christian Church because she kept / ‘celebrated’ /
 < “feasted” the Sabbath Days of the Bible which they –the pagans–
 < regarded not as ‘Jewish’, but as Christian, and therefore,
 < condemned! They condemned the Sabbath because they
 < condemned the worship of the Lord of the Sabbath.

< Paul with those very Sabbaths lingering in his mind declares:
 < “Do not you be beguiled of your reward”. The Sabbaths showed
 < under Whom the Church served. The world condemned the
 < Sabbaths and the Church for their celebrating; it in effect and
 < ultimately condemned the Church for worshiping and serving the
 < Lord of the Sabbath. Paul intercedes, and assures the Church: “Let
 < not yourselves be judged with regard to your feasting your Sabbath
 < Days”.

< It was not a matter of correcting how's or how not's about the
 < Sabbath; it was a matter of the nerve and life of the Church contained
 < in and revealed by its Sabbath Days. >

#3. The Sabbath “authorities” outside the group of
 Christ's followers are always the Jews in the Gospels –
 never the gentiles, never the pagans.

Quoting Gerhard,

< The same non-existing supposition. I suppose no “Sabbath
 < authorities” – I suppose Sabbath denouncers / judges who at the
 < same time were Church –Christian Faith– denouncers / judges: “the
 < world”; who at the same time were the denouncers / judges of the
 < Lord of both the Church and her Sabbath Days. In Colossians it is
 < paganism against Christianity; and Christianity victorious “in Him” –
 < as the Sabbaths proved.

< How the Sundaydarians hate the idea! How strange that
 < Sabbatharians could hate the idea as well! >

Gerhard said

< When Paul introduces the issue of false teaching in chapter two,
 < he finds no internal issues to deal with. In fact, he departs from the
 < standpoint of the unanimous baptism of the Congregation "WITH HIM
 < in His death", and directly from this presupposition concludes that
 < nobody should "judge you with regard to the feasting ("eating and
 < drinking") of a feast (of yours)".

< Therefore first of all the ONENESS of the Colossian

< Congregation should be taken cognisance of, and this oneness
< should be determinative for the interpretation of 2:16-17. >

Bob:

The problem is that the unity of the group is affirmed in a number of letters - only to find later that there are factions. The other problem with this is that even if unity did exist in the group - we have plenty of evidence that outside condemnation from unbelievers (Jews) that were regarded as "experts" on Bible practice - is also a common problem in the NT church.

Quoting Gerhard,

< May be you're right, and I have no problem with it. I only say, be
< specific, and give the Letter to the Colossians the individual attention
< due it. In Colossians we do not find later that there are factions, least
< within the context of the vital issue of the Church celebrating her
< Sabbaths' Feasts. >

Bob:

But this is never the case for condemnation coming from pagans. Pagans never set themselves up as experts on the Bible or Bible practice in all of scripture.

Quoting Gerhard,

< Second sentence: ja well! Pagans regularly set themselves up as
< experts on "wisdom", "philosophy", "first principles", "authorities" etc.
< First sentence: Condemnation coming from pagans was the
< order of the day. 'Helenisation' was the real and common threat to
< Christianity. Colossus was at the heart of the Helenistic 'world'.
< Judaism played the minor role if at all.

Gerhard said:

< Because of (what Christ availed), therefore do not you be judged
< by anyone (from outside) ...". >

Bob:

This does not exclude Jews from outside the Christian group being the ones who judge - since they the most obvious outsiders to claim to be a "higher authority" on the practices of God's law.

Gerhard said:

< Jews may have played their part – ‘hellenised’ Jews they were
 < who were no different than the heathen pagans; they also had
 < become pagans and did not worship the true God and our Lord Jesus
 < Christ. They were also ‘the world’. I’m talking from an understanding
 < of the Letter to the Colossians. From other sources one may get a
 < different impression about the Jews. It changes nothing of the picture
 < Colossians gives; in fact, in Colossians the pagans feature faceless
 < and without genealogy – they feature as “the world”.

Gerhard said:

< The meaning of the word "judge" (krinetoh):
 < It has NO negative meaning as far as the Congregation is concerned
 < – Paul "condemns" the "world" who would "condemn" the Church. He
 < is not < correcting an "abuse of the Sabbaths"
 < inside the Church related to "judging one
 < another" ...> >

Bob:

"Let no one judge you" is a direct contradiction of that interpretation. It is clear that "doing that very thing" (judging in this case) is "negative".

Gerhard said:

< "... as far as the Congregation is (or was) concerned".
 < Paul does not "condemn" the Church – he defended the Church, the
 < Church being object of the world’s condemnation.
 < "doing that very thing" (judging in this
 < case)" is exactly what Paul says should not be allowed;
 < it should not be done or brought against "you" the Church as the
 < Body that consists of Christ’s. Paul supposes –nay, calls– "anyone"
 < (tis) that may judge "you", not to be allowed to judge you. Or, as I
 < have explained before, more directly: "Do not let yourselves be
 < judged by anyone". Without doubt that leaves the Congregation out
 < from those who judge or who are doing the judging. The only party
 < left who could do the judging was the world. So Paul’s admonishment
 < to the Congregation at the same time is an encouragement "Not to be
 < judged". And that has no negative implication or connotation as far as
 < the Congregation or as far as the Sabbaths were concerned.
 < The connotation and the implications of judging in this case for both
 < the Congregation and the Sabbaths are absolutely positive, and for
 < both the judge, "anyone", and the world, absolutely negative. >

Gerhard said:

< Here -in Colossians 2:16f- Christianity held in possession her
 < New Testament Charter for observing the Lord's Day of holy Sabbath
 < for two millennia nevertheless scorned it and turned it "against"
 < herself – having sorted it with the sophistries of the world, instead of
 < having enjoyed it in the freedom obtained for her by her Head and
 < Lord, Jesus Christ.

< What is worse –far worse– is that this very Body of the Elect of
 < God his Church has exchanged the recipient day of this honour and
 < service to the Church, for another, strange, and idolatrous Day of
 < worship – all in the Name of Jesus and all on strength of His
 < resurrection from the dead, "ON the FIRST Day of the week" (Mt28:1
 < perverted).

< Thus, worst of all, this happy but so tragic Company of the Faith
 < of Christ has fallen into disrespect even for the Scriptures the Word
 < of God, and does not hesitate to manipulate it to suit its false case
 < and false cause for Sunday-worship. >

Bob:

I agree they are making a mistake here. In Romans 12 we find that the contrast at the end of time is between those who "keep the commandments" and those who rebel against God. The time will come when Christians will fully understand that they are not keeping God's commandments by ignoring the 4th and then they must choose where they will stand.

G:

What contrast is there between those who "keep the commandments" and those who "confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Phil.2:11)? The time will come when Christians will fully understand that they are not keeping God's commandments by written code, but by the Living Word, even obeying the 4th Commandment by no other authority than Jesus Christ risen from the dead "in Sabbath's-time".

Eventually I have nothing else to say. My argumentations re Colossians 2:16-17 have the same in view and nothing else or more. "To the glory of God the Father, confessing that Jesus Christ is Lord" – "Lord": the Living Law / Authority / Command and Commander / Owner and King of the Christian's life and eternal security. "In Him" we may rest our faith, and gladly feast on God's Sabbath Days of Worship-Rest. Colossians 2:16-17 confirms the Sabbath Christian! It confirms it Christian Congregational – Church-stuff. The Sabbath has no meaning and no relevancy but for believers – believers in Jesus Christ and Lord, Head of the Body that consists of Christ's Elect.

Bob:

Tuesday, October 12, 2004

Gerhard said -

"I say the pagans judged = "condemned" / "beguiled" the Christian Church because she kept / 'celebrated' / "feasted" the Sabbath Days of the Bible which they –the pagans– regarded not as 'Jewish', but as Christian, and therefore, condemned!"

That is simply not possible. To "Judge" as in "Condemn" is to make yourself the authority and in a position to judge the practice - There is no hint in all of scripture that pagans tried to be better Sabbath keepers than Jews or Christians. There is also no hint in all of scripture that pagans did not view Sabbath keeping as something associated with Jews. (Recall that early Christians were viewed as a sect of Judaism).

Bob:

Here it is chapter 4 VERSE 5.

5 Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders, making the most of the opportunity.

6 Let your speech always be with grace, as though seasoned with salt, so that you will know how you should respond to each person.

This shows how Paul refers to those outside the church in the book of Colossians. No guessing. Just reading.

15 Oct.04

Bob,

Just look at your own words:

"This shows how Paul refers to those outside the church in the book of Colossians. No guessing. Just reading"!

"THOSE OUTSIDE THE CHURCH" – even more so though indirectly in 2:16: 'Do not you (inside the Church) let yourselves be judged by anyone (tis) (outside the Church)!'

G:

Dear Bob,
Thanks for replying.

This verse confirms, Paul advises the Congregation of Christian believers to answer "outsiders" in kind: answer them with "wisdom", he says, 'wisdom' they the world boast so much with. "You", the Church has the true Wisdom, even that of God, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Dear Bob, the crux of my argument! This whole Letter deals with the relationship between Church and 'world'. Therewith I do not deny it also touches on "internal" matters. Its main strain of thought though is "YOU" the Church as over against "ANYONE" being the "world" – the 'world' of "wisdom", "philosophy", "dominion" or whatever concept Paul anthropomorphologically applies to the 'world'. He does not always do it as amicably though as here in 4:5, but most sternly denounces it especially in 2:16: "DO NOT YOU (the Church) let (YOURSELVES BE) judged / intimidated / scorned / bullied with regard to (your) feasting ("eating or drinking") of your Feasts whether of Sabbaths' or of month's (celebration)" – supposing the Sabbath a CHRISTIAN institution and practice very much ALIVE in the contemporary setting of the Church in the world! "Make the most of the situation" Paul also in this verse implies, 'FEAST your Sabbaths, freemen of Christ, and so be a witness to and against the world, a witness for your Lord who is the Lord even of the Sabbath!'. The world is not lord of the Sabbath; it has no "authority" in the matter; it cannot 'judge you – not you of all people, because you are Christ's, not the world's!'

I can rejoice with Paul and with the Church "with regard to (this spiritual) feeding and drinking" of Christ, through true, Christian, "Sabbaths' celebration". As a member of His Body, you are also free to join in and enjoy. This text of Col2:16f is the Scripture's invitation to you as well.

Wednesday, October 13, 2004

Dear Bob,

It seems to me we do not progress at all – we get stuck at the very outset on the question of who the "anybody" of verse 16 is. I have exhausted my present available ideas to persuade you that "anybody" is the world as portrayed throughout Colossians. You every time react with insisting it is an inside party of the Church. I keep on saying Paul has the Christian keeping of the Christian Sabbath in mind. You keep on insisting he speaks of annual ceremonial Sabbaths.

And so I could go on.

But thank you very much in any case. Much good has come from our conversation nevertheless for me. I see the discussion dried up, and won't continue on the subject. God be with you

Bob:

Colossians 4:5-6

5 Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders, making the most of the opportunity.

6 Let your speech always be with grace, as though seasoned with salt, so that you will know how you should respond to each person.

Consider, “how you should respond to each person” 5:4, This presupposes “each person” whether within or without the Congregation; whether Believer, or “anyone” of the world of unbelievers – how “you –the Congregation– should respond to each”.

Whom does Paul address directly?

The Church – only!

About whom does he address the Church?

In 4:5 Paul addresses the Church about the “outsiders” – how the Church-members should conduct “toward” them. “(I)n Colossians when Paul speaks of "outsiders" he "says" outsiders.” When speaking to the Church, he uses the Second Person Plural, “you”. With the emphatic Pronoun like in 2:16, he contrasts emphatically between “you” and “anyone” ELSE. In Colossians 2:16 Paul ‘says’, “Do not YOU (the Church) (let yourselves be) judged by ANYONE”, that is, “anyone” NOT “you”, but “anyone” synonymous with the world.

Simply the IMMEDIATE context –without ANY further reference to ANY of his other Letters– makes that, clear without a shadow of doubt, in both instances of 4:5 and 2:16, equally.

We asked, Whom does Paul address directly?

It is evident from the command-word –‘inflected’ in it– that he in 4:5 commands the Church, and speaks to it, only: *peripateite!* – Second Person Plural, purely Active: “Walk ye”.

This except for its purely Active sense, perfectly corresponds with “Do not you let judge” of 2:16 with a strong Passive feeling about it.

4:5, “Walk ye towards them that are without”, *pros tous ecsoh*.

This is grammatically and syntactically a perfect parallel of 2:16, “Do not you let judge anyone you”, *Meh tis humahs krinetoh!*

To quote you, “. . . when Paul speaks of "outsiders" he "says" outsiders.”

When he does NOT “say” anything, he may either ‘speak’ of those “from among your own selves”, or, “of outsiders”, like in 4:6, “each person”. It will depend on the context all by itself, and without reference to e.g. Luke, who records Paul on totally another issue in “Acts 20”.

Colossians 2:16-17 – The Crux

I regard your constant leaning on irrelevant –and not even really ‘similar’– texts and contexts as illegitimate ‘exegesis’, and have demonstrated amply how Paul in this Letter of his to the Colossians itself, will “say” when he means parties or persons “from among your own selves”, or parties or persons different and distinct. Your presentation of 4:5-6 illustrates. The instance 4:5 underlines the instance 2:16, “Do not you be judged by anyone”, meaning that by “anyone” Paul has in mind the “outsiders” who judged the Church because she celebrated the Christian Sabbaths of weekly or of month’s occurrence.

... and another example ...

Colossians 2:8 – it is contextual, and therefore “similar” and applicable (not like “Acts 20” which is neither similar nor relevant):

“Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the traditions of man, after the principles of the world, and not after Christ.”

Whom does Paul directly address? The Church of course. About whom does he warn the Church? About the world of course! Now how do we know that? By all and the whole of his statement of course, but specifically by the word *tis* –“any man”.

So why not exactly the same in 2:16?

Because ‘inspiration’ might teach different, I guess?

Well I’ll stick to cold letters and prefer facts and reality.

For the umpteenth time, certainly “there is no reason to suppose that pagans were the judge of which Sabbath observance was correct.” I never said it and I never meant it. I said all along the word “judge” in its setting in 2:16 has NO connotation of determining or deciding what or “which Sabbath observance was correct”. I said before, the word “judge” does not have the meaning of “evaluate” or “correct” or ‘educate’. In its context here “judge”, means to ‘condemn’, ‘denounce’, even ‘curse’ IN ITS ENTIRETY THE CHURCH AND ITS PRACTICE OF SABBATH OBSERVANCE. Nothing pedagogic about it; this was no inspectorate or critique, but condemnation. Paul stands up and defends the Church against THIS JUDGE who dares assault and insult the Church**, and he orders the Church: You are free, made free by Christ; set free by His resurrection from the dead, “WHEREFORE” (oun) you have all the reason, all the grounds, all the justification to feast your Sabbaths. SO FEAST IT AND AWAY WITH BEING JUDGED! “NOT ONE” of these “exposed” and vanquished and “wiped out” foes of your freedom –14 to 15–

has “dominion” over you any more; you are no longer of the world, “BUT OF CHRIST’S”! Don’t ignore this “but”: *to de sohma tou Xristou* – “BUT the Body is of Christ’s”. *De* is a small word with great meaning – in its context here. It sets the Church as over against the world.

Col2:16-17 thus understood –the Church condemned by the world– far truer meaning is required of the concept, “the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us” in verse 14. Seen the judgement of condemnation which the world is bringing against the Church regarding the fact she feasted her Sabbath Days (verse 16), it virtually defines “the handwriting of ordinances against us” as having been a (literal) legal or judicial document –a summons or subpoena– officially issued through the “authorities” of state and prosecutor, served on the Body of Believers, the Congregation of Colossus. Says Paul, Wave this worthless piece of paper, Christ is Victor, and has abolished all dominion and powers against us! Not even the Law can touch us!

I’m sure you are aware of the millions of debates that through centuries have accumulated over this Scripture about the law of ordinances, all very silly, distinguishing between ceremonial laws and moral laws or denying any distinction or whatever, and as a result distinguishing between kinds of Sabbaths or denying difference between any Sabbaths. It also resulted in unacceptable explanations of the meaning of the word to “judge”, like evaluate, even teach, prescribe, endorse – everything but the word’s first and simplest meaning, that which a prosecution inevitably would end up in, “judgement passed”, “found guilty”, “condemned”!

Meantime we here have had the first case by ordinance of state of the persecution of the Christian Church for keeping God’s holy Sabbaths – the anti-Christ’s first Inquisition against the Christian Church! And we here have had the earliest case of Christian protest and demonstration for the Faith, Paul and the Church bearing the banners: Christ has overcome! Jesus died and rose again! We live by the power of His Resurrection! Christ has made the laughingstock of all against us! Freeman we shall feast our Sabbaths!

This really will be my last word on the subject, I hope a positive, constructive and comforting word, as I believe it was Paul’s sole intent in and purpose with writing this Letter of his to the Congregation of Colossus, “making the most of the opportunity” it offered.

** The ‘world’ today in the person of presumptuous ‘translators’ carries on with condemning Sabbaths’-keeping and the Church for Sabbaths’-keeping. *E.g.* our text, telling us it says “Let no one prescribe to you that you should keep the Sabbath”, *Nuwe Afrikaanse Bybel ... ‘Bible’*, imagine!

From: Gerhard Ebersoehn

Re: Sabbath

In answer to Leroy Moore <lmoore@ALeroyMoore.com>
who, on Fri, 05 Nov 2004 11:47:11 -0600, wrote:

Good morning Gerhard,

At 01:44 PM 11/3/2004, you wrote:

- >Colossians 2:16-17 deals with 'Sabbaths'
- >as being believed and "feasted" / "celebrated"
- >by the Christian Church.
- >Does Paul "judge" the Church because of it?
- >No, he does not. So then does
- >he support the Church in writing to them,
- >"Do not you let anyone judge you"?
- <He does, making good his intentions with
- >writing this Letter to the Colossians,
- >while he in 2:1 expressed his wish that they should be
- >"comforted" with this his writing to them.

Leroy's comment:

{BQ}what comfort does he give? Comfort that they need not fear the claims of Judaizers who would dis-fellowship them unless they were circumcised and accept the whole ceremonial law.[EQ]

Answer:

What comfort does he give? Comfort that they need not fear the condemnation / "judgement" (v16) of the world / "principalities and powers" (v15a) who would prosecute them by Law ("annulling the subpoena against us, which was contrary to us", v14a) unless they stopped feasting their Sabbaths, whether of month's or of weeks ("Sabbaths' occurrence", and "be beguiled of their reward "IN HIM" (v18 et al), and accept the whole system of "wisdom" and "philosophy" of "the world" (v8). "Circumcision", "Judaizers", "the whole ceremonial law" – show that from the context! It's not there.

Gerhard wrote:

- >Paul acts protector and defender of the Faith, writing, "Do not you be
- >judged by anyone with regard to (your) eating and drinking of feast",
- >which means just what it was: a "celebration",
- >"OF Sabbaths whether OF month's or
- >OF week's ("Sabbaths'")", occurrence.
- >Paul therefore does NOT have 'ceremonial Sabbaths'
- >or 'annual Sabbaths' in mind – not at all!

>It is a fallacy! And it is a fallacy for no reason but
 >the UNREAL FEAR that Paul
 >'condemns' the keeping of the 'Sabbaths' he is here writing about.
 >Both ideas of 'ceremonial' and 'annual' are FOREIGN,
 >irrelevant, and artificial. They are proposed because
 >their proponents don't defend TRUTH, but dogma!

Leroy's comment:

These are pretty bold claims -- that Colossians
 2:16-17
 does "not have 'ceremonial Sabbaths' or 'annual
 sabbaths'
 in mind - not at all," and that "both ideas of
 'ceremonial' and 'annual' "are FOREIGN, irrelevant,
 and artificial."

Answer:

Bold they are! So was Paul, and so was the Congregation, and so was Christ: Who made the laughingstock of the persecuting authorities of the world, daring them: We celebrate God's Sabbath Days, so what are you going to do about it, sirs? On this I base my bold claims. Christ is Victor, man, through resurrection from the dead – which foe else do you imagine more daunting could He have conquered on our behalf ... AND US, "IN HIM"!? So who's gonna stop us feasting?

Leroy:

Your claim is based on denial of any distinction between the annual sabbaths and the weekly Sabbath and that Paul was simply speaking of the Sabbaths-- which to you means both but really only one. ...

Answer:

Quite right! The Seventh Day Sabbath took in all previous 'Sabbaths' – of all kinds. The Creation-Sabbath (Gn2), the Exodus-Sabbath (Ex20), the Restoration-Sabbath (2K11/2Chr22), the Passover-Sabbath, Day of Atonement-Sabbath, Day of Trumpets-Sabbath, Shekina-Sabbath – name them, they in essence as well as in literal time, all coincided and converged “on” and “in the Sabbath” and all “on” and “In the Sabbath” were 'fulfilled' to receive final and perfected meaning and reality : "IN HIM", and "IN HIM" in resurrection from the dead!

I further propose the unity of all 'Sabbaths' of the previous dispensation in terms of "Law" – they were all one and the same "Law" in different forms and different applications, but the one and same Sabbath in "END", namely "IN HIM". (In other words, they all were 'eschatological'.) 'Sabbaths' – they were:

all 'Moral Law', and ethical, and normative and 'spiritual' – in their "very essence of being" (Mt28:1) or 'literalness'.

Leroy:

But whatever "sabbaths" means, Paul had the same in mind in writing to the Romans: One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be persuaded in his own mind . He that regardeth the day regardeth it unto the Lord, and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks (Rom 14:5-6)

Answer:

Never! The only 'days' that will agree to the context of Ro.14 is – or rather were – the Passover's 'First Days'. They were three, over against the five other 'normal' Passover-Season-days – not here to be entered upon. In any case "days" were not the bone of contention in Ro.14, but a judging (human) spirit / heart – haughtiness and pride, that made of food and drink, the Kingdom of heaven. You, Leroy, know as well as I do Ro.14 has nothing to do with the Sabbath. Don't let us misapply it to Colossians 2. As you say,

“Whatever days are regarded by some as important and by others as unimportant, it is clear from the context, which focuses not upon worship days but upon judging those who refuse to eat meat offered to idols, that those who so refuse are "weak in the faith." ...

Leroy:

...Thus, according to your argument, anyone who observes any sabbaths – whether annual or weekly, Paul declares weak in the faith. (see "Re: Sabbath – Leroy's reply # 2)

Answer:

I cannot do more than simply deny. Oh yes, I can do a lot more! If you have read my extensive study of this Scripture, in my book 'The Lord's Day in the Covenant of Grace', (www.biblestudents.co.za), you would have noticed how I lift out Paul's view about who the "strong" and who the "weak" really were, and you would have noticed how I showed that in actual fact it was the "strong" who "regarded the day", and the "weak" who did not regard the day.

Leroy:

Now, if there is no distinction between weekly and ceremonial sabbaths, according to Paul those who observe either--or both as you do--are "weak in faith."

Answer:

I frankly don't know where you get the idea from I <observe either> Sabbaths, <weekly and ceremonial>. In a certain sense though, yes, I do, while I believe, as I have stated above, that I believe all Old-Testament-Sabbaths converged in the (weekly) Sabbath. But I neither keep the Sabbath for that reason, nor because it ultimately is the weekly Sabbath of the Fourth Commandment – I believe (and try to keep) and definitely feast God's Holy Sabbath Day the Seventh Day of the week because it is Christian, because it is based on Jesus Christ, and because it is based on Jesus Christ in resurrection from the dead "In Sabbath's-time". And because it is Apostolic and Maiden-Church practice and Faith (before adulterated by the world and its Sunday-worship). Thirdly, you may say, I also believe the Sabbath for the reason that in it all previous Sabbaths converged and were fulfilled by and in Christ, on and in the Seventh Day Sabbath, by rising from the dead "on the Sabbath", and, "before the First Day of the week", "in the very being of (day)light" – Mt.28:1. Then in the last place, I surely still believe that God's Holy Day "is valid for the People of God", not only by the wondrous fact on it, "entered into His Own Rest as God", Jesus, Lord of the Sabbath Day, but, quite simply, for the Fourth Commandment written that commands and demands from man the duty to "Remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy".

The supreme reason or motif though remains, as I have in a previous post said, the only appropriate GIVEN for the Sabbath of God and for the Church taking cognisance of it by faith and obedience, is "the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power which he wrought IN CHRIST WHEN HE RAISED HIM FROM THE DEAD". That was the moment of the finishing and perfection of the creation of God – its moment of ultimate redemption and salvation. Because that was the very moment of Christ's exaltation at God's "own right hand in heavenly spheres, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come, and hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the Head over all things to the Church, which is His Body – the fulness of Him that filleth all in all."

Very similar words and ideas to what we find in Colossians 2!

Leroy:

Now it is evident from Scripture that Paul consistently observed the Sabbath. Nor is there any suggestion, unless it be in Col 2:16 or Rom 14:5, that he ever declared the weekly Sabbath no longer valid or in any way denigrated it.

Answer:

And I unequivocally will not even admit an <unless>, or any suggestion, the Sabbath <in any way denigrated in Col 2:16 or Rom 14:5>, or, Paul ever declared the weekly Sabbath no longer valid.

Leroy:

Your strong assertions appear to be required to defend ceremonial sabbaths--which you deny are any different from the weekly Sabbath.

Answer:

How do you infer my <strong assertions appear to be required to defend ceremonial sabbaths>?

How ironic, You defend the notion Paul here speaks of ceremonial Sabbaths – 'Sabbaths' which he defended, while I maintain no, he here speaks of the (ordinary) Sabbaths – which he, in fact, here defends.

Haven't I a thousand times denied Paul writes of 'ceremonial' Sabbaths in Col.2? Haven't I a thousand times asserted – and well-founded asserted – he wrote about the Sabbath as a Christian practice of freedom "IN CHRIST" and of a "feasting" "IN CHRIST"?

I'm still waiting and begging for anyone to show me what other 'Sabbaths' Paul could have had in mind in this text of Scripture and in this context of Scripture!

Leroy:

But your only argument for this, as seen below, is that "the very context of verses 16-17" proves that Paul refers to the "sabbath Christian"-- surely a weak defense, at best.

Answer:

Your subjective opinion – no comment but that it should never be forgotten 16-17 as concluded from 14-15 and further back, the "in Him"-section!

Leroy:

But what is the context to which you refer and insist that we ignore? And which, indeed, must direct our conclusions. What does it "prove"?

Answer:

I have just given it to you again as many times before. If I haven't all along and constantly referred to the context to which must be insisted and conclusions must be directed from and to – as above once more – I wouldn't be able to do it otherwise in any way. And this thing hasn't started with the current discussion – you should be able to recall my same insistence of years ago.

What does it prove: It proves this: That because Jesus Christ became Victor ("Triomfator") according to verse 15, He annulled "the court-order against us – that in fact denounced us" for Sabbath-keeping, "and ridiculed it in public". THEN: "THEREFORE (the 'therefore' which you ask about below) do not you let judge you by anyone regarding your eating and drinking of feast, whether of month's or of Sabbaths' (weekly) (occurrence)"! That's what it proves! Am I denying the Sabbath! God forbid! I establish the Sabbath if I as such a mere human being might claim! If I would talk of 'ceremonial' Sabbaths or of 'annual' Sabbaths, then that would have spoiled my very attempt at defending and propagating the Sabbath – God's only Sabbath Day "of month's or of Sabbaths' celebration".

Leroy:

That Paul begins his 2:16 statement obviously indicates that his statement is based upon what he has just said:

Answer:

In all earnestness: Praise God! You have seen it!

Leroy, quoting:

< Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink,
< or in respect of an holy day, or of the new moon, or
< of the Sabbath days: which are a shadow of things
< to come; but the body is of Christ (Col 2:16-17).

Leroy, asking:

To what does "therefore" refer?

Leroy explaining:

To understand Paul's preceding discussion and thus the basis for his 2:16 declaration, let us examine several of the preceding verses:

Answer:

Haven't I done just that?

Leroy:

2:11 In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ. This insistence on "circumcision not made with hands" he identifies with "putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ." And what is involved here is clearly set forth in Romans and Galatians, which he wrote years before in the initial stages of his conflict with Judaizers--a conflict that continued through out his life and is reflected here. ...

Answer:

Just hold a second, Leroy! <what is involved here is clearly set forth>, NOT <in Romans and Galatians, which Paul wrote years before in the initial stages of his conflict with Judaizers ...>, but right here in this Letter itself. Neither setting nor content agrees with <the initial stages of his conflict with Judaizers>. Colossians very much holds its own. Plain, honest fact is, Paul does NOT handle the <conflict with Judaizers> in Col.2. He deals with a two-sided conflict: that between "the Body of Christ's own" the Church, and "the world" of "wisdom's" "philosophy" and "authority" and "power" – even of state-affairs and court-decisions – not Church, or doctrine, or party-issues.

Leroy:

The conflict with them (the Judaizers) was over whether Christian converts had to be inducted into Judaism by circumcision. For it was the entry rite, which required faithful observance of the OT ritual laws that centered on the ceremonial feast days, some of which were designated "sabbaths."

Answer:

I have nothing to counter or to amen. It hasn't got anything to do with our 'issue' right here in the Church in the wilderness of the pagan state of Colossus. This problem receives no word of Paul's in this chapter or even in this entire Letter.

Leroy:

Paul's resounding answer was, absolutely not. For these were but shadows pointing to Christ and

were no longer required upon His arrival and fulfillment in reality of that which the shadows could only pre-figure.

Answer:

Leroy, you mix up Paul's stance with regard to the conflict in Colossus between "world" and "Body", with his stance with regard to the conflict between "those of the circumcision" and those of "uncircumcision". You mix up the Letters Galatians, Romans, Corinthians, Colossians, and Acts, producing a pot-pouri of irrelevancies.

Leroy:

Instead of circumcision, the non-blood rite of baptism was instituted by Christ as the basis for induction into Christianity--not circumcision. Thus Paul followed his declaration of spiritual circumcision of the heart "without hands," by emphasizing baptism as the true induction ceremony into Christ: 2:12 Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with [him] through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.

Answer:

Paul doesn't describe Baptism as a rite or ceremony, but as a representation of us by Christ – a totally spiritual 'baptism', as John the Baptist said Jesus would baptise men with. It shows how Paul uses the Baptism of and into and with Christ, through HIS dying and through HIS resurrection, as reason for the Christian not to be enticed with wily words of wisdom, and be scared of their convictions and enjoyments "IN HIM". Paul does not 'doctrinise' on Baptism – he assumes it as "in Him" and "with Him", THE basis of Christian freedom of which Sabbath-keeping was most conspicuously sign and token!

Leroy:

Baptism, the entry rite. takes place but once, just as did circumcision. Moreover, just as that bloody ritual was followed by regular rituals that revolved around the daily service and annual feasts, all of which foreshadowed Christ's sacrifice--even so the once for a lifetime baptism is followed by the regular, non-blood communion service.

Answer:

Quite well baptism may have formed part of the Church-service of Sabbaths' worship – it might have been a liturgical ingredient of "celebration of Sabbaths" at this stage (of Paul's writing) – confirming his disapproval that the world or "anybody" of the world should dare accuse and condemn the Church for "celebrating" (these 'rites' if you like). Seeing the baptism Paul here speaks of is of "you", being "buried with HIM", and "also co-raised with HIM, through faith", it shows he illustrates our condition and status "IN HIM". Then on ground of this representation on our behalf by Christ, Paul can rejoice in the language of verses 13 to 15, to so, form the foundation from which he is able to challenge the Church, "not to let (yourselves be) judged with regard to (your) eating and drinking of feast, whether of month's or of week's (occasion), (by) anyone (of the world)".

Leroy:

Prior to the shedding of Christ's own blood, the blood types fore-shadowed the reality of His life and death -- the "good things to come" (Col 2:17).

Answer:

This statement referring to the past <types>, would have been true, have you not combined it with Col 2:17. Col 2:17 doesn't refer back, but forward, saying, "these thing ARE a spectre / shadow of things a-coming the Substance / Body being of Christ's own". Paul then further explains what he means by this, saying in verse 19b, "holding (fast) to the Head (Christ), from which all the body (the Church) by joints and bands (of means and helps – like the Sabbath Day) having nourishment ministered (by "feasting" on, or by "eating and drinking" of Christ) – and knit together (by bands of Love and being "one in Him") – increaseth with the increase of God." Paul fore-sees the suffering Church become the triumphant Church – like its Master Who suffered and triumphed.

Leroy:

Following His death, the same principles were portrayed without blood (in a "circumcision made without hands"--symbolized by baptism) by reference to His death and resurrection, as then represented by the communion service (Jn 13; 1 Cor 11:23-30).

Thus, Paul explains: 2:13

And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses". Paul here speaks to Gentiles who had been "dead in ... sins and the uncircumcision of ...

heart. Paul here identifies circumcision of the flesh as a symbol of heart circumcision. Their problem before conversion was not that they were not circumcised in the flesh with hands, but that their hearts were not circumcised from sin by the Holy Spirit--which circumcision baptism symbolized.

Answer:

To which I fully agree. You PICTURE the conditions and circumstances of the Colossian Church in focussed lines here, and it clearly shows a situation wherein the Church stood as Body of Christ's over against the world and worldly powers and authorities and principles both subtle and vicious. Nothing of party splitting and internal strife, nothing of Judaizers or warmongers, nothing of loveless divisions, jealousy and hatred, but unity 'In Him" being confronted by monstrous foe – the enemy dead in sin and the uncircumcision of heart with one desire: to extinguish THESE WHO KEEP THE LAW OF GOD AND THE TESTIMONY OF JESUS CHRIST!

Leroy,
speaking of this Church: Thus, they were "quickenened together with [Christ]," by rising with Him from symbolic baptism to a new life (Col 3:1-4; Rom 6:1-5).

Leroy diverting, saying:

Having thus established baptism rather than circumcision as the entry rite into Christ and Christianity, Paul proceeds to argue that the old, shadowy ritual of which circumcision was the entry rite, was done away by the cross.

Answer:

Leroy, stick to the text! Where does Paul argue this? Where, here in Colossians? Of course circumcision was done away by the cross, and Paul may refer to that event BEFORE, in verse 11, through the "circumcision of Christ" which may mean His death. But he does not even imply or suggest anything of the kind AFTER verse 15. Paul after verse 15 and in 16-17 has only words of comfort and establishment in the Faith for the Church.

Leroy:

Note: 2:14 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; What was against them and thus taken away? The answer seems clear enough here. But to remove doubt, let us see how Paul clearly answers it in Hebrews ...

Protest:

Again Leroy, allow Paul to answer here, you admit it <seems clear enough here> – so why resort to other Scriptures – and this specific one not even written by Paul?

I say "the document by ordinances against us, which was contrary to us" and meant to destroy us, was a court order, a subpoena (or more than one), issued by 'law-ordinances' of the "authorities", "against us", with the intent of wiping us out from the face of the world (just because we feast our Sabbath Days) because of Jesus Christ! Instead, Christ wiped it out!

We are free of course to spiritualise on the meaning of this phrase, and say the "written document by law-ordinances against us" means the record of our sins which Christ carried with Himself to the cross and thus wiped it out. But that is not the primary meaning, however noble it is.

Verses 16-17 therefore keep direct relation with verses 14-15, once more – their connection is never severed.

And that implies the important point in our current debate, that 'ceremonial' or 'annual' Sabbaths can never be the subject of contention in this place.

Leroy:

... , where the entire discussion relates to the "faulty" old covenant, which was against them, which, by the cross, Christ replaced by the new covenant, of which the old was simply a shadow.

Answer:

It will not help to generalise or to make sweeping statements that throw together the various and divergent issues discoverable in the different Documents of Scripture. It is difficult enough to see clearly the meaning of one thing at a time; to concoct the many won't help, but will only create further confusion.

What you say here, is true – don't get me wrong – but NOT if you relate it all with "where the entire discussion" refers to Paul's statements in these verses, because Paul does not in this chapter – or in the entire Letter – deal with "the "faulty" old covenant" being "replaced by the new covenant, of which the old was simply a shadow". It simply is not the subject of his interest here. Here, Paul is concerned with practical things, with harsh and with hard reality, with politics, one could almost say. He finds the Church assailed and assaulted by

every warmachine at the disposal of the real "world". He encourages the Faithful: Do not be dissuaded, stand fast, Christ is your Head, and you are in Him, protected and safe in Christ in God, feast on! It is Paul's interest of throughout the Letter.

Leroy:

After explaining that the ancient priesthood were merely an "example and shadow of heavenly things" (or "good things to come")--Paul declares; But now hath He obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also He is the Mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises. For if the first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second. (Heb 8:5-7) The first covenant promises were made by the people and related to a bloody shadow. The second covenant, which the first foreshadowed, was vastly better for it was the real which alone could do what the first was only a shadow. Moreover, the shadowy type turned out to be "against" them because they did not perceive the reality to which it pointed and insisted on salvation under the type-- they crucified the great Antitype. Thus, Paul continues by stating that the fault was with the people, who might have had the fruit of the Antitype all along, for in true faith in the type--as type, a shadowy pointer to the coming Seed which must die and be cast into the ground--they could have had the second covenant fruits all along: For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant (Heb 8:5-8).

Answer:

I must repeat you're referring to two different Books of Scripture, and to different meanings and applications of the word "shadow" in these different Documents. "Shadow" in any case, in both these Letters, has no dark meaning of obscurity; it in both has the meaning of serving as pointer or clarifier of what lies ahead. In Colossians especially, it has the meaning of "future image" or "spectre of things a-coming", not like a mirage deceiving expectations, but sure indicator of "the reality", or "substance" namely "the Body of Christ's own", indeed the Church Triumphant!

Leroy:

After declaring the victory of Christ on the cross, which brought in the new covenant that would take the place of the shadow of "good things to come," by conquering the powers of evil and darkness (2:15), Paul concludes: 2:16 Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in meat, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath [days]:

Answer:

Absolutely! Only remember your interpolation actually stands there in unwritten brackets: <After declaring the victory of Christ on the cross [which brought in the new covenant that would take the place of the shadow of "good things to come"] by conquering the powers of evil and darkness (2:15), Paul concludes:>

Although absolutely true that the cross brought in the new covenant that would take the place of the shadow of "good things to come" the Old Testament, it is not what Paul says here. Though he may have had it in the back of his mind, Paul is here dealing with the immediate and present situation of the Colossian Congregation vis a vis the world, and with immediate and present concern for the Congregation's Sabbaths'-feasting. Paul fetches back to the origin of the New Covenant even, and claims: This, Jesus Christ in dying and rising for your salvation and for establishing the New Covenant, is your assurance to go on unhindered and unimpressed by the world's arrogance: "Let no one judge you in eating and drinking of feast (spiritually of Christ), of month's, or, of weekly Sabbaths', for these things are a shadow of (even better) things a-coming, even the Body of Christ's (Elect) ... increasing with the increase of God!"

Leroy:

I have repeatedly shown that the items not to be judged are all (including the new moon festivals that are not treated in Lev 23) part of the ceremonial system which the Judaizers insisted must be observed by all Gentile converts--a system of shadowy types introduced by bloody circumcision made with hands. Thus, Paul concludes by explaining just what was blotted out and "nailed to the cross" (see 2:14 above). These he identifies: 2:17 Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body [is] of Christ.

Answer:

And I have repeatedly shown by asking to provide the "it is written" for what you here state – from this Letter, and from this context – the context of chapter two. Every time in answer these foreign to this context words pop up: <the new moon festivals ... the ceremonial system which the Judaizers insisted must be observed by all Gentile converts--a system of shadowy types introduced by bloody circumcision made with hands>.

Sorry sir, a very simple question by a very simple man, but sorry, I don't read it here, and I cannot distinguish its implication here. In other words, I flatly deny what you insist on is true.

Leroy:

It is clear that the entire shadowy system prefigured the incarnation and death of Christ. Thus, the true and real body foreshadowed was that of Christ.

By contrast, Gerhard, ...

Interruption:

I accept and support and believe what you say here

Leroy:

you are so certain that this text has nothing to do with ceremonial issues that you make the strong statement:

We cannot get that into our stubborn heads because we are the victims of our own pride and fear that we should be proven wrong and shall have to change our minds and views.

Your use of "we" and "our" here is but a thinly veiled reference to "you" and "your." That you do not include yourself is evident from your strong claims.

Interruption:

No, Leroy. You think these persuasions just happened? You think it wasn't painful for me to come to the realisation I had it wrong for the best part of my life? I used to understand and believe this text like you do now. The Law of God -the Scriptures- knocked me over down and out. In many ways and on many occasions, this one was one of the toughest, but now gladly relieving and relinquishing!

It just stays a mystery to me why 'we' should so be bound to 'our' concept of 'ceremonial and annual Sabbaths'? What could 'we' loose? What

could 'we' gain? We – Sabbatharians – could gain certainly one of the most positive statements of Scripture endorsing and confirming the Sabbath and Sabbaths' celebration because of Jesus Christ and because of Him in resurrection from the dead – that is what we 'score'! No prize to despise! We could further gain the further advantage of a united front against the haters and enemies of God's Holy Sabbath Day. We could gain the strategic advantage of returning their salvos against the Sabbath and its doctrine and keeping in kind, turning their very own arguments against them!

We would without legalism gain a convincing and transforming reason and argument that magnify Christ and grace and will bring to faith and obedience.

But most of all we could reap the splendid benefits of the pure milk of the Word of God, and like satisfied babies, rest in God's care and protection knowing while enjoying His Sabbath Day, we have Jesus our Rest and Redeemer IN WHOM our life is hid in God.

Leroy:

I do not question that "we" do all tend to have "stubborn heads" and "our own pride" is innate to humanity—something we must battle daily by the grace of God. And something I must confess I must continually battle. Nor do I always win that battle. But net readers must determine for themselves which "proponents don't defend TRUTH, but doctrine."

Answer:

I am grateful Leroy, for NET to allow me throwing in my word, which I realise and confess more often than necessary is rude and unsavoury. May God forgive me for handling His Pure Word with such soiled hands.

Leroy:

It is indeed difficult to change one's mind. Is it possible that your response "a thousand times" to what you perceive as "the obsolete an dry as dust arguments of 'ceremonial' and 'annual' Sabbaths" might exemplify the unwillingness or inability to change? Your claim, "No one has ever brought against me solid reason or purely Scripture!" reminds me that one cannot see what he does not believe exists.

In saying: "I wonder what SDANet will say," you apparently are soliciting comments from others. For I am sure you do not wonder what my response would be. For you have read my expressions in several

recent posts, dated October 24 to 27. You did not read my most recent post "Re: sabbath - Leroy's Reply #2," for it came out in the same mail as yours. But I there refer to five Oct 24-27 posts that I would encourage you to re-read.

May God help us find the truth as it is in His word.

A. Leroy Moore

Answer:

Thank you Leroy, for your Christian approach and admonition. And thanks to NET, once again, and thanks to anyone who took notice of what I have had to say. It was stimulating and inspiring, and I say thanks to God, for it.

Gerhard Ebersoehn

From: Gerhard Ebersoehn

To: LeRoy Moore

Answering some general observations of yours

>5) Are you not in danger of defying that
>command by insisting that Jesus did not rest
>upon it with the women, "according to the
>commandment"?

Jesus rested on that specific Seventh Day Sabbath, but not like the women rested on that specific Seventh Day Sabbath. God also at the creation rested on that specific Seventh Day Sabbath, but not like Adam and Eve rested on that specific Seventh Day Sabbath. For God's rest is conscious, active rest, whereas man's rest - especially in 'sleep' - is unconscious and passive. God's rest of the creation Sabbath was His great act of the Seventh Day - not a slumber or something He willed not to do or not willed to do. God's "works" of the creation Sabbath are named, divine, and uniquely divine deeds - works man is not capable of doing. Those works are mentioned: "finished / completed / perfected"; "blessed / honoured / magnified"; "sanctified / determined / separated / destined / appointed". God's ACT of REST is of the same nature and quality as these - no anthropomorphism! God's rest "on the Seventh Day" was God's UTMOST DEED that required "the exceeding greatness of His Power". Could God's rest require anything less

than this, would it "revive" (a word 'Moses' also uses for God's rest of the Seventh Day) even Him the Almighty? Therefore Jesus did rest during His 'crucifixion-Sabbath', but not in passiveness - like men do - and not in death - like man does - but in conquering death - like ONLY God in Christ availed. I describe this mightiest deed of God His rest whereby even the creation exists and came into existence and wherein it, finds its, rest. I don't argue the point, I proclaim it against all logic and fact for the truth of all fact.

So I am as much in danger of defying or denying the Fourth Commandment as I am in danger of defying or denying God by insisting that Jesus did not rest upon it with the women, but with His Father and the Holy Spirit in the resurrection of Him from death, hell and grave, and in the exaltation of Him "in it" (Col 2:15) to "the right hand of God in heavenly realms" (Eph 1:19f), "according to the commandment" in its real essentiality. In a word: I believe in the eschatology of the Fourth Commandment; I believe the Fourth Commandment is Gospel (and not that the Gospel is the Fourth Commandment). Am I (for the above reason still) in danger of defying or denying, as you say,

>... the distinction Christ Himself
 >made between the "ordinances, which the
 >Passover and other "feasts of the Lord" are
 >called, while the 4th commandment Sabbath is
 >repeatedly called "the Sabbath of the Lord"?

I don't deny this distinction, but I say, do not take it too far or make it everything! On the other hand, don't refrain from taking it all the way! For the Passover Sabbath is also called a 'Sabbath' in the Bible, which is the same thing as saying the Word of God, which is the same thing as saying the distinction of Christ Himself.

But most ironic to me is the blind spot in our field of vision where this Passover Sabbath is made the Sabbath of this very Fourth Commandment, yet we insist on absolute distinction of the 'two'. It's not only different Sabbaths, they also are one. In the yearly Passover of the Old Testament they are distinct and different; in the weekly Passover of the New Testament they were merged into the fulfilled and only everlasting Passover

(Redemption) Sabbath Day of the LORD your God, the 'weekly Sabbath' or "Seventh Day" in Biblical terminology.

In the Fourth Commandment in Deuteronomy 5:12-15, the 'creation-motive' is NOT SO MUCH AS MENTIONED. In contradistinction the Passover-Redemption theme is given twice, not only for the Sabbath Commandment, but for the whole of the Ten Commandments - for the WHOLE of 'Law'. (Does not that make you think it must point to Christ?) Who will accuse Moses of denying or defying the creation-basis of the Sabbath Day? Of course nobody. But in the light and glory of the Sabbath's salvation-history, the light and glory of its creation-history fades into nothingness. Moses argued this way, as the Deuteronomy Fourth Commandment proves. Paul also argued this way, as he somewhere in very similar words do prove. Then accordingly it is just as true that in the light and glory of the Sabbath's Christ-salvation-history the light and glory of its Egypt-salvation-history fades into nothingness.

No one has once denied or defied the light and glory of any of the dispensations; it is only argued the glory of the Gospel makes the light and glory of the previous "Covenant" / "Testament" (of creation and Egypt's Exodus) like the light and glory of birthday cake candles against the light and glory of the midday sun.

>... beginning His work again on the 7th day
>Sabbath rather than on the 1st day of the
>week ...

Dear Le Roy, I'm not talking of God >beginning His work<; I'm talking of God "FINISHING ALL HIS WORKS", and repeat, without which "finishing" creation would not have been. This last assertion I make without hesitation or reservation. Talk about basis, true beginnings, creation - call it what you like - Christ's resurrection from the dead is it - the basis, true beginning, the creation. The creation and God's creation-act and the resultant creation per se, rested on this from the beginning, namely on the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. You agree? Then we agree and thanks and praises be to God. You disagree? Well then there's a lot still to be explained and understood by both of us.

Understand the point of departure of Sunday-venerators; they think of Jesus' resurrection as God's Sabbath Rest. Now in that they are right except they transgress not only the Fourth Commandment but also the Commandment that says one should not steal as well as the Commandment that says one should not lie. For they steal what by the Word of God belongs to God's Sabbath, and then lie that the privilege and honour and glory of Christ to have risen from the dead on it, is the Sun's day's. Then they transgress the Commandment that says one should not kill, and they kill the True truth of God's Sabbath Day - which is Jesus Christ Himself - and with the same blow the Sabbath Seventh Day. And so I can go on and show how every Commandment is transgressed by the transgression of the Fourth. Or I could simply say, so is Christ the Lord of the Sabbath dishonoured. I think it is better to say it in the last way. Therefore I still insist Christ has become the Law for the Christian, and the Christian should beware lest the Law for him has become his Christ. This is not even a skin-deep analysis; I am not a good theologian to repeat the same thing every time with austere reverence and beauty. Seems that whenever I try, I either, or always, confuse and affront people.

Therefore please read me with a forgiving spirit, and you may perhaps better understand me.

“... When the passage is tough, requiring serious thought and expression, the attention of our listeners wanders, eyes glaze, and we quickly reach for an easier explanation.”

Reminds me of the saying, ‘When the going gets tough, the tough get going’. Actually, when the passage is tough, requiring serious thought and expression we quickly reach for accustomed, traditional, explanation. When such occasions arise, it is time that courage and honesty should achieve breakthrough and discover and recover the treasure of old truth that has been hidden for ages under fear, sloth and the crave for popularity. But the almost reverent attention and admiring gazes of our listeners give us such a nice feeling of self-esteem we lose ability of discernment as well as palate for anything not sugar-coated and soothing to natural taste.

The toughest explanation in this case, Colossians 2:12-17, is the easiest! Paul speaks so plainly we won’t accept – like the Gospel that comes ‘too cheap’! Desire for the more difficult explanation is part of the reason Colossians 2:14-17 still – regularly and as a rule – suffers exegetical abuse. You see, we look so much more learned with arguing the ‘scholarly’ interpretation. Poor ignorant (laymen) who cannot comprehend! (I must some day send you Helmut Thielicke on this point!)

“... We who hold both the law and the Sabbath in considerable esteem approach the passage with some uneasiness, since Paul's figure of nailing something to the cross (verse 14) is in close proximity to a Sabbath (verse 16) and some sort of law (verse 14)...”

“...hold both the law and the Sabbath...”

What’s the difference? Both the law and the Sabbath are ‘Law’! But if we held both the Law and the Gospel, all “uneasiness” in “approach (of) the passage”, vanishes, since Paul's figure of nailing something to the cross (verse 14) is in close proximity to a Sabbath (verse 16) – yet a Sabbath not only of being “nailed to the cross”, but also of being co-raised with Christ! Because to hold the Law and the Gospel, is to hold the Gospel as the Law.

Why should we be afraid to admit the “Law” – the Ten Commandments and with it the Sabbath – were nailed to the cross? That God would not be able to give it new meaning and new Life through Christ? Then He just as well would be unable to raise Christ from the dead again. (A new Law I give you, said Jesus, to love one another – yet they (and we) had that law since Moses.) What makes the Law new and living – always ‘valid’ – is God in Christ. After we successfully have explained how “the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us”, in fact

had been a “certificate of debt ... a bond written in ordinances ... the bond which stood against us with its legal demands” – what have we achieved? Have we proved it was not the Law – all Law and the very Principle and Prince of Law that had been nailed to the cross? Not at all, for if not the Law had thus been nailed to the cross, none of these other things we have here explained, are true. The fact we are* buried with Him in baptism and co-raised with Him into and to a new life and cleansing from sin, God “having forgiven us all our trespasses”, does not cancel out, but confirms, “the bond which stood against us” had been, and still is, the Law. Jesus’ carrying the Law with Him and in His body to the cross and there nailing it to the cross Himself, is the ultimate confirmation of the Law – confirmation of all law and the whole principle of Law. Had Jesus not given His Life for sin there would have been no sin – nothing that is sin; no law that declares it sin. For here, in Jesus Christ in His laying down the Life that is His, “the Righteousness that is of God” is revealed and revealed originally. THIS, is the explanation of ‘law’ – THIS, is God, Himself all law and the very principle of it. THIS, is to show what SIN, IS. THIS – Jesus surrendering and extinguishing His own divine life illustrates man’s sin, while it is the righteousness that is of the Law, God Himself being Himself that Righteousness of that Law and its Executor! I am unable to understand any other ‘fulfilment’ of the Law than this, for I am unable to understand any other righteousness of the Law than Jesus Christ Himself. And I am unable to understand what sin is but through looking at God’s Holy One in sacrifice and victory and victory through sacrifice and extinction. To consider Law as a side issue is vain. The righteousness of God is invisible, here, if not God’s Law is obviously manifested, here. Both God’s ‘No’ to sin and ‘Yes’ to righteousness are seen here, in the One, Who is the Law. Here is Law and the beginning and end of Law. This is God’s finger, writing, His Law of Life for death and Death for life – “an ordinance of the LORD, forever”. Here is revealed: Divine Morality.

[* “Being co-buried”, participle, “you are co-raised”; just so the Law, embodied in Christ.]

If the Sabbath had not – with the whole Law – been taken to the cross and had not there been nailed to it and abolished, extinguished in and with and through the very life of Christ Himself, it afterwards would be worthless, man’s own invention. It’s plain, comprehensible sense – to faith in any case. Maybe it is stupidity or foolishness to human or natural intelligence and academic knowledge; to me it is the Gospel.

The argument, therefore, “So if some law was nailed to the cross, it would have to be the ceremonial law, since the moral law was not made “void” by the cross (Rom. 3:31)”, is void! This text, simply, does not say “the moral law was not made “void””. It says, “we” cannot “make the law void”; “we”, are only able to “establish the law”, or admit its establishment in Christ. For only “One is the

Lawgiver". That means, for us to "establish the Law", doesn't mean we are the inventors of the Law – its 'givers'. No, it only means, we agree to what God has said and has done with regard to and through Christ. Therefore as God is the only Giver of the Law, so He also must be its sole Annihilator. This logically is possible by identifying God and Law; and this in fact is exactly what God has made possible and historically has made true in having become man in Jesus Christ and in having offered Himself a Sacrifice for sin, Himself being also that Law that demands the exchange of Life for sin. So, if ever "ceremonial law" had been "established" 'morally', it had been in and through Jesus Christ in His death and resurrection. In exactly the same way "the ceremonial law was nailed to the cross", the 'moral law', had been "made void", in Him. "Both" ceremonial law and moral law thus, through the very death-burial-baptism of both in Christ, are "established" in Christ, "once for all". All past, 'Old Testament' 'law' receive value, meaning, validity, establishment, in Christ – in nothing else and nowhere else than in the sacrifice and resurrection of Himself historically for sin unto newness of life. "... The various Mosaic rituals and ceremonial "ordinances" that you say "largely ceased to have relevance after Christ died on the cross", never ceased to have relevance when or after Jesus died, but obtained – and first obtained – 'relevance' and true meaning and applicability when and as Jesus died and rose again. Imagine the Old Testament with all its ceremony and sacrifice without Jesus Christ its essence and relevance!

Your statement is very true therefore, that "... Paul rarely makes the neat division between the ceremonial law and the moral law that we are often quick to make. In fact, his references to the ceremonial laws are rare. When he does use the word "law" (nomos), he most frequently has in mind the moral law in general and often the Decalogue in particular. Of course, in our passage he doesn't use the word "law" at all, which is why we have to be so careful to reason from the context to understand his meaning."

No other concept than "in Christ", explains either condemnation or salvation; sin or forgiveness, Law or "newness of life", and the freedom, peace and joy of celebrating God's holy Sabbath Day. "Be carefully guided by the immediate context", and by the indicative particular of "participle phrases". They "result in" "essentially the same thing", "to mean" "forgiveness of our sins". And from this dominant TRUTH in Christ, "resulted" the "rituals and ceremonial 'ordinance'" contextually relevant, namely the no longer "Mosaic", but Christian celebration by "the Body that belongs to Christ" the Church, of her "Feasting of Sabbath Days' feast"! Context (Christ's victory through death and resurrection) and specifics (of participle phrases) resulted in both "the canceling of

the bond that was against us” – “the forgiveness of our sins”, and the very authority whereby we are found to be sinners and whereby sin is exposed and defined – the Law. It is Christ thus exposed and defined. By these linguistic instruments of Paul’s is obtained – not lost or “ceased” – the “relevance after Christ died on the cross” of the Law and the Sabbath Law for Christians!

The contextual meaning of Paul’s is ‘law’ – divine Law – for no other law can be “certificate of debt . . . a bond written in ordinances . . . which stood against us with its legal demands”. And what we usually indicate as “the moral law” does that no better than what we usually indicate as “the ceremonial law”. Look at the cross: The Son of God our Passover Lamb! What else could give ‘law’ ‘moral’ quality? ‘Ceremonial law’ is ‘moral law’ for what God did in and through Jesus Christ! No ‘natural capacity’, no grandeur, no ‘ethical urgency’, nothing human or humanistic, nothing ‘rational’, or ‘civilised’, or ‘normative’, makes ‘law’, ‘moral’, but what God did in Him – and that was sacrificial, usually defined as ‘ceremonial’. “The context of both Colossians and Ephesians indicates that something more than ceremonies was involved.” That ‘something more’, happened within and through the ‘ceremonial’ – the suffering, crucifixion and death of Christ: the LAW. Without these, no resurrection of Christ, and without resurrection, no more than ritual and death: lawlessness, sin and perdition! No more ‘moral law’ – therefore ‘moral law’ was “nailed to the cross”.

“One thing is very clear: when Paul elsewhere refers to the impact of the cross for the Christian, he does not limit his reasoning to abolishing the ceremonial law. For Paul the most important thing that ended at the cross was the condemnation brought about by our sin. That condemnation arose out of a broken moral law. As he says in Romans 7:7, "if it had not been for the law, I should not have known sin" (RSV). In other words, it is the broken law that stands before us and condemns us, which is all the moral law can do for those who have broken it. But as Paul says in Romans 8:1 "there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus" (RSV). Or, as in verse 3, "God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do: sending his own Son . . . condemned sin in the flesh" (RSV).”

Very well said! Yet, “. . .the condemnation brought about by our sin . . .” is surely not true. It is the Law that condemns and its transgression that kills, and that – the taking away of life – ultimately is brought about by God. “It is the broken law that stands before us and condemns us”, indeed Jesus the Crucified, the Law against whom we transgressed

and whom we ‘broke’ – the One that healed and heals, who laid down His life and rose from the dead again – with Whom we are co-buried and co-raised.

Therefore “the handwriting of ordinances” was the handwriting of God in His holy Law. That Law, He Himself “took and nailed to the cross”, and so removed it “out of the way” of God’s providential salvation. He “spoiled” it and “made a show of it (ridiculed it) openly”, “triumphing over it”. Because it was Jesus Christ Who was made sin for us – but Who also was made condemnation and oblivion in our stead. As we, man, ridiculed our Saviour, God ridiculed sin and death and the “authority / dominion of darkness”. “He was made sin for us”, He the righteousness, the Law of God – made sin for us! Precisely when he vanquished sin and death and hell through resurrection “from the dead”! Christ went down amongst the sinners, the dead, the scandalous and ridiculed; from among sinners and from among the dead and scandalous and ridiculed He rose, “triumphing over them in it” (in His resurrection). In Christ NO DISTINCTION can be made or is allowed to be made between the Law and the curse of the Law; between its condemnation and its power “whereby a man shall live”, its right and authority to judge and kill, and its right and ability to save – but only in Christ the living Law of God. For in Him is contained and exercised too, authorisation and vindication of the Law. As Jesus dies the Law of God, He also rises the Law of God. As He descends The Shame of humanity, He rises the “Glory of God in the face of Jesus”, the Prince of Peace, the Everlasting God, the Head of “the Body that is Christ’s”.

“God . . . sending his own Son . . . condemned sin in the flesh” – that is, condemned US. “. . . It is the broken law that stands before us and condemns us, which is all the moral law can do for those who have broken it.” But it is the Broken Sacrificial Law that stands before us and condemns us in the Person of The Son of Man, Lord of the Sabbath. HE, this Law, can do and does do more for us: God in sending His Son and on strength of this His very condemnation of us, through resurrection from the dead also sets us free to the service and worship of Him. That is Sabbath-keeping.

“Repeatedly Paul stressed the all-sufficiency of the risen Christ . . . which brings clarity to his use of “shadow” and “body” in verse 17.” The Christian Sabbath and the Christian keeping of the Sabbath derive from nothing else and from nothing less than “the all-sufficiency of the risen Christ”. This is precisely Paul’s meaning and intention with following up verses 12-15 with verses 16-17!

You will understand it isn’t the popular idea “according to the principles of the world” or ‘natural religion’. This explanation defies and despises traditional explanations of the passage. As “carefully by the immediate context” shown, the Sabbath in Colossians starkly stands out, observed and seen in practical congregational worship (or ‘religion’) of the Christians in a sea (“world”) of pagan heathenism. Like the floating shadow of “the Body that is Christ’s” the Sabbath Day

and its celebration contrast sharply against the worship in and of the world, its “wisdom” or ‘religion’, the “dominion” and “power”, “of darkness”. The purpose with the Church’s “celebration of (her) feast of Sabbath days” (*en brosei kai en posei ... heortehs ... sabbatohn*), singularly is to serve the Head of the Body, Christ.

This Sabbath Paul is writing about in Colossians 2, is ‘Christian’ and “unblameable” in every respect – only to be recommended and enjoyed unintimidated, unincriminated. Neither contextually nor specifically is there indication Paul meant the Sabbath ‘Jewish’. The idea of Jewishness or Judaism is totally foreign to the whole of the Letter! (Just as completely as the absence of the word *nomos*.)

Also the background against which Paul visualises this Sabbath and its keeping by Believers or the Church, is totally non-Jewish! The “world” and its “principles” in Colossians, in whole, are the heathen, pagan, ‘natural’, ‘Greek’, “powers” of “wisdom” and “philosophy”. There is no semblance of similarity between this Letter and Romans where Paul does deal with a ‘Jewish issue’. And there is neither semblance of nor similarity with this Letter and Galatians 4 where Paul most probably countered a threat of pagan Sunday-worship.

Thus forgiveness of our sins that resulted in the cancelling of the bond that was against us by Law, again resulted in the Church “*celebrating her Sabbaths’ (weekly) feast, or month’s*”. Colossians 2:14-17 is a passage of transparent meaning.

“Colossians 2:14-17 is not a passage with a transparent meaning.”

I cannot think of anything written in your article more faulty. Paul here motivates Christian celebration of the Sabbath Day on strength of Jesus’ death and resurrection and further defends its freedom against condemnation from any source on earth. Read with this understanding, Colossians 2 is one of the most positive and unambiguous statements about and affirmative declarations of the Seventh Day Sabbath in all of the New Testament. One encounters absolutely no difficulty in getting its clear-cut message of the freedom, peace and joy of the Church in celebration of her “Feasts of Sabbath Days (weekly) or of month’s” (Lord’s Supper). All the cliché’s on grammar and “doctrinal and theological difficulties” are herewith exposed in their error!

“... The powers have been defeated. And that happened when the condemnation of the moral law was ... nailed to the cross. The NRSV smoothly translates it: “erasing the record that stood against us with its legal demands. He set this aside, nailing it to the cross.” Thus He made “peace by the blood of his cross” (Col. 1:20, RSV).”

“... the condemnation of the moral law was figuratively nailed to the cross.” Yes sure, but that leaves three quarters of the truth unsaid. The three untold quarters are that the moral law was literally executing its condemnation when it nailed Jesus to the cross. Not only its condemnation was nailed to the cross, but the moral law itself, was nailed to the cross, not only “figuratively”, but actually and in Person – “in His flesh”.

“Erasing the record that stood against us with its legal demands” – “with its legal demands”, meaning, the Law, the moral law, the ceremonial law, the law that is spiritual, all Law – it could but happen in and through Jesus Christ, the all Law encompassing God-Man. “Thus He made “peace by the blood of his cross””. “Very similar” with Colossians indeed! “Figuratively” there is sublimely much of. Yet literally, it legally was the Law of God – the Divine Law Jesus Christ Himself – that was thus “nailed to the cross”. Nothing figuratively about it! With His life and breath of life, went the record of our sins, and went the enmity – in that, that Law, went. Don’t separate or put enmity where God brought about oneness, unity and peace. The record stands, peace prevails: the Law finds, in our place, Jesus Christ the Risen Crucified.

“This interpretation does not mean that the moral law itself did not survive the cross. It is one thing to say that the demands of the law have been met in Christ. It is quite another to say that the law has been abolished in Christ. Or to put it differently, the law serves at least two functions; as an objective description of God's character and expectations, it stands forever; as an unbending standard that condemns our failure to keep it and thus drives us to Christ, it has a temporary function. It is this last aspect that Paul has in mind when he uses the “nailed to the cross” figure.”

“...the moral law itself ... survive the cross...”
 The moral law itself did NOT survive the cross if Jesus had not. And Jesus did NOT survive the cross but died the death of the Law, the death of the moral Law. The death of death in the death of Christ was the death of God’s holy Law in Christ. When Christ died it was hell; Jesus dying, IS hell – the death of all and of all Law. And when Christ rose from the dead, He rose from hell and from the death of all and of all Law. He rose: The Law of God Triumphant!
 “Therefore do not you be judged by any of the world with regard to your feasting (eating and drinking) of your Feasts, month’s or Sabbath’s!” It follows immediately!
 Conclusion: The *cheirographon tois dogmasin* – “handwriting of ordinances” – indicates Jesus Christ Crucified. This is God “against us”, God who in being against

us in Jesus Christ, is God in Jesus Christ for us. It – God in Jesus Christ herein – is our redemption and salvation. What comes of it, is God’s People celebrating God’s Day of Rest, feasting her Sabbath Days. (Nothing comes more natural, for Paul and the Church, that is.) Colossians 2 tells the very same truths found in Hebrews 4. If Jesus gave them rest, while He entered into His rest, then remains valid – in fact becomes valid – for the People of God their keeping of the Sabbath. It “resulted”, “the parallel and repetitive phrases” explain it; are the cause of it. Colossians 16 further may never be read without verses 12 to 15 also being read before.

Who may doubt Jesus is God’s Law in living Person, having read your quote: “Romans 8 ... in verse 3, "God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do: sending his own Son ... condemned sin in the flesh".” Then if He, being so weakened by the flesh He was killed, the Law also was killed being nailed to the cross. If not thus obliterated never could the Law be the Law for Christians, or the Sabbath be the Sabbath for Christians. (Never in any case and never however is there implication or suggestion of the First Day of the week, so honoured in the Scriptures, for Christians.)

Colossians Two, Alien Invasion! (Richardson)

The purpose of this study:

To show how unfounded presuppositions determine, and spoil, hermeneutics, especially as in the case of an exegesis of Colossians 2:16-17.

First the "Article, "Sabbath: nailed to the cross? Colossians 2:14-17 revisited",

By

William E. Richardson, Ph.D., chair of the Department of Religion, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan.

Then, Comments, by Gerhard Ebersöhn

GE in Arial

Richardson in Courier New

"Sabbath": nailed to the cross? Colossians 2:14-17 revisited

"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 any 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" (Col. 2:14-17).

In this day of the "sound-bite," we biblical expositors have our work cut out for us. When the passage is tough, requiring serious thought and expression, the attention of our listeners wanders, eyes glaze, and we quickly reach for an easier explanation. I believe that desire for the "easier explanation" is part of the reason Colossians 2:14-17 still suffers occasional exegetical abuse. Understandably, we who hold both the law and the Sabbath in considerable esteem approach the passage with some uneasiness, since Paul's figure of nailing something to the cross (verse 14) is in close proximity to a

Sabbath (verse 16) and some sort of law (verse 14). So, to protect two of our most revered pillars, we tend to interpret this passage with certain presuppositions firmly in place. However, in this exposition we will focus sharply on the Colossian context before making contemporary applications.

Colossians 2:14-17 is not a passage with a transparent meaning. Even a good English translation is not enough to resolve all the doctrinal and theological difficulties. In fact, this is one of those passages in which a few of the finer points of the original language gives us a real boost to our interpretive task.

The context

The first phrase that gives rise to some contention is cheirographon tois dogmasin, translated in the KJV as "handwriting of ordinances." Other translations include "Certificate of debt" (NASB), or "bond written in ordinances" (RV), or "the bond which stood against us with its legal demands" (RSV). Since the words occur nowhere else in Scripture, lexical definitions must be carefully guided by the immediate context.

The context begins with 2:12, where Paul speaks of being "buried with Him in baptism." The result of that "burial baptism" is resurrection to a new life and cleansing from sin. Paul refers to that cleansing with two participle phrases that are parallel, the second repeating the thought of the first. The first of those two phrases is "having forgiven us all our trespasses" (verse 13, RSV). The parallel and repetitive phrase is "having canceled the bond [cheirographon tois dogmasin] which stood against us" (verse 14, RSV). Both phrases mean essentially the same thing, the second simply repeating in different terms what it meant for him to forgive our sins. Thus forgiveness of our sins has resulted in the canceling of the bond that was against us.

It is primarily the KJV translation of verse 14 ("handwriting of ordinances") that has led some to interpret the phrase as referring to the various Mosaic rituals and ceremonial "ordinances" that largely ceased to have relevance after Christ died on the cross. So if some law was nailed to the cross, it would have to be the ceremonial law, since the moral law was not made "void" by the cross (Rom. 3:31).

However, Paul rarely makes the neat division between the ceremonial law and the moral law that we are often quick to make. In fact, his references to the ceremonial laws are rare. When he does use the word "law" (nomos), he most frequently has in mind the moral law in general and often the Decalogue in particular. Of course, in our passage he doesn't use the word "law" at all, which is why we have to be so careful to reason from the context to understand his meaning.

In a strikingly similar passage in Ephesians 2:14, 15, Paul tells how Christ has brought peace, not just between Jew and Gentile, but between all humans and God, by nullifying the "law of commandments in decrees" (ton nomon ton entolon en dogmasin) (see New Jerusalem). Here the word "law" is linked with the word dogmasin, the same word translated "ordinances" in Colossians. The context of both Colossians and Ephesians indicates that something more than ceremonies was involved.

One thing is very clear: when Paul elsewhere refers to the impact of the cross for the Christian, he does not limit his reasoning to abolishing the ceremonial law. For Paul the most important thing that ended at the cross was the condemnation brought about by our sin. That condemnation arose out of a broken moral law. As he says in Romans 7:7, "if it had not been for the law, I should not have known sin" (RSV). In other words, it is the broken law that stands before us and condemns us, which is all the moral law can do for those who have broken it. But as Paul says in Romans 8:1 "there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus" (RSV). Or, as in verse 3, "God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do: sending his own Son . . . condemned sin in the flesh" (RSV).

To put it another way, the moral law could point out sin, but could not forgive it. So God had to intervene, or we would stand forever condemned by that law. At that point, the "principalities and powers" that Paul mentions in Colossians 2:15 would triumph over us. But now, as a result of the cross, that picture has changed, and the powers have been defeated. And that happened when the condemnation of the moral law was figuratively nailed to the cross. The NRSV smoothly translates it: "erasing the record that stood against us with its legal demands. He

set this aside, nailing it to the cross." Thus He made "peace by the blood of his cross" (Col. 1:20, RSV).

The moral law after the cross

This interpretation does not mean that the moral law itself did not survive the cross. It is one thing to say that the demands of the law have been met in Christ. It is quite another to say that the law has been abolished in Christ. Or to put it differently, the law serves at least two functions; as an objective description of God's character and expectations, it stands forever; as an unbending standard that condemns our failure to keep it and thus drives us to Christ, it has a temporary function. It is this last aspect that Paul has in mind when he uses the "nailed to the cross" figure.

But an even more problematic phrase follows in verse 16. The first word, *oun* ("therefore"), is a small but crucial word that closely connects what follows with what has just preceded. So then verse 16 begins with Paul saying, "Consequently, on the basis of what I have just established, don't let anyone pass judgment on you in the following matters." In other words, Christ's death not only did away with our guilty indebtedness to the law, it also took away the basis of criticism from those who would pass judgment on the Colossian Christians. But just what was the nature of this "passing judgment"?

Passing judgment

Some have suggested that Paul's counsel was not directed against the false teachers, but only against the believers listening to them and acceding to their criticism.⁽¹⁵⁾ Such a view has Paul saying, "Pay no attention to their criticism, since your practices are above reproach." We Sabbatarians like that suggestion, since it leaves our day of worship firmly in place. But our peace of mind cannot be bought so easily. In this verse Paul mentions five different details of religious ritual that have been called in question: food and drink and then the three tightly connected "feast days, new moon, Sabbath day." Are we to believe that Christ's death simply did away with the basis of criticism so that now we can continue not only all food and drink rituals, but also the rituals of feast days and new moons?

If Paul had stopped with the first two words, "food and drink," that interpretation might fit. But after Paul listed these five things he referred to at least some of

them as a "shadow" (skia) compared with the "substance" (soma), which is Christ. Surely this last phrase emphasizes flawed practices, not just some heretics' demanding attitudes about perfectly acceptable practices.

Food and drink

But we must look more carefully at Paul's list of five. First, with reference to "food and drink" (brosis/posis). These words have suggested to some that the issues at stake had to do with Mosaic food and drink offerings that were abolished by Christ's death. But the Greek words brosis and posis don't equate easily with anything Mosaic.

For example, throughout the Septuagint and the New Testament brosis and posis are never used with reference to meal and drink offerings. Furthermore, thusia is the technical word for sacrifice or offering, and given Paul's Hebrew background, he must have known the correct word for meal offering. Similarly, posis was never used for any kind of drink offering, because spendo was the term that meant "to offer a libation or drink offering." (16) However, even if the verse is speaking of ceremonial offerings, posis suggests something incongruous, since the Mosaic law contained no prohibition respecting drinks except in the rare case of a Nazirite vow or the case of drinking from vessels made unclean by the dead body of an animal. (17)

It should also be noted that these two words have action endings, which means they would normally be translated "eating and drinking" rather than "food and drink." Accordingly, they probably refer not to Mosaic rituals, but to more general ascetic prohibitions being advocated by some Colossian false teachers. Such an interpretation harmonizes well with other references here to strict asceticism that go beyond anything Jewish or Christian. For example, in verses 18, 20, 21, and 23 Paul scorns those who delight in "self-abasement and worship of angels," and decries those who are submitting to stringent negatives, such as "Do not handle, do not taste, do not touch"! Such behavior appears to be devotional, but in fact has no value (verse 23, RSV). The point is, whether this "eating and drinking" referred to mistaken asceticism or harmless eating practices, the cross has freed us from the criticism.

The issue of sabbath

In the phrase "festivals, new moons, or sabbaths" (heortes, noumenias, sabbaton) in verse 16 (NRSV), the identity of the sabbaths has occasioned considerable debate. This phrase is found nowhere else in the New Testament, but occurs five times in the Septuagint (2 Chron. 2:4; 31:3; Neh. 10:33; Eze. 45:17; Hosea 2:11). Each time, speaking of the burnt offerings other than the daily offerings, the reference is to the Sabbaths (weekly), new moons (monthly), and appointed feasts (yearly). At times the order is reversed, but in each case, "new moon" is in the middle, thus making a logical sequence from weekly to yearly or vice versa. The implication is that the sabbath being described is the weekly Sabbath.

Another point to consider is that the ceremonial sabbaths were part of the annual feasts to which the word heortes referred. Accordingly, when Paul here refers to "sabbaths," if he meant the ceremonial sabbaths, he was needlessly repeating himself. In that case he would be saying, "Let no one pass judgment on you in regard to a feast day/ceremonial sabbath, or in regard to a new moon, or in regard to a ceremonial sabbath," a statement neither logical nor likely.

Sometimes the assertion is made that the plural form of the word "sabbath" here indicates something other than the weekly Sabbath. But the plural form is used several times for the weekly Sabbath, including in the heart of the fourth commandment.

Whatever Paul is suggesting about this sabbath day, he is not addressing the age-old Saturday versus Sunday debate. Verse 17 makes clear that for the Colossians there is a more substantive issue at stake, and it is only when we keep focused on the immediate Colossian context that we can correctly resolve the difficulty.

Much has been written about the many-faceted Colossian heresy, its gnostic tendencies, asceticism, Judaism, and distorted Christianity. But the single most recurring element that dominated Paul's concerns was the low view of Christ that characterized the heresy. It is not incidental that the strongest statement regarding the deity of Christ in the entire New Testament is found in Colossians 1:15-20. Repeatedly Paul stressed the all-sufficiency of the risen Christ (1:15-20; 2:6-11, 19, 20;

3:1-4, 11), which brings clarity to his use of "shadow" and "body" in verse 17.

The word "shadow" has often been interpreted as if it meant to "foreshadow" something to come. But without exception, when the word "shadow" (skia) is used in juxtaposition with "body" (soma), the meaning is emptiness contrasted with substance or reality. By these two words Paul addressed several aspects of Colossian worship practice that had one thing in common; they are Christ-less and for that reason, empty. Some practices were ascetic and empty; others were Jewish types and now empty. The Colossian weekly sabbath, while not a Jewish type, was empty in two ways. First, like all their other rituals, it was without Christ, and for Paul, a Christ-less sabbath was an empty sabbath.

And second, Paul saw emptiness in the Jewishness that had become attached to the weekly Sabbath. When the Sabbath commandment was given the second time in Deuteronomy 5, its observance was directly linked, not to God's having created the heavens and the earth (Ex. 20:11), but to God's delivering Israel out of Egypt. Therefore, for that reason, "the Lord your God commanded you to keep the sabbath day" (Deut 5:15, RSV).

Over the years the Sabbath had become so identified with the regulations of Judaism that even Jesus' attempts to purge them were only marginally successful. Among the Colossians, a ritualized Jewish sabbath had emptied the day of Christ, its true substance.

It is plain from the argument that the Sabbath is here regarded not as it was primevally (Gen. 2:3) "made for man" (Mark 2:27), God's benignant gift for His creatures' bodily and spiritual benefit; but as it was adopted to be a symbolic institution of the Mosaic covenant, and expressly adapted to the relation between God and Israel (Ex. 31:12-17); an aspect of the Sabbath that governs much of the language of the Old Testament about it.(18)

In positive terms, only a Sabbath stripped of its Jewishness can be filled with Christ, its true substance. The Colossian sabbath, kept without Christ ("not holding fast to the head" (2:19, NRSV), is still linked to shadowy Jewish ritualism instead of being a genuine rest in Christ as described in Hebrews 4:9. The fact that Paul did not carefully spell out the kind of Sabbath keeping

he advocated should not surprise us. Paul often rebuked what he considered foolish practices without giving, in that context, detailed instruction on proper behavior. Furthermore, his own practice of teaching and preaching Sabbath after Sabbath was so well known he probably felt it slightly absurd to spell out in detail what they had seen him doing every Sabbath.

-Ministry Magazine, May 1997

Comments:

<The first phrase that gives rise to some contention is cheirographon tois dogmasin, translated in the KJV as "handwriting of ordinances." Other translations include "Certificate of debt" (NASB), or "bond written in ordinances" (RV), or "the bond which stood against us with its legal demands" (RSV). Since the words occur nowhere else in Scripture, lexical definitions must be carefully guided by the immediate context.>

One is able to combine from the above translations, the "*written ordinances issued against us / served upon us demanding legal action against us*". Carefully guided by the immediate context, it could but refer to one thing: A court order against the Colossus Believers for believing in Jesus Christ and for celebrating the Sabbath in His worship and to His honour.

By keeping to the simplest, most down to earth, direct, practical, existential and literal translation, 'spiritual' applications of the text will stay simple and clear, while speculative – usually the <cut out for us> interpretations – will prove themselves superfluous at best.

The <carefully guided by the immediate context> translation will also fit perfectly with Paul's use of the juridical word "judge", which once more, is used in its simplest, most down to earth, direct, practical, existential and literal sense, which is that of a judgement and condemnation passed by the "principalities" civil and statutory of the "world", "against" "you", the Church. But instead of the "dominions" of this world condemning and ridiculing the Christians who stood trial for their Faith of Jesus and the keeping of His Commandments, He, "in it" – in His death and resurrection from the dead – made of them, before the courts of heaven, the laughingstock"!

The implication is, inevitably, that Paul also uses the word "Sabbaths" for its purest sense, that is, of the Sabbaths ordinary – Christian Days of Worship-Rest. <Lexical definitions must be carefully guided by the immediate context>!

<<Even a good English translation is not enough to resolve all the doctrinal and theological difficulties. In fact, this is one of those passages in which a few of the finer points of the original language gives us a real boost to our interpretive task.>>

<Our interpretive task> with this Scripture most of the time is self-assigned, and the <doctrinal and theological difficulties> which we (<'We'> – <biblical expositors> who have their <work cut out for them>) are <to resolve>, are purely imaginary and inherited from earlier <biblical expositors> who did not have their work cut out for them, but set the rule for those who would follow.

Yet the finer points of the original language give us no reason or provocation to assume, find or 'prove' the existence of <doctrinal and theological difficulties> in this Scripture.

But this is how it goes with the <interpretation> of our Scripture, for many years now. To start, first create one's own difficulties, even 'heresies' – 'Colossian heresies'. Then try and find solutions and answers to our self-made problems and questions, and self-made definitions for our imagined 'heresies'. It is so impressively scholarly not even a good English translation will be enough to resolve all the doctrinal and theological difficulties we have invented and solved all by ourselves.

Example:

<It is primarily the KJV translation of verse 14 ("handwriting of ordinances") that has led some to interpret the phrase as referring to **the various Mosaic rituals and ceremonial "ordinances"** that largely ceased to have relevance after Christ died on the cross. **So**, if some law was nailed to the cross, it **would have to be** the ceremonial law, since the moral law was not made "void" by the cross (Rom. 3:31).>

Invented all by ourselves, I said. In fact! From where is derived the idea of <the various Mosaic rituals and ceremonial "ordinances"> or, in short, <the ceremonial law>, artificially inserted here, from which to draw illusionary would-have-to-be's? Not from

anywhere in this Letter or from the immediate context of 2:16-17, but from <Rom. 3 : 31>!

Paul in no manner nor in any one word, wrote or meant or just hinted, in the direction of <the various Mosaic rituals and ceremonial "ordinances">. It had long since been forgotten among Christians.

Chapter 2 verse 14, *ecsaleipsas to kath hehmohn cheirographon tois dogmasin ho ehn hupenantion hehmihn* Marshall: "Wiping out the against us handwriting in ordinances which was contrary to us".

Dogmasin from *dogmatidzoh* – "To lay down a decree" (The Classic Greek Dictionary) = to make a law. So a "handwritten law" is an authorised, signed, and sealed law! This downright, audacious "court order" "against" the Colossian Church, says Paul, is a worthless scrap of paper. When Christ blotted out the very sins of you, "having forgiven you all trespasses" (of the Heavenly Law), in that He hath quickened you together with Him (Jesus Christ)", he took with and in Himself even this puny threat against you and did away with it. Who now, can bring in accusation against you in view of the fact it is Christ who died, and Christ who rose again – He who Judges, and he who forgives sins? (To forgive sins is to justify.) "In Him" you are the untouchables! So what is this, this scribbling on paper? Christ took this insignificant decree against you – after all it's only a human order – and nailing it with Himself to His cross, removed it out of the way completely! He in fact IN IT – in having died and risen again – spoiled principalities and powers / put off the rulers and the authorities (Marshall), exposed them, made a show of them / ridiculed them in celestial court. So then, Christ having done just that to anything and everything –ANY 'Law'– "against us", Paul "reassures" (2:2), acting "paraclete", doing what the Great Paraclete the Holy Spirit inspires and commands him to do, writing:

Therefore, don't you o Body of Christ's own, let yourselves be judged by anyone of the world. The law is for the transgressors of it – you, need none of it. Your present suffering for Christ, weighed up against the glory that awaits you as Body of His own, is nothing.

About that word "Therefore": States Richardson:

<The ... word, oun ("therefore"), is a small but crucial word that **closely connects what follows with what has just preceded**. So then verse 16 begins with Paul saying, "**Consequently, on the basis of what I have just established**, don't let anyone pass judgment on you in the following matters." In other words, **Christ's death** not only did away with our guilty indebtedness to the law, it also took away the basis of criticism from those who would pass judgment on the Colossian Christians.>

<... what has just preceded ... > – what is it?

Just before Paul writes his single word ‘oun’, <"Consequently, on the basis of what I have just established>, he writes: "... (Christ) triumphing ... in it".

“In it” – ‘in’ what was that; what is ‘it’?

First of all it is what Paul says RIGHT HERE it is, Christ “triumphing” or Christ “victorious”!

Now what does Paul have in mind, is the ‘triumph’ of Jesus Christ?

Do we have to guess? No! He tells us straight: it is Christ Jesus in resurrection from the dead – the RISEN Crucified in whom is the Fullness of God.

“As ye have received Jesus Christ ... THE LORD!” How “the Lord”? The Lord, through resurrection from the dead and triumph over all the foe of God, righteousness and life!

“And ye are complete in Him, which is the Head of all principality and power.” Where and how did that happen, did that become true?

Here: “What is the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power which He wrought in Christ WHEN HE RAISED HIM FROM THE DEAD, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavens far above all principality and power, and might and dominion, and every name that is named not only in this world but also in that which is to come, and hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the Head over all –to his Church which is His Body– even the fulness of Him that filleth all in all.” (Eph.1:19-23)

This is what Richardson says it was: <In other words, Christ's death not only did away with our guilty indebtedness to the law, it also took away the basis of criticism from those who would pass judgment on the Colossian Christians.>

Did not <Christ's death> avail all this? Surely not without the resurrection of Him from death and the chains of hell! Christ's death would NOT do away with our guilty indebtedness to the law; His death would NOT take away also the basis of criticism from those who would pass judgment on the Colossian Christians, had not Christ risen from death into life where – AND WHEN – operated the fullness of the Godhead in the fullness of His power – had not God RESTED from ALL His works on that day of His raising Jesus up again!

This we may and must qualify in full assurance, for THIS, is the basis upon which Paul “reassures” / “comforts” the Colossian Christians in the matter of the Sabbaths they with eating and drinking of Jesus Christ and “in Him” feasted. Because this, is the reason, the grounds, the essence and the guarantee of the Christian Sabbath Day.

Where are <all the doctrinal and theological difficulties>? They do not exist.

Where are all the difficulties the Colossians must have had, seeing Paul found it necessary to "comfort" them in it? Earthly, existential difficulties, they were! Plain stuff, resolved, taken out of the way, nailed to Jesus' cross, made a joke of by Him who rose from the dead and therein triumphed over it!

With our sin-problem solved, all our problems are solved; are all our problems nothing! And with our soul-enemy vanquished and squashed, all our threatening earthly enemies are despicable little clowns.

Therefore, feast on, "eating and drinking, eating and drinking of Christ-Feast: whether of month's, or of Sabbath's ('weeks') occasion".

Plain sailing on the roughest of seas by God's Providence in Christ.

Why should anyone who trust in Jesus, approach this passage with uneasiness? This from the outset is what causes all the doctrinal and theological difficulties. Approach this passage with and in the freedom wherewith we have been made free for Christ and are the free of Christ, and look where all the doctrinal and theological difficulties vanish to. They are all blown straight onto the anti-Sabbath, pro-Sunday approach.

<<So if some law was nailed to the cross, it would have to be the ceremonial law, since the moral law was not made "void" by the cross (Rom. 3:31).>>

If some law was nailed to the cross, it would have to be the law as authority and power that judges, denounces, condemns and kills, for now, or forever, THE 'MORAL' LAW, since the moral law was not made "void" by the cross but confirmed! Look at the cross of Christ and see the Law: it isn't useless, powerless, "void", but brings to judgement and puts to death Him the Sacrifice for the transgressors of it! It is the Law of God Jesus Christ that takes to the cross and in and with and through and by Himself nails to the cross, taking out of the way, blotting out, the Law! Yea, The Law, the 'moral' Law of God. Here is the one situation that it should be: The Law, the Law, and nothing but the Law! So if some law was nailed to the cross, it was that greatest of both 'Ceremonial Law' and 'Moral Law', that if you transgress it 'morally', you shall surely die.

Colossians 2:14-17 is a passage with most transparent meaning, but it seemingly incessantly must suffer bumptious ABUSE under the pretence of 'exegesis'. Its only 'difficulty' though, is 'expositors', who 'interpret' with certain presuppositions firmly in place in their minds, and who, while

they sharply focus upon 'contemporary application', at any and all cost must do away with the 'easier explanation' – despite that 'easier explanation' may be the Gospel simple and pure.

It is completely incomprehensible how Richardson could say, <Understandably, we who hold both the law and the Sabbath in considerable esteem approach the passage with some uneasiness>, but also completely true. For all 'we' can see in it is what 'contemporary application' and 'certain presuppositions' have put there since it had been decided it must and only can be 'doctrinal and theological difficulties' and 'contention'; that it must be <the various Mosaic rituals and ceremonial "ordinances">, and or <a ritualized Jewish Sabbath>, or whatever but the Gospel and the Gospel Sabbath Day.

<The context of both Colossians and Ephesians indicates that something more than ceremonies was involved.> Richardson should have remembered it even better than he did.

Here is that most famous of <presuppositions> wherewith Colossians 2:16-17 is approached and interpreted, made difficult, uneasy and contentious,

<So if some law was nailed to the cross, it would have to be the ceremonial law, since the moral law was not made "void" by the cross (Rom. 3:31).>

What alternative does Richardson offer? Only something more difficult, uneasy and contentious, as I shall show. Says he, <In this exposition we will focus sharply on the Colossian context before making contemporary applications.> But even before he focussed sharply, he already had decided, <Colossians 2:14-17 is not a passage with a transparent meaning>! Nevertheless, here is what he has to offer,

<The context begins with 2:12, where Paul speaks of being "buried with Him in baptism." The result of that "burial baptism" is resurrection to a new life and cleansing from sin. Paul refers to that cleansing with two participle phrases that are parallel, the second repeating the thought of the first. The first of those two phrases is "having forgiven us all our trespasses" (verse 13, RSV). The parallel and repetitive phrase is "having canceled the bond [cheirographon tois dogmasin] which stood against us" (verse 14, RSV). Both phrases mean essentially the same thing, the second simply

repeating in different terms what it meant for him to forgive our sins. Thus forgiveness of our sins has resulted in the canceling of the bond that was against us.>

With a spiritualised 'application' or 'interpretation', this is in order. But Paul isn't <simply repeating in different terms> <the same thing> in the <parallel and repetitive phrase>.

Where he in <the first of those two phrases> undoubtedly applies our mystical co-baptism to the forgiveness of sin in the baptism of Christ's suffering – in His death and resurrection – this mystery of Godliness already forms the basis for what Paul further states in verse 14 in words and phrases unmistakably not mystical or spiritual, but literally literal, "The WRITTEN LAW against us, that was meant to annihilate us, He annihilated"! On strength of the first, the second has been made possible. Therefore the two things meant in each, are not the same.

By virtue of our forgiveness of sin through Jesus Christ, THIS "written Law" is "taken out of the way" – is made no longer an obstacle in our way. It simply cannot prevent us to do what we must do and which is just the unpretentious and most natural thing to follow since we as the Body of Christ's have our sins forgiven, which is to celebrate and to worship God who most wonderfully provided opportunity and venue for it in the Christian Day of Worship Rest, the "Sabbaths"!

"Both phrases mean essentially the same thing" as far as the Law is concerned: it has been made powerless against us seeing God forgave us our sins through Jesus Christ. But in the existential situation of the Colossians, the two phrases had very different application, their forgiveness of sins being the fountain of the Congregation's free and happy feasting– the reason for their Sabbaths' celebration, and the reason they could defy the world through it.

Some people will get a heart attack when they are shown that the Law had been annulled. Others will revel in their embarrassment. Neither party however have reason to gloom or gloat. It had been Christ who died; it had been He who was crucified, and it had been He who rose from the dead again. Therefore whatever happened to Him happened to the Law. The Law had been taken out of our way whereas it had been against us and brought no happiness. It had been and is the power of sin, said Paul. But since Jesus also rose from the dead our happiness can no longer be suppressed by the Law. The Law can no longer be against us, but Christ having taken in its place, The Law has become the Source of our happiness and feasting – the Source of our Sabbath's-living. It is why the world hated the Christians' Sabbaths – because they hated Christ, and the Body of Christ's own. Redemption, Redeemed, and being redeemed – the three are ever in one;

are ever in one “in Him”. Being Redemption is Jesus Christ; being the Redeemed is being His Church or the Body of Christ’s; and being redeemed is being the Body of Christ’s feasting Jesus Christ – “feasting Sabbaths’ Days of Feast”. It comprises the whole of what <both phrases mean> and that is <essentially the same thing> ... <forgiveness of our sins has resulted in the canceling of the bond that was against us> and has provided substance, solid reason and common sense ground for Sabbaths’ Feast.

Ceremonies? Who spoke of ceremonies? Not Paul! Not here!

Or does He? Yes in fact, he does speak of ceremonies – the whole Sabbaths’ celebration reference is about the ceremony of Sabbath-keeping! Now what’s wrong with that? Does it make Sabbath-keeping immoral, the fact it’s ‘ceremonial’? The artificiality and superficiality of the idea! Does it make of the ‘moral’ Sabbath a ‘ceremonial’ Sabbath, Paul’s reference here to Sabbaths? Or of the ‘ceremonial’ Sabbaths the ‘moral’ Sabbaths? It’s ridiculous the idea of ‘Ceremonial Law’ and ‘Moral Law’. Irrelevant! Paul has nothing in mind but Christian Sabbaths and Christians, keeping them, and the world condemning them for it. And that it was a moral issue if ever there had been! Kept it the Christians did because of Jesus Christ and of what He attained through victory in death and resurrection. If that will not make of the Christians’ Sabbaths’ Feast, holy, moral, blameless, free, salvation-practice, –‘ceremony’– then what will? <Essentially ... forgiveness of our sins has resulted in ...> their “eating and drinking of feast, whether of month’s, or of Sabbaths”. Theirs was a Sabbaths’ Feast of the Moral Law, blessed and holy, because of Jesus Christ, a Sabbaths’ Feast of God’s finishing of all His creation and of all His works, because it was a Sabbaths’ feast of remembrance of Jesus Christ and of Him being “declared the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of Holiness by the resurrection of Him from the dead ... the Gospel of God which he had promised afore by His prophets in the Holy Scriptures”. (Ro.1:4,1,2) “God thus concerning the Seventh day spoke: And God on the Seventh rested from all His works ... (in these last days by the Son).” (Hb.4:4, 1:2)

Ceremonial Law?

Says Richardson,

< ... Paul rarely makes the neat division between the ceremonial law and the moral law that we are often quick to make. In fact, his references to the ceremonial laws are rare. When he does use the word "law" (nomos), he most frequently has in mind the moral law in general and often the Decalogue in particular. Of course, in our passage he doesn't use the word "law" at all, which is why we have to be so

Careful to reason from the context to understand his meaning.

In a strikingly similar passage in Ephesians 2:14, 15, Paul tells how Christ has brought peace, not just between Jew and Gentile, but between all humans and God, by nullifying the "law of commandments in decrees" (ton nomon ton entolon en dogmasin) (see New Jerusalem). Here the word "law" is linked with the word dogmasin, the same word translated "ordinances" in Colossians. **The context of both Colossians and Ephesians indicates that something more than ceremonies was involved.**

(Emphasis CGE)

One thing is very clear: when Paul elsewhere refers to the impact of the cross for the Christian, he does not limit his reasoning to abolishing the ceremonial law. For Paul the most important thing that ended at the cross was the condemnation brought about by our sin. That condemnation arose out of a broken moral law. As he says in Romans 7:7, "if it had not been for the law, I should not have known sin" (RSV). In other words, it is the broken law that stands before us and condemns us, which is all the moral law can do for those who have broken it. But as Paul says in Romans 8:1 "there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus" (RSV). Or, as in verse 3, "God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do: sending his own Son . . . condemned sin in the flesh" (RSV).

To put it another way, the moral law could point out sin, but could not forgive it. So God had to intervene, or we would stand forever condemned by that law. At that point, the "principalities and powers" that Paul mentions in Colossians 2:15 would triumph over us. But now, as a result of the cross, that picture has changed, and the powers have been defeated. And that happened when the condemnation of the moral law was figuratively nailed to the cross. The NRSV smoothly translates it: "erasing the record that stood against us with its legal demands. He set this aside, nailing it to the cross." Thus He made "peace by the blood of his cross" (Col. 1:20, RSV).>

Well said!

Nevertheless, there is a bit of an anti-climax in the following:

<But now, as a result of the cross, that picture has changed, and the powers have been defeated. And that happened when the condemnation of the moral law was **figuratively** nailed to the cross.> (Emphasis CGE)

Through an ingenious identification of <the condemnation of the moral law> and <the moral law> as such, Richardson precludes <the moral law> was actually <nailed to the cross>. He in principle would not accept it; for him (an SDA) the Law could not be nailed to the cross, for that (for him) would mean that the Law had been abolished, removed, annulled.

But it exactly, had been the case. Richardson's fear, that it would mean the end of the Law, is groundless. He only needs to remember that what happened to and with the Law, happened to and with and in and through Jesus Christ – not by itself or by human authority! So that as the Law was taken down and out, so was Jesus Christ; but as Jesus Christ was raised up again to be Head and Light and Lord, so was The Law!

The identification should not be made between the condemnation of the Law and the Law itself, but between the Law itself as in its very condemnation taken to the cross and nailed to it, and the Law revived from the curse of the Law which was the curse of the cross, and raised to Life again in the Person of Jesus Christ!

So then, the "principalities and powers" of the world that Paul mentions in Colossians 2:15, would triumph over us. But now as a result of the cross, that picture has changed, and the powers have been defeated. And that happened when NOT <the moral law> but by virtue of it being <the moral law> that was nailed to the cross, the "written (literal) legal document against us that was served upon us", was also <figuratively> nailed to the cross and <defeated> "in Him".

So that Paul could write to the Colossian Christians and "reassure / comfort / solicit" them, Christ having done away with our sins and with the Law against us, "in Him", and having forgiven us our trespasses against it, "in Him", has in fact therein and "in Him", "done away with the written legal document against us" which "condemned" / "judged" us for eating and drinking of Sabbaths' Feast.

<This interpretation does not mean that the moral law itself did not survive the cross. It is one thing to say that the demands of the law have been met in Christ. It is quite another to say that

the law has been abolished in Christ. Or to put it differently, the law serves at least two functions; as an objective description of God's character and expectations, it stands forever; as an unbending standard that condemns our failure to keep it and thus drives us to Christ, it has a temporary function. It is this last aspect that Paul has in mind when he uses the "nailed to the cross" figure.>

<This interpretation does not mean that the moral law itself did not survive the cross>, but only for as long as "the Law" as seen "in Him"!

<It is one thing to say that the demands of the law have been met in Christ. It is quite another to say that the law has been abolished in Christ.>

<The demands of the law> are the Law. The Law is the Law of demands and commands. It cannot be the one thing is true and the other is not. "The Law WITH its demands", says Paul, has been nothing less than <abolished in Christ> for only thus could its <demands been met in Christ>. The very perpetuity of the Law demands its abolishment and annulment "in Him"; otherwise it would still demand of ourselves payment for our sins with eternal death, and would we not have been saved. But "in Him" the demand had been abolished, and "in Him" the penalty had been abolished, and "in Him" the Law of the demand and of the penalty, had been abolished. Paul meant every word he wrote, to its last consequence. <As an unbending standard that condemns our failure to keep it and thus drives us to Christ, it (the Law) has a temporary function.> With its function, the Law stops; Law without function is nothing. Our condemnation had been turned over in the death of Christ; our justification had been introduced in the resurrection of Him "FROM the dead"! Christ had been "raised up AGAIN"! It was the history of God's Christ; it was the history of God's Law.

Only, "If there had been a Law that could give life ..." was Paul's ejaculatory prayer. "For if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness (and life) should have been by the law." (Gl.3:21) But the Scriptures says no, everybody is a sinner! (verse 22) The Law that could not, had gone, in Him; the Law that indeed gives life, rose from the dead, its law being, that we might have life, and life more abundantly. Oh how I love Thy Law; Oh how He loved me! Who can say that of the Old Law? In the Old dispensation they could say, Thy law is the truth; in the New we know, Thy Law is the Truth – the Living Truth of Life! The Law that killeth no longer kills because it cannot, and it cannot because He in his body nailed it to the cross. "I may live, for Thy Law is my delight!", repeated three times in

Psalm 119 – 77, 92, 174. “If we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him” (Ro.6:8).

By this very Law the Colossian believers feasted their Sabbaths. “In that / because / by the principle HE who died unto sin, LIVETH, he LIVETH unto God!” ... In that / because / by the principle they died, having been co-buried with Christ, the Colossian Believers, in that / because / by reason they were co-raised to life “in Him”, LIVED God’s Sabbath Day “UNTO God”!

How passionate is Paul here; how barren our appreciation of what he was so passionate about.

Paul however, could get more excited about his subject than when viewed purely objectively – the Law when viewed as a document merely. For Paul in fact argues the written Law which he finds in “the Scriptures”, had been a temporary thing that as it came, also went. There was a time it was not; and there had come a time it no longer had been anymore. (Ro. 5:13) For Paul could get most excited, most passionate, when he considered the law that really killed, the law within – that law with which Paul identified totally, and with which he identified totally every man, Romans chapters 6 and 7 and especially 8:2 and further, the law of sin! This law has a much longer history than the Law of the Scriptures, in fact it has a history as long as that of sin itself and of man as a sinner himself which is scarcely shorter than the whole of his history!

Now in Colossians Paul has in mind this Law, and not the temporary ‘Moral Law’ one sees written in the Old Testament, “The Ten Commandments” or “Nomos”, as he calls it elsewhere. No, Paul thinks of that law that killeth truly and truly never could justify or give life, “the Law of Sin” – as over against “the Law of GOD” (Ro.8:7)! The whole drama about this Law he sees played off “in Him”, in the death-burial of Him, and in the resurrection-triumph of Him, and now its effect upon them that as a Body are raised up together with Him and co-quickened “by His Spirit that dwelleth in you”. “THEREFORE brethren, (just like in Col.2:16) we are debtors (that is, are we under that LAW) not to the flesh ... for if ye live after the flesh (and according to its law), YE SHALL DIE!” ... But now: “The Spirit (of Christ) beareth witness with our spirit, that we are The Children of God (His Church), and if His Children, heirs of God (and of His Rest, and of His Sabbaths’ rest indeed); then we are joint-heirs WITH Christ – if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified with Him. For I reckon that the sufferings of the present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.” (Ro.8)

Here is a very similar, almost parallel passage with Colossians 2. Don’t you be judged by anyone, for your condemnation by the world is not worthy to be compared with your prize “in Him”: Do not be beguiled of your reward but feast your Sabbath Days, celebrate your redemption, “in Him” – these

things are but a spectre of things a-coming – that we as the Body of Christ's own, may also be glorified together with Him.

<... it is the broken law that stands before us and condemns us, which is all the moral law can do for those who have broken it. But as Paul says in Romans 8:1 "there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus" (RSV). Or, as in verse 3, "God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do: sending his own Son . . . condemned sin in the flesh" (RSV).

To put it another way, the moral law could point out sin, but could not forgive it. So God had to intervene, or we would stand forever condemned by that law.>

Yes, this in fact is true. It could also be said with another word of Paul's, "The letter kills" (2Cor.3:6), or, "the ministration of condemnation of death, written and engraven in stones", verses 9 and 7.

Strange that the same people will not accept it is the Law spoken of in these lines! The reason they will not, it must be, is that Christ is not seen as ultimately Himself the Law that condemns, for Paul uses metaphor – he speaks 'figuratively' of the law – of the law as doing the work of Christ. In reality a letter cannot kill because it is itself a dead thing. It is The Broken Law of God, Jesus the Word of God, that in Person and living –as the Crucified– stands before us and condemns us, which is what morally speaking, ONLY God can do. Just so it is ONLY God who, while Himself being the Moral Law, can justify those who have broken the Law and transgressed against HIM, 'directly'. "Against Thee only have I sinned!" Therefore, as Paul says in Romans 8:1 "There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus" (RSV). Or, as in verse 3, "God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh [that is, the Law in letters on stones], could not do: sending his own Son . . . condemned sin in the flesh" (RSV). To put it another way, the written law could spell out sin, but could not convince of sin, nor forgive it – could as little as it could give life, take life! So God had to intervene through mercy and forgiveness unto LIFE through Jesus Christ, or we would stand forever condemned in Him, and condemned by Him.

Christ would have availed no more than the Law **in theory only** could do, namely to kill, had He not risen from the dead in order to attain what the Law also could not do – to give life. ("The Law" is an Old Testament metaphor for Christ.) It is as much a property of the Written Law that it cannot kill as that it cannot give life. It can in reality judge as little as it can condemn or pardon. These things lie in the capacity and power and Person of Judge Himself – the Judge who lives and ultimately earned His power over death

and life, Jesus our Lord and Saviour. Therefore Paul could say that Christ through His crucifixion and resurrection took away the written judgement against them.

Paul definitely thinks of Christ-the-in-full-power-and-ability-and-un-weakened-by-the-flesh-Law-of-God. "God sending His own Son" AS THIS LAW "CONDEMNED sin in the flesh (through the Man Jesus)". Christ not only forgives sins; he also condemns sins, and so is Himself the ('Moral') Law of God that killeth. 'The Law' – the Letter – could but 'point' to Him. Even though written by the finger of God on tables of stone, these were not really the "letter that killeth". For it is Christ who as he had the power to lay down His own life and to take it up again, so also is the ONLY who has the power righteously to demand life and to take life. 'The Law' –'the Letter'– could but 'point' to Him, for as little as it could give life, could "the Letter" actually demand or take life – could it actually "kill".

Now what has all this to do with our exegesis of Colossians 2:16-17?

If "nobody" could "condemn / judge you" –the through Jesus Christ Justified of God– how could "anybody" "subpoena" you for feasting God's Sabbaths? That's all!

What more do you want?

"And you while being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your hearts (you while being judged, condemned and killed / cut off / circumcised in Christ Himself by God's Word of Law in Person), you He together with Him quickened, having forgiven us all trespasses (against Him, The Law of God Himself). Wiping out the(-to-our-judgement-)written-ordinance which was against us (served / issued), He removed cancelled it out amongst us, nailing it to the cross (with Himself as well)."

What more could you expect?

"(Even) removing principalities (the highest authorities of the world) He put them to open shame, and in it (in His dying and rising, judgement and forgiveness, justice and mercy, killing and restoring to life) put them to open scorn." They are left without any authority over you now.

The first Christ literally did in Himself, being the Judge and Saviour, the Condemner and the Forgiver, the Killer and the Restorer, the Law and Mercy, together in Himself.

The second He did figuratively, having carried it with Him and in Him and nailing it with Himself and in Himself to the cross as He did with our sins.

Now just as it was possible Jesus could carry a literally written document of (worldly) justice in Himself to nail it to the cross in order to obliterate it in Himself, just so was it possible Jesus was able to carry a literally written document of Divine justice – the Ten Commandments and in fact the Scriptures in totality – in Himself to nail it to the cross in order to obliterate it in Himself and in and through Himself, to make it of no effect, so

that the sinner should stand blameless and spotless before the judgement seat of God Almighty.

Its very obliteration became its confirmation through fulfilment – its establishment and institution – by the once for all work of God, His act of rest.

Just as Jesus' very moment and act of dying and death, was the very moment and act wherein was sealed and guaranteed, and obtained and confirmed His resurrection and exaltation, so it was the final fulfilment once for all of all the works of God and of all His creation – His act of rest and entering into His own rest as God. Jesus' death and resurrection give origin and eternal existence to the Seventh Day of God's finishing, of God's blessing, of God's sanctification, of God's rest. The first Sabbath of God's creating work was caught up in the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

The Colossian believers knew it, and lived out in practice of Sabbaths' Feast, their knowledge, persuasion and Faith "in Him". And the world knew the Congregation lived their Sabbaths according to Jesus Christ and for the sake of Him and because of their faith in Him, and therefore, couldn't tolerate it or them for it. So the principalities, the authorities, the powers and dominion of the world, ordered and court-ordered the Church to stop their annoying practice. But Paul solicited them writing to them, saying: Don't you allow anyone to judge you in eating and drinking of feast, whether of month's or of Sabbath's Feast!" It has nothing to do with the world or anyone of the world, just go on feasting, it like a spectre promises things a-coming for you, even the Church as the Body of Jesus Christ's own, increasing with the increase and ingathered of God, His Elect and Triumphant Church.

And that brings us to another idea that needs clarification to the understanding of our Scripture, the idea and the meaning of the word translated "shadow".

Alleges Richardson:

<But after Paul listed these five things he referred to at least some of them as a "shadow" (skia) compared with the "substance" (soma), which is Christ. Surely this last phrase emphasizes flawed practices, not just some heretics' demanding attitudes about perfectly acceptable practices.>

We won't here enter too much upon the falsity <the "substance" (soma), which is Christ>, while the text has it, "the Body (or 'substance' to which the shadow adheres) is OF Christ's (own)" – in other words, is the Church – not, <is Christ>.

We would look at false allegations reached from nowhere, such as, <Surely this last phrase emphasizes flawed practices, not

just some heretics' demanding attitudes about perfectly acceptable practices>. Even <emphasizes> 'flawed practices'! Richardson a little further on makes another presumption, that 'shadow' indicates 'emptiness'. Here he insists it <emphasizes>! Inconsistent, to say the least.

Most 'empty' of substance of all though, and most confused, is Richardson's presumption that <Surely this last phrase emphasizes flawed practices, not just some heretics' demanding attitudes about perfectly acceptable practices.>

On what basis does he claim his <Surely> for his totally groundless <flawed practices>? This is what one could call assuming presumption. It is best of tactics for presumption to be assuming and as arrogant as possible.

<Flawed practices> of what?

Oh, I see! The <flawed practices> of the infamous 'Colossian heresy'! For Richardson the wrong things according to him implied in this Scripture, are <not just some heretics' demanding attitudes about perfectly acceptable practices>, but straight forward <flawed practices>. Were choices to be made between these, I would prefer to think that, while the <practices> are supposed <perfectly acceptable>, the supposed <heretics> with there supposed <demanding attitudes> supposedly were the nearest to the supposed right things. Luckily we are not restricted to Richardson's supposed alternatives or forced to discover a supposed 'Colossian heresy' in this Scripture whatsoever!

I wouldn't know who was the first to come to the fore with the idea of a 'Colossian heresy'. It wasn't Richardson though, and we may therefore justly conclude he is simply parroting previous exegetes. For most presumptuous and assuming, is the whole notion of a so called 'Colossian heresy' contained and exposed in these lines of Scripture. A heresy is first supposed, and then volumes of tiresome and uninspiring debate is started about what sort of heresy, e.g., was it about <some heretics' demanding attitudes about perfectly acceptable practices>, or was it about <flawed practices>? Nothing of that shall be found in the Scripture under scrutiny!

So what was the 'Colossian heresy'? I ask only to bring some order into play in our thinking, and shall allow Richardson to provide us with an almost flawless good description of it:

<Much has been written about the many-faceted Colossian heresy, its gnostic tendencies, asceticism, Judaism, and distorted Christianity. But the single most recurring element that dominated

Paul's concerns was the low view of Christ that characterized the heresy. It is not incidental that the strongest statement regarding the deity of Christ in the entire New Testament is found in Colossians 1:15-20.>

I said almost flawless, for there are a few fundamental errors in this description of the 'heresy' that must be discerned here.

First of all is the use of the word 'heresy' as such, for a 'heresy' implies an error harboured and guarded by the Church against its own principles. If it is the world outside that entertains the error, it no longer is called a 'heresy', for the world then harbours and guards that error according to its own "first principles". For the world there will be nothing wrong with it, and to the world's dismay it will be something which the Church fails to practice or believe.

The second flaw in Richardson's explanation of the 'Colossian heresy', is his inclusion in it of <Judaism, and distorted Christianity>. Simply, where does he get it from? Impossibly from the Letter itself, whether from the context in proximity or far. On the contrary, the 'Christianity' among the Colossians, you will find in all Paul's writings as the nearest to perfect he knew.

That acclaimed discovery of a 'syncretism' of a 'many-faceted heresy' of 'gnostic tendencies, asceticism, Judaism, and distorted Christianity' in the Colossian "Body of Christ's Own" was a delusion.

One could perhaps find something like it in Paul's Letter to the Galatians, but in this Letter? Till today from many years since, no one has been able to present one word indicating such a 'heresy' among these believers – except of course and invariable these very words of verses 16-17 in the second chapter – which depended every step on its distorted representation and interpretation.

Otherwise, yes sure, Richardson's definition of what the 'heresy' was as found in Colossus – not in the Church – is flawless, namely that its <single most recurring element ... was the low view of Christ that characterized> it. This being absolutely correct and true, I ask just one thing: Show me this in this Letter in the Body of Christ's Own in this city!

On the contrary, one finds the perfect opposite of this, in two respects: First with regard to the world, that the single most recurring element of the low view of Christ characterized and indicated it, and not the Church. Second, with regard to the Church, that the single most recurring element of the HIGH view of Christ characterized it and its worship, and indicated its perfect unity "in Him". It

is in this context that the Sabbaths' feasting of the Church should be understood – an 'indicator' or 'shadow' or 'spectre' or 'promise' "of things future, the Body namely, of Christ's Elect"!

Now did that bring us any nearer to a better understanding of the word "shadow"? Only in the last conclusion, yes.

But remember we in the first place wondered off this far, from the moment we inquired about this word! And we wondered off because we followed the flawed reasoning of the exegetes! How much have come of the good intentions to <focus sharply on the Colossian context before making contemporary applications ... in this exposition> and to <be carefully guided by the immediate context>.

Our conclusion is, no! This has just lead us away from the meaning of the word, and we would never have been able to find its true meaning unless we returned to the context and to the Scriptures!

So what about the meaning of the word "shadow" 'skia' in the immediate context?

<Repeatedly Paul stressed the all-sufficiency of the risen Christ (1:15-20; 2:6-11, 19, 20; 3:1-4, 11), which brings clarity to his use of "shadow" and "body" in verse 17.>

The all-sufficiency of the risen Christ, for the Body of His Own – that, "these things", namely, the feasting, the Sabbaths, are a shadow of. That is the meaning of the "shadow", here – that, positively, and for no moment in a sense bad or <empty>. The all-sufficiency of the risen Christ, being the Head and Light of "the Body that belongs to Him", which is 'the substance' causing and casting the shadow by the Light flowing from its Head, is really and exclusively what the shadow means and points to – which it indicates though completely and through being completely dependent upon both this Body and this the Body's Head. Its shadow thus being cast right underneath its feet, is never without, and never severed, from this Body or from this its head and Light.

But, asserts Richardson,

<The word "shadow"(skia) ... without exception, when used in juxtaposition with "body" (soma), the meaning is emptiness contrasted with substance or reality. By these two words Paul addressed several aspects of Colossian worship practice that had one thing in common; they are Christ-less and for that reason, empty ...>.

Richardson does not qualify where, <used>, but asserting <used ... without exception>, he must have meant in the New

Testament as well – which is the only place of consequence of its use for us.

Now look at the word ‘shadow’ when used in the New Testament! Once – only once in a parallel instance – is it used with a meaning of ‘emptiness contrasted with substance or reality’, Mt.4: 16; Lk.1:79 – “sat in the region and shadow of death”.

Otherwise you will find the ‘shadow’ always ‘in the region of’ and inseparably connected with its object of casting:

“... the fowls of the air may lodge under the shadow of it (the mustard tree)”. Notice the shadow provides a home and a place of gathering! So the shadow of Col.2:16-17: It – the Sabbaths-shadow – is providing and in the future will provide a place of Congregation – so to speak a Church building in time – for the Body of Christ’s to assemble and worship.

In Hb.10:1 the shadow is the equivalent of a promise – and all the promises of God are sure, substantial and real: “The law having a shadow of good things to come”. What certainty, and what irrefutable dependence the shadow has on God’s providence! It never is empty, nor ever deprived of its substance and reality, because it is the Word of God assuring, and comforting, to His Church.

No one can dismiss the clear correspondence in meaning of substantial reality and fullness between this text and the Colossians instance of its use.

So in Hb.8:5 where it says, “the priests ... serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things ... all things according to the pattern...”. Undeniably ‘shadow’ virtually is the same as the ‘example’ and ‘pattern’. “Heavenly things” they were that cast this shadow, and heavenly “things are these” that in Colossians 2:17 are the shadow cast by heavenly things, namely through Christ the Head and Light, and the spiritual Body of the Assembled of Christ’s Own His Church. Does that indicate <emptiness contrasted with substance or reality>? In fact not! The word “shadow” in these Scriptures shows and confirms and establishes closest connection in oneness, the very conglomeration of heavenly things on earth!

As in Acts 5:15 where the shadow of Peter passed over an ill man and immediately cured him. Would that have happened had it been the shadow of any other person than Peter’s? Would that have happened if so happened the shadow did not pass over the sick? Only to illustrate that in the New Testament the word “shadow” is used in juxtaposition with the “body” (soma) in relation with which it stands, and that the meaning is almost exclusively substantial or real. It in fact ‘contextually, ‘emphasises’ ‘substance’ and ‘reality’ precisely

in not being the substance or reality itself. In the terminology of the Scriptures quoted: It "SERVES" as an "example", or functions as a reference or implication of its nearby – 'proximate' – reality and substance.

In the context of Colossians 2:16-17 it means the word shadow indicates God's Church on earth and in time as being the Body of Christ its Head – and that indicator being the Sabbaths the Church feasted, the Sabbaths as domain in time and space for and of Christian Worship-Rest.

So, away with the scholarly interpretations of the meaning of the word 'shadow' in this Scripture. They ALL – intentionally or unintentionally – work against the Sabbath ... and eventually, for, the Sunday and Sunday-worship – which has nothing to do with Paul's intent or words.

<The moral law after the cross

This interpretation does not mean that the moral law itself did not survive the cross. It is one thing to say that the demands of the law have been met in Christ. It is quite another to say that the law has been abolished in Christ. Or to put it differently, the law serves at least two functions; as an objective description of God's character and expectations, it stands forever; as an unbending standard that condemns our failure to keep it and thus drives us to Christ, it has a temporary function. It is this last aspect that Paul has in mind when he uses the "nailed to the cross" figure.>

Where do we find <God's character and expectations> ultimately and 'objectively', 'described'? In don'ts –in what man is forbidden– or in what God has done? Is the true 'Object' of God's 'character' the Law from Sinai, or the Law from Heaven and Person of Jesus the Christ of God? Then who or what is God's Law in the end – and who or what is God's Law from the beginning? The Ten Commandments, or, Jesus Christ whom you crucified through and with your trespasses, but whom God raised from the dead? Then The Law had been nailed to the cross – not to be disputed ever! Could man make void the work of God? God forbid!

Did God write the Ten Commandments in stones to show its everlastingness, or to show its temporary ? The first pair of stones broke the same day it was discovered the People transgressed it. The second pair of stones just disappeared. The first Ten Commandments gave the creation for reason of the Sabbath; the second Ten Commandments gives no word of the

creation, but God's redemption of Israel from Egypt as basis and motive for the Sabbath. What happened to the creation motive?

No, nothing was lost of the Law. Actually much 'Law was added'. But the real explanation is all Law was realised and fulfilled and thereby established true and righteous in and through Jesus Christ, and IN HIS PERSON AND HISTORY, once for all! Thus it had been all Law abolished, in that abolished in the flesh of Him who died in our stead and for the salvation of our souls. Thus there truly had appeared in history a law whereby if a man does it, he shall live; that Law was Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour who rose again for our justification.

<The moral law after the cross> therefore is Christ our Lord – forever Master and Eternal Law; as of our life, so of our lives the Force and Director.

<The moral law itself>, survived the cross, because it went to the cross, was carried there and there was nailed to it, "in Him", and by Him. That is why, and how, the moral law itself survived the cross, to live forever and to be unto His Church the Law of God forever. That's why and how the Church in Colossus feasted Sabbaths' feast. That's why and how the world judged the Church of Christ's with regard to their eating and drinking of feast – Jesus Christ being the reason and the cause and the end-purpose of her Sabbaths and of her feasting.

<It is one thing to say that the demands of the law have been met in Christ. It is quite another to say that the law has been abolished in Christ.> Nor are the two things the same, or one. Both are true "in Him" and in Him only. Neither are true anyhow else or in anyone else. For no man could ever meet the Law's demands, and no man but Christ could in his own self be the Law. Therefore it is quite another thing to say that the law has been abolished in Christ – it was the prerogative of God Himself for only God was able to raise up Christ from the dead again.

<The law serves at least two functions; as an objective description of God's character and expectations, it stands forever; as an unbending standard that condemns our failure to keep it and thus drives us to Christ, it has a temporary function. It is this last aspect that Paul has in mind when he uses the "nailed to the cross" figure.>

<The law ... as an unbending standard that condemns our failure to keep it and thus drives us to Christ, it has a temporary function. It is this

last aspect that Paul has in mind when he uses the "nailed to the cross" figure.>

So what now as an unbending standard condemns our failure to keep God's Law and thus drives us to Christ? Is it not Christ Himself the Crucified Risen Standard? Is it not Jesus suffering, that through the Spirit whereby He was raised from the dead, convinces of sin? Is it not He who in His humiliation, suffering, dying and death <drives us to Christ> – that is, to Himself, and even more so draws all men unto Himself in his being lifted up high and raised above all principality and power and every name so famous? So, is not Jesus Christ The Law which serves as an objective description of God's character and expectations, and who in that capacity incarnated and risen from the dead, stands forever? Who could, or would, deny? It is this First and Last of God's Word that Paul has in mind when he uses the "nailed to the cross" figure, and indeed, "in Him", applied it to this "written summons by law against us". For who or what else but Jesus Christ was crucified or rose again from the dead?

What then remains to be answered? What mystery of God has been left unattended?

Only the imaginary irrelevancies of the scholars, like <Some practices ... ascetic and empty>, and <others ... Jewish types and now empty>.

Paul simply doesn't talk about these things, and simply doesn't give them thought – not in immediate context or remote.

LEAST does Paul have in mind or under consideration differences between or different types of 'typical' or 'ceremonial' Sabbaths – <the Colossian weekly Sabbath> supposed as a 'Colossian heresy'. For the Colossian weekly Sabbath was God's and Christ's and the Church's "Feast, of month's, or of Sabbaths", in fact, by nature, and as custom. The Colossian weekly Sabbath, was empty in no way whatever, for it was no empty sabbath without Christ, no Christ-less Sabbath day. While, NO <Jewish type>, it was and is a type of God's rest through and in Jesus Christ! For this Sabbath, the Christians were judged, were summonsed and would stand trial! But for Christ at all was it the Christian Sabbath, and to Him owed its very existence and by Him had filled its very essence to the brim of cup's drinking and to the fill of every feasting eater.

<But an even more problematic phrase follows in verse 16. The first word, oun ("therefore"), is a small but crucial word that closely connects what follows with what has just preceded. So then verse 16 begins with Paul saying, "Consequently, on the

basis of what I have just established, don't let anyone pass judgment on you in the following matters." In other words, Christ's death not only did away with our guilty indebtedness to the law, it also took away the basis of criticism from those who would pass judgment on the Colossian Christians.>

Richardson's arguments are acceptable, except for his unnecessary remark, <problematic phrase in verse 16>. The rest is of crucial importance and relevance.

What concerns us more closely here though, is what <the basis of criticism from those who would pass judgment on the Colossian Christians> actually was, as it before and repeatedly has been explained.

It was in the first place the Colossian Congregation's **faith in Jesus** that formed <the basis of criticism from those ("the world") who would pass judgment> on them. Their living being totally "hid in Christ in God" in oneness and fullness of God-fearing satisfaction, is what provoked the world's judgement and condemnation.

It was in the second place their observing by celebration of this salvation-rest by **Sabbaths' Feast**, that formed <the basis of criticism> and aggravated the enmity towards the Body of Christ's Own – that even resulted in their being summonsed before the "principalities" of the world (14), and being condemned for it (16).

But Christ won their day and case.

Richardson has other ideas. Says he,

<But just what was the nature of this "passing judgment" ?

Passing judgment

Some have suggested that Paul's counsel was not directed against the false teachers, but only against the believers listening to them and acceding to their criticism.(15) Such a view has Paul saying, "Pay no attention to their criticism, since your practices are above reproach." We Sabbatarians like that suggestion, since it leaves our day of worship firmly in place. But our peace of mind cannot be bought so easily.>

Not <so easily>!? Jesus' death and resurrection not good enough!?

Here is where it all starts for Richardson – the deviation from consequential exegesis, and the resultant invasion by strange and truth-destructive ideas.

Richardson reckons it too easy a reason that we Sabbatarians may confidently rely on Paul saying, "Pay no attention to their criticism, since your practices are above reproach" ... since it leaves our day of worship firmly in place.

Silently Richardson's own agreements with the counterpart gets underwritten without the fine print having had a closer look at. One finds this tactics invariably in the exegesis of this Scripture. Even with a little bit of honey around the mouth.

For his refusal of this proposition, Richardson nevertheless accepts the notion of the presence and activities of 'the false teachers' in the Church and as members of the Church. He visualises them as being themselves 'believers'. He also presupposes division within the ranks of 'the believers' – those who resisted 'the false teachers', and those <listening to them and acceding to their criticism>. Richardson though purely imagines the <criticism> of 'the false teachers'. For there is no word or suggestion or reference or implication or allusion to 'false teachers', 'their criticism', or any who refused or rejected the teachers and their criticism. Not nearby, nowhere! But what is found nearby and everywhere in this text and Letter, is exactly, pertinently and emphatically, Paul, reassuring, comforting, commending and even eulogising the Believers in everything they believed, believed in, and actually practiced as this BODY THAT IS OF CHRIST'S OWN – which left their Day of Worship firmly in place without a doubt.

"Your order", wrote Paul, "you are respected world-wide for your order"! This "order" was none less than their true Christian worship, and their Sabbaths' Feast, supplying the core of their worship-order.

But these concepts imported here, they are even more exotic and without relevance than the 'old' aliens, the 'ceremonial Sabbaths' etcetera. The old relics might have floated ashore from shipwreck – may still have had connections with the New Land; but these, they must have arrived from space, from emptiness contrasted with substance or reality.

<Some have suggested that Paul's counsel was not directed against the false teachers>.

Richardson protests not at this point already – the presence of <the false teachers> doesn't bother him a bit, but he takes it for granted.

<In this verse Paul mentions five different details of religious ritual that have been called in question: food and drink and then the three tightly

connected "feast days, new moon, Sabbath day." Are we to believe that Christ's death simply did away with the basis of criticism so that now we can continue not only all food and drink rituals, but also the rituals of feast days and new moons?>

I would not hesitate to confess and affirm that Christ's death did away with the basis of criticism so that now we can continue spiritual "eating and drinking of Him, have Feast, whether of month's or of Sabbaths' (weekly)". Call it 'ritual' if you like, <the rituals of feast days and new moons>. But please also explain why it is unchristian? Even according to the tarnished 'translation' used by Richardson it's unchristian in no respect.

Richardson this time is himself the introducer of strange elements. He makes a statement of fact (asserting fact),

<In this verse Paul mentions five different details of religious ritual>. These <religious ritual(s)> he says further on, <emphasize(d) flawed practices>. That means the Sabbaths Paul mentions are flawed religious ritual – and so the <food and drink>.

Richardson says these

<... refer not to Mosaic rituals, but to more general ascetic prohibitions being advocated by some Colossian false teachers.>

(<(S)ome ... teachers> Richardson doesn't sound so sure, and for good reason!)

A third strange element, <general ascetic prohibitions>, virtually equated with the Sabbaths and the eating and drinking which Paul mentions.

We only ask: From where, and how on earth? For the correct way of finding the answer we shall have Richardson advise us:

<... Verse 17 makes clear that for the Colossians there is a more substantive issue at stake, and it is only when we keep focused on the immediate Colossian context that we can correctly resolve the difficulty.>

We shall honestly try to abide by these indicators.

We shall also expect Richardson to abide by them, and then shall again ask him, where, and how, do you bring together the "eating and drinking of feast, whether of month's, or of Sabbaths'" of the Colossian Christian Congregation, and <>false teachers>, <general ascetic prohibitions>, <the many-faceted Colossian heresy, its

gnostic tendencies, asceticism, Judaism, and distorted Christianity>, and, <the single most recurring element> of <the low view of Christ>? Where and how do you find it in the text, or in <the immediate Colossian context> of chapter 2 verses 16-17, or for that matter in the more remote context of the whole of the Letter?

And the same question should be asked about Richardson's assertions in these lines:

<The Colossian weekly Sabbath ... was empty ... it was without Christ, and for Paul, a Christ-less sabbath was an empty sabbath. ... He saw emptiness in the Jewishness that had become attached to the weekly Sabbath.> Where and how does one find it in the text, or in <the immediate Colossian context> of chapter 2 verses 16-17, or for that matter in the more remote context of the whole of the Letter?

The straw-man must be built before it can be targeted.

Yes, for Paul, a Christ-less sabbath was an empty Sabbath. So why does he forbid the Church to be judged and the world not to judge the Church, condoning the Colossians' Sabbaths' Feast? Because they were not empty, but filled with Jesus and the worship of Him by those who constituted His Body!

No, it is protested, Paul in other places saw emptiness in the Jewishness that had become attached to the weekly Sabbath and that's why it should be the case here too. Show it! Show it here! Show it Paul says so. Show it the Scriptures says so. Show it the Church said so.

(Isaiah once described how the drunkard argues with "here a little, there a little" – which method to us a priori is unacceptable in this case as in any other. Sorry for the restriction! It's not that we fear to face the truth, only that we want to stay sober and 'focused'.)

Now this has gone from bad to worse like an open tin of fish on the shelf. We refer back to what Richardson said of the <five different details of religious ritual that have been called in question: food and drink and then the three tightly connected "feast days, new moon, Sabbath day." ...>.

Again, notice how he introduces as fact but what is simply his own assumption: These 'five' things <have been called in question>. By Paul? By the Church, or by the world? Or by the exegetes? But by now the fact has been established, and can now serve as basis from where further to make more conclusions and more assumptions. For, says he, these <five different details of religious ritual>, <... refer not to Mosaic rituals, but to more general ascetic prohibitions being advocated by some Colossian false teachers.>

The “shadow”, the eating and drinking”, the “Feast”, the “Sabbaths”, the “Month’s Feast”, which before were interpreted as referring to ‘Mosaic rituals’, he now admits <refer not to Mosaic rituals >. They now – according to Richardson – refer <to more general ascetic prohibitions being advocated by some Colossian false teachers>. And with that he has resolved all the doctrinal and theological difficulties. In fact – if we could believe him – the finer points of the original language must have given him a real boost to his interpretive task. Only my eyes aren’t good enough any more to read such fine print.

We have seen how Richardson actually agrees with us on our understanding of some key words and phrases such as ‘Sabbaths’ and more or less what the sort of ‘eating and drinking’ meant.

We differ on one point of real importance though; we differ on our main assumptions, on the <more substantive issue at stake>.

Richardson holds <the single most recurring element> of <the low view of Christ> is also the most ‘basic’ and most important. We take as point of departure it is the single most recurring element of the HIGH view of Christ in this whole Letter and especially in the immediate context of 2:16-17 that determines the true understanding of the nature and sort of “eating and drinking of feast, whether of month’s, or of Sabbaths” of the Colossian Christian Congregation. It is this, that explains each and every word and phrase of the text and the context we are studying. It explains and determines the word “THEREFORE” – which stands first. And from there it explains Paul’s admonition, and with regard to what he admonishes and in fact reassures, consoles and solicits. It explains and determines the meaning of the word “judge” and the reason these Christians were judged and condemned for, namely their HIGH view of Christ – “for the Faith of Jesus” (as John would have explained). And so we could go on and repeat what we have said so many times in so many ways before, that this Scripture confirms the Sabbath Christian. Yes, the word “therefore” even explains HOW ‘Christian’ these Sabbaths and HOW Christian these that feasted them, were. Because it even explains the “written document of Law against us” (and how Paul identified with “us” who celebrated our Sabbaths). “Therefore, because Jesus Christ annulled this court-order served on you in that he had annulled all Law and all principalities of Law that had been against us in having nailed it to the cross, and in having had your sins forgiven, “therefore”, about these Sabbaths of yours and your celebrating of them: Do not let yourselves be judged in anyway by anyone with regard to it!”

Richardson holds to <the single most recurring element> of <the low view of Christ>. But that he could do only as far as it is characteristic of the “doctrines of men” – of the world’s wisdom and philosophy; and of the world’s power, dominion and principalities who had such a low view of Christ. The world even condemned the Church for being Christian, and condemned their Sabbaths, for being Christian! This low view was not of Christ’s; not of the Body that is Christ’s LOYALLY and TOTALLY. THIS Church consisted of NO <>false teachers>, and practiced NO <general ascetic prohibitions>. THIS Church wasn’t possessed of <the many-faceted Colossian heresy>, was unacquainted with the world’s <gnostic tendencies, asceticism>, wasn’t plagued by <Judaism>, taught and proclaimed NO <distorted Christianity>, and <the single most recurring element> of its life and joy, of its doctrine and practice, was the HIGH view of Christ it cherished and celebrated, “eating and drinking” of Christ by faith, by Sabbath’s Feast, whether of month’s, or of weekly Feast.

Paul in the second chapter does not mix with nor ascribe to the Church the pagan and idolatrous rituals and doctrines alluded to in these other verses! He CONTRASTS the CHURCH, its faith and practices and order – its whole worship –, with the “first principles of the WORLD”. Precisely as the “philosophy” and the “wisdom” (the <gnostic tendencies>), were properties and characteristics of the “world”, belonged the “neglecting of the body” (<asceticism>) and the pettiness of fetishes like those named in verse 21, to the WORLD, and was it characteristic of the world – the outside of the Church world. The two ‘bodies’ or ‘dominions’ were opposites – not a conglomeration. They were enemies, not allies.

And this is conspicuously clear from the structure of this chapter. (See the chiasm.)

Conclusion: Paul’s in fact:

“If then ye 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 earth, for ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.”

2:16-17 says the same things, that in no respect differ, or contradict what Paul says here in 3:1-3. That is what it means to do exegesis of this text while focusing sharply on the context before making contemporary applications and before being led astray by it, by irrelevancies and by ‘theological difficulties’, from the easier explanation – from the text’s OWN explanation.

Soli Deo Gloria!

Colossians Two

Purpose	For I would that ye knew what great conflict I have for you, and for them at Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh. that their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love,
Mystery of God	unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding to the acknowledgement of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and OF CHRIST
In Christ	IN WHOM are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.
Warning	And this I say, lest ANY MAN should beguile YOU with enticing words.
Order	For though I be absent in the flesh, yet I am with you in the spirit, joying and beholding your <u>order</u>, and the steadfastness of your <u>faith</u> IN CHRIST. As therefore ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord IN HIM so <u>walk</u> ye, IN HIM rooted and built up, and stablished in the faith – <u>abounding</u> therein with thanksgiving as ye have been taught.
Warning	Beware lest ANY MAN spoil YOU through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of MAN, after the principles of the WORLD, and not after Christ.
In Christ	For IN HIM dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. IN HIM ye are complete, who is the HEAD of all principality and power. IN WHOM also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision OF CHRIST. WITH HIM buried in baptism, wherein also ye are co-risen through the faith of the operation of God who hath raised Him from the dead. WITH HIM hath He quickened you together, you being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, having forgiven you all trespasses. Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us –which was contrary to us– and taking it out of the way, nailing it to His cross, having spoiled principalities and powers, He made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it.
Warning	Let NO MAN therefore judge YOU
Order	in feasting / celebrating (“eating or drinking”), or in feasting / celebrating OF a Feast whether OF month’s or OF week’s (occasion) – which things are a spectre of things a-coming, the Body which is OF CHRIST’S.
Warning	Let NO MAN beguile YOU of your reward in a wilful humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, not holding to
In Christ	the HEAD FROM WHOM all the Body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered and knit together increaseth with the increase of God. WITH CHRIST wherefore if ye be dead from the principles of the world,
Doctrines of men	why, as though living by the WORLD, are ye subject to indoctrination – Don’t touch! Don’t taste! Don’t handle! – which all are fleeting things and all in accordance with the injunctions and doctrines of MEN, things which have a show of wisdom in will-worship and humility, even in the neglect of the body, dishonourable and to the satisfaction of the flesh.
Aim	WITH CHRIST then if ye be risen, (Ro. 6:4-5, 8, 11) 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. For ye are dead, but WITH CHRIST is hid in God your life.

Bille Burdick reacted to my <laboured view>, saying,
 <your basic presupposition ...
 <that to keep the Sabbath because it has been
 <commanded by God specifically is not <appropriate
 for a Christian motive for
 <Sabbath keeping.

May I re-phrase: My basic presupposition that to keep the Sabbath because it has been commanded by God specifically IN CHRIST who had become the Law in every form and manner THROUGH VICTORY over sin and death, is THE ONLY appropriate motive for Sabbath keeping for a Christian. If only I could persuade you of the beauty and joy of this <basic presupposition>!

Ignatius defended this very stance of a "Sabbath-living according to Jesus Christ" against a Judaistic keeping of the Sabbath "without Christ" and "without grace" by Christians already in the second century. He also argued this very legalistic approach to Sabbath-keeping already existed in OT times!

Serious re-consideration of your <strong disagree(ment)> with my <reasoning> - what loss could it be to you? Is not Christ the "all in all" and everything - most of all the Law of God - to Christians?

Why should this principle (or <basic presupposition>) be reserved for Sunday-keeping - which has had NO grounds for the privilege and honour that belonged to God's Sabbath Day since the creation - the privilege and honour of being the ULTIMATE Day of God's Rest, ULTIMATELY, "in the Son"! This is the meaning of Hebrews 4:4-5 - "God thus concerning the Seventh Day Spoke, And God the Seventh Day rested". Now bring to this the introductory verses of the Letter - "God spoke ... in these last days ... through the Son"! THIS - Jesus' resurrection - IS the <basic presupposition> in this Letter in 4:8 and 10, for and as the sole reason and <motive> for the fact and truth that "THEREFORE is still valid for the People of God their keeping of the (God's) Sabbath Day".

Dear Bille, I harbour NO animosity, I have NO "program" or 'agenda'. I believe God's Sabbath for Christ's Sabbath - that's all.

Christian Greetings

Gerhard Ebersoehn

www.biblestudents.co.za

Gerhard Ebersoehn continues to answer Bille Burdick:

Wrote Bille,

< The "one reason and cause"
 <that we as Christians should keep the <Seventh-day
 Sabbath is because
 <that is the day specifically designated in
 <scripture.

What Bille here expresses as the Sabbath <specifically designated in scripture>, is what I would call the 'eschatology of the Sabbath'. Peter and Paul expressed the principle of eschatology very simply, and no one has as yet been able to improve on them. They said, "according to the Scriptures", and for them, that meant the OT tells us of Jesus Christ. John speaks of "in the beginning, the Word". And it all amounts to Jesus Christ in resurrection from the dead. If not, then of all would come sheer nothing.

This 'specific designation' or 'eschatology' applies to the Seventh Day Sabbath as well and very much so. It never could nor would apply to the First Day of the week, yet we see it so generally accepted as if, throughout Christendom.

"Christianity that is not Resurrection Faith, neither is Christianity, nor Faith", said Juergen Moltmann. Sabbath Faith that is not Resurrection Faith is neither the Christian Sabbath, nor Christian Faith.

Continued Bille:

< Once this has been established, then I can <agree that the various spiritual and <theological associations, implications, and <applications which you mention are valid <lessons to be gained from our Sabbath observance. But the REASON for keeping <Sabbath is still the fact that it was so <designated in the Ten Commandments.

I observe total agreement on 'basic presuppositions' here, but different and contradicting perceptions of the same.

Therefore may I again re-phrase:

Once the eschatology of the Sabbath has been established, then it may be agreed that the various spiritual and theological associations, implications, and applications of the Sabbath and its history point to and culminate in Jesus Christ and in His earthly history which provide the

exclusive validity to God's Sabbath and our observance of it. Nothing of this ever applies to the First Day of the week, while all of it is prerequisite of being God's Day of Rest. The REASON for keeping the Sabbath is still the fact that it was so <designated> in the Ten Commandments - it 'pointed to Christ'! Eschatology solves the problem, explains everything and exposes all 'meaning' and 'reason' and 'motive', "according to the Scriptures", which is Jesus Christ in resurrection from the dead!

Continues Bille:

<... the scriptural view of what constitutes < a day. "And the evening and morning" ... <and in that order ... is what constitutes a <day. Thus the Seventh-day Sabbath begins at <"evening" on what we call Friday, and ends <at "evening" on what we call Saturday.

That is also my <method of calculating time>. It 'strikingly' agrees with <the scriptural view of what constitutes a day>.

From here on the issue becomes technical. For that very reason, what follows is not of equal weight of what we have so far discussed (and hopefully have come to agreement on).

So here is what follows in Bille's words:

< The record states that Jesus was <resurrected after the Sabbath had
<passed and by the time the sun had risen.

No, not <the record states>, but (more recent) 'Translations' or 'Versions', <state>! Compare the AKJV with the New KJV to see a perfect example of the manipulation of <the record>. To see EXACTLY the 'text' from which the NKJV correctly translates, read Justin's Apology!

Bille:

<You are asking us to believe that he was <actually raised before sundown on Saturday
<night?

Yes and no: not "on Saturday night", but, "In the afternoon of the Sabbath"! Believe it, and you will be able to believe the eschatology of the Sabbath Day as being fulfilled - made true and fast - in and through and by Jesus Christ in Person and Act of resurrection from the dead "IN SABBATH'S-TIME". Isn't that what a Genitive

- a possessive, genetic Genitive, means? Well then, that's what Matthew used - sabbatohn. Isn't this what "in the very being of light of the Sabbath" literally and grammatically and syntactically correctly, indicates? Bille:

< I don't think you can give any sound basis <for that view.

Sabbatohn tehi epifohskousehi! That is what Matthew wrote and meant - tehi - "in the" / "with the"; epi - "very", "emphatically tending"; ousehi - "being", "essence"; phohs - "of light" / "of sun" / "day's".

Bille a little further on:

< According to the scriptures, Christ rested <in the grave through the Sabbath hours, and <rose from the dead sometime between the <close of the Sabbath and when the sun rose <Sunday morning.

My answer to this is contained in the arguments of both the eschatology of the Sabbath and of its history in the history of Jesus, according to Matthew 28:1 above. Only to add: First, <according to the scriptures Christ rested in the grave>? Which Scripture? Second, Since when did the wages of sin - death and grave - constitute the rest of God in Jesus Christ? Christ "suffered death" - this is Scripture! - <through the Sabbath hours> TILL He was raised from the dead WHEN "the pangs of death" were "ended" - this again, is Scripture! So that "God rested the Sabbath Day" when He in Victory over death and grave, in Tri-Una Almighty Power "raised Christ from the dead". He raised Christ from the dead "LONG" and "BEFORE the First Day of the week". That is clear and undeniable from two more aspects of Matthew 28:1. First, from the word translated correctly "Late" (ASRV) or "In the end" (AKJV). Dionysius (I think he was fourth century) explained this word to mean "In the slow hours of the day" and, "before the First Day of the week" - the equivalent of "afternoon", simply. Second, the Preposition and Accusative, eis mian sabbaton - never ever to be confused for a Dative, Genitive or even Ablative. "Light" / "Day", (or <Time> as Bille calls it), was "towards the First Day of the week" (Tyndale and quite a few men of count). <Time> was NOT, "ON the First Day of the week"; it was "BEFORE the First Day of the week".

The Scriptures was manhandled, corrupted, used for profit, for the no-gods, sun and emperor, to gain. Also for conforming Christians to gain.

Lastly, I haven't tried to be poetical, but precise in language and fact of event "according to the Scriptures". Theology more than any other science should be an exact science. Christian Faith is based on Truth yet is Faith. The Truth sets one free, but also binds one. It sets the believer "free from the Law to serve Christ". There is at the same time and not a contradiction in this. I have tried to explain it, and it seems have failed.

Long ago I wrote to SDANet saying, Don't kill the paradox, like in this case also of the exact science of theology relying on precise language and meaning but resulting in faith and "the mystery of Godliness". So also while not serving the Law, serving Christ. Get to this, and you have grasped my point of <view>.

I still maintain, what man can better than another call on his obedience to the Law? Before the Law we are all guilty of its transgression ONLY, never justified obeyers of it. So also before the pureness of Jesus. Before Him we at the same time are just the opposite than what we are before the Law: We are pardoned sinners ONLY, never justified obeyers of the Law. Christ being the Law for us (Have I read this in the Bible or not?) we no longer serve the Law like Jews, but Christ unlike the Jews! That means we no longer obey the Law or keep the Sabbath because <the REASON for keeping Sabbath is still the fact that it was so designated in the Ten Commandments.>

We <do everything because of Christ ... then we DO keep the law that HE ...> IS! The Law is not Christ; Christ is the Law. (Love is not God; God is love.) The perpetuity of the Law is founded upon and and is found in the Living Person of Jesus Christ - exclusively. He does not compete with the Ten Commandments - He obsoletes the Ten Commandments as rival of Himself; they only exist to HIS glory; after Christ they only have eschatological meaning left. They no longer have a demanding right on our obedience for Christ has taken over that authority.

Here's our point of difference:

"I come to glorify thy Law" - which means it was the purpose of Christ's Life - but as fulfilled in HIMSELF the Law of God. "Now is the hour" when God would be

glorified by the Son, was the hour of Jesus' own glory. The glory of the Father when He raised Jesus from the dead - Romans 1 - was THE moment of Jesus' OWN glory, HERE "declared", "Christ" - means, HERE "Anointed", that is, "Blessed", "Sanctified", "Finisher", LORD of the Sabbath Day HE "made". "Made" by such anointment and appointment as resurrection from the dead of Himself. No Other Day could ever be thus associated with the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead as the Seventh Day of God's Sabbath Rest in and through and for the sake of Jesus and the glory of Jesus.

You prove the same "concerning" the First Day of the week, and I shall believe He could rise from the dead "on the First Day of the week", even contrary, even though not "according to" the Scriptures, so strong value such 'facts' would have had.

The 'Dutch' Confession of Faith states that if even the Apostles (NT), taught us differently from 'The Scriptures' (OT), we should not believe them.

You know what is strangest to me? How I have as yet came accross no Seventh Day Adventist - no Sabbatharian - who could be convinced of the Sabbath by these (my) <basic presuppositions>, but only some 'Reformed' folk who are educated Sundaydarians. There must be some convincing power in these suppositions - which surprises not, they being based on Christ in resurrection from the dead and nothing else!

Bezug auf: Kolosser 2,16
 Autor: Raphael

> Kolosser 2,16
 > Wie ist dieser Text zu verstehen? In der Regel wird argumentiert, daß der
 > Plural "Sabbate" darauf hinweist, daß es sich nicht um den Wochensabbat,
 > sondern um die jüdischen Festtage handelt. Doch auch in Mat. 12,1-2 wird im
 > griechischen der Plural verwendet. Der Plural schließt also den Wochensabbat
 > nicht aus.

Hallo Raphael,

aus mangel an Zeit möchte ich dir kurz eine alte Mail von mir kopieren. Ich hoffe es hilft Dir ein wenig weiter.

"Sabbat" steht hier im Singular, obwohl 'sabbaton' (mit Omega) nach gen. Plural riecht.

Hier nochmals zur Erinnerung der Text aus Luther 1984:

Kol. 2,16.17

"So laßt euch nun von niemandem ein schlechtes Gewissen machen wegen Speise und Trank oder wegen eines bestimmten Feiertages, Neumondes oder Sabbats. Das alles ist nur ein Schatten des Zukünftigen; leibhaftig aber ist es in Christus."

Was nun? Im griechischen steht "ton sabbaton" (Strong-Nr.4521). Ein Wort, das aus dem Hebräischen ins Griechische übernommen wurde wie das Wort "Computer" im deutschen aus dem englischen.

Im hebr. ist es das "schabbat schabbaton" - ein Festlicher Sabbat. Und da die Griechen kein 'sch' kennen ist daraus ein 's' geworden.

Mit "schabbat schabbaton" werden folgende 3 Sabbate bezeichnet:

-der wöchentliche Ruhetag (ein Sabbat für den Herrn)

3Mo 23,3

Sechs Tage sollst du arbeiten; der siebente Tag aber ist ein feierlicher Sabbat, heilige Versammlung. Keine Arbeit sollt ihr an ihm tun; denn es ist ein Sabbat für den HERRN, überall, wo ihr wohnt.

-Der Versöhnungstag (ein Sabbat für euch, weil es um unsere Entsühnung geht)

3Mo 23,32

Ein feierlicher Sabbat soll er euch sein, und ihr sollt fasten.

-das Sabbatjahr (ein feierlicher Sabbat für das Land)

3Mo 25,4

aber im siebenten Jahr soll das Land dem HERRN einen feierlichen Sabbat halten;

Es besteht nun die Frage, welcher der drei "schabbat schabbaton" die Kriterien eines Schattens erfüllen und in Jesus Christus die Erfüllung finden.

Was steht im 2. Mo 20 als Begründung für den Sabbat, den wöchentlichen Ruhetag?

Warum wurde der Sabbat gegeben? "Da Gott in 6 Tagen Himmel und Erde gemacht *hat*". Das ist nicht nur grammatisch Vergangenheit, sondern auch tatsächlich. Somit kann der wöchentliche Ruhetag kein Schatten des Zukünftigen sein.

Es bleiben damit nur noch die Festsabbate übrig, die ein Schatten des Zukünftigen sein können. Ich will hier nicht alle Festsabbate aufführen (z.B. Sabbat des Blasens), für diese gild aber ähnliches.

Dieser Text aus Kol.2 steht also mit einem dieser Festsabbate, wahrscheinlich sogar mit dem Versöhnungstag in Verbindung (es geht ja um einen "bestimmten Sabbat"). Denn dieser war ja für Paulus tatsächlich noch zukünftig, und um diesen sollen wir uns kein Gewissen machen, denn in Christus ist dieser Tag "leibhaftig" oder verbürgt.

Denn:

-der 7. Tag-Sabbat = Erinnerung an die Schöpfung - an die Ruhe, die wir einst im Paradies hatten (betet den an, der gemacht hat...)

-der Versöhnungstag = Erinnerung daran, daß uns Gott einmal tatsächlich Ruhe geben wird.

(!!!In diese Ruhe sollen wir durch Christus eingehen, von unseren Werken Ruhen!!!)

-das 7. Jahr = Erinnerung daran, daß auch das Land von der Sünde befreit sein wird.

Also 2x Zukunft/Schatten und einmal Vergangenheit!

Der vollständigkeit halber noch die anderen Dinge aus Kol 2:

"Speise und Trank": Das einzigste Fest, das mit Speise und Trank zu tun hatte war Pfingsten.

"ein bestimmter Feiertag": Das einzigste Fest was noch nicht erfüllt war, ist Laubhütten "ein bestimmter Neumond": Der 1. Tag im 7. Monat, Tag der Posaunen - Ankündigung des Gerichts.

Alle diese Dinge sind ein Schatten, aber leibhaftig in Christus.

Alles was in der Bibel mit der Sünde zu tun hat, also Opfer oder Handlungen im Heiligtum werden einmal aufhören wenn das vollkommene kommt, oder gekommen ist. Der wöchentliche Sabbat hat aber überhaupt nichts mit der Sühnung der Sünde zu tun!

Viele Grüße

Matthias

mts.ro@gmx.net

Recapping Some Basic Presuppositions

Gospel Viewpoint:

It is the Christian Sabbath Paul in Colossians 2:16-17 writes about, Christian Unity and Christian Freedom.

Legalists' Viewpoint:

It is Ritualistic Ceremonial Sabbaths Paul in Colossians 2:16-17 writes about, Church Factions and False Teachers.

Historic Fact or Error?

Why does Paul dare the world – or rather the Church, verse 16 – “NOT (TO) BE JUDGED with respect to (her) feasting (“eating, drinking”) OF (her) Sabbaths”? Because of what Christ availed through resurrection from the dead, verse 15!

It amounts to Paul saying: ‘Feast your Sabbaths because of the fact Jesus conquered by having been raised from the dead and don’t you be intimidated or denounced for it by anyone of / in the world’.

Quoting: Why does Paul
Because of what Christ availed. End
Quote

This is in fact an error. The abuse that Paul is correcting in Colossians 2 is ALSO condemned before the cross by Christ in Matt 7:1-3.

The abuse and sin did not suddenly BECOME wrong after the cross. It was always wrong.

Your argument is unique in that it is arguing for feasting on Sabbath as though this was the intent of the Cross. However it is clear in Colossians two that this “judging of others” was a problem – an abuse by those with false doctrine, and Christ makes it clear that they were doing this BEFORE the cross (Matt 7) and were condemned THEN for doing it as well as in Colossians 2.

Consider:

Q: "This is in fact an error." EQ

What is an error? "This": Paul dares the world – or rather the Church, and consoles her (2:2) – "NOT (TO) BE JUDGED with respect to (her) feasting ("eating, drinking") OF (her) Sabbaths" because of what Christ availed through resurrection from the dead (2:12-15), that's what's an error!

How is this an error? This is an error "in fact"! The 'facts' differ from "this". Paul does not dare the world, or the Church; he dares no one! His words do not respect the Church's feasting by eating and drinking; nor do they concern her Sabbaths. And what Christ availed through resurrection from the dead in this regard is an abuse! In a word, it all "is an error"! So Paul teaches 'error'.

This in fact is the error of this error, for it reckons Paul's own words "an error".

How is it concluded "This is in fact an error"?

By pure presumption – by preconceived notion merely. Without provocation it from the word go is (or had been) decided, "This is in fact an error"! The assertion is accredited "fact" by not a single argument, nor by any one factual 'fact'. And what Paul said in the very words of his own hand are beforehand found, "error".

AAA – Arrogant Asserted Assumption, the hall-mark of this viewpoint!

Q: "The abuse that Paul is correcting in Colossians 2 is ALSO condemned" EQ

AAA!

"The abuse":

What "abuse"?

"The abuse that Paul is correcting in Colossians 2":

Where "in Colossians 2" is Paul "correcting...the abuse"?

One is forced to infer this viewpoint supposes the Sabbaths mentioned in 2:16-17, for they are what the discussion is about. So the questions can be put again: What "abuse" concerning the Sabbaths? Where "in Colossians 2" verses 16-17 or nearby is Paul "correcting...the abuse" of, or regarding the Sabbaths? What words or ideas is he employing? (What improvement to or alternative for the Sabbaths does he offer? Sunday observance?)

O no, no!

The 'ceremonial' Sabbaths then? Did Paul preach the Church should still keep those ceremonial Sabbaths?

O no, no!

Oh! He only suggested how to observe them in a more 'Christian' manner?

No, no! He meant those who taught such things were false teachers!

Now just read me where he says that, please?

But can't you see it yourself?

Even if I could, should I? Am I not rather obliged to listen to what Paul says himself? Does he not say, in fact, and I quote him as writing:

"Do not – you, the Church, Accusative = Passive, *hymahs* – be judged, and let no one (whosoever, of the world ever so big) judge YOU (its very opposing opposite, the Church), either with regard to (your) eating and drinking (of faith), or with regard to (your enjoying) OF Feast, whether OF month's or OF Sabbaths' (occasion)".

Is that what Paul wrote – "feasting on Sabbath as though this was the intent of the Cross" – or is it not? Is it error, or is it fact? What is AAA, that Paul wrote and meant just plainly 'this' wonderful and inspiring truth, or that he 'is correcting an abuse' (– in which case he must have dismally failed)?

"... it is clear in Colossians two that this "judging of others" was a problem – an abuse...". Just to make that clear please, quote please!

Paul speaks of the Church – "YOU" – being judged BY "others" – by "anyone" of the "world" that is – he doesn't speak of some "within" the Church "judging others" or of the Church 'judging one another'!

Q: "The abuse and sin did not suddenly BECOME wrong after the cross. It was always wrong." EQ

AAAA! Which stands for nothing lekker, but for something very unpleasant: Again (and more) Arrogant Asserted Assumption, or, in short, PP for Preposterous Presumption. Now the "abuse" has improved into a "sin" that "did not suddenly BECOME wrong ... It was always wrong".

Just stop there and consider for a moment that Paul here in Colossians 2:16-17 wrote,

'Let no one condemn you either with regard to (your erroneous) eating and drinking or with regard to (your sinful) Feasting or (your abusive) months or Sabbaths' – then he condoned sin!

Or that he wrote: 'Let no one (whatsoever authoritative teacher of yours or "those with false doctrine") TEACH you either with regard to (your) eating and drinking or with regard to (your) feasting or (your) months or Sabbaths' – then he actually said nothing, because the Believers knew perfectly well what they were doing, feasting their Sabbaths.

Or that he wrote: 'Amongst yourselves do not judge or correct or criticise the one the other either with regard to the eating and drinking of ceremonial feast whether of month's or Sabbaths' – then Paul would have said, Don't worry, carry on with the old and useless ritualism of Judaism.

Or that he wrote: 'Amongst yourselves do not judge or correct or criticise the one the other (Q: "this "judging of others" was a problem – an abuse by those with false doctrine" EQ) either with regard to the eating and drinking of feast whether of month's or Sabbaths' – then really everything about the whole matter was a shadowy business without substance, and not worth even the little attention Paul spends on it. But far worse, then Paul wasted words and created false allusions, inferences and relations between the great deeds of God in Christ in verses 14 and 15, and what followed, not only in context of the text, but in context of its truth and power, that "THEREFORE, you must not allow yourselves be judged by anyone regarding "these things", that Christ "through the faith of the operation of God", and "blotting out the handwriting of ordinance that was against us, which was contrary to us, taking it out of the way, nailing it to his cross, spoiled principalities and powers and shamed them in public, having triumphed over them in it" – that is, in His death and resurrection. And so Paul would have BELITTLED Christ and what he did to forgive us our trespasses.

The one is as impossible a possibility as the other. Paul meant none of these – he meant the Sabbath Christian! With the Sabbath taken for Christian and for the Sabbath of Christian freedom, Paul here wrote to the glory of God in the face of Jesus.

If it implied Paul believed and taught the Sabbath was nailed to the cross, and abolished in His body, then what? The only honour and the only glory of anyone and anything Christian, is the shame and suffering of Jesus! If not taken with Him and if not with Him nailed to the cross and if not with and in and through Christ taken to eternal oblivion through hell in death, how would he or it be "co-risen with Him through the faith of the operation of God" (2:12), which was this: "the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe, according to the operation of His mighty power which He wrought (in triumph) in Christ when he raised Him from the dead"!

If the Sabbath except for this, have it! Share it with the Jews! It is not to the honour, to the glory, or to the service, of Jesus Christ! It is not to the service of His Body the Christian Church, but is legalism, haughty, hypocritical, pharisaic righteousness by works! Then indeed there is no substance of a Body Divine from whose Head and Light is cast this following, inseparable shadow of its Sabbath Day.

Shadow

“Shadow-Sabbaths” (the cliché, for denigrating the Sabbaths Christian the Body of Christ’s feasted), were in fact inseparable sign and accompaniment of this Body and at all dependent upon its Head the very Light of it. In the shadow of its creation, the Gospel harbingers shelter their feet, week by week, month by month resting, feasting Bread of Life, Supper of the Lord.

Richardson:

Q: “... without exception, when the word "shadow" (skia) is used in juxtaposition with "body" (soma), the meaning is emptiness contrasted with substance or reality. By these two words Paul addressed several aspects of Colossian worship practice that had one thing in common; they are Christ-less and for that reason, empty. Some practices were ascetic and empty; others were Jewish types and now empty. The Colossian weekly sabbath, while not a Jewish type, was empty in two ways. First, like all their other rituals, it was without Christ, and for Paul, a Christ-less sabbath was an empty sabbath.

If “Christ-less” and “empty”, if not for the Body of Christ’s Own, then from where this shadow? And if not this shadow is real and faithful to this Head and Body, would there be this head and Body? Most unnatural indeed for light and object not to cast its very own shadow!

“Ascetic and empty” – there’s something natural, consequential and true to itself! But feasting, eating and drinking, and growing with the growth of God through nourishment being ministered, how could that be ascetic and empty? But feasting, eating and drinking, weekly, monthly Sabbaths celebrating, growing with the growth of God through nourishment being ministered, how could THAT, be not natural, not consequential and not true to itself?

The Colossian weekly Sabbath Paul has in mind and writes about, he associates with the feast-type, with the eating and drinking kind of Sabbaths – the only Sabbaths the Bible as the Word of God knows. It for no moment “was ... for Paul a Christ-less ... empty sabbath”!

It’s a lie, an Arrogant Asserted Assumption!

The Church Written To, or Divisions Addressed?

It is the Christian Church in oneness and unbroken harmony and peace whom Paul addresses, admonishing them that they should not allow anybody to judge them with regard to their feast of Sabbath Days.

There are many cases where the NT authors use the term "anyone" to mean "anyone in the church" or "anyone among the people of God". The reason for limiting it in that way - is because Christians ALREADY don't listen to PAGANS. In fact these Christians were themselves pagans at one time - and had to STOP listening to pagan authorities LONG before they ran into false teachers WITHIN the church or within Bible believing people of the ONE true God. I think we both agree there.

No, I think we do not agree here, for Paul here in this Letter of his to the Colossians uses the term "anyone" (*tis*) NOT to mean "anyone in the church" or "anyone among the people of God", but he uses it to mean "anyone" of the "world", "anyone", "outside" "YOU" (*hymahs*) the Church. Compare "the Body" the Church in 1:18 ("you" in 2:16) in contrast with "every creature which is under heaven" in 1:23.

Then when Paul wants to say "anyone among the people of God", he uses words specifically to that end, like in 4:5, where he uses the Second Person inflected, "walk ye toward the ones outside (*tous ecsoh*)"; or in 3:9, "lie not one to another (*allehlous*)". Note also the context as a whole in e.g. "This I say (to 'you' the Church) in order that no one (*mehdeis*) may beguile YOU (*hymahs*)".

"You" are those who have "received Jesus Christ the Lord", and "so walk(ed) in Him", 2:6, as over against those who when preached to them rejected Jesus Christ as Lord, and in opposition to Him and as the "world" (*kosmos*), were the patrons and advancers of its own "first principles", its own "laws and dogma" - the patrons and advancers of the "dominion" / "rule" / "lordship" and "injunctions / doctrines of MEN" NOT Christian (2:20).

The contrast is continued in 3:1 further, where, speaking of the Church –“you” in 2:16– it is said of it, “Christ is our life”, “our life (which is) hid with Christ in God”. Then in 3:6, “those outside” are defined as “the children of disobedience”.

Therefore, no, by all criteria it is the Church exclusively as over against the world outside that is “you” – “you” whom Paul consoles (2:2) in the very reaching of his purpose with writing to them, saying, “Therefore YOU, o Body of Jesus Christ’s Own, let no one ever so authoritative of the world, judge or condemn you with regard to your feasting your Sabbath Days”. ‘What have I explained to you that you are “in Him”, and that “with Him” you have died and had been risen up again to live unto Him? So feast! And live your life and freedom from the world in every respect, your life being “hid in Christ in God”. What more or better could I comfort and encourage you with? There’s nothing more, better or besides!’

It is the Church, THIS Church, and nothing besides it, outside it OR DIVIDED WITHIN it; it is this Church, as a whole and as a Unity of Faith in faith and love, which Paul in these verses addresses and consoles, and whose actions and practices he in these very verses condones and encourages in the face of the forces of hell and earth combined.

Who would dare advance: ‘This is indeed an error!’?

Who Are Supposed 'Outsiders'?

The central presupposition in Colossians is the faith and love of the Congregation. It was famous throughout the world and theirs certainly an example in one-ness "IN HIM" – used so many times. When Paul introduces the issue of false teaching in chapter two, he finds no internal issues to deal with. In fact, he departs from the standpoint of the unanimous baptism of the Congregation "WITH HIM in His death", and directly from this presupposition concludes that nobody should "judge you with regard to the feasting ("eating and drinking") of a feast (of yours)".

Therefore first the ONENESS of the Colossian Congregation should be taken cognisance of, and this oneness should be determinative for the interpretation of 2:16-17.

Bob replies,

I pointed out Paul's own explicit reference to those outside the church in the same book – in chapter 4:5. Paul explicitly identifies them as "outsiders". Paul's recommendation is to lure them in "Making the most of the opportunity" to engage them in conversation and draw them in. The idea that Paul is preaching against outsiders and against a supposed practice of viewing outsiders as "scholarly authorities on the correct way to keep Sabbath" can't be found in all of scripture.

(Bob's use of the inverted commas are, as he explains, for emphasis – they don't mean he quotes me.)

Nevertheless his deduction that my interpretation boils down to "The idea that Paul is preaching against outsiders and against a supposed practice of viewing outsiders as "scholarly authorities on the correct way to keep Sabbath", is unreasonable. I in fact refute the idea! It clashes with the presupposition of the Church's unity. And by itself it simply makes nonsense. Where have you ever seen pagans who would pose "as "scholarly authorities on the correct way to keep Sabbath"?"

Paul in any case isn't "preaching" here to heathen pagans or to any of the world – he wrote this Letter to the existing Christian Congregation with the sole purpose of their comfort – 2:2.

Bob constantly returns to this accusation against me. I cannot understand why. It must be because he takes for granted the Church must have been guilty of some syncretistic mal-practice in Sabbath-keeping – which inference is totally unfounded, not only from Colossians, but also from the rest of whatever Paul wrote.

The only wrong appreciation of the Sabbath found in the New Testament will be found in the Gospels where the Jews' legalistic narrow mindedness spoiled everything of the Sabbath's beneficial, Christian ('salvific') nature. The Sabbath nowhere in the New Testament forms an ingredient of a Hellenistic-philosophical-Christian mix-up. This very text of Colossians 2:16-17 as supposed to prove exactly that, exactly does not prove it, but exactly proves the impassable distinction between a Hellenistic syncretism of heathen and pagan concepts and practices, and the pure Faith of the Apostolic Church. Each had its distinguished and distinct Brand Forum –each had its "first principles", and "principalities" of "dominion" ('authority')– who decided and applied the strictest criteria for and use of the distinctive brands of each. Of no mixture was this the Body that is Christ's 'sign' / 'brand' / 'shadow' / 'banner' – it was THEIR characteristic, Christian, celebration of THEIR, characteristic, Christian, Sabbath Days.

"No one" possessed 'authority' in this matter of "the author's meaning to the primary audience" but The Christian Church itself in undivided oneness!

'Exegesis'

Good exegesis does not always demand that we look at similar work. Sometimes it demands that we acknowledge the uniqueness of a work to determine meaning. With that I say that Colossians is in a class of its own and 'similarities' with e.g. Galatians and Romans should not be taken out of context. Because Paul in other letters of his mentions factional judgemental tendencies does not prove he speaks of the same thing in Colossians 2:16-17. Also, as I have previously explained, Paul had a way of saying things –specific things specifically– as legitimately discovered by exactly your methodology of exegetical demand. When he wanted to say 'judge one another', he says it with as many words. But here in Colossians 2:16f he addresses the Church as a whole and undivided – not one or the other of any opposing sides. He presupposes the unity of the Body "in Him" as over against a subtle yet monstrous foe – the "world" and everything that stands for this world, like "philosophy" and "wisdom", "principles" and "principalities" – also as a whole and undividedly, the enemy number one to the very existence of the Church.

Bob Ryan:

The rules of exegesis demand that we let the text speak for itself by noting the author's meaning to the primary audience, the author's own context in the chapter, in the book and also the author's similar messages in other Bible books. And finally we add to it, the work of other Bible authors on the same topic.

The idea of ignoring the other writings of the author on the same or similar subjects, is not a part of exegesis. Paul's statements in Colossians 2 are in contrast to his Colossians 4:5 statement about "outsiders". So there you have Colossians two by contrast to Colossians 4:5. Same book, same author.

And clearly – nothing is ever said in all of the NT about pagans being considered as "the judging authority" on Christian faith and practice.

The insinuated accusation of “The idea of ignoring the other writings of the author on the same or similar subjects”, is false. In fact, the legalists’ idea ignores the specific writing of the author on this same or specific subject of the Christians’ of Paul’s day’s Feasts of their Sabbath Days. This has been pointed out by exhaustive specifics from the context and contents of this Letter – not by exhausting ‘rules of exegesis’. So there you have Colossians two by contrast to Colossians 4:5. Same book, same author – on two and different subjects. And clearly – nothing is ever said in all of the NT about pagans being considered as “the judging authority” on Christian faith and practice, but here, are said to be “the judging authority” OF Christian faith and practice – in other words, are here, said to be the judge – that “anybody” of verse 16– that “condemns” both the Church and its Sabbath Days.

It must be the Legalists contend against the fact Paul in Colossians 2:16-17 defends the Christian virtue and nature of the Sabbaths, because if they would admit, those Sabbaths cannot be ‘ceremonial’, ‘ritualistic’, Sabbaths of ‘Judaism’ – which is what they want them to be. They will rather stick to ‘ceremonial’, ‘ritualistic’, ‘Judaistic’, Sabbaths as such, or – as happened to be – were forced to merely talk about the manner in which the Sabbaths were supposed to be kept. Only they will never acknowledge – it seems by some mysterious superior knowledge just like that of the world of Colossian wisdom and philosophy – that Paul mentions and means, Sabbaths Christian.

And that brings us to perhaps the most decisive difference between the Legalists’ and the Gospel-orientated interpretation of this passage, that of the meaning that should be given to or rather should be understood from the word “judge” in verse 16. Of course the subject has been discussed numerous times and in numerous ways. Here the way the Legalists wrangle it, will be looked at more closely.

To Judge

The Legalists' supposition all along is some infighting in Colossians, "This could only be a problem within".

Then, if infighting, to "judge" assumes the meaning of 'judging one another' 'within' the Church, more readily. Then logically, it won't be the 'pagan' "outsiders" who judge, but members of the Church themselves who judge 'one another'.

Whence it is deduced, the word "judge" means assuming the role of authority – "to be accepted as a judge" or "teacher" of one's brother in the Faith.

Misconduct and abuse must inevitably result, and the 'judges' having assumed positions of authority, started teaching error to their fellow Church members.

... the idea of judging and beguiling assumes the role of authority and teacher. This could only be a problem within – where those who were "Expected" to hold authority – actually teach error. There is no other possibility.

... the position of authority ... the idea of supposing to be accepted as a judge. All this is only possible of a "grievous wolf" as we see in Rev 20 that "arises from among your own selves" seeking to draw away disciples "after themselves". Assuming positions of authority but teaching error.

... To Judge and mislead (beguile) is to assume a position of authority, to claim to evaluate and to correct someone else – as having more insight and better information than the one being judged. (Emphasis CGE)

Light a task is it to surmise. By surmising anything can be made from the text. Therefore let us read the text according to this surmising – and read it in BIGGER CONTEXT, and start from 2:1 – or even better, from 1:1!

Out goes 1:4, not true!

Wishful thinking, 1:6!

A liar was Epaphras, who "declared unto us your love in the Holy Spirit"! 1:7f

And so we could go on and shall be forced to make of the whole of this Letter of Paul's to the Colossian Believers, a farce, for all the love, all the

unity, all the fullness and perfect satisfaction the Congregation supposedly enjoyed “in Him” proved false!

In Bob Ryan’s own words, “The problem is that the unity of the group is affirmed in a number of letters – **only to find later that there are factions**. (Emphasis CGE) The other problem with this is that even if unity did exist in the group – we have plenty of evidence that ...” contradicted true, Christian, unity in this instance.

All this because of some superior knowledge supposed in the word “judge” in 2:16 that made of those who judged the ‘better informed’ Christians and ‘teachers’ of the backward rest. (“... as having more insight and better information than the one being judged”)

But take the word literally and contextually, and it means just what it says, that the world “condemned” the Christians – CONDEMNED all the Christian CHURCH – for having been Christians and for therefore, having celebrated the Sabbaths whether of month’s or of weeks’ occasion.

Take the word literally and contextually, and its first and simplest meaning will explain just how, the world “judged” and “condemned” “YOU” the Christian Church. It will explain the meaning of that famous (or infamous?) phrase in verse 14, that Christ “blotted out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us”, to have been a scandalous court order by state and legal authorities for the prosecution of the Congregation for being Christians and for therefore having celebrated the Christian Sabbaths.

The word “judge” does not here mean to educate or to correct or even to “evaluate” or criticise, for that implies division which in the case of the Colossians’ Sabbaths-keeping, did not exist. The word “judge” in this “CASE”, meant what it basically means, to legally judge, which is to summons to Law, to give hearing according to Law, and to decide according to Law, and then to pronounce sentence, and to pass judgment, according to Law – which in this instance, was: Founded guilty and condemned to death!

It implies the Law applied was that of state, first and existentially; but ALSO, in the end and finally, that of Divine Justice, by which all men are found guilty and sentenced to death, but for the intervening Grace of God through Jesus Christ.

This evidently must be the most basic difference between the Sabbatharians of different kinds and their different interpretations of Colossians 2:16-17. That difference is clear: it is the Gospel.

In the meantime the Sundaydarians sit with teeth mouthfuls. Sunday is irrelevant; so what can they say? Except to admit being silenced, for ever, the only ‘Text’ for their case against the Sabbath, being swept from under their feet. (They would not side with the world either, would they?)

Elaine G T. Clint Nelson:

Hi Gerhard,

Nothing like a good Bible discussion! Unfortunately, SDAnet does not want any questions regarding what they have determined is traditional Adventist answers.

Questions are rarely allowed, which is what I've been told several times: they want statements.

Yes, it is paradoxical that those who refer to the MOST important doctrine--Sabbath--although denied, will be seen as attacks.

What do you mean by "if you believe the Sabbath"? There is no one, especially myself or any other Bible student who would deny the Sabbath as being established in the OT and observed by all the Jews during and after Christ's time. It's a fact that the Sabbath was an icon for the Jew and worship to the extent of hurrying his body down from the cross before sundown; they were most scrupulous in its observance.

No one either, is arguing that Paul and the Jews observed Sabbath after Christ's ascension; after all Paul was an observant Jew as were the new Jewish Christians and there was no reason to discuss it, was there?

However, the new Gentile Christians had not been practicing the Jewish ceremonies and festivals, as pagans they were polytheistic and it was a major decision to become Christian for them. Neither were they ever given instruction on the many Jewish festivals which they were now expected to observe. It seems that Paul's message to them was simplicity itself: Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and refrain from eating food contaminated by idols and eat Kosher and abstain from fornication.

Of course, we all interpret the Bible differently, but it seems to me that the theme in Paul's letters is love and not judging others, isn't it?

We see what we're looking for, often. And having gone through SDA schools know well the "proof text" methods which are still used: one sees the trees and often misses the forests. I fear our non-SDA Christian brothers have a much more wholistic view and see the "big picture" rather than majoring in minors which has often been the SDA perspective.

I NEVER said there was evidence for Sunday sacredness given in scripture; that would be futile as there is none. However, while there is, admittedly, no evidence for Sunday sacredness in the NT, there is absolutely no instruction given to the GENTILE Christians, who could not have been observing Jewish practices, for them to begin worshiping on the Jewish Sabbath. Please supply the texts. Yes, Paul met with various Christians on Sabbath, as he also met with many in the synagogue (which was like a town meeting place then) which does not, of itself, lend any sacredness to the Jewish synagogue, does it? Common practice is not specific instruction. Many SDA's assume that simply on the basis of long practice, that the Gentile Christians automatically began worshiping on Sabbath. Maybe so, but where is the evidence, other than to hear Paul speak? If, as is contended, Sabbath was as important for them then, as it is today, why no instruction as to its observance and proper time, etc.? Should we assume that they also "assumed" its importance?

History gives ample evidence that to separate themselves from the Jews, the Gentile Christians began meeting to worship the Lord on the day of His resurrection. Was that wrong? Some of them were the likely inheritors of the apostolic tradition: Justin Martyr and Irenaeus, to name a few. Did the inspiration of the apostles end when the NT canon was closed? Since that was not formally adopted until several hundred years AD, are we to assume that the compilers of the NT were all equally inspired? Even at the Jerusalem Council there were conflicting ideas of what was important for the new Christians and history demonstrates that the conflicts did not end there but were continued on with Marcion and those strongest in power eventually determined the definitions of orthodoxy and heresy; which we evidently hold today. By what inspiration have we come to accept all that was adopted into the NT and that which was rejected? Assumption, again? Too many questions to accept so easily, IMO.

GE:

Dear Elaine,

You are rather paradoxical to me; sometimes it sounds as if you believe the Sabbath, other times, not. Like in this case, you writing to SDANet:

<<Neither of us has shown that the Sabbath was specifically mentioned in Paul's instruction to the new Gentile Christians. It is only by assumption that the Sabbath was an important rule for the Gentiles.>>

I know of three Scriptures (quickly thinking) that show Paul lived in happy harmony with the Sabbath Day as not only part and parcel of Christian behaviour, but as fundamental Christian Belief!

In 1Cor.16:1-2 he presupposes the Sabbaths' observance of the Church, and therefore collections should be stored up on the First Day of the week - AFTER Sabbaths' Day. All right, <<only by assumption>>, yet so simple it's undeniable.

Acts 20:7: "It having been evening, the disciples (named at the beginning of the chapter I think) AFTER-HAVING-HAD-ASSEMBLED-FOR-THE-LORD'S-SUPPER-(on the Sabbath Day before)-STILL-BEING-TOGETHER on the First Day of the week, Paul, because he would leave the next morning, held discussion with them till midnight."

But here's the best: "Because ['oun'] (of what Jesus had availed according to the previous verse through resurrection from the dead) don't let anyone (of the world) judge YOU (the Church), because of ['en merei'] (your) eating and drinking OF FEAST (which is the 'celebration' - a spiritual 'eating and drinking' of Christ) whether of month's or of Sabbaths' ('of weeks') (occasion), for THESE are but a shadow of things a-coming: indeed the Body which is of Christ's", the Church, "increasing with the increase of God, nourishment being ministered by joints and bands (such as the Sabbath Days)!"

What a testimony of Paul's concerning the CHRISTIAN Sabbath Day!

By the way, the moderators of SDANet say I attack their doctrine with these my views.

Elaine:

<<Does it not seem paradoxical that those who firmly believe in the Sabbath today have difficulty proving from scripture that instruction was given to the Gentiles for its observance on their becoming Christians?>>

Answer:

I cannot see the difficulty in indicating – and even in <proving>, <from scripture that instruction was given to the Gentiles for (the Sabbath's) observance on their becoming Christians>. It not only is difficult, but impossible, NOT to find this 'proof' throughout the NT, whether in or between the lines.

But I do have sympathy with your <paradoxical>, because <those who firmly believe in the Sabbath today> mostly are the SDA's, who look for the UNNECESSARY and UNEXPECTED in the NEW Testament. But it also applies to people like you, who expect the LAW repeated in the New Testament before any of its principles or regulation or prescriptions or prohibitions could be valid or applicable <today>. Christ having fulfilled and being the Fulfilment of every of these OT 'laws', <today>, has become their true realisation and authenticity – originally, that is, for the first time. Instead of being the annulment therefore of the Sabbath Day, Jesus Christ has become its genuine validity. He is the Law standing in the place of the Law. He is the Law, living, that <today> confronts us, inviting, inciting: Enter in into God's Rest. THEN: "Therefore there remains valid keeping of the Sabbath Day for the People of God." (A direct <instruction> or 'commandment' although not Paul's if ever.)

For the New Testament Faithful there was no such thing as a transfer out of the Old into the New dispensation or 'Testament'. Everything in the OLD, for them verily in Christ, obtained NEW meaning! Everything was both still the same and still not the same any longer. Jesus made the difference.

An example of how Jesus makes the difference is found in Colossians 2. Here is the frail infant Christian Community "judged", prosecuted and "condemned" by the big mighty infamous world for celebrating her Sabbaths. Why, the world didn't judge the Jews for keeping their Sabbaths? Why? The Christians unlike the Jews, feasted their Sabbaths by reason of Jesus' resurrection! They believed and taught Jesus Christ, and then they for His sake and on strength of Him and of being "IN HIM", celebrated His Day of Worship Rest. There is the stumbling block! The Jews – as Ignatius put it, "lived the Sabbath" "not according to Christ", but "sabbatized" "without Christ", and the world left them in peace.

But the Colossians, for being Christians and for being Sabbath-keepers "because of" or "according to Christ", were persecuted and were prosecuted and "condemned" by "written document of law against us".

Elaine:

<<No one, not me, would attempt to show that Paul did not observe the Sabbath; after all he was raised an observant Jew, wasn't he? However throughout all his letters he never once instructed the new Gentiles on the importance of Sabbath as he was taught, did he? Was it important then, if he "assumed" they would begin observing it? On what basis?>>

<<No one, not me, would attempt to show that Paul did not observe the Sabbath>>

Why not, because you beforehand knew the futility of such an attempt? And (conveniently) forgot the normative influence Paul's practice as an Apostle should have had for those <new Gentiles> when <they would begin observing> the Sabbath just like he did?

<<On what basis?... after all he was raised an observant Jew, wasn't he?>>

What does it matter? What matters is what Paul did and did not do as a Christian, and that he AS A CHRISTIAN, <observe(d) the Sabbath> – not as a Jew.

But what was MOST 'important' was the <basis> on which Paul <assumed>, <instructed>, and set the example in, Sabbath-observance. That <basis> to Paul was Christ's victory through resurrection from the dead, obvious in Scriptures like Colossians 2 and Acts 13. That <basis> is also implied – most obviously implied – in Acts 20:7, for having had eaten the bread of the Lord's Supper on the Sabbath before his discussions with the disciples on the evening after, shows for what reason and purpose Paul respected the Lord's Day. (Don't be confused, I use the nomenclature 'the Lord's Day' for the Sabbath, not for Sunday!) Now notice I haven't yet referred to texts telling of Paul's habitual Sabbath's Church-attendance.

Therefore your observation, <However throughout all his letters he never once instructed the new Gentiles on the importance of Sabbath as he was taught, did he? Was it important then, if he "assumed" they would begin observing it? On what basis?>, is most unobservant!

Therefore unlike <as he was taught> as a Jew, but certainly as he was taught as a Christian in whatever manner Divine, Paul did not apply the Law the Law all the time like a slave driver the whip.

Paul enjoyed the Lord's Supper with his fellow-believers on the Sabbath Day, we have noticed. (Acts 20:7) There is no indication or reason it was not the Christian and exemplary thing, or not the Christian and exemplary Day, for the enjoying of the Lord's Supper. For Luke says Paul, "After they had come together for the Lord's Supper and thus after on the First Day of the week

were together still – it (by now) being evening – discussed with them (the disciples) (their itinerary)”. (The Perfect Participle!)

Would Paul “comfort” the Believers, “Don’t let yourselves be judged by anyone of the world with regard to your eating and drinking of feast, whether of month’s or of Sabbaths’ (weekly) occasion”, if it hadn’t been of <importance> to both him and the Church?

If the Sabbath wasn’t important to Paul, why would he advise the Corinthians to do the private saving up of their relief-fund contributions on the First Day of the week – not on the Sabbath therefore, for obvious reasons of its Christian importance.

<<Meeting at the synagogue or wherever on the Sabbath does not of itself, promote Sabbath observance, does it? Traditional practice was what was being followed.>>

Why would <meeting at the synagogue or wherever on the Sabbath> not of itself, <promote Sabbath observance? It undeniably indicates the Church as observing the Sabbath – how could it not be important?

How however could it ‘promote’ Sunday observance?

Yea, in fact <traditional practice was what was being followed>, you say, and that influential, normative ‘tradition’, meant keeping the Sabbath, promoted the Sabbath, and instructed the Sabbath – Seventh Day – and lifted out its importance.

But that’s not all; it was the New Covenant that was being followed, and the Sabbath anew, and the recreation of all things “in Him”, and the creation of all thing, finished by Him.

The ‘promoting’ power and influence behind it all, that imbued everything Christian, was Jesus Christ, the Crucified, resurrected from the dead, Triumphant, Victor, LORD, and therefore, Lord of the Sabbath too and Lord and head of the Body the Church in its practice of Sabbaths’ celebration. This was why Paul and the Church, then, ‘observed’ the Sabbath.

Never the Church assembled but for the Feast of the Resurrection, and never on but the Day of the Resurrection – according to the Word of God “spoken concerning the Seventh Day: And God on the Seventh Day rested from all His works”.

God also from His work of salvation, one day would, and that one day having come, in fact did rest – confirming His Sabbath Day once for all, when He raised Christ from the dead by the exceeding greatness of His power – His Power to finish and to rest.

The traditional, New Testament, Biblical practice was being followed, no mistake!

Then came, saw, and conquered Wisdom and Philosophy, and Principalities, Rule and Dominions, and with enticing words, subtle beguiling, and false humbleness, robbed from the People God's Day, and upon the First Day of the week bestowed all such honour and virtue as belonged to it.

Justin Martyr was the first and till today stands first in rank among these giants of "the traditions and doctrines of MEN" who stole the honour of God's Sabbath to give it to pagans' day of Sun-worship. A 'Gnostic' – someone who knows – they say Justin was. Traditional practice was what was being followed, by him and his like – not the traditional practice that as Christians was being followed by Paul and the Church of his day.

<< We know from history that the early Christians began worshiping the risen Lord in His honor on the Resurrection day. Was that wrong? >>

Ah! We know, we know! But <the early Christians>, who were they? If they were the first century Christians, then nothing <was wrong>. We know from the history recorded in the New Testament that Believers began worshiping the risen Lord in His honour on the Resurrection Day, the Seventh Day Sabbath. That was the beginning of the Christian observance of the Sabbath in contradistinction to the Jews' observance of it. That the early Christians began worshiping the risen Lord in His honour on the Resurrection Day was NOT the beginning of the Christian observance of Sunday. That only began about a century later! And then that, was all wrong! As you say,

<<There is nothing in the Bible, or for many centuries later, declaring Sunday sacredness, nor have I ever mentioned it as being sacred.>>

<<To say that Sabbath is Christian one should give texts instructing the new Christians in its proper observance. Where is that to be found? Correctly, it is the Jewish Sabbath, and all good Jews will

confirm that. There is no "Christian Sabbath" given in the NT, is there?>>

Is there not? Now what would you call the Sabbath Jesus observed and said He is the Lord of – a Jewish Sabbath? And how would you explain the Sabbath kept by the early Christians? You say they observed it to the honour and for the worship of their Lord even the Lord Jesus Christ – yet it was no Christian Sabbath Day?

After how many years of being the Christian Church were the books of the NT written and compiled by it, and throughout there is only this "Sabbath" of the Seventh Day of Christian worship mentioned and not mentioned?

I would not know what a Christian Day of Worship-Rest is if not this 'Sabbath'.

One needs give no texts instructing the new Christians in the proper observance of the Sabbath. Haven't we just seen <it was Traditional practice (that) was being followed>, even by <the new Gentiles>? Yet you ask, <Where is that (instruction) to be found?> The question is as unasked for as 'instruction' would have been unasked for.

Your question is purely imaginary, taking for granted the 'new Gentiles' weren't 'instructed' about the Sabbath Day. Where do you find that Paul was 'instructed' the 'proper observance' of the Sabbath Day? Yet you began by saying Paul kept the Sabbath <as he was taught>.

This 'issue' of 'instruction' is much like the whole Sabbath-'issue'. Because the Sabbath was so commonplace among Christians, it needed no highlighting as 'Law' or 'keeping'.

While we do not find a direct repetition of the Fourth Commandment in the New Testament, we actually find the Sabbath's true origin there as in Jesus Christ. Just so with any 'instruction' about the Sabbath Day. The Sabbath was so normal and natural and matter of course, it needed no special mention EXCEPT in its Divine fulfilment in and by and for the sake of Jesus Christ! THIS Sabbath Day totally permeates the New Testament Message.

Did not Paul also unintentionally set the example with his customary attendance at Sabbaths' worship? He – and so the Church – would have been left with no congregational worship were it not for the opportunities the Sabbaths offered.

So to conjure examples of Sunday-attendance, Sunday enthusiasts were not afraid to tamper with God's Word, and forcibly wrangled out of it a few (three to be exact).

<Texts instructing the new Christians in proper observance> of the Sabbath? On what grounds do you ask such a question? What 'instruction' would any believer have needed in this regard? Even <the new Gentiles>, like those in Colossus, very well knew about the Sabbath, its meaning and its proper celebration, namely as the Feast of promised things to come, even the Body of Christ's own, "increasing with the increase of God". For them it was the Church-Day! For them the Day promised better thing! Now they may suffer for the Faith of Jesus, but the Sabbath gives them that spectre of the Church Triumphant. For the Sabbath for them was the Lord's Day!

So the believers – whether old Jews or new Gentiles in fact had to have been instructed properly on proper Sabbath-keeping and proper Sabbath-belief – which were the Christian enjoyment and the Christian Faith-basis of Sabbath-practice and doctrine.

All old Jewish and new Gentile converts were instructed about it "every Sabbath Day", Luke recorded in Acts 15! Had he not recorded it, we nevertheless would have known, and could be sure they were.

If any questions remain, they are removed by the simple fact the Gospels were written later than any Letters of Paul's, and in them there is no question about the Sabbath Day or about its Christ-foundation and Christ-end-purpose, namely "to the glory of God in the face of Jesus". <There is> not a single exceptional example in all of the New Testament, and least is Colossians 2:16f one.

<<That Jesus and Paul were circumcised and observed Sabbath is evidence of their Jewish heritage. Paul spoke often, and eloquently, on not judging behavior such as days, didn't he? What did he mean? Depends on one's interpretation.>>

Paul could do nothing about the fact he was once circumcised in the flesh. He could do even less about the fact he was once circumcised with the circumcision of Christ, the circumcision not done by hands. He also could do nothing about the fact he once as a Jew observed the Sabbath Day. But he could as a Christian have stopped to observe the Sabbath Day had that been the instruction to him from above, as in every other case of his inability it was

a matter of instruction from God – of God's will for Paul. But no, Paul kept on keeping the Sabbath Day, only now better and more divinely instructed in it – because he had become a Christian, because it evidenced his CHRISTIAN <heritage>!

Then this is what Paul had to say to those helpless and vulnerable believers at Colossus, "That their hearts may be comforted / find solace, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgement of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ – in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge (= 'instruction'). And this I say lest any man of the world should delude you with smooth talk." Jesus Christ now through the Holy Spirit was the Christian's New Law, his complete 'instruction'.

You think the Colossians had no 'instruction' also as far as the Sabbath was concerned? Then why would Paul say again, "Do not you be judged = condemned by any man of the world as pertains feasting feast of Sabbaths", but be "comforted"? You suppose it possible regardless of their knowlegdeability? If you do, I reckon you should reconsider what it involved to be a Christian in Paul's day!

Elaine G T. Clint Nelson:

Thanks for not giving the "brush off" which is what SDANet has done to similar questions. It appears that once "in" the questions are to cease.

For those of us who have run the full gamut of the SDA educational institutions, it is not lack of knowledge, but lack of coherent reasoning by some of the moderators that is in short supply, as well as patience.

Thanks for your reply,
Elaine

Protestants in denial, 1 (The Little Word "Or")

wopik

Protest-ants like to think they are light-years away from their catholic roots, their mother church.

But the protestant daughters still keep their mother catholic church's holy days: sun-day, christmas, Ishtar (Easter) and Halloween, thereby forsaking God's holy days - His "appointed times".

GE:

Wopik,

You and some friends of yours have found a clever way to dodge any real challenge to your positions by every time creating a new 'topic'.

Let's forget the insect-ology ("protest-ants") and keep to God's 'Logos'.

What is more pathetic, a Protestant who has forgotten how to protest, or a Christian who has forgotten how to be free? Not much of a difference, is there?

The Christian PRINCIPLE is basic and correct, of believing and keeping the Day of Christian Worship because of Jesus Christ, and because of Him in the exceeding greatness of God's Power when He raised Him from the dead. It was God's great act of rest, His finishing work of all the works of God and of all things created through and in Jesus Christ.

Only flaw is these Protestants neglect protest against the antichrist's falsifying of the Scriptures to make it say Jesus rose from the dead on Sunday - which He did not because He rose on the Sabbath Day - as the very nature and essence of the Sabbath promised.

Christians who follow after the Jews and believe and keep Sabbath (Seventh Day) because of the Law full stop, are just as slavishly practicing a Christianity that is neither Christian, nor Faith, because it is not in the first place and fully, Resurrection-Faith.

Then all these technicalities so paraded on this thread simply reveal gross ignorance, like the theory Jesus was crucified on Wednesday. If true, He would have to be in the state of death for five days if resurrected on the First Day of the week.

The ABCOG bases its entire dogma on one single premise - what the 'Sadducees' have said - for which they have NO ONE SINGLE word from those 'Sadducees' themselves to rely on, but ONLY what the 'Pharisees' they so condemn have said about them. Ironic! I would not base my faith on irony.

liafailrock:

... Many of the celebrations by the Christian church are "traditions of men".

On the other Christian board, we are discussing the issue regarding the day of the crucifixion as well. I don't believe that was on a Friday, either.

GE:

Correct, it wasn't on Friday. But answer me this one, which your referred website cannot, How come the body of our Lord was laid in the tomb on the day He was crucified and died, "Now evening had come" and the body still hanging on the cross?

How illuminating the RCC-inspired and coerced 'Versions' changed those two texts (Mt.27:57 and Mk.15:42) to suit their theory – a theory contradicted by their own superstitious practices!)

liafailrock

Gerhard:

I'm not sure what you are asking. Jesus died on the cross Nissan 14. He was taken down and prepared for burial and entombed when Nissan 15 started at sundown--- so the three day countdown commences at Nissan 15 to fulfil the feast of Unleavened Bread.

GE:

You deem being entombed the literal equivalent of the figurative experience of Jesus' being "in the heart of the earth". The correct understanding of this 'status' of being in the heart of the earth, is – or was – Jesus' experience of having tasted death. That started beginning fourteen Nisan, "My hour has come", and ended 16 Nisan, "Then suddenly", John 13 and Mt.28. Not while being entombed.

The Passover was slaughtered 14 Nisan, and its remains burned the following day in the wilderness. Next day – Nisan 16, saw Israel standing on the other side of the Red Sea – resurrection of

Jesus its antitype. Visit <http://www.biblestudents.co.za>

The three-day countdown did not begin once the body had been entombed – it began when Jesus actually and finally began to experience death's agony, consciously and actively willingly.

Also, Jesus was only interred on 15 Nisan late day while being daylight still – Luke 23:54-56. It was deep into night when Joseph only had his body taken from the cross. Thereafter he prepared the body "according to the custom" which took much time.

Israel travelled most of day into the wilderness and first stopped at Succot where they burned the remains of the lamb. Succot, "tents" – Jesus' temporary hiding place of being entombed.

liafailrock

Well, Gerhard, it's like anything one studies. When we want to find something out, we go back to the 'textbook'. Let's see what Jesus said in Matthew 12:40...

For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

The whale's belly was symbolic of the grave as Jesus pointed out. Jonah was in that belly for 3 days and 3 nights. The time involving the 3 days did not include any event that transpired before Jonah was swallowed.

pastorjeff

I'm still trying to figure out the big deal here. What matters?

1 Cor. 15:4- he was buried and rose again the third day according to the scriptures.

Are you trying to prove something?

liafailrock

Pastor Jeff:

I tend to agree with you actually. My stance is that Christ fulfilled what was foreshadowed in the feast days just as other areas of OT prophecy speak of Christ--- that's all. These days were Passover (late 14th)--- His death, Unleavened Bread (starting at sundown on the 15th)--- his burial, and Firstfruits---his resurrection starting at sundown Saturday. In this case, three days later, or on the 18th of Nissan. Pretty simple, straightforward prophetic timeline mapping out the events perfectly timed. No sense in deviating from this simple mathematical concept of counting to the number "three".

I think the issue with some folks about Christ arising on late Saturday afternoon is that they seem to think the resurrection needs to fall on that day to make the Sabbath valid for some reason. The Sabbath can stand on its own no matter what day the resurrection occurred. Indeed, in the Bible, the first day of the week is also

the eighth day, the number eight is associated with new beginnings and new life.

In the age to come, a new heavens and new earth is created after the sabbath millennium.

pastorjeff

I think the Sabbath issue is something that confuses some people. Scripture tells us we need a day of rest. So take your day of rest. Scripture tells us we should not forsake corporate worship, so if the church is open on Sunday for worship, I will be there. The Scripture also tells us the day we set aside for that worship is a side issue. What matters is that we worship together and get our rest. We are making big issues about the wording and timing of things, and not the purpose and intent.

GE:

quoting pastorjeff:

I'm still trying to figure out the big deal here. What matters?

1 Cor. 15:4- he was buried and rose again the third day according to the scriptures.

Are you trying to prove something? QE

GE:

Yes, that "according to the Scriptures" in this very reference of yours means according to the Passover-symbolism – that Jesus would die, be buried, and the third day according to the Scriptures, be raised up again. Jesus fulfilled the Scriptures; He fulfilled prophecy; and He is our Passover Lamb, Lamb of God.

The negative of this is that Jesus would not have risen only on the second day of His having tasted death. And that implies the traditional view of Jesus being crucified and died and buried on Friday, and risen on Sunday, cannot be correct or true – not, "according to the Scriptures"!

This is my whole point: The Sabbath cannot stand on its own no matter, never, not for a moment. For the Sabbath Day to be Christian Faith, it stands in need of Jesus Christ and His institution of it by the redemption wrought in Him and by Him, just like the patriarchs stood in need of the creation for a possible belief of the Sabbath; and the Hebrews depended on the Exodus for their unmistakable remembering of the Sabbath Day.

If not on Jesus' resurrection the Sabbath stood, it falls for Christians. The Scriptures, the Scriptures! They confirm, "For God thus concerning the

Seventh Day spoke, and God the Seventh Day RESTED from all His works" – which ONLY happened in Jesus Christ.

Why does the Christian Church believe and keep Sunday? Because the Church believes the principle Jesus' resurrection justifies and is the sanction to so believe and practice.

Only problem is, they base this sound principle on false data – assumed 'facts' that aren't 'facts' but the traditions of men. Because the Scriptures do NOT say Jesus rose on the First Day of the week – it says He rose "in Sabbath's-time", and besides of long before so presented the Sabbath Day so as to have been the Day of God's Rest and Finishing ... through Christ.

liafailrock:

Pastor Jeff:

... These days were Passover (late 14th)--- His death, Unleavened Bread (starting at sundown on the 15th)--- his burial, and Firstfruits---his resurrection starting at sundown Saturday. In this case, three days later, or on the 18th of Nissan. Pretty simple, straightforward prophetic timeline mapping out the events perfectly timed. No sense in deviating from this simple mathematical concept of counting to the number "three".

GE:

You cannot even count, what interpret the prophecies!

liafailrock

No, I meant that's 3 days between the start of Nissan 15 and Nissan 18 (72 hours). I won't even debate the mathematically obvious or one's ability to count to three. If anyone else here has trouble seeing that, maybe we can arrange for tutoring in math.

GE:

You're quite right, maths isn't the point. It's what Jesus said or did not say. And Jesus never said or implied He would be "in the grave (Nisan 15 to Nisan 18) 72 hours". The point is what Jesus said and meant, and He never said He would be in the belly of the whale whether for 72 hours or for three days and three nights. No, He said, "as Jonah was in the belly of the fish", "so" would "the Son of Man be IN THE HEART OF THE EARTH for three days and three nights". Jonah had his own experience – alive, he didn't die – for three days and three nights; Jesus had His own experience – alive and even in death I think – for three days and three nights. It comprised of His whole LAST SUFFERING for sin – his being actually interred comprising but one part or aspect of this suffering of "being in the heart of the earth".

Jesus' DEATH-SUFFERING begins the three days and three nights, just as His DEATH-CONQUERING brings the end to the three days and three nights. You will break down this temple and on the third day I shall have rebuilt it. The interment fell in between. On the day after Nisan 14 the remains was returned to the earth.

Then again, the Scriptures nowhere states or implies Jesus would rise on that one moment that is neither the past nor the next day. Armstrong exposes his foolish thinking best exactly on this point of the ending of the three days and three nights, where he initially overstates the time period to the second, then a bit further on in his pamphlet brings the resurrection a bit before sunset, and still further on to Sabbath's afternoon – in the end hitting the right spot.

The Scriptures say, LITERALLY and particularly meaning, epi – emphatically, phohs – light, ousehi – while / in being. The very thought is strengthened by the first phrase of the text, opse – fullness, sabbatohn – of Sabbath's-day. Simply: "AFTERNOON". So found by many and trustworthy, godly, scholars. It's not I who so invented.

GE reminding Eric B,

There is this day in the New Testament called, "The Lord's Day". You are offended by this Day, when you say, "This is what happens from focusing on a day like that. We lose focus on what the Church is!"

If the Day belongs to the Lord – if He is Lord of and over this day – then to His People does it belong, and they upon it! And you are offended by it.

Liafailrock:

My stance is that Christ fulfilled what was foreshadowed in the feast days just as other areas of OT prophecy speak of Christ--- that's all. These days were Passover (late 14th)--- His death, Unleavened Bread (starting at sundown on the 15th)--- his burial, and Firstfruits---his resurrection starting at sundown Saturday. In this case, three days later, or on the 18th of Nissan.

GE:

14 Nisan to 18 Nisan = FIVE days?

"Late" 14 Nisan? No! both its part of "day AND night" as Jesus specified! It began at the beginning: "My hour has come", at the table; then followed Gethsemane and so forth as you are well acquainted with, until He died, and remained hanging on the cross through evening of 15 Nisan, when only Joseph appeared on the scene ... and buried Him next day of Nisan 15,

afternoon before the weekly Sabbath Nisan 16, "WHEN SUDDENLY there was an great earthquake ...". Read your Bible, not the RCC versions of it!

liafailrock

I found a web site that has a table part way down their web page that gives the timeframes of Christ's death, burial and resurrection. Their chart agrees with what I've been saying--- everything occurred on the feast days AND the 72 hour requirement was fulfilled.

When one looks carefully at all the other viewpoints, they somehow contradict the biblical information or leave things out. I can't see how any other timing would satisfy the requirements as he has charted out. The events are bounded

mathematically and prophetically.

<http://yephiah.com/wednesday.html>

GE:

Quoting pastorjeff:

I think the Sabbath issue is something that confuses some people.

No Pastor Jeff, it's the Sunday-issue that confuses people. In the Scriptures there's NO "Sabbath-issue" as far as its placing in time is concerned, only as far as it's placing in Christian Faith is concerned. The Sunday receives absolutely no SUCH attention in the Scriptures simply because it was for the NT believers just another day for their work. It had no church- or redemptive significance or pertinence or relevancy.

This sanctimonious distancing oneself as a Christian from the Sabbath-issue is just to avoid its very real relevance in our day.

NEVER EVER does "the Scripture tell us the day we set aside for that worship is a side issue".

I shall make big issue about the wording and timing of things, for it is the purpose and intent throughout Scripture, of no less than God and His Christ Himself. He shall plague us with these words, forever: "according to the Scriptures"! He shall terrorise us with these words: "The Seventh Day is the Sabbath Day of the LORD your God", "For GOD, thus concerning the Seventh Day did speak, and God on the Seventh Day rested from all His works" – which He HAD DONE in Christ – "in these last days ... through the SON"!

"Protestants in denial" – what an apt title! It's sub-heading could have read: Protestants in retreat! How they take their heels whenever confronted

by the most practical and relevant aspect of Christian Church life – it's very day of being the Church of Jesus Christ! How heroically they take flight when it comes to be either Protestant or RC on the very "Sabbath-issue"!

Quoting who was it?:

"In the age to come, a new heavens and new earth is created after the sabbath millennium." QE

GE:

I beg your pardon, where have you read any of this in the Scriptures? The Sabbath is a day in the Scriptures, the seventh day of the week or of the creation order of God. In the New Testament it's even clearer and more authentic: "In the Sabbath ... BEFORE the First Day of the week". I haven't invented it – it is God's own cycle of days in time – earthly time of days and of nights.

I would rather stay with my feet on earth than swoon with my head in the maze of millennia.

Eric B quoting GE:

Protestants in retreat! How they take their heels whenever confronted by the most practical and relevant aspect of Christian Church life – its very day of being the Church of Jesus Christ!

Eric B:

"So the Church is only the Church one day of the week when they meet in a building? I hate to say it; but boy, do you have things mixed up! This is what happens from focusing on a day like that. We lose focus on what the Church is! Just like the argument of Armstrong that "Christ's presence" is not in other days! (How limited of Christ! I guess Satan must be lord of 6/7ths (85%) of the week!) QE

GE:

Distorting what I say won't create a way of escape for you.

I don't even know what Armstrong has to say on this point, neither do I care. I'll rather remind you of one Pliny who wrote on the Christians' behalf to the ruler of the world of his day, and he told him who the Christians were – by telling him what they used to DO. "They on a certain day MEET TOGETHER". Most conspicuous!

That's it friend in Jesus – YOU are one of them because YOU, "meet together" and "meeting together", IS the Church of Jesus Christ.

What do I teach that is so radically different from THIS, sound, doctrine, that you go nuts? Nothing but the irritating reality of the constitution of God's People being that Body of Believers who – essentially – are those who meet

together "on a certain day". The only question remaining, is THIS: Is it the Day "thereto appointed" by God, or is it any day of anyone's liking or disliking of the day appointed thereto by God?

gb93433 quoting GE:

"Protestants in denial" – what an apt title! It's sub-heading could have read: Protestants in retreat! How they take their heels whenever confronted by the most practical and relevant aspect of Christian Church life – it's very day of being the Church of Jesus Christ! How heroically they take flight when it comes to be either Protestant or RC on the very "Sabbath-issue"! QE

I have friends in a country who are there to share their faith and will probably not attend a church unless they travel to another country on the outside.

GE:

It is unfortunate, because it is not God's design for His Children to be so dispersed and separated. It is God's ultimate will they will be free to Congregate as "the People of God" – and God left them an appointed day to that very purpose and end.

GB, you surely pray for your friends, do you not?

Privately, I am sure. But I'm even surer you pray for them while having Communion with your other and nearer and freer friends, all gathered together in the Name of Jesus and on His Day the Lord's Day? Sure! God be with you!

You think God provided for all such circumstances? Then He must have provided by securing you this Day of Worship-Rest as an – no, as THE opportunity for so interceding through the Holy Spirit in prayer for your friends? "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day" said John, on his own and far away – YET TOGETHER IN THE SPIRIT of faith and worship and prayer. Not even John the Apostle of Christ was the "Church" by himself.

Eric B:

The Church in Acts met every day of the week. People can get together anytime for prayer and fellowship, and they are still "the Church". Meeting one day out of the week is ONE thing the Church does; not ALL the Church does; and outside of that, it doesn't exist! It is not all about a building and a certain time of the week. It is the traditions of men that have defined the Church like that.

"Going nuts"? All I have done is calmly tell you the truth. You are the one reacting. "offended"? Why would I be; when your position clearly is not biblical. "escape"? what is this, you think you have me on trial or something?

(You're obviously the one "offended", then; it's like I "offended" you, and now you're "chasing" me or something!) "distorting what you say"? You are reaffirming it. No, the Church is not only the Church at a set meeting time. If so, that would mean we were outside of Christ and not saved the minute we set foot outside the building, until the next week. "By ONE SPIRIT are we baptized into one BODY. "Body of Christ" is synonymous with "the Church". We are not in and out of the Body every week. As we see, you do lose focus of the truth; by turning the very concept of Christ's Church (a SPIRITUAL fellowship and Kingdom) into a mechanical routine of people meeting at a certain time in a certain place.

quote:

There is this day in the New Testament called, "The Lord's Day". If the Day belongs to the Lord – if He is Lord of and over this day – then to His People does it belong, and they upon it! And you are offended by it.

Eric B:

You make the same exact mistake as the Sunday keepers! That passage says not ONE THING about a day of the week. John was, however taken "in spirit" (vision) to the "Day of the Lord", which was the time of His judgment! It was in the 2nd century when that term was first assumed to be a day of the week, and that day was Sunday. So all you are doing is trying to beat the Sunday keepers at their own game.

quote:

Then again, the Scriptures nowhere states or implies Jesus would rise on that one moment that is neither the past nor the next day. Armstrong exposes his foolish thinking best exactly on this point of the ending of the three days and three nights, where he initially overstates the time period to the second, then a bit further on in his pamphlet brings the resurrection a bit before sunset, and still further on to Sabbath's afternoon – in the end hitting the right spot.

Eric B:

Armstrong offshoot Christian Biblical Church of God writer Ron Coulter points out that both interpretations of the term "3 days and 3 nights" are harmonized at one particular pair of times. If "day and night" means only "parts of 3 days"; that can be from the end of the first

day to the beginning of the 3rd day; which would be the traditional Friday night to Sunday. But it could also be the beginning of the first day to the end of the 3rd Day. Which would be practically 72 hours, agreeing with the literal interpretation. If we postulate they didn't actually make it to the tomb before the annual Sabbath began; the annual Sabbath would be the first day. And of course, if He actually arose at the end of the weekly Sabbath (and was discovered after it ended), then the weekly sabbath would actually be the "3rd day". I had found that "today is the 3rd day since these things occurred" (Luke 24:21) could possibly be translated something to the effect that "the third day has passed". (I'd have to look it up again). That would make sense, because why would they necessarily expect Him to have been risen already at the beginning of the day? There would be the rest of the day for Him to rise to fulfil the prophecy.

I had accepted this, until I noticed that all of the resurrection accounts; we see a progression of "Crucifixion Day--Sabbath Day--Resurrection Day". It really doesn't seem there were two sabbaths in there with another day in between.

As for the argument about women and the spices before and after the sabbath; I harmonize all of the accounts here

GE:

Eric B,

I've got 5 minutes, and I'm slow, so here's a reference for you that will interest you greatly, I'm sure, tackling every of the things you mention here, www.biblestudents.co.za.

GE:

You have noticed: "It really doesn't seem there were two sabbaths in there with another day in between."

Spot on!

But two 'sabbaths' 'in there' there were, the first having been the Passover's Sabbath Day, the day properly called "The Passover". Jesus was crucified on the "Preparation of the Passover (Sabbath)". Then followed (beginning with its evening after which Joseph obtained permission) this "High Day (Sabbath)". Joseph buried Jesus on it. Then followed the third day – resurrection-day, Day of "First Sheaf Wave Offering Before the LORD". It happened to be the weekly Sabbath.

Then by the way, The early Christians did not meet every day in the way you want it to mean.

Argument: The Apostles appointed others to attend to some of their duties so that they could minister full time.

Argument: "Every day" simply means 'every day they worshipped, they worshipped in the temple'. Otherwise it also must mean they never worshipped in another place like the synagogues. But we know they did. And so on – but read my book, 'The Lord's Day in the Covenant of Grace' from the web page I referred you to.

wopik

quoting GE: There is this day in the New Testament called, "The Lord's Day".

If you are talking about Rev. 1:10, well, no day of the week is associated with this term.

It is referring to "the day of the Lord" -- when the moon and sun will be darkened and the stars will fall from heaven (Zephaniah 1 and Joel 2).

Ray Berrian

Wopik,

I liked your passage from Joel about the Day of the Lord which speaks about the Second Coming of Christ. This is also picked up in the New Testament in Matthew 24:29, II Thessalonians 1:7-9, II Peter 3:10 and Jude verses 14-15. Peter actually says, '. . . the Day of the Lord.'

Just think Enoch preached about the Second Coming back in Genesis 5:23 when he lived and Jude calls attention to Enoch's prophecy in Jude verse 14.

Enoch lived about 2,950 years before the birth of Christ and we are still looking forward to this grand day when Jesus will come to judge the wicked.

Berrian, Th.D.

GE:

Quoting wopik:

If you are talking about Rev. 1:10, well, no day of the week is associated with this term.

It is referring to "the day of the Lord" -- when the moon and sun will be darkened and the stars will fall from heaven (Zephaniah 1 and Joel 2).

<http://www.centuryone.com/crucifixion.html>

GE:

The Greek is kyriakehi hehmerai -

First the word "day" stands there to be taken for real, "the day the Lord Jesus", 'Lordly Day' – implying two distinctives: Day of becoming Lord through Victory (Col.2:15, Eph.1:19f), Day earmarked by Christ – the Lord – when He triumphed.

Two: Day of the worship of Him this 'Lordly' Lord: "I John was in the Spirit". The Lord Jesus is worshipped "in Spirit and in Truth".

Both these distinctives synchronised in the Sabbath Day for which reason Jesus declared "Therefore the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath Day".

Maybe judgement day will also be on a Sabbath, remembering His resurrection-day was judgement-day He being vindicated and exalted over every name and every authority "WHEN raised". (Just in passing)

The Greek is NOT, hehmera (tou) kyriou – Genitive of the Noun – ALWAYS used for the last day of the Lord. No, it's the Adjectival, like in "the Lord (Jesus') Supper". Clearly a peculiar use for a peculiar Reason – Jesus.

GE quoting Eric B, QB ... "Body of Christ" is synonymous with "the Church". We are not in and out of the Body every week.

As we see, you do lose focus of the truth; by turning the very concept of Christ's Church (a SPIRITUAL fellowship and Kingdom) into a mechanical routine of people meeting at a certain time in a certain place. QE

GE:

No fine, you're right, and I am sorry I created the misunderstanding. It was not my intention the Church exists only while in the Gathering.

But I think you know I didn't.

We, the Church, don't we confess, I believe the Communion of the Saints, the work of the Holy Spirit not only to bring Christ into the heart of the lonely, but to bring all believers together in the worship and praises and confession of the Christ? Is the Church not the completion of the work of the Holy Spirit in the event of the Gathering of the Believers? (I'm not talking of a building, but of "The Body of Christ's Own" (Col.2:17) I'm talking of the WITNESS IN THE WORLD which is the Church ultimately. When all the world sees: HERE, are the People of God. (Mixed of course with the false members, but no less.) When is sounding over all the world the WORD PROCLAIMED. That doesn't happen in a corner, but as a judgement against them who hear, both inside the Church and outside. The Church is portrayed as a CITY – visible, located, shining in the darkness. Yes the individual light too, but how easily a bushel may be put over it; not so easy with a city.

To see the appropriateness of the Sabbath Day for the people of God in this context is as easy as unavoidable.

You cannot get away from texts like Hb.4:9 and Col.2:16-17. They imply the Sabbath Day celebrated by the Spiritual Church in unity in Christ, in physical unity combined on the Sabbath Day. For one reason: Jesus Christ and HE in resurrection from the dead!

In the last analysis, the Sabbath Day is God's design and provision (also His Command); our likes and dislikes cannot change the fact in the least.

Eric B

Hebrews 4 shows that the true "Sabbath rest" is spiritual; meaning "ceasing from one's works"; not just on one day, but every day, and that would include trying to "keep" a day to fulfil the Law. (that in this case is considered WORK; not "rest".

Colossians is telling us not to let anyone judge us over sabbath days, meats, etc. as "law-keepers" do.

No, it is not about likes or dislikes' it is about what the New Testament truly teaches us.

GE:

Are your "law-keepers" those who judge, or those who are judged? If the last, then they are "law-keepers" with God's blessing! Never heard of God-fearing "law-keepers" who are condemned by Christ for being "law-keepers"! In fact: "Here are they (the patient saints) that keep the commandments of God indeed the faith of Jesus", standing with the Lamb and singing the Song of Moses and the Lamb with their Father's Name written in their foreheads! What a picture of freedom and victory!

Stop parroting the real legalists, and start appreciating the Scriptures for yourself.

In Hb.4 the "rest" – anapausis – is Jesus Christ; and "a keeping of the Sabbath – sabbatismos – THEREFORE, is still valid for the People of God". In Colossians the Church – the Christian Church – is judged by the world and its authorities on wisdom and doctrine (the real 'legalists') for feasting her Sabbaths – the Lord's Sabbaths.

Eric B:

The "law-keepers" are obviously the ones who do the judging. Who is the one coming onto the board suggesting that everyone is sinning by not keeping the right day? Talk about a total turnaround. We are the "legalists" (the word means one preaching Law; not the one claiming to not be under the Law!) The passage says "judge ... in regards to...a sabbath day". Not "judge you for keeping

the day". What Paul teaches us elsewhere is "One man esteems one day above another day; and another esteems every day alike. Let each one be fully assured in his own mind. He who regards the day regards it to the Lord; and he not regarding the day, does not regard it to the Lord." (Roman 14:5, 6-- which agrees with the teaching in Col.)

If the rest is Jesus Christ; then that means this is spiritual, and not a literal "rest" on a particular day. There are other "commandments" besides the letter of the 10 Commandments; so that does not prove the sabbath either.

GE:

First, as I see it – no Scripture to back me up with – a "law-keeper" is not a legalist, but a legalist is one who, where there is no law, creates his own, to obey as though his life depends on it. Not your usual version, but holding water. The Pharisees were legalists – they weren't "law-keepers", because they BROKE God's Law in order to obey their OWN laws. The Sabbath-incidents in the Gospels illustrate very well. With doing their own laws, the Pharisees thought they could earn God's favour (in whatever respect). By not caring about the love-principle of God's Law whether as contained in the Fourth Commandment or whether as contained in the Greatest Commandment itself, concerned them no bit.

Now I say Christianity generally despises the Fourth Commandment because they say Christ is not honoured by it. Are they not sinners for it however they may protest?

But then Christianity generally increases its indebtedness to God's Law by setting up their own – which is Sunday-keeping – and think they honour Christ through it. Are they not legalists for it?

Behaving as though Sunday-keeping does not exist as Law and works of the Church won't excuse it. It just further proves the hypocrisy of it.

But worst is to force God's Word to excuse oneself while simply despising the Sabbath-Commandment as the Sabbath, and adoring and venerating Sunday in practice, doctrine and ideology.

Who is fooled?

As to your references to those two Scriptures, I have dealt on them a lot already on BaptistBoard, and on <http://www.biblestudents.co.za>

GE quoting Eric B:

"So: The passage says "judge ... in regards to ... a sabbath day". Not "judge you for keeping the day"."

GE:

The passage does NOT say "in regards to ... a sabbath day". It says: "in regards to eating and drinking (=feasting) OF Feast or OF Sabbaths", and that again, = feasting. In short: Don't YOU (the Church) let anyone (tis) (of the world) judge = condemn you (hymahs, Acc.) in eating and drinking (en brohsei kai en posei), or, with regard to (eh en merei, by Ellipsis, en brohsei kai en posei – FEASTING) OF, Sabbaths' (FEAST) – whether OF month's (singular) or of Sabbaths' (pl. weekly) (occasion)."

Sour old Paul who condemned the happy Church for celebrating her Sabbaths' Feasts? No! Sour old legalists, who demanded, "Don't touch! Don't taste! Don't practice!"

And you know WHY Paul "solicited" (2:2) the Church not to be intimidated and incriminated because she feasted her Sabbaths' Feasts? Because, said he, Christ triumphed over all the sour old legalists – the "authorities" and the "principalities" of this sour old world. Take solace – be comforted, as well as be given good legal advice, Don't you mind these with their blown up greatness, they are but puffed up wind bags, over whom Christ has triumphed gloriously. "THEREFORE (oun): "FEAST your Sabbaths' Feasts!" Like it? I'm sure you abhor it!

So be it. But that is what the TEXT, means, and with almost so many words, states. To the shame of many a 'translator'.

Not "judged you for keeping the day"?

Eric B:

"Oh, so leave out that little word "OR" (#2228) a few times and hope no one notices? "food, or in drink, OR in respect of an holyday, OR of the new moon, OR of the sabbath days. You are going to some length to butcher the text.

The fact that you have to do this, is what makes you just like the Pharisees you referred to as the legalists. You are setting up your own law (the OT sabbath still in effect) by changing texts, just like the JW's create their own Christ in John 1:1!

Eric B quoting GE:

Now I say Christianity generally despises the Fourth Commandment because they say Christ is not honoured by it.

Eric B:

Really? I already cited Rom.14: "One man esteems one day above another day; and another esteems every day alike. Let each one be fully assured in his own mind. He who regards the day regards it to the Lord; and he not regarding the day, does not regard it to the Lord." That is what true Christianity teaches. What we "despise" is those who violate these Scriptures by saying "You're not keeping all of the commandments like we are", and twisting them to prove it!

Eric B quoting GE:

But then Christianity generally increases its indebtedness to God's Law by setting up their own – which is Sunday-keeping – and think they honour Christ through it. Are they not legalists for it?

Behaving as though Sunday-keeping does not exist as Law and works of the Church won't excuse it. It just further proves the hypocrisy of it. But worst is to force God's Word to excuse oneself while simply despising the Sabbath-Commandment as the Sabbath, and adoring and venerating Sunday in practice, doctrine and ideology.

Who is fooled?

Eric B:

It is true that others may legalize Sunday, and I do not agree with them. I have even responded to Frank and other Campbellites when they try to legalize it with Acts 20:7. Still, just because others make it "a law"; you cannot generalize and try to say that every single Christian who goes to church on Sunday is legalizing it, or even "venerating", adoring, etc; so the fact that others are making it a law is hypocrisy on their part. But you're not arguing with them now, so what is the point?

GE quoting Eric B:

"Oh, so leave out that little word "OR" (#2228) a few times and hope no one notices? "food, or in drink, OR in respect of an holyday, OR of the new moon, OR of the sabbath days. You are going to some length to butcher the text."

GE:

Consider:

"That little word "OR"

Good you make this statement, for man shall live by every word of God's.

"That little word "OR" –

First, delete that reference of yours (#2228) because it doesn't apply every time.

Let's see:

"... *en brohsei KAI en posei EH en merei heortehs EH neomehnias EH sabbatohn ...*".

–

One occurrence on its own, and one correlative, that is, two times its effect.

The first *EH* (your second) is used indicatively or demonstratively:

"*with regard to eating and drinking, THAT, with regard to feast*".

It virtually takes the place of "*eating and drinking*" which is implied (a second time) through Ellipsis: "*in eating and drinking (Dative), THAT with regard to (eating and drinking) of feast*".

Please report me to my Greek teachers for incorrectly applying the sound principles of grammar and syntax they have taught me. But you'll have to explain my errors to them.

You say I "leave out" the word, "or", or "butcher" it.

The text does not use *EH* "OR" between "*eating*" and "*drinking*". It uses the conjunction, "*and*" – *kai*, thus making of it ONE CONCEPT, that of "*FEAST*".

The unitary idea is therefore: "*eating AND drinking OF feast*" – it includes, "of feast".

Thus the Genitive of the text "*OF feast*", is done justice to – it is not "butchered".

The "*eating and drinking*" is found in the Dative, it being referred to by the expression "*en merei*" – "*with regard to*".

Neither "*Feast*", nor "*month's*", nor "*Sabbaths*" are in the Dative; they are in the Genitive, and therefore, "*with regard to*" has bearing on "*eating and drinking*" ONLY, making perfect sense it being the "*with regard to the 'feasting' (eating and drinking) OF Feast ('celebrating') WHETHER (EH) OF month's, OR (EH) OF Sabbaths' ('occurrence')*".

I give account of EACH instance of "the little word "OR" – *EH*, in good, accurate, English, idiom. But I give account of each and every OTHER factor involved in the text – which your version miserably FAILS to do.

Butchering of the text? How does Paul put it, "*dividing the Word of God*", "*rightly*"?

Eric B:

"All I see in my interlinear are (eh's); not "*kai*", and your making one of the "or"'s "that", while one of the

possible definitions of the word, still is not proven in what you have just posted; but was conjured up to try to make only feasting the issue. But then there are other law-keeping groups who believe the feasts are still obligatory, (and that you are just as disobedient as the Sunday-keepers) and they will have some other answer to do away with that.

Eric B quoting GE:

It is an unfortunate fact for you, dear Eric B, that the clause, "*he not regarding the day, does not regard it to the Lord*", does not occur in the original.

Disregard it, because you should, and notice what difference it makes to the whole context. It will show you that the passage reads "the strong" were those who "regarded" days. Tradition got it "the weak", regarded days.

Eric B:

It doesn't have to say that; it is a parallel principle, for one thing. And no one ever transferred the concept of "weak" and "strong" to the days. That is clearly about meats, and I have never seen anyone say otherwise. You are doing that now as yet another straw-man to try to prove your point. It does not say WHICH are weak or strong; the point is NEITHER should judge the other, but rather "be fully assured in his own mind".

Eric B quoting GE:

However the Sabbath Day is not here discussed whatsoever. Paul clearly speaks of certain days regarded more important than the rest of the days regarded important, which indicates that some period of regarded or important days – like those of the Passover Season – were involved in the issue in the Church.

But the issue not at all was about days or their regarding – everybody according to the text regarded days; it was about food, which some believed was the content of God's Kingdom.

I need not cite the verses that declare it – you know them as well or better than I do. But you must have forgotten about them, making such an issue of the days that all and everybody of the Church regarded!

Eric B:

Just like in Col. You try to push the issue off onto some law that you do not believe in keeping. The entire NT church was being assaulted by those trying to get them to keep the Law, and other practices like vegetarianism. So food and drink was one issue, and days of worship was another. You cannot lump them all into one thing, under

the banner of "meats". There were many issues people were judging over.

Eric B quoting GE:

Christ still and always will be the Law of God, sharper than a two-edged sword, as Hebrews in close context to the Sabbath, says. We can't get away from HIM, or from the redemption he has wrought, and "*that's why there is the Sabbath Day of God still binding upon God's People*".

Here is another instance of my 'butchering' of the text. Please pay attention to every word I wrote – it's in the text, clear and bright as that sword's glitter!

Eric B:

Christ is the Law, and He is the Sabbath rest; not [any longer] a literal day. That is the point of that passage.

Second Consideration:

Quote:

"All I see in my interlinear are (eh's); not "kai", and your making one of the 'or's, "that", while one of the possible definitions of the word, still is not proven in what you have just posted; but was conjured up to try to make only feasting the issue."

GE:

Consider:

"All I see in my interlinear are (eh's); not "kai" ..."

Answer:

Two variant readings against all the rest, have eh's; not "kai".

If 'EH' (and not 'kai'), it normally should have been used twice, before "eating", as well as, before "drinking" (translated 'either ... or'). Because it occurs only once in the two variants, the fact strengthens the probability 'EH' in them is a mistake.

Or, while you insist the 'EH' must be there in between "eating" and, "drinking", then it should be 'correlating' with the next after 'EH', and will result in an even messier set-up: 'Do not you be judged in eating, whether in drinking, or with regard to drinking (by Ellipsis) of feast ...'. "Eating" now is not "eating", but is "drinking" and once more "drinking" – intemperateness – and something Paul would certainly have judged and condemned the

Colossian believers for in strongest terms. He would not have said “Do not you be judged by anyone”.

You insist it must be an *EH* ‘OR’, in between “*eating*”, and, “*drinking*”. If not a correlative as in the above, the Colossians weren’t judged for doing both, but for ‘either eating or for drinking’? The grammarians call ‘*eh*’, a ‘Disjunctive’ that ‘contradicts’ – “*einander Ausschliessendes*” (Bauer)! Which of the two things, “*eating*”, “OR”, “*drinking*” were the Colossians not to be judged then?

Nestle did wisely to give preference to ‘*kai*’, “*and*”, having decided on textual as well as exegetical evidence. For are not both “*eating*” AND “*drinking*” essentials “*OF feast*” (or of “*OF feasting*”)?

“*Eating AND drinking*” was the one, and spiritual, “*feast(ing)*” of Christians in their practice – their practice of “*feast*” in faith of Jesus Christ, whether on occasion “*of month’s, or, of Sabbaths*”.

Eric B:

... and your making one of the "or"'s "that", still is not proven in what you have just posted; but was conjured up to try to make only feasting the issue.

Answer:

“... “that” ... conjured up” ...

On the one hand, I “butcher”; on the other, I “conjure up” ...

“... “that” (*eh*) ... conjured up” ... Yet you admit, “while one of the possible definitions of the word”! Which shows you indeed are well informed, but does not so well discern – because you are simply not prepared to?

So much then, for the first (and erroneous) “OR”, of ‘(your) Interlinear’.

‘EH’, number two:

We have three ‘*eh*’s’. The last two are a pair, forming the correlative: “*whether ... or*”, correlating “*of month’s*”, and “*of Sabbaths*”. Now WHAT “*OF month’s, or, OF Sabbaths*”? WHAT, but “*eating and drinking*”? The first (real) ‘*eh*’ obviously must be relative, used like a Pronoun, “*that*”, ‘*indicating and assuming the actual existence of the event or subject*’, namely “*eating and drinking – that (an) eating and drinking of month’s, or, of Sabbaths*”.

How should I make it clearer? By mixing up the issue in Colossians 2 with that in Romans 14 like you do?

Eric B:

““that” ... conjured up to try to make only feasting the issue.”

GE:

“Only feasting the issue”. Yes, but with what significance attached? Not feasting per se, but the feasting or celebration “of Sabbaths”. Not gluttony, but spiritual eating and drinking by faith of Christ. That really, was “the issue”. The world – in the last analysis – condemned the Church for believing in Christ; it condemned the Church for Sabbaths’ Christ-Feast! You, Eric B, have confirmed it!

I feel like writing this observation in capital letters, “JUDGED FOR SABBATHS’ CHRIST-FEAST”! Precisely what Paul had in mind! If you could grasp, you would have been persuaded to change your own predisposition.

Eric B:

“But then there are other law-keeping groups who believe the feasts are still obligatory, (and that you are just as disobedient as the Sunday-keepers) and they will have some other answer to do away with that.”

GE:

Let them have it their own way! Of what concern are they? Do they honour Christ whom they don’t even believe is Lord and God?

The principle, “the feasts are still obligatory”, today is truer than ever, they all being binding in Jesus Christ! If one feasts Christ, he feasts all the Old Testament feasts; he feasts the Feast of God, His Son, in Whom the Father takes great delight.

There’s no dichotomy in what I say.

What says Hebrews 4? It, after having given a summary of Christ’s achievement of having obtained rest and having given rest to the People of God and having entered into His own rest as God, concluding from it, says, “THEREFORE (*ara*) there remains valid for the People of God a keeping of the Sabbath Day!”

So does Paul, in fact, exactly so! Says he, after having given a summary of Christ’s achievement of having obtained rest and having given rest to the People of God through his death and resurrection from the dead, “THEREFORE (*oun* – Christ “having triumphed IN IT”), do not you (the Body of Christ’s Own) be judged by anyone in eating and drinking of feast whether of month’s, or, of Sabbaths’ (Christ)-Feast”.

Eric B quoting GE:

It is an unfortunate fact for you, dear Eric B, that the clause, “*he not regarding the day, does not regard it to the Lord*”, does not occur in the original.

Disregard it, because you should, and notice what difference it makes to the

whole context. It will show you that the passage reads "the strong" were those who "regarded" days. Tradition got it "the weak", regarded days.

Eric B:

"It doesn't have to say that; it is a parallel principle, for one thing. And no one ever transferred the concept of "weak" and "strong" to the days. That is clearly about meats, and I have never seen anyone say otherwise. You are doing that now as yet another straw-man to try to prove your point. It does not say WHICH are weak or strong; the point is NEITHER should judge the other, but rather "be fully assured in his own mind"."

GE:

Consider:

"It doesn't have to say that", namely, "WHICH are weak or strong",

yet it does. First, many – just as well every Sunday-dogmatician – have made capital of the inference that if the weak only ate herbs, it meant the weak observed days too, and it is the strong who did not observe days. As expected they would refuse the opposite implication, that if there is no non-regarding of days, the strong should be those who had in fact regarded days. But simply read the text without the 'non-regarding' clause. While 14:2 says the weak person eats only herbs, it must be deduced that those "who are strong" (15:1) are those persons who "eat" – who "eat" of all the food involved irrespective. "One regards one day more important; another regards every day equally important. Let every one be sure in his own mind. He minding the day, does so to the Lord. And the person eating, eats to the Lord, thanking God."

Clearly the ones regarding days are those eating irrespectively, and therefore they are the strong. Sort of adding and subtracting logic, I admit – sort of "parallel principle" – but forced upon one through the logic of Sundaydarians. They are simply answered in kind. I am not the one who erected a straw man to demolish; they are the implicated! And so is any Sabbath-opponent, like yourself.

The point – in Romans 14-15 – is NOT, "NEITHER should judge the other, but rather "be fully assured in his own mind". The point is, neither SHOULD JUDGE the other, full stop. I have a strong feeling you will agree. Which will bring us to the crux of the passage – of Romans 14-15 – which cannot be expressed better than by Paul himself, where he negatively, states: "For the kingdom of God is NOT MEAT AND DRINK"; and positively: "but righteousness and peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit (in these things serving Christ)", 14:17-18. It shows what some made

'the point' of: "meat and drink". Not 'days', regarded or not regarded. Or the crux of the passage – of Romans 14-15 – cannot be expressed better than by Paul himself, where he positively, states: "Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus: That ye may with one mouth glorify God" ... not one saying he regards one day more important than the other '*to the Lord*', and another, he regards every of the regarded days important '*to the Lord*'; one claiming he eats not '*to the Lord*', and another he eats '*to the Lord*', because it is not "likeminded toward one another", not "with one mouth to the glory of God", but is the one judging the other in a spirit unlike the Spirit of righteousness and peace and of joy.

One unconditionally conditional fact remains: EVERYBODY, "regarded days" – "*one, one day above the other days regarded regards; another, every of the regarded days alike regards*".

Where does Sunday-regarding / -esteeming / -observance feature? Where does Sabbath's' NON-regarding / -esteeming / -observance feature?

Nowhere whatsoever! Has ever a strawman been erected the like of?

"... it is a parallel principle ..." of what, or in what? Of, or, in, the following: "... that the passage reads "the strong" were those who "regarded" days"? That "tradition got it "the weak", regarded days"? If I could make out your point, I would have been able to answer it.

Eric B:

"... no one ever transferred the concept of "weak" and "strong" to the days. That is clearly about meats, and I have never seen anyone say otherwise."

GE:

Tradition has it, I said, and need not quote authors and sources multiple that do transfer the concept of "weak" and "strong" to the days. The better reading of the text proves the fallacy of THEIR concept. If WE agree on the fact and 'principle' the concept of "weak" and "strong" does NOT transfer to the days, so much to our credit; so much to the discredit of those who habitually transfer to the days the concept of "weak" and "strong".

Eric B:

"It does not say WHICH are weak or strong ..."

GE:

In 15:1 Paul supposes: "WE then, who are strong ...". Paul includes himself with the "strong". Who are "the strong"?

In verse 4 Paul supposes the Jews, they being those for whom “aforetime things were written ... for OUR learning”. Paul was a Jew, and therefore a Sabbath-keeper as well as one who “regarded days” – naturally.

In 14:1 “the weak” are those “received” – obviously ‘received’ by ‘the strong’! The Church in Rome was started by Jews – and by Paul the Jew himself. He sees himself and his co-workers as God’s “servants” (verse 4) – Israel. They were Sabbath-keepers naturally. As a matter of course, they also would have been those who “regarded days” – verse 5 further – undeniably.

It may safely be inferred from the context then, that those who “regarded days important”, were “the strong”. But Sunday-advocates would have it the other way round, at all costs, even to the point where they to their own whims see fit to insert into God’s Words, their own.

Eric B:

“... the point is NEITHER should judge the other, but rather "be fully assured in his own mind".”

GE:

In fact! “*Be fully assured in his own mind*” – not be brazen, but teachable. Paul doesn’t give everyone permission to obey his own feelings – he incites every one to make sure he stands fast in God’s ways. Which never while “everybody” (?) “in his own mind” (?) mysteriously agrees on Sunday-sacredness, would permit God’s Sabbath Day to be despised and denied.

Eric B:

Just like in Col. You try to push the issue off onto some law that you do not believe in keeping. The entire NT church was being assaulted by those trying to get them to keep the Law, and other practices like vegetarianism. So food and drink was one issue, and days of worship was another. You cannot lump them all into one thing, under the banner of "meats". There were many issues people were judging over.

GE:

Consider:

“You try to push the issue off onto some law that you do not believe in keeping”.

The Law – God’s Law – is still there to be obeyed, as ever before, and as for ever beyond. I only maintain the Law is no power for keeping the Law; has no power to keep the Law; it is Christ who awakens the soul to the faith of God. There’s no Law of the Old Testament I do not believe should be kept. I believe believing in Jesus Christ crucified and risen for the redemption of the elect of God, is believing – and obeying – every law of the Old AND New

Testament. Christ is the embodiment of all Law; He is the embodiment of its keeping for the believer in Him. Jesus is the revelation and character of the Will and Word of God, its living emblem, its ultimate fulfilment – its ultimate institution. Never its violation. Believing Christ is obeying Him, not denying Him. Being a Christian means following in Christ's every footstep and desire for me, as for His whole Church – His Holy Body in the General Assemblies of the Saints.

Will not the Body follow the impulses of the Head?

Then how will it exist without its Sabbath Day, the Lord's Day? How will the Head "minister nourishment", but "by bands and joints" – or instruments – of service to the life of the Body such as God's Sabbaths' Day?

(It is an inspiring illustration of Paul's in verse 19. He elsewhere speaks of the "members" of the Body, and here of the neck and throat in particular mostly forgotten they are a "member". This vital 'member' "joins" together the Head, Christ, and its Body the Church, and through its channels or "bands", "nourishment" whether in the form of "eating and drinking" or of breathing, and impulses of doing the will of the Head, are transported from the Head to the Body. The Body breaths from Christ its Life's-oxygen, having utilised all life-essence received for its own "nourishment" and "increase", growth and energy, through the neck. To cut its "joints and bands" is to sever the Head from the Body; sure death results instantaneously. There is no Church-life without Sabbath-life just as well as there is no Living Body not by the neck "holding the Head".)

Eric B:

"The entire NT church was being assaulted by those trying to get them to keep the Law, and other practices like vegetarianism."

GE:

You equate things the Scriptures do not equate, "other practices like vegetarianism", with "to keep the Law".

In the end there is but one Law 'remaining valid for the People of God' – it is the "Greatest Law of all" – the Law to Love God above all else. No other Law is so impossible for man to keep, though he should keep it. No Law is so harsh when broken. This, is the Law that kills if a man disobeys it – no other Law is able to. This Law, no man pharisaically can boast keeping; it searches the depths of the soul. Under this Law all men are equally born and in life are themselves found equally condemned transgressors!

Then you moan and groan when someone from the nature of the situation supposes the keeping of the Fourth Commandment as valid for the People of God still? If ever a Law had been a yoke, a hard and merciless yoke, it is God's Law to love. Nevertheless, if ever there had been a Law that sets free

and imparts life and blessings divine, it is God's Law to love. It all depends on how you have experienced God's Law – as a gift from God, in descending and condescending love, in elevating, inspiring love, or as His holy and just judgement of one's guilt? Is Christ the Law to a man; or is the Law the Christ to a man?

In reality God's Law to love is not experienced but in both ways – as freedom-charter as, as just recompense for not obeying.

Love, is love's reward! It is the Law of God. Mercy kills to raise to life again. It was Christ's part and reward; it is our part and reward.

So even the Sabbath Law shall convince – through the working of the Holy Spirit – of God's love, and from there, of sin; only to also convince of God's Rest provided, and from there, of God's Day of Rest provided. Accept it, and find the Sabbath the Day of God's Love reward; reject it, and forfeit the privilege it assures being that sign between God and His People, that He to them is their merciful, loving and caring God, and that they, to Him are His merciful, loving and caring People. "Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine" ... sing it in and with His Church, before you can truly in yourself, fully taste the sweetness of that knowledge.

Eric B:

"So food and drink was one issue, and days of worship was another. You cannot lump them all into one thing, under the banner of "OT practices".

GE:

No, you miss my point: food and drink was one issue, and days of worship was no issue! You cannot lump them all into one thing, under the banner of "OT practices"!

Although in Romans it is the Christian Church still "feasting" to some extent the Passover's 'regarded days', it was not the days as such that was the point of contention, but haughtiness that made of "food and drink", the rule of judgement whether one is found worthy of "the Kingdom of God" or not.

Even so, the situation in Colossus was quite different from that in Rome.

Where you lump them all into one thing, under the banner of "OT practices", Paul and the Church did not. In Colossians it is the Christian Church for the first time "feasting" God's Passover in Christ – on occasion "whether of month's or, of Sabbaths". It was not the Sabbath Days as such that were the point of contention, but haughtiness that judged and condemned the Body of Christ's Own for "eating and drinking of Feast" – the rule of judgement being the antagonist of "the Kingdom of God", namely the "principalities and powers" of this "world", of "wisdom and the doctrines of men".

Eric B:

So you change the word based on what you think the context "demands"? The context is OT practices; not just "feasting".

GE:

What, dear Eric B do you mean, I, changed the word? If you have in mind 'kai' AND in the place of 'eh' OR, then not only the context, but the text – the originals – demands it. You simply ignored my referring to the manuscripts. As you ignored my referring to exegesis. To what next will you resort to boost you on in your headlong flight of denial?

Then, what, dear Eric B, makes YOU think "The context is OT practices"?

HERE, is the CHURCH – the CHRISTIAN Church, being judged, yea, indeed condemned by the world of this Christian era for what she does in practice above judgement, immune to censure or condemnation, celebrating her Sabbaths' Feast, Paul her solicitor, she being hid in Christ in God, enjoying the fullness of the knowledge of God in Him – and you say, "The context is OT practices"?

Eric B:

"v.11. 13 mentions circumcision.

14 mentions the "handwriting of ordinances " (written Law).

So then, from there, we get to additional practices in v.16, food& drink, feasts, new moons and the sabbath ("days" is actually added to the text).

v21 carries it even further with "taste not, touch not, handle not". More OT practices!

And as I am learning now through debates with the preterists (they do have some good points that are overlooked by the majority "the rudiments of the world" also refers to the Old Covenant.

Thus, as I said, the context is the [entire] OT Law; not just feasts. That is only ONE thing mentioned in the text."

GE:

Let us begin with your second "additional practices in v.16 ...". While these make up the debated subject, they should wait for further findings before they can be classed OT or NT.

Next to your last remark, "the context is the [entire] OT Law; not just feasts ...".

This is too sweeping a claim so that even if anything "mentioned in the text" were OT Law, it will on its own have to show its relevance to the "practices in v.16" – which to expect there has not the slightest provocation, seeing the whole Letter deals with the Christian Church in its Sitz im Leben of the world of Greek philosophy.

Besides is this, "the context is the [entire] OT Law; not just feasts" – not what you are supposed to prove by illustration? But instead you are using it as proof by illustration of itself. (A master in this 'methodology' is the great Professor Samuele Bacchiocchi of Pope's golden medal fame.)

Then with reference to your reference to the "preterists", from whom you have "learnt ... "the rudiments of the world" also refers to the Old Covenant".

You do not explain and I am unable to guess how they have taught you that, so that speaking of verse 16, it is only fair not to count their view in on the plus side for saying "the context is OT practices".

They in any case only could have used the same arguments you could present, because the source of any argument is supposed to be the Letter itself, and only itself.

It is however impossible (for me) to see how the preterists are able to assert what you say you have learnt from them. Paul's words are clear enough – he says, the "rudiments ("first" principles, axioms – even philosophical 'gods' like "wisdom" and "knowledge") are "OF THE WORLD". Isn't that enough it's not Old Testament – not what is God's Word forever?

Besides, there is a HUGE difference between the Old Covenant and the Old Testament. You will find the Old Covenant (of works) in both the Old and New Testaments, just as you will find the New Covenant in both Testaments – things irrelevant to our discussion.

Eric B:

"v21 carries it even further with "taste not, touch not, handle not". More OT practices!"

GE:

One may take an entire year and read the Old Testament from beginning to end, and be unable to find these "practices" mentioned or just suggested. Once again, these are the "commandments and doctrines of men", says Paul in verse 22. They are or were not Christian 'practices'.

And they stood in direct opposition with what the Church in actual practice practiced, namely, to feast by “eating and drinking”.

No, the "taste not, touch not, handle not" of verse 21 were “things which (had) a show of wisdom in will-worship, and false humility, and neglecting of the body (‘asceticism’), dishonourable and to the satisfying of the flesh (or sinful propensities of human nature)” – in other words, were humanism (the fetishes of ‘liberalism’!) – the humanism of Greek philosophy and wisdom and OF THE WORLD!

Paul presupposes these “things” are NOT even supposed possible in the Body of Christ’s Own, saying, “Wherefore, if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments OF THE WORLD, why (‘my goodness, it’s unimaginable!’) as though living in the world (= in the ways and beliefs of this world) are you subjected to (things like), Do not touch” etc.

Mark, the word “*ordinances*” is supplied. Sure, these “*practices*” mentioned, in essence were ‘laws’ – the KJV is right in describing them as such. The point is though, they were “the commandments and doctrines of MEN” – NOT, God’s, not even the commandments and doctrines of the Old Testament.

These “*practices*” were ‘legalism’ and they were ‘legalism’ in the extreme. But why should ‘legalism’ necessarily be Judaism (not to speak of ‘Old Testament’)? Judaism is a legalistic system, no one denies. But “the world” had a few things to teach Judaism in legalism! Humanism all together is a system or religion of salvation through self-righteousness and works of laws and “*practices*” = ‘legalism’!

Nothing suggests the “*practices*” mentioned in verse 21 were Old Testament, even if it were Judaism. It’s final.

But just to still further confirm, view the chiasmic structure of our passage – which you may find as an html article on www.biblestudents.co.za . The “*practices*” mentioned fell beyond the borders of the Church. There existed a marked delineation between the “*practices*” mentioned in verse 21 and the “*practices*” of the Church mentioned in verse 16.

Thus there remains two references of yours courtesy demands should further be considered. They are:

"v.11. 13 mentions circumcision.

14 mentions the "handwriting of ordinances " (written Law) ."

"v.11. 13 mentions circumcision."

Here is a typical example of an incidence of the New Covenant in Old Testament colours in the New Testament, or, of the Old Testament in New Covenant terminology ... and power!

You are certainly not going to object to the plain truth the circumcision Paul here has in mind is NOT the Old Testament circumcision? He with so many words defines it as "*the circumcision of Christ*"! He also with so many words states it is "*NOT done with hands*".

And YOU know it is the regeneration of the heart Paul writes of here – both, themes of the Old Testament as well as of the New.

Therefore, that, in the context of 2:16, is ONE MORE thing mentioned in the text that is NEW 'Testament' or New Covenant – that is the Eternal Covenant of Grace – a 'practice' indeed of God's own doing, and not the works and doctrine of man trying to be unto himself the law and redeemer.

We have one more example of "more OT practices!" to consider; I quote:

"14 mentions the "handwriting of ordinances" (written Law)".

Now please don't expect the fossilised explanations of this expression.

Paul "solicits" – 'acts attorney', *paracleitos* (2:2) – to his beloved brethren so encompassed by the calamities the world imposed upon them.

First consider the existentiality – the plain down to earth and practical implications – this phrase is meant to have had for the Church in its straits of being judged and condemned by the world for its – in the eyes of the world – irksome, obstructive, stupid and obnoxious Christian Faith and Church-life. Only then, are we equipped with the right understanding of the "handwriting of ordinances" to apply it to Christian faith and practice of later times and generality.

The expression, 'the ordinances in written Law' (nearer to the literal), is the Law, not just the 'ceremonial' Law, but 'Moral Law' – the Law that judges, condemns and kills its transgressor ("the Law is for its transgressor"). The "handwriting of ordinances" WITH the "principality (authority) and power (government, behind it)", HAD been nailed to the cross in the body of Jesus and in his body HAD been "taken out of the way" to eternal redemption which it obstructed. No second's doubt!

But understand, that is not the literal meaning of the text, nor its contemporary intention.

This phrase / expression is inclusive – it does apply spiritually to the Law, say the Law of Ten Commandments (in the last analysis to all the Scriptures!) – but it in its historic setting had direct and practical implications for the Colossian Christians as the Church of Jesus Christ in space and time their own. "Handwriting of ordinances" has direct bearing on the 'practices' of the Church of Christ in the world, manifestly displayed in the enjoyment of her Sabbaths' "Feasting, whether of month's or of Sabbaths".

Through the "Handwriting of ordinances" the "WORLD",
"CONDEMNED", the Church!

Second aspect never to be left out of consideration!

Is the context and kind of this, 'Old Testament'? Perhaps in the magic dream-world of Sunday-dogmaticians, but not in textual context.

The historical setting was this: Here was the Body of Christ's Own – the Christian Church – assailed by the worldly authorities and powers who judged her and condemned her – who, in actual fact, summonsed her to appear in court – doing exactly what she was judged and summonsed for: for simply living her Christian Faith, for feasting her Christian Sabbaths!

Here was Paul, "comforting" her, reminding her, "these things are but the shadow of coming things – of the Body of Christ's – let no man judge you regarding it! Let nobody beguile you of your reward in Christ, their humility is hypocrisy, a worship as were they angels so holy are they in their own estimation. But you, eating and drinking – feasting of Christ through faith, receive nourishment ministered by joints and bands of love and the fullness of the knowledge of God in Jesus Christ, and being CLOSELY KNIT TOGETHER (into this one Body of Believers) increase with the increase of God!

What a picture of the Church! What comfort Paul brings them! But it is a picture and a comfort inconceivable apart from its historic and immediate presence in the world.

It is all, New Testament, the setting, the background, the context, the text, the terminology, the ideology, the vision, the prospect – it is all New Testament, the very conflict between world and Church.

I hope that answers your remonstrance, "we get the additional practices in v.16, food& drink, feasts, new moons and the sabbath ... More OT practices!"

It was the Sabbath "the Seventh Day (of the week) God so (consistently) spoke of" "throughout the times past" "in the Son", "but in these last days" of the Christian era, even more so.

(I need not tell you, God never "thus concerning spoke about" the First Day of the week – luckily, it saving me much effort.)

Eric B quoting GE:

What, dear Eric b, do you mean, I, changed the word? If you have 'kai' AND in the place of 'eh' OR, then not only the context, but the text – the originals – demands it. You simply ignored my referring to the manuscripts.

To what next will you resort to boost you on in your headlong flight of denial?

Eric B:

I didn't mean particularly you ["I"]; but translators do it too. Then, how do we know who is right?

Then, we have to get into detailed discussions

of Greek grammar that the average person doesn't know, and it takes a lot of time to learn. Meanwhile, the person is stumped, and you "win" the argument by default. This reminds me of the JW's and their claim that John 1:1 should be "A god". But the entire context of the Bible disproves this, as there are no legitimate "gods" working next to the Father.

So likewise we look at:

Eric B quoting GE:

... So much then, for the first (and erroneous) "OR", of '(your) Interlinear'.

Eric B:

OK, the KJV margin has "for eating and drinking". But then, this is not the "or" that is decisive here.

Eric B quoting GE:

... you would have been persuaded to change your own predisposition.

Eric B:

I acknowledged that the word could be translated "that", but still, that is not affirming your point. We still have to check by the context. Even if the first "or" is not there, and it is "eating and drinking"; then we have "eating and drinking, OR, in RESPECT OF a holy day, OR of the new moon, OR of the sabbath". In no way can you ball all of that together into your "sabbaths Christ feast". We have "holy day" mentioned there, AND "the sabbath", which once again, incorrectly had "days" added; but the annual sabbaths ARE the "holy days"; so this is referring to the weekly sabbath, and that is what you are advocating. then, there's also "new moons", which are altogether separate occasions. Sorry, but all your grammatical wrangling cannot make this only "feasts". "let no one judge you in eating and drinking THAT in respect to a holy day, or new moon...", etc. makes no sense, and it is a jump to change it to "let no one judge you for observing Christ's sabbath feast". You're omitting all of the different practices mentioned there! This thing about "pairs" of correlatives doesn't prove anything; there can be trios.

Eric B quoting GE:

... By mixing up the issue in Colossians 2 with that in Romans 14 like you do?

Eric B:

We have to compare scripture with scripture. That helps determine issues like this. Both are saying the same thing, and your position has to try to explain away both through grammatical suppositions.

Eric B quoting GE:

Yes, but with what significance attached? Not feasting per se, but the feasting or celebration "of Sabbaths". Not gluttony, but spiritual eating and drinking by faith of Christ. That really, was "the issue". The world - in the last analysis - condemned the Church for believing in Christ; it condemned the Church for Sabbaths' Christ-Feast!

Eric B:

So the real issue they were being "judge" by the world for was "gluttony"? They were being judged for not being gluttonous? This is getting more and more desperate! That is nowhere in the context. If this was in 1 Cor.11, then you would have a point. Clearly, it is those pushing old covenant laws being criticized here.

Eric B quoting GE:

Let them have it their own way! Of what concern are they? Do they honour Christ whom they don't even believe is Lord and God?

Eric B:

They do believe Christ is Lord, and some , God, as well. (Armstrong, some of the Messianic/Sacred name groups). But they are using the same argument as you, and to them, you are using the same argument as us when you justify not keeping ALL of the Laws. So it is of concern. If you're right; their right; but then if their right; you're wrong. What a situation to be in!

Eric B quoting GE:

... "THEREFORE (oun - Christ "having triumphed IN IT"), do not you (the Body of Christ's Own) be judged by anyone in eating and drinking of feast whether of month's, or, of Sabbaths' (Christ)-Feast".

Eric B:

That's right; "THEREFORE". That rest He gave them IS that "Sabbath-rest" being spoken of. "He gave them rest; THEREFORE, there remains a ["sabbath-"] rest...". This right here shows how the "sabbath rest" is fulfilled and not violated even when a day is not literally "kept". And it is for THIS reason, that in Col. we are not to be judged for it-- by those

(called "the circumcision") advocating that the entire letter of the Law is still in effect and must be kept literally by Christians, as we constantly see Paul dealing with.

Eric B quoting GE:

... But Sunday-advocates would have it the other way round, at all costs, even to the point where they to their own whims see fit to insert into God's Words, their own.

Eric B: Well, I don't argue everything the Sunday dogmatarians do, so you are the one who brought "weak and strong" into it. Like you said, "Let them have it their own way! Of what concern are they?" And I am not a sabbath-opponent. I acknowledge that the sabbath has a more biblical basis than Sunday. But I still have the right to defend myself scripturally from those who say it must be kept like in the OT, and having to change the principles of scripture, or the meanings of statements to do it.

Protestants in denial 3 (third consideration)

Eric B:

"... translators do it too ("change the word"). Then, how do we know who is right?

Then, we have to get into detailed discussions of Greek grammar that the average person doesn't know... Meanwhile, the person is stumped, and you "win" the argument by default. ... But the entire context of the Bible disproves..."

GE:

Just reckon how many arguments the translators have won in this way! They set the trend for the whole of Christendom, and have 'won' the argument by default, the entire context of the Bible disproves regardless.

I specifically have their Sunday-dogma in mind.

"The entire context of the Bible disproves", or, the entire context of the Bible must approve, is your golden rule! It cannot be claimed for Sunday-worship – you agree (as you told me). But the entire context of the Bible confirms the Sabbath God's appointed day for the service of His worship. I, speaking for myself, attach NO other values to the Sabbath Day but its value to serve God and His glory in the face of Jesus,

and his People for the same end. To render service – to be loyal, attending servant, is the Sabbath Day’s sole purpose, value, virtue and honour and glory. It is all ever GIVEN to it by God. To that end it is “the Sabbath Day in force for the People of God” – Law! New Testament Law – not Old Testament Law; New Testament Law not by the blood of animal sacrifices, but by the blood of the Lamb of God. Because by the blood of the Lamb of God, it is by the resurrection of Him from the dead – He could not be held captive in death and grave – but “triumphed in it”, that is, in His resurrection! What is Law – Divine Law? It is that which is established by the Divine Word of Promise (eschatology), and is sealed with Blood of Sacrifice.

We read the Ten Commandments in Exodus 20 up to verse 17, and never further, through verses 24 to 26. Yes, there would come an Altar Whereon was discovered our nakedness, and polluted by our sins, against Whom we lifted up the breaking tool: the Altar of God Who became sin for us, so that we, by the sacrifice of Him, may be saved unto God. That’s where the Ten Commandments really ended. God commanded it so as a figure of Christ. The Ten Commandments were commandments not divinely ordered until confirmed and sealed by blood of sacrifice.

Paul says the same thing in Colossians – not until Christ was nailed to the cross became He unto us God’s Law, and not until nailed to the cross and raised from the dead, did he in Himself take out of the way forever all previous Law and every condemnation of before.

Behold now, the rejoicing crowd, eating and drinking of feast – in fact eating and drinking of Christ-Feast! See them, celebrating, whether of month’s, or, of Sabbaths’ celebration – “Body of Christ’s Own”! (The redeemed are those purchased by the blood of Christ and released from guilt and condemnation by the resurrection of Him from the dead.)

This was a Christian Faith, and a Christian Congregation, and a Christian motivation: would it not be a Christian celebration of a Christian Day?

Which Day then, was it, if not the Christian Sabbath? Does not the entire context of the Bible approve?

Eric B:

“... the KJV margin has "for eating and drinking". But then, this is not the "or" that is decisive here.”

GE:

The “or” may not be that ‘decisive’, but nevertheless strengthens the idea of the oneness of “eating and drinking” in being an “eating-and-drinking-of-feast”, showing the nature of it in whole. It was no legalistic parochialism, but the spontaneous and Christian ‘*celebration*’ of the Sabbaths’ Days of Worship. Therefore to translate the word, “that”, is also not that

'decisive' to have the phrase "eating and drinking" affirm this very point, yet it contributes much to the same effect.

"We still have to check by the context" – and in this case will find it in harmony with the idea to "ball" the different aspects of the context "together into "Sabbaths' Christ-Feast"". There is nothing contrary to the idea, and everything in favour of it.

I shall now have to assume again a more technical approach.

Consider:

"Even if the first "or" is not there, and it is "eating and drinking"; then we have "eating and drinking, OR, in RESPECT OF a holy day, OR of the new moon, OR of the sabbath" ."

GE:

Here is the English idiom employed of the possessive (or 'Genitive') word, "OF", with the function of a relative (or 'Dative').

Greek though, being a much more 'precise' language than English, will not allow it.

The English can in fact be less ambiguous. In stead of reading "in RESPECT OF", read "with regard to", and the possessive feeling largely disappears while a nuance of relativity is gained.

'En merei' – "with regard to", is found in the Scriptures incidental, as here in Colossians, with the Dative following required. When relative or / and incidental, 'en merei' will not accept a Possessive (Genitive) following.

In our text therefore, where 'en merei' is used both relatively and incidental, the Genitive "OF feast" that follows, implies there must be an Ellipsis – where a word or words or a concept, is omitted in expression but is present in thought. In this instance: "eating and drinking" is present in thought. So: "... in eating and drinking, or with regard to eating and drinking of feast". The "eating and drinking" as one concept in the Dative belongs to "feast" in the Genitive, thus creating a further single concept: "eating-and-drinking-of-feast", which simply may be rendered, "celebration".

The rest is just as simple: It is the "celebration of month's, or, of Sabbaths". Ellipsis is characteristic of all language to the extent without the use of it, it will be practically impossible. This very sentence may illustrate, where the Pronoun "it" represents "language" and "Ellipsis". Pronouns are a case in hand of Ellipsis – it stands "for", 'pro', something not mentioned but implied and supposed. Another illustration is, 'This very sentence may illustrate ...' Illustrate what? Illustrate "Ellipsis".

Just so in our text, Colossians 2:16.

No, this is not “all grammatical wrangling” – this is exegesis all pure and lawful. And it makes perfect sense to read the passage like this: “Do not you allow yourselves be judged by anyone of the world in your eating and drinking, or, with regard to your eating and drinking of feast – whether of month’s, or, of Sabbaths’ occasion”. In fact, a nearer to literal and more syntactically slavish rendering is scarcely imaginable.

Consider:

“...Sorry, but all your grammatical wrangling cannot make this only "feasts". ... This thing about "pairs" of correlatives doesn't prove anything; there can be trios. ... You're omitting all of the different practices mentioned there! ... We have "holy day" mentioned there, AND "the sabbath", which once again, incorrectly had "days" added; but the annual sabbaths ARE the "holy days"; so this is referring to the weekly sabbath, and that is what you are advocating. then, there's also "new moons", which are altogether separate occasions. ...

Answer:

I tried to arrange your remarks in logical order, from there the ...'s. Do your “trios” consist of “altogether separate occasions” which “we have mentioned there”: “... "holy day" ... AND "the sabbath" ... then ... also "new moons"? You say “there’s” this “trio” of “holy days”, “mentioned there”? You maintain, “We have ... the annual sabbaths (that) ARE the "holy days" ... mentioned there”; “all of the different practices mentioned there”.

I’m flabbergasted! You say I, “conjured up” the words and concepts I maintain are there, but yours, you say, “we have mentioned there”? I can’t see “holy”, or “day”, or “the sabbath”, or “new moons”, or, “annual”, or “the annual sabbaths”, or “practices”.

Instead there are these words: “regarding eating and drinking of feast, either / whether of month’s, or, of Sabbaths”.

“Feast” you ‘butcher’; and “day”, and “month”, and “annual” and “the” and “Sabbath” and “practices”, you, ‘conjure up’.

“Day” isn’t mentioned at all; so your words, “annual” and “the” and “practices”, and they aren’t suggested by anything. (Only “practices” could be assumed, if referring to the Christian ‘practice’ of Sabbaths’ celebration.)

Then where the Plural, “Sabbaths”, Genitive, ‘is mentioned there’, you ‘have’ the Singular; and where the Singular, “month’s”, Genitive, ‘is mentioned there’, you ‘have’ the Plural. Every instance of something’s “mention” is of definitive importance, yet you could not present a single true claim!

“... altogether separate occasions ...”

When I say separate occasions of celebration, “either of month’s, or of Sabbaths”, you disapprove! Where I still keep them together, saying they are the Christians’ celebrations of their Sabbath Days, “whether of month’s, or, of Sabbaths’ (weekly) occurrence”, you dissect them “altogether”, and make of them “separate occasions” of “days” (“holy days”), or “new moons”, or “annual Sabbaths”, or, “the weekly Sabbath”.

Style and syntax:

Paul is jubilant. He throughout his Letter repeats ideas in various ways as could he not compress the greatness of it into a single word or expression. For example, see 1:25-26, where he in awe describes “the word of God ... the mystery”; “ages ... generations”; “riches ... glory” ... and so virtually every thought he employs he doubles. He continues the same style in chapter 2 and in the proximity of verse 16. In 14, “blotting out ... took out of the way”; “handwriting (‘order’) = ordinance”; “contrary ... against”. In 15: “principalities ... powers”; “exposed ... triumphed”.

Likewise in 16! Find it not strange then that the “in eating and drinking” of the Dative should be repeated by Paul’s use of ‘en merei’ – “with regard to / in respect of”, which by Ellipsis does exactly that, so that “eating and drinking” is made a very close equivalent or ‘double’ of “feast”. He “balls all together” into ‘Sabbaths’ Christ’s-Feast’.

Fourth Consideration

Eric B quoting CGE:

By mixing up the issue in Colossians 2 with that in Romans 14 like you do?

Eric B:

“We have to compare scripture with scripture. That helps determine issues like this. Both are saying the same thing, and your position has to try to explain away both through grammatical suppositions.”

GE:

Yes, but that doesn’t mean one has to force into the compared Scriptures what one already decided should be in it. One may find there are not the

possibilities of comparison he has liked to 'be there'; and will not accept the fact, and will not try find out what the compared passage by itself says. He will not stop insisting there must be similarities and agreement where there are none.

In Isaiah somewhere we read "here a little, there a little" is how drunkards reason. One may be so adamant Scriptures must compare (not be compared) that it like too much wine blunts the senses for anything contrary one's own expected 'same things'.

I don't like that type of 'exegesis'; it degenerates into 'eisegesis' – bringing into a Scriptural passage what one wants it to say – even something fetched from another Scripture.

Eric B, quoting GE:

"Yes, but with what significance attached? Not feasting per se, but the feasting or celebration "of Sabbaths". Not gluttony, but spiritual eating and drinking by faith of Christ. That really, was "the issue". The world – in the last analysis – condemned the Church for believing in Christ; it condemned the Church for Sabbaths' Christ-Feast!

Eric B:

"So the real issue they were being "judge" by the world for was "gluttony"? They were being judged for not being gluttonous? This is getting more and more desperate! That is nowhere in the context. If this was in 1 Cor.11, then you would have a point. Clearly, it is those pushing old covenant laws being criticized here."

GE defending:

"That is nowhere in the context."

Where do I say it is? I don't say it; I say "Not gluttony, but spiritual eating and drinking by faith of Christ."

Can't you read?

Who gets "desperate"? It must be desperation that drives you to yet more repetitiveness and greater assertion, "Clearly, it is those pushing old covenant laws being criticized here." Haven't you said that before but never substantiated?

Who are "being criticized here"? Who in fact, are here condemned? Is it not the Church "of Christ's Own" – "YOU"?

By whom is this Church of Christ's Own judged, criticised and condemned?

Does not Paul say, "by anyone" – that is, by anyone of the world opposing and condemning the Church?

Of course! Who else?

Who then, would be “those pushing old covenant laws”? The world?
 By way of elimination, who else but the world?
 Would the “world” – “philosophy”, “gnosis”, the “dogmaticians” of the
 Hellenistic “domain”, “principalities”, “powers” – have pushed old
 covenant laws? What would they care for old covenant laws?
 So then it must be the Church that condemns and judges – ‘criticises’ –
 the Church? The Church observing old covenant laws condemning the
 Church for observing old covenant laws?
 Are you trying to be funny?

No, here is the Church of Christ’s Own celebrating – “feasting” – her
 Sabbaths for the sake of Christ’s worship, “judged” and “condemned” by the
 world of pagan philosophy exactly for being Christian. Paul hints at nothing
 besides; this was the real – and ONLY – ‘issue’ that concerned him, the
 Church, and the world. It was not – clearly not – a matter of some (“those”)
 – “anyone” inside or outside the Church – “pushing old covenant laws
 being criticized”.

Eric B:

“But they (‘Unitarians’) are using the same argument as you,
 and to them, you are using the same argument as us when
 you justify not keeping ALL of the Laws. So it is of
 concern. If you’re right; they’re right; but then if
 they’re right, you’re wrong. What a situation to be in!”

GE:

They are NOT “using the same argument” as I, and to them, my
 arguments are just as unacceptable as to you, or even worse!
 I use only one ‘argument’ to justify keeping the Christian Sabbath
 Day, and it is Christ and His Church only. So it is of concern. If I’m
 right, they as well as you are wrong; and if you or they were right, Paul
 wasted all his effort and energy to stand by the Church in her being judged
 and condemned by the world for being Christians ... What a desperate
 situation to be in!

Eric B, quoting GE:

“What says Hebrews 4? It, after having given a summary of Christ's
 achievement of having obtained rest and having given rest to the People of
 God and having entered into His own rest as God, concluding from it, says,
 "THEREFORE (ara) there remains valid for the People of God a keeping of
 the Sabbath Day!"

So does Paul, in fact, exactly so! Says he, after having given a summary of Christ's achievement of having obtained rest and having given rest to the People of God through his death and resurrection from the dead, "THEREFORE (oun - Christ "having triumphed IN IT"), do not you (the Body of Christ's Own) be judged by anyone in eating and drinking of feast whether of month's, or, of Sabbaths' (Christ)-Feast". "

Eric B remonstrating:

That's right; "THEREFORE". That rest He gave them IS that "Sabbath-rest" being spoken of. "He gave them rest; THEREFORE, there remains a ["sabbath-"] rest...". This right here shows how the "sabbath rest" is fulfilled and not violated even when a day is not literally "kept". And it is for THIS reason, that in Col. we are not to be judged for it-- by those (called "the circumcision") advocating that the entire letter of the Law is still in effect and must be kept literally by Christians, as we constantly see Paul dealing with.

GE:

Consider:

"That rest He gave them IS that "Sabbath-rest" being spoken of."

Sorry again to differ; sorry, because we only seemingly agree while true agreement for all our dialogue would have been so compensating!

"That rest He gave them IS that "Sabbath-rest" being spoken of." The Text, once more, demands accuracy, so that that rest He gave them (4:8) IS Jesus Christ in His entering into His own rest as God (4:10) – which in both texts, IS Jesus Christ in resurrection from the dead. The supposition of verse 8, "If Jesus had given them rest" has no uncertainty about it – isn't conditional at all. Christ availed; He "triumphed in it", that is, He triumphed in His resurrection "FROM THE DEAD" (Col.2:12-15). He conquered the ultimate "powers" of this earthly "dominion" and "dominion of darkness" – sin and death, and the instigator of sin, satan, "murderer from the beginning". Christ triumphed "having entered into His own rest" (Hb.4:10). It is Christ "exalted" (Eph.1: 19-23), "made higher than the heavens" (Hb.7:26); it is Jesus who had "given them rest" (4:8).

In this sense ONLY, "IS" Christ "the rest" spoken of in Hebrews.

Truth of Grace is therefore, that Jesus had given them rest – "them", "the People of God". The "if" of the supposition is rhetoric – it emphasises a fact – the divine fact of all facts, that Jesus indeed did give them rest.

"Seeing therefore it is still true that some must enter into God's rest (Jesus by faith) ... we who do believe, do enter (God's) rest" (4: 6) – are in truth found "in Him". "For unto us the Gospel (of Christ) was preached!" (4:2)

This is the BASIS; this, the moving factor; this, the motive; this, the PRIZE (“the GREAT prize”).

Then?

“There then therefore remaineth ...” that which already is accomplished by and in Christ’s achievement, namely, the rest of God? Hebrews has a word for it, the ‘anapausis’. It is not still awaiting accomplishment; it had been “finished”; it, “finished all the works of God”.

“Now (=“therefore”), there remaineth FOR THE PEOPLE of God ...”, not what God had already done, but what they must do – it is “for the People of God”; it is God’s further gift to them, a gift of His grace and love, yet not that Gift and not that Grace and not that Love ... Himself!

But “BECAUSE” of Himself, “there remaineth for the People of God their Sabbatismos – their keeping of the Sabbath Day”. “Sabbatismos” – it is not “anapausis”.

“That (R)est He gave them IS that "Sabbath-rest"” ... no, that Rest He gave them IS Jesus Christ who had given them rest, and “If Jesus had given them rest” THEN, there “THEREFORE remaineth a keeping of the Sabbath for the People of God”. It is their privilege as well as obligation, nothing short of the inevitable, unavoidable ‘grace of (that) grace’ received, even Jesus Christ in His triumph in resurrection.

The one, a rest, God’s only Rest in Christ, His ‘anapausis’; the other, a work, a duty, an answer – a law – “for / unto the People of God”, their “Sabbatismos”.

Eric B,

“... that "Sabbath-rest" being spoken of.”

GE:

Which "Sabbath-rest" would it be?

The "Sabbath-rest" ... “spoken of”!

The "Sabbath-rest spoken of” BY WHOM?

Spoken of by God! 4: 4-5: “For He (God) spake in a certain place of the Seventh Day ON THIS WISE, And God did rest from all His works; and in this again: “If they would have but entered into MY REST”!

Had Israel believed in the true Rest of God – in the Gospel of Jesus Christ that had been preached unto them –verse two– they would have accepted and remembered His Sabbath Day.

The reason they (yes, they, Israel!) “through unbelief” neither entered into God’s own rest that is Jesus Christ, nor kept holy God’s Sabbath Day, was, that they believed not the GOSPEL!

"Sabbath-rest" (["sabbath-"] rest) is meaningless repetition:
 "Sabbath" = "rest".

"Sabbath-rest" is not 'spoken of' in Hebrews, nor was it 'spoken of' by God. The "rest" spoken of in this Letter is: "His rest"; "My rest" – God's rest, which is Jesus Christ – anapausis.

But, "in a certain place", "God thus concerning spoke" about a certain "day", "the Seventh Day", in verse 9: sabbatismos. The ending, an '-ism', indicates habitual, customary, ideological practice and teaching, the 'keeping' of the Sabbath, AS, a day, a "sabbatism".

GE quoting Eric B:

"He gave them rest; THEREFORE, there remains a ["sabbath-"] rest...". This right here shows how the "sabbath rest" is fulfilled and not violated even when a day is not literally "kept".

"Not violated even when a day is not literally "kept" is the direct negation of 'sabbatismos'.

Ignatius uses 'sabbatidzontes' – the "living-of-the-Sabbath", precisely like Hebrews uses 'sabbatismos', that is, the observance of it. It can be done in one or the other way: it can be a "living-of-the-Sabbath-Day-according-to-Christ", or, "a "living-of-the-Sabbath-Day-without-Him". The first is the 'Christian' Sabbath which Ignatius would have liked to see observed by Christians; the other is the judaizing Sabbath-keeping "without Christ" which Ignatius regretted in fact had been observed by Christians.

The four Gospels treat on the Sabbath for no different reason – they would have the Sabbath Day belonging to Jesus, Lord of His Disciples as well as Lord of His Day of Worship. The Jews envied Jesus the prerogative!

To put the record straight:

"He gave them rest (katapausis / anapausis); THEREFORE, there remains (obligatory) a sabbatismos" – not, anapausis.

God has done His work – He finished it "all", "on the Seventh Day". Now it's "for the People".

This right here shows how the "sabbatismos" is fulfilled and not violated even as a day literally "kept" in faith in Jesus Christ – by the People of God the Body of Christ's Own, "entering into" the Anapausis of God, Jesus Christ.

Eric B:

"And it is for THIS reason, that in Col. we are not to be judged for it ..."

GE:

Amen!

Eric B:

“... by those (called "the circumcision") advocating that the entire letter of the Law is still in effect and must be kept literally by Christians, as we constantly see Paul dealing with.”

GE:

My! Try as I may, I can't find that in the context, what in the text!

You see how by alien invasion you corrupt the text as well as the context and the entire thrust of the Letter!

Yes, yes, I know that is how the passage has always been interpreted even by men of God, in fact by His Church, for almost two thousand years now. But not by the writer of this Letter himself, Paul (and of course not by the Holy Spirit by Whom Paul was inspired to write). I have no further appeal nor desire; I have two witnesses – according to the Law. I rest my case in the Scriptures even if ridiculed for it by legalists and antinomians like yourself alike.

Just as a reminder, the Law is still in effect and must be kept literally ... “The Law is for the transgressor”. If you think you may combat the effectiveness and literal keeping of God's holy Sabbath Day, and pretend it's not violated if not literally 'kept' as a day, but 'fulfilled', think of it!

Pay attention to your own argument here. It concludes in your accepting the Law is being “fulfilled”, which means the Law must still be applicable and binding. Not annulled in the sense no longer applicable and binding on Christians; otherwise Christians could not 'fulfil' it! You only have done away with a part of the Law (like Calvin), the Day as such, which as such is nothing but the Sabbath – an impossibility and insolvable dichotomy. The Scriptures nowhere deals with the Sabbath in such a manner. Whenever the Scriptures makes mention of the Sabbath, it makes mention of it as the Day (the Seventh Day in the case of the 'creation'-Sabbath).

Eric B,

“This is just like Galatians, where your side tries to prove it is only pagan practices that the Christians are falling into. But while the pagans may have had celebrations that could be called "holy days", and may have observed new moons (but this still seems to be more a Mosaic law), still, they did not have "sabbath days", even though the sabbatarians try to call their days (such as Sunday) "false sabbaths".

GE:

'The Christians' of Colossus were not 'falling into' the 'pagan practices'. What do you think did the world judge and condemn them for? For NOT being "beguiled with enticing words ... of (their) reward ... in Him"; for NOT being "spoiled through (the) philosophy and vain deceit" of "the world"; for NOT allowing themselves to be incriminated and walked over for keeping to their keeping of their Sabbaths' Feast! For having the fullness of knowledge and wisdom and spiritual understanding in Christ, who is our life, who is the head of all principality, the image of the invisible God; for having Him as the Head of the Body; for being complete in Him! The Christians of Colossus were NOT "falling into pagan practices"! (the 'Colossian heresy' is scholars' whim.)

It is presumptuous assumption the Christians of Colossus, "like Galatians", were falling into pagan practices. I never said it, and it is you, not I, who insist Paul here has "OT practices" in mind! I maintain Paul here, writes to the Colossian Church with the view to encourage and confirm them in their Christian faith and practice! "Therefore", he writes, "Do not you allow yourselves be judged by anyone in eating and drinking, with regard to feast's, whether of month's, or of Sabbaths'!" Implied is their feast –their "eating and drinking"– OF CHRIST'S FEAST"!

What you further say ("But while the pagans may have had celebrations that could be called "holy days", and may have observed new moons (but this still seems to be more a Mosaic law), still, they did not have "sabbath days", even though the sabbatarians try to call their days (such as Sunday) "false sabbaths".") is just speculation of absolutely no bearing on our subject of contention, and of no worth to determine whether the Colossians observed the Sabbath Day as Christian Sabbath Day or not.

(It may look as if I am the one who is repeating a thousand times; but I am forced by answer to your hammering on the same anvil the same sword of lead over and over in the hope it may blend into steel.)

Eric B,

"I was probably wrong on "rudiments of the world", as I see that "world" is cosmos and not age. Generally, references to "the age" are what are taken as referring to the Old Covenant age. I will have to look to see if the preterists still take this statement as referring to the Old Covenant, and if they do, there is probably some OT reference that can be connected to it.

GE:

This is how you reason and prove your point, that if an OT reference or statement can be looked up there, and then can be connected to the NT, then, voila, proven is it that where used in the NT, the reference or statement is the OT thing.

Eric B:

“... references to "the age" (cosmos) are what are taken as referring to the Old Covenant age ... this statement as referring to the Old Covenant ...”

GE:

Why not try Paul's Letter to the Colossians to supply you with an answer as to what in it, "cosmos" refers?

You see, that's what I find so frustrating, that everybody must always call on outside sources – even if they were Scriptures – to explain what this Letter explains itself exhaustively.

You will find throughout the Letter that "the world" – 'cosmos', is 'the world' – this world– fallen, degenerate, godless 'world' "without Christ", "not according to Christ", etcetera: "the power of darkness", visible and invisible, thrones, dominions, governments, powers. (1:13, 16)

But in nearer context you will find this 'cosmos' defined as "man" – "any man", "philosophy", "vain deceit", "traditions" and "traditions of men", "dogma", "rudiments". (2:8 and others – more examples of what the "world" is can be obtained from the Letter freely.)

In a word, the "world" is the antagonist of Christ and His Body the Church. This antagonist more often than not, is the real world of politics and power-play – the contemporary civil authorities. This real world of course also was the world of the subtle wisdom and smooth talk of its religion. This aspect of it proved an even greater threat to Christ's Church. This is the world presupposed the enemy number one of the Church in her historical existence as Paul was writing to her in Colossus, "Do not let yourselves be judged by anyone ...!"

There's no need to go to the preterists to tell you what the world is. What would they know, in any case, what Paul didn't know?

Eric B:

“... "the age" (cosmos) ... referring to the Old Covenant”.

GE:

This 'argument' will only be another name for the 'argument' "Old

Testament practices”, and will, I guarantee, refer to the very same texts, circumcision, touch not, Sabbaths, et al.

Eric B:

“The "circumcision" Paul speaks of is the spiritual one; but the reason why he does, is to contrast it with the physical one; being pushed on the Church by the Jews.”

GE:

Here is Paul's reason why he speaks of the spiritual "circumcision": “Ye are complete in Him ... you being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath He quickened together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses.” He gives no hint he speaks of a “"circumcision" ... pushed on the Church by the Jews”. He says it is “the circumcision of Christ” by which we ARE co-buried with Him ... through the faith of the OPERATION OF GOD”. “The "circumcision" pushed on the Church by the Jews”?

I look forward to your answer!

Eric B:

“The Jews were also Hellenized; which explains the philosophy and enamoration with angels some of them fell into ...”

GE:

Some of the Jews?

Some of only the Jews?

And those through whom those Jews were Hellenised, the Greeks?

Of course they too!

So those Jews too were only what Paul would have called “the world”. But he did not distinguish them from the rest; for him the world was the world where there is neither Greek nor Jew, but “anyone” “not of Christ” or “anyone” found not “in Him” ... found judging and opposing His Church!

Eric B:

“The nation was spiritually on its way down (and it gets far worse when the final war starts a few years after this was written), so all such references cannot be assumed to be purely pagan, and not coming from the Jews.”

GE:

Cannot comment.

Eric B:

"Touch not; taste not" CAN be found in the OT! They are the dietary Laws from Leviticus. Even if it was some pagan addition as you suggest; the principle would still carry over. "taste not, touch not" has nothing to do with feasting. It is the avoidance of eating certain things, or even touching them (with its curse of rendering one "unclean until the even") that is being delineated."

Eric B:

"... They are the dietary Laws from Leviticus ... that is being delineated."

GE:

No sir,

"Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments OF THE WORLD, why, as though living in the WORLD, are ye subject to DOGMA (like) 'Touch not; taste not; handle not – which in practice are all to corruption – things according to the injunctions (entalmata – precepts) and didactics of humans (= 'humanism' – Greek, Hellenistic, humanism, paganism)."

Thus are these things "delineated" – 'carefully described' – by Paul himself. "Dietary Laws from Leviticus"? Is it your honest answer? Is it your own answer? Or is it being delineated thus by others whom you blindly follow?

Eric B:

"Even if it was some pagan addition as you suggest; the principle would still carry over. "taste not, touch not" has nothing to do with feasting. ..."

GE:

Thanks for saying it! "It was pagan", "the principle", "taste not, touch not"; it "HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH FEASTING"; "it is the AVOIDANCE of eating ...". It was the opposing philosophy of the world to that of the free and celebrating, eating and drinking, 'feasting', Church. And there ends what you are right about. For it wasn't "some pagan ADDITION", and I do not "suggest" it was. It wasn't paganism added to Christian practice – it was paganism raw with the intention to extinguish Christian practice as Christianity.

It "has nothing to do with feasting" of the Church. It is the avoidance of eating certain things, or nothing at all – a curse, rendering one "corrupted" and "perishing" – dying of hunger and lack of hygiene. ("Neglecting of the body".) That's how Paul saw it. He never "condemned" this damned pagan (contemporary New Age) doctrine for being

“Old Testament”, “Old Covenant”, or “the Law of Moses”. It’s what commentators say to discredit Christian Sabbath-keeping, and to justify their pagan sanctification of Sunday.

Eric B:

“The "handwriting of ordinances" is the Law with its condemnation, as you say. Christ gives us a new law, which as He shows in the sermon on the mount, is different from "what they of old time say"..."

Eric B:

“Christ gives us a new law, which as He shows in the sermon on the mount, is different from "what they of old time say"..."

GE:

Yes, and, no. Jesus said, a new law I give you, yes. But He also said, I didn’t come to destroy the Law, but to establish it, etc. Therefore, when Jesus declared: A new Law I give you, He quoted the Law to love from the Old Testament. He could, because He was and is and would be confirmed that very Law in Person. “For God so loved the world ...” is Christ – God’s Love for the world.

I shall not attempt to remove the seeming contradiction New Law Old Law – it is how the Law of God is. It is mysterious, and the day one could say he has unravelled the mystery of it (just like with the mystery of the Godhead), guaranteed he’s lost it.

God’s Word is everlasting and unchangeable like Himself. The Old Testament is the Word of God through Promise; the New Testament is that same Word of God in its Fulfilment, Jesus Christ. All law of God is contained in Him, and since He rose from the dead, He is Lord –the Ruler and Law– over all things. (Even over death and grave. Christ has become the Law “whereby if a man shall do it, He shall live”.)

In this sense to be under grace is in this sense to be under the Law. “They shall be as kings” ruling under the Rule of the King Eternal. That is how it is to be under the Law but not under the law at the same time.

Eric B:

“... (hence the Law of Moses in the letter being "the COMMANDMENTS OF MEN", along with the interpretations and other works added to them).”

GE:

This is going way beyond what the Word says, as beyond what “the Letter” says. I don’t want to repeat what I have just said above, or point out how you twist my words to suit your fancy. I shall only show how you get caught in your own words:

“the Law of Moses in the letter” – Where?

“the Law of Moses ... being "the COMMANDMENTS OF MEN", and not God’s?

“along with the interpretations and other works added to them” – Again, where? Which? By whom?

On the same level and within the same category “the Law of Moses” go, “along with the interpretations and other works added to them”! That’s pharisaism.

Then from this, you deduce that the Sabbath is not “the Sabbath of the LORD your God” any longer and not to be “remembered”, or thus honoured?

If God the LORD can shake off what since the creation belonged to Him as had it all the time been inferior, temporary, in actual fact despicably ‘Jewish’ and human, then what King or God is He really? Should He not then be classed along with those “men” and doctrines as being but too human?

God went further. Don’t kill the paradox! He became the Law for us, and Himself went to the tree, and by his own will nailed Himself to the emblem of shame, thus in Himself annulling scandal and sin and shame through the sacrifice of Himself as The Law. Which annulment is no less and nothing but the Risen Victor Triumphant – God’s Eternal Law of Love confirmed, established, instituted, once for all in the resurrection of Him from the dead! God himself categorized the Sabbath Law, here, in one category with His Law of Love. Says it “in the letter”: “Therefore then don’t you let yourselves be judged or condemned in eating and drinking, that, with regard to feast’s, of month’s, or, of Sabbaths”.

(Not one word ‘added’ or ‘butchered’ or ‘violated’. Just showing how I “just bring in grammatical possibilities, ... then run wild with it!”)

Eric B:

“People living by the letter were not actually keeping the Law (not realizing that hate was still murder and lust still adultery), and thus still under that "certificate of death", as Bob and others call it.”

GE:

Well said!

But those very people supposedly living by the letter of the Law, were they actually living by the letter? They 'added' many more, so weren't really living by every word of God's! That is true in principle and generally, everywhere, and always.

Nevertheless that is NOT the issue in the Letter to the Colossians. The Church truly lived by the letter as well as by the spirit of the Law – the spirit of God's, Sabbath-law only. If one read the minimum of words of the Greek as the minimum of words of interpretation, the impression one gets is that the Church should not allow anyone to judge her or condemn her for being so festive, eating and drinking of feast, of month's, or, of Sabbath's, because these things are indeed a sign of what awaits her, even the reality of the Body of Christ's. Therefore, don't be robbed of your reward in Him, but receive nourishment to wax great with the vitality (and energy – Eph.1:19f) of God who raised Christ from the dead to become head of this Body.

Who will judge me for believing thus? Who will say I cannot claim to be a Christian? Who will punish me for being happy in Christ's and God's evidence of love towards me through His Sabbath Day? My believing His joyous Sabbath Day, could that? Or will it like the silent shadow always evidence the going forward and the growth of Christ's Own, its Head faithfully shining and showering over, administering grace and love and joy and light?

Eric B, quoting G:

"Just so in our text, Colossians 2:16 [where "eating and drinking" is duplicated through Ellipsis]. ...

Eric B:

"So now, you go purely on implication, of what "MUST" be true, rather than clear proof. Then your whole lesson on "Ellipsis" forcing it to refer to "eating and drinking". This is often used as a substitute for proof. But this 'implication' is not absolute, and can be subject to the interpreter. So at the most this could possibly be true; but it would require much further study among the scholars; but most have already come to the conclusions reflected in the translations which they have published, which renders it "in respect of a holy day or new moon, or sabbath..."etc."

GE:

Which is not much different from 'mine'!

What I emphasise – the Christian character and essence of the Sabbaths celebrated by the Colossian Christian Church – is in fact reconcilable with this 'conclusive' translation. 'My' translation is only a more literal and more concentrated version of the Greek, and being more accurate, brings out more

precisely and faithfully, the Christian character and essence of the Sabbaths the Colossian Christian Church celebrated.

This 'published' translation though, depends more on "what 'MUST' be true" than mine or the original. Mine uses Ellipsis only where the Greek does; this translation uses 'implication' where not even necessary, for example using 'holy day' instead of "feast". I won't go into further detail again, in view of how useless my explaining the incidence of Ellipsis in the Greek before seems to have been.

But I am grateful that in whole this remark of yours is more affable than any of earlier discussion.

Eric B, quoting 'my' translation:

""Do not you allow yourselves be judged by anyone of the world in your eating and drinking, or, with regard to your eating and drinking of feast - whether of month's, or, of Sabbaths' occasion". ..."

Eric B:

"And where do you get the words "eating and drinking" in there TWICE? This is what I mean. You use these suppositions, and from them take the liberty to change the text at will. After all, it "MUST" mean that; regardless of what the text says! We can make the Bible say anything we want like that."

GE:

This is what I mean! No sooner surprised by affability, disappointed by monotony: "And where do you get the words "eating and drinking" in there TWICE?"

What was my explaining Ellipsis for? To fall on ears deaf to reason?

I'll repeat:

I get it in there twice through giving account of 'en merei' with the Dative required by relativity and incidental reference – as in the first and occurring incidence of 'en brohsei kai en posei' without 'en merei'. The principle applies even in the English language: "judged in eating and in drinking or with regard to (that / with regard to it, i.e., "eating and drinking" the second time by Ellipsis) of feast ...".

Now if that doesn't explain to you, I give up, considering the numerous incidence even while writing this sentence of the unavoidability of Ellipsis.

I use these suppositions and linguistic 'laws', and from them derive the implicated, required, intended, meaning of the text. It CANNOT be ignored "at will" unless unfaithfully!

GE (Eric B):

"After all, it "MUST" mean that; regardless of what the text says!"

It "MUST" mean OT practices; it "MUST" mean 'trios'; it "MUST" NOT mean NEW Testament practices – it "MUST" NOT mean the very thing the Colossian Christians should NOT be judged in: their Christian feasting their Christian Sabbath Days!

"We can make the Bible say anything we want like that."

Eric B:

"Let no man therefore judge you in food, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath [days] ". You know that the word translated "holy day" is what you are translating "feast". It is literally "a festival". The annual sabbaths in the OT were "feasts". Look at all of "heorte"/1859's other uses. It always refers to the OT "feasts", such as the Passover; never the Church's "Feast gatherings". Yet there was a weekly sabbath as well. So one refers to the annual; and the other refers to the weekly; even though that last "days" was added, as I pointed out.

Sorry, but all of those grammatical suppositions cannot change all of this.

The word used on Col. translated "new moon" means literally "the festival of the new moon". So I don't know how you could incredulously claim that I made all of those things up.

Likewise, once again, even if your "let no one judge in regard to eating and drinking of feasts" interpretation is true; that was never limited to any "sabbath" in the New Testament. The Christians had their love-feasts whenever they met; which we see in Acts was every day of the week, even, at least at times. Once again, what Paul is telling them is not to let anyone judge them over OT celebrations (that the judgers maintained must be kept), for THESE were the shadows of Christ; not the Christian's feast gatherings themselves.

GE:

So we're back to square one. We fell a far way, having almost reached the last square.

If you haven't incredulously made all of those things up yourself ("food ... or ... drink ... holy ... day ... new moon ... the ... sabbath"), you relied on it as on your own conviction.

Eric B

"You know that the word translated "holy day" is what you are translating "feast"."

GE:

You've noticed!

Eric B

"It is literally "a festival"."

GE:

It is literally "OF feast / OF feast(ing)" in context the literal feasting of the Colossian Christians.

Eric B

"The annual sabbaths in the OT were "feasts". Look at all of "heorte"/1859's other uses. It always refers to the OT "feasts", such as the Passover ..."

GE:

So what? In the Old Testament the feasts were the days of the Church worshipping none other than the Christian God.

So, "... never the Church's "Feast gatherings"" is just not true.

Eric B

"Yet there was a weekly sabbath as well."

GE:

What keen observation!

Eric B

"So one refers to the annual; and the other refers to the weekly ..."

GE:

In the Old Testament, yes! But in the New Testament, and here in Col.2:16, those "Feast gatherings" are all converged and concurring in the Christian celebration of "Feast, whether of month's, or, of Sabbaths' (feasting)".

Eric B

"... even though that last "days" was added, as I pointed out."

GE:

I have no problem with it. In fact, "days" was added because of Ellipsis. In other words, it not really 'was added' but all the while was 'there' by 'implication'.

Sorry, but all of these grammatical suppositions cannot be wished away.

Eric B

"The word used in Col. translated "new moon" means literally "the festival of the new moon"."

GE:

No, not in Colossians; in the Old Testament, sure! But here in Colossians we don't have to do with the Old Testament Church, but with the New Testament Church "feast ... of month's, or, of Sabbaths" recurrence, "literally".

Sorry! (And you would not have been so sorry, have you stood by the text "literally"!)

Eric B quoting GE:

"There is nothing contrary to the idea (of "balling together") the different aspects of the context into "Sabbaths' Christ-Feast"), and everything in favour of it."

Eric B:

"I do not see you as proving that. It is just a supposition. You take "it must be a oneness of eating and drinking", and then jump right into your "eating and drinking OF sabbath feast". Right there, it is hard to follow all of these grammatical suppositions and claims; so I guess everyone is to just take your word for it, or go and take up doctorate in ancient Greek. This is a common tactic and substitute for genuine biblical support for one's doctrine. It "looks" scholarly, though. If the sabbath observance is God's truth for today, and is so important; then it should be clear like all of the other truths of Christ; not something hidden behind centuries of wrong translation, and only now rediscovered by one person or one scholarly work, and that the average person cannot understand."

GE:

I am obliged to deny mine "is a common tactic and substitute for genuine biblical support for one's doctrine". My discoursing with you is witness to my disclaimer. I have stuck to the text as nearly and as concisely as possible; I have restricted myself to the historic background and existentiality of the Colossus Congregation; have tried to bring into testing play each and every aspect for the exercise of sound exegesis. Mine is an

up-stream attempt with nothing in common with the easy and liberal and peace-loving compromising with commonality.

How many times now have you returned to your first and many times answered argument, "I do not see you as proving that (There is nothing contrary to the idea of "balling together" the different aspects of the context into "Sabbaths' Christ-Feast", and everything in favour of it.)". It is just a supposition. You take "it must be a oneness of eating and drinking", and then jump right into your "eating and drinking OF sabbath feast".

You show you perfectly understand my understanding of the text, and have explained it well. You thereby have shown you perfectly understand the text, and have explained well its simplest meaning, for that's exactly its literal wording and supposition: "Let yourselves not be judged by anyone in eating and drinking, or with regard to it of feast, of month's, or, of Sabbaths' (feasting)."

I am obliged!

Eric B:

"Right there, it is hard to follow all of these grammatical suppositions and claims ..."

GE:

"Hard to understand", you say, yet have just given perfect insight in "all of these grammatical suppositions and claims". So I guess everyone is to just take your word for honest you don't understand. For really there's no need to go and take up a doctorate in ancient Greek. This is a common tactic and substitute for genuine biblical support for one's doctrine. You could simply read that translation you used as an example of a "conclusive translation", and find no place or space in it for all the 'conjured' and 'additional' 'OT practices' you insist 'are there'. It "looks" scholarly though, just like the scores of treatises and D. Div.-theses stocked up in Sunday-apologetics archives and libraries.

Yes, If Sabbath observance is God's truth for today, and is so important, then it WOULD be clear like all the other truths of Christ, and not something hidden behind centuries of dogmatic translations and commentaries and catechisms, so that the average person must understand it the way dogmaticians and pastors want them to.

(You considerately corrected my 'dogmaticians' to "dogmatarians". But I use 'dogmaticians' because they are more like magicians.)

Eric B:

"You haven't proven they aren't there. I showed you where the whole context is OT practices being imposed on them, and that pagans would not be "judging" them for keeping sabbath feast celebrations; and to simply read the translation; I see them all listed in the passage. The common reading DOESN'T look scholarly! It looks SIMPLE, like just reading the text that has been handed down to us! You are the one coming in with all of this deep linguistic arguments; saying everyone else is wrong, and rewriting the text based on some grammatical possibilities; more like a magician than anyone else!"

Considering:

"You haven't proven they aren't there. I showed you where the whole context is OT practices being imposed on them"

GE:

And I've shown you where the whole context proves NEW Testament practices, as THEM the Believers, being CONDEMNED!

Considering:

"I showed you ... that pagans would not be "judging" them for keeping sabbath feast celebrations"

GE:

And I've shown you how the pagans would not have done anything less to the Christians for being Christians and for feasting their Christian feasts.

Considering:

"... to simply read the translation; I see them all listed in the passage."

GE:

And I've shown you by reading this 'conclusive translation' – the KJV – there's nothing "in there" to the contrary it was the Christian Church that celebrated / observed / feasted / kept these 'practices' for being the spontaneous outflow of their simple faith in the work of Christ – for being Christian practices. And that there's nothing in there that requires these 'practices' must be or had been 'Jewish' or 'Judaistic', or 'OT practices'. I don't see them listed in the passage; I don't know how you see them listed.

Considering:

"The common reading DOESN'T look scholarly! It looks SIMPLE, like just reading the text that has been handed down to us! You are the one coming in with all of this deep linguistic arguments; saying everyone else is wrong,

and rewriting the text based on some grammatical possibilities; more like a magician than anyone else!"

GE:

"The common reading" – KJV – does look simple; it is not to say it is perfect; it is not to say it isn't scholarly. Nevertheless the KJV is NOT "the text that has been handed down to us" in the original, but also, is a 'translation', and therefore, also is an interpretation – a human and fallible attempt at the perfect rendering of God's Word.

ANY well written 'translation' of this or any Scripture will look "SIMPLE" – and for the naïve and innocent – PURE. The more 'scholarly' in fact, the simpler and more fluent etc. a translation will look. It's only when tested against the original by painstaking effort, that its genuineness or falseness may be discovered. (An excellent example: John 20:19!) And the resultant contra-translation may be difficult to understand and look awkward and even backward, but truer and purer to the Word of God.

I attempt an as concise and as uninfluenced and unprejudiced "reading" as possible. If you take exception at my attempt at simplicity therefore, I am powerless to prevent you.

Any other 'reading' will also "look simple", and in fact may read much easier and be understood much easier than 'my attempt', or even the KJV. It is not to say it is better; it could be totally "wrong" and plainly false, as the example I gave you of 'Die Nuwe Afrikaanse Bybel' that reads: "Let nobody PRESCRIBE to you to keep the Sabbath"! The text will have to be completely rewritten to make such a 'translation' possible. Some versions may be more subtle in their misleading, some even courser than this NAB, yet be written in most sublime language.

Eric B quoting GE:

Yes, If Sabbath observance is God's truth for today, and is so important, then it WOULD be clear like all the other truths of Christ, and not something hidden behind centuries of dogmatic translations and commentaries and catechisms,

Eric B:

"You just demolished your own case! (once again trying to hash my words back at me!) If your reading of the text is true; then it WAS "hidden behind centuries of dogmatic translations and commentaries and catechisms". That was just what I was saying: "centuries of wrong translation"! Now, that's what you just described, in your own words. ..."

GE:

I must admit I contradicted myself in that I made this statement while at the same time contending the KJV does not actually differ with 'my' rendering. But my mention of the translations not necessarily includes every translation. And surely there are those – especially newer 'Translations' – that are shocking examples of disinterest in God's Word for God's Truth. My example once more: ('Die Nuwe Afrikaanse Bybel' 1988), "Let nobody PRESCRIBE to you that you should keep the Sabbath". Others may be not so blatant as I've said, but few consciously so translate as to avoid the impression Paul referred to 'OT practices'.

Now I say it's hypocrisy not to practice what one preaches. But to preach that which while practicing one is teaching is contrary God's Word and should not be practiced, that baffles me completely. I mean people who claiming no Sabbath or Sabbath Law applies to Christians, yet every Sunday keep it holy. Could I have had you in mind?

Eric B:

"The question then would be Why? Why would that proper translation be lost all these centuries, and only you and whatever material you are using come out with "the truth" all of a sudden?"

GE:

Why do you think is translating a non-stop enterprise? I am of the opinion it used to be to constantly improve on preciseness in representing the original. But since the RCC became the chief in charge of translating and spreading of the Bible, I have grave grave doubts and many instances for good reason of my doubts.

Of old the prophets were often unfaithful – they were human beings, nevertheless had to proclaim: "Thus saith the LORD!" Nowadays the translators stand in the old prophets' shoes. They are human beings; will they not also be tempted and coerced to proclaim: "Thus saith the LORD" while the LORD had never so spoken? I deal with not a few incidences of such unfaithfulness in my book, 'The Lord's Day in the Covenant of Grace'. You will find it on the webb at <http://www.biblestudents.co.za>.

Considering:

"Oh, but then how do I know it is really not some other person doing the same thing with some other doctrine (JW's, etc) who is right?"

GE:

That's for you to make sure about and decide what you are going to do about whatever you've witnessed proven or exposed false.

Considering:

"After all, the Greek grammar does allow an indefinite article before any noun!"

GE:

As we say in Afrikaans, what has that got to do with the price of eggs?

Eric B:

"I believe God has preserved His word properly translated (though with some minor translational errors –that have been found, admitted, and corrected; but otherwise; you could still get a sense of what it is teaching. He obviously has not preserved your reading of it."

GE considering:

"I believe God has preserved His word properly translated".

So do I with great reserve, for translation can be instrumental to the demolition of sound doctrine like nothing else. The devil himself doesn't sleep nor slumber.

Considering:

One "could still get a sense of what it is teaching."

GE:

Sometimes – perhaps more often than not – one is capable of sensing what the Scriptures is truly teaching exactly by means of a 'wrong' or 'improper' 'translation'. Nowhere is it so acutely actual as in the case of 'Sabbath'-Scriptures.

Eric B quoting GE:

Then Paul doesn't say the "Principalities" or "Authorities" prosecuted the Christians for not worshipping the emperor; he says they judged them for "feasting of Sabbaths". That's what Paul says.

Eric B:

"No; they wouldn't care about their "Christ-feast". They wanted them to ADD some homage to the emperor to it; not do away with the feast. Paul nowhere talks about emperor worship in this passage; that is you trying to take my argument in your favor. (but then you even acknowledge this and repeat it yourself!)"

Considering:

"No; they wouldn't care about their "Christ-feast"."

GE: Yet that is what Paul says the Church was judged for.

Considering:

“They wanted them to ADD some homage to the emperor to it”

GE:

Where do you read it? Read all the ‘warning’ pericopes, 1:28, 2:8, 2:16, 2:18, and in between, and you won’t find the slightest suggestion of it – except if anyone suppose the emperor the representative or a figure of the “world” Paul speaks of, like I did (‘acknowledged’) in my previous post. To which you refer, saying, “Paul nowhere talks about emperor worship in this passage; that is you trying to take my argument in your favor.”

GE:

Thanks for putting it straight, “Paul nowhere talks about emperor worship in this passage”!

Consider:

“... that is you trying to take my argument in your favor.”

I, trying to take your argument in my favour? So it must be you who in the first place claimed Paul talks about emperor worship in this passage. In fact so it was; you countered my argument with just that when you claimed the Christians were allowed their Sabbaths but were condemned for not worshipping the emperor. Then again it was you when you claimed it was the Jews who added or wanted added to the Christians’ Sabbath-observance something of emperor worship. Man you’re muddled.

While we actually agree there is no direct or indirect involvement of emperor worship in this Letter, least of all should the JEWS want the Christian Church “ADD some homage to the emperor”.

You bluntly refuse to submit to the Law of God, the Law of His Sabbath Day the Day of His worship for His People. It is the only problem with you – not the understanding of Colossians 2:16-17.

The Sabbath DAY is as Present Truth to the Christian Community from the very beginnings of Christianity as the Community itself, according to this Scripture of Colossians 2:16-17. To deny and refuse the fact and abiding truth of the Sabbath Day is plain wilful disobedience and disregard for the Lordship and Rule of Christ over His Church in the world.

Not to admit the validity, applicability and DUTY of the Sabbath DAY and its celebration is not to admit Christ’s resurrection for being suitable and sufficient motive and BASIS for the Day of Worship-Rest of the People of God – like undeniably argued in Hebrews 4:8 to 10 and undeniably presupposed in this here Scripture of Colossians 2:16-17. (Not even referring to the MANY other NT Scriptures confirming the Sabbath Day (Seventh Day

of the week), Christian Faith because of the work of Christ.)

To obstinately refuse to consent to the fact the Church was assailed and assaulted, judged and condemned for her Faith and Freedom “in Him”, Christ, while feasting her Sabbaths, is derogatory to the attainment of Jesus Christ through resurrection from the dead. It is EXACTLY what Paul counselled the Church NOT to be judged in and not to allow itself be subjected to.

YOU, Eric B, judge the Church in respect of her Sabbaths for her eating and drinking of Christ-Feast. YOU, refuse the Church its Christ-obtained freedom and pleasure. YOU, say to her: “Don’t touch! Don’t taste! Don’t handle!”, just like the world of old. Don’t eat nor feast of Sabbaths or face the charges, say you!

You call to the bench “Attorney at Law” (paraclehtos) PAUL, and he calls the Risen Christ, True and Faithful Witness for the defence.

Cross-examine you:

‘Do the defence feast their Sabbaths by reason of You, Jesus they call their Christ?’

Yes, they do!

So you’re the instigator of their Sabbaths’ feasting?

You’ve said it.

How is it, Sir?

By my resurrection from the dead.

Indeed? No further questions, your honour; I rest my case!

As I said before:

The Church has this assurance and guarantee – this ‘Covenant for the Defence’ – in the lawsuit: ‘Eric B versus Christian Community’:

“Having quickened you together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, having wiped out the written law-ordinance against us and having rejected it as evidence contrary us, having nailed it to the cross, having put off the (prosecuting) RULERS and AUTHORITIES, HE EXPOSED THEM to shame having TRIUMPHED over them in it (dying and rising).”

Nevertheless gives sentence ‘for the State’ Eric B: “You’re hereby judged and condemned not because you didn’t do away with your Sabbaths-Christ-Feast, but for allowing the Jews to ADD to your Sabbaths’ Feasting some homage to the emperor.”

Meantime this Eric B outside the court room believes there’s no legal system violate-able, seeing the Law no longer exists according to himself. So either he thinks himself above the Law, or is unethical in his judgement. Or both things.

Eric B quoting GE:

To learn from this Letter is the hard reality of a "handwritten ordinance, a document of law" that was issued "against us" by none less than the "authorities" – verse 14. The "Rule" or 'law', the "principality" or 'government' –of the land (or "world")– "judged / condemned" the Church. That's what Paul says.

Eric B:

"The "handwriting of ordinances" refers to the written Law (which includes "circumcision"; also mentioned)."

GE:

Why mention, in view of the fact you're discoursing with me? Never held it doesn't. I have said more than once "ALL LAW", 'moral law', 'spiritual', "Ten Commandments"; 'ceremonial law', 'sacrificial', 'literal' – ALL LAW, even the whole of Scriptures!

Jesus, crucified, removes every possible judgement against those His, seeing HE DIES ALL LAW CRUCIFIED / SACRIFICED; and RISEN, He confirms every right and privilege of those His, seeing HE RISES ALL LAW VINDICATED, VINDICATOR ... "FOR THE PEOPLE"!

It is the only thing Paul is driving at in this issue of judgement against the Christian Community for celebrating her Sabbaths' Christ-Feast – the only thing. They were "condemned" by the world while they were "IN HIM"; they were vindicated by Christ while they were "IN HIM". In whatever they did, "whether in feast of month's or in feast of Sabbaths", they were blameless – "Let no man judge you!"

Eric B:

"The temple institution and Sanhedrin were also "authorities"; "principalities" and "governments" under the Romans; but nevertheless, still active, and having power over the people. Look at how Jesus (in Matt.5 and elsewhere) refers to "the council"."

GE:

Again, ALL LAW, "taken" to the cross in the body of Jesus Christ AS, ALL SIN, "carried" in His flesh, "vanquished", "removed", extinguished, "nullified", "abolished" – even these: The temple institution and Sanhedrin, "authorities", "principalities" and "governments", under the Romans, under the Jews, still active, and having power over the people today, tomorrow – sine qua non, ALL LAW! Went down all unrighteousness by THE LAW and "in Him"; came up All Righteousness by THE LAW "in Him and through Him". Alleluia, unto worship and praise of His Name!

Eric B quoting GE:

The "powers" of this world cared a lot about what the Christians did. It all the time tried to dissuade them from the Faith and from their great Reward; it in every possible manner hoped to force them into conformity with itself.

Eric B:

"And that was by trying to force them to add pagan practices; not by trying to stop the Christian practices. They would not care if a group of people had feasts in honor of Christ; any more than other groups having feast in honor of any other gods. It was only the Jews who were that directly opposed to the name of Christ."

GE:

Consider: "And that was by trying to force them to add pagan practices; not by trying to stop the Christian practices."

GE: Answered above.

Consider: "They would not care if a group of people had feasts in honor of Christ; any more than other groups having feast in honor of any other gods."

GE: simply incorrect – everybody and all authorities and majorities took exception to Christianity and the Christian Faith. Pagans were safe in their pagan world, doing whatever they liked. Paul tells the Believers, You are safe "in Him", do whatever you do, do well as unto God! And the Christians were persecuted for their Faith and Practice everywhere by everybody in power – by the "world" in a word.

Consider: "It was only the Jews who were that directly opposed to the name of Christ."

GE: How naïve! Contradicts what you have just said, that the Christians were expected by "pagan injunction" to worship the emperor.

You think it possible to have Christ and worship both Him and the emperor?

"You cannot serve two gods" ... who was it that said it?

If I remember correctly it was one of the lords served Himself who said! Then just as impossible as it is today, was it then.

Eric B:

"Once again; they could have Christ if only they would worship BOTH Him and the emperor."

GE:

You know, you talk nonsense. Paul also knew, and warned there's no either or in serving Christ. He was of the opinion once out of the kingdom of

darkness, entered into the kingdom of God's Light unreservedly; one is either "dead" in one's sins, or alive – "quicken together with Him" "unto God" – and many more illustrations from his Letter!

Eric B:

"And the pagan injunctions against the Christians had nothing to do with any covenant God had with them."

GE:

Again you're talking against your own better knowledge. The whole of this Letter proves you wrong in your assertion.

For our purposes one may accurately describe "any covenant" simply with the loyalty / allegiance the Christians showed amongst themselves and to Jesus Christ – clearly what "the world" found offensive and what it regarded as token of disloyalty to itself and its own principalities, ideological ("philosophy", "wisdom") or political ("rule", "power"). Again, you only need to read the 'warning'-passages.

Eric B:

"(just like the "manmade additions" others claim regarding the "handwriting of ordinances") So they could therefore not be "nailed to the Cross". They were never legitimate (to God) to begin with."

GE:

Once more, already answered, above. If Christ not nullified 'manmade' law in that He nullified Divine Law by His death and resurrection, He could not have nullified Divine Law – 'moral law', 'law' that "has to do with sin" and the "law of sin" therefore. If He was unable to destroy the weaker, how could He be able to destroy the stronger?

Eric B:

"They were never legitimate (to God) to begin with."

GE:

So was and is sin, not legitimate to God, against the Law of God; yet was it taken to the cross, nailed to the cross and removed by the cross. (Saying 'cross' actually meaning Jesus.)

This is the Christian's surest consolation and comfort and rest, that Christ reigns, Lord and King, Almighty God, who thrones kings, and dethrones kings. No law of land or lord is ever made but God designed to serve His own design – his Eternal Purpose and Covenant of Grace – by it.

Eric B quoting GE:

God did not judge the Church. Paul did not condemn his brethren. The Body did not judge one another - it was not divided. No one incriminated the other. Their unity and order and peace and love was renowned worldwide and they were an example to all the other Congregations. That's what Paul says.

Eric B:

"Yes, and those harassing them over the Law were not seen as truly part of the Church. Some crept in or "bewitched" the Christians; but they were clearly denounced as false preachers; or "ministers of Satan"."

GE:

You're again confusing Scriptures. Where do you see (Judaistic) 'false preachers clearly denounced' in Colossians? In the passage you imply by quoting the word "bewitched"? That's Gal.3:1! In Colossians it is the True Church judged and condemned by authorities and / of the world literal and ideological. Yes, also with 'bewitching' tactics, 2:4 "beguile with enticing words", by "any man" outside the "closely knit" Christian Communion; 2:8, "any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit after the traditions of men, after the first principles of the WORLD, and NOT after Christ". Judaism? If, then completely paganised Judaism! See also 3:18 for another example of the world's vain and foolish philosophy being the "beguiling" agent.

And not "crept in" (not even Paul, but Jude), but directly attacking and assaulting the Church from OUTSIDE with measures of civil be it religious, 'law' – by "judging" through "written document of law". The Christians were prosecuted by law of the land for their Faith. That is, they were persecuted – the case in Colossus.

Jude the whole Letter deals with persons who left the Church and then infiltrated back to spoil it from inside. In 19 it says they "separated" themselves spiritually; in 16 that they filled high positions (they were 'false teachers' therefore) from where they dazzled the People with their eloquent arrogance.

The difference is clear: in the Jude-situation the assault was from within; in the Colossus situation the assault came from without.

This difference non the less, it is impossible to say even from Jude the 'false teachers' were (former) Jews and not (former) Gentiles. They were perverted and perverted the Gospel is all it can be said. I got the impression myself from Jude it was more likely the 'pagan' converts-aberrant who were 'that directly opposed' to the name and doctrine of Christ.

Point is, the two Letters cannot be appreciated on par, and therefore it cannot be said Colossians supposes 'false teachers' of Jewish stock 'adding' Judaistic extras to the Christians' Sabbath-keeping. It is a false comparison.

Eric B; quoting GE:

In Colossians, "the world" was "Greek" and humanistic, and not "Jew" and 'legalistic' ('Old Testamentish') - which is absolutely clear from the whole of the Letter. Jews, unlike in Rome, in Colossus must have been the minority by far.

Eric B:

"Apparently; those that were there (how many ever that was) were still harassing the Church. Just remember; many Christians were Jews, and these people would continue to receive flack from their families."

GE:

Pure speculation, not necessarily nor exactly, and improbable in the specific case of the Colossian circumstance. In Colossus, I repeat, the converted 'pagans' formed the majority by every indication, and many of them would continue to receive flack from their unconverted families. We could say with certainty few Christians in Colossus were not pagans and few if any were not still harassed by the pagan world surrounding them.

Eric B quoting GE:

"Still, the question remains; why would the world "judge" them for this?"

Do you, saying "still", admit "eating and drinking" was "spiritual"? Why 'question' it? From where does the question "remain"? You import the "question" from nowhere - it never occurs and never is suggested – not in the letter!

No, Paul tells the reader, in so many words, "why the world would "judge" them", and for what? For "eating and drinking, that, in respect of (eating and drinking) of feast, either of month's, or of Sabbaths" ... with so many words! Why not believe Paul?

Eric B:

"I was once again granting you the benefit of the doubt. Even if it meant what you say; you still would not have any historical proof that pagans "judged" the Church just for having a spiritual feast.

I also notice that this word "judge" (krino) is almost always associated either with God, or the Law. Never "persecution by the pagans"! God legitimately judges by His spiritual Law; man falsely judges by the Letter!"

GE:

Thanks, but I don't need the benefit of doubt. Doubt in this matter is of no benefit.

They were persecuted / prosecuted by 'law' of "judgement", "against" them, by "hand-written document of ordinance / law" "contrary" them.

Not 'persecution'? Then what is?

Consider:

"... you still would not have any historical proof that pagans "judged" the Church just for having a spiritual feast."

I have it in this very Letter; and I have it in many other NT Scriptures. Just living their Faith for the Christians was 'having a spiritual feast' – Christ-feast! The Lord's Supper and the Sabbaths were THE two special instances of such "Feast".

Eric B quoting GE:

Could you see it, you won't insist, "Still the question remains". When the Church is judged, it is judged by the world of the day, by the world the world, the immoral, godless Hellenistic world with all its boasting in wisdom and knowledge. Not by the Old Covenant found in the Word of God, and not because of it! No, the Church is judged and condemned by law of the real world – and by "anyone" of it whether prosecutor at law or professor at science / philosophy ... "anyone" representing this world, IS, the Greek 'cosmos'!

Eric B:

"But precisely one of the implications from the Gospel being taught is that the Hebraic paradigm is just as much a part of the "cosmos" as the Hellenistic one! One was no better than the others; though the Hebrews liked to look down on the Gentiles as "dogs". This is one of the main reasons why the Jews opposed the Gospel so much in the first place!"

GE:

No comment.

Eric B quoting GE:

Now I ask you once more, was it with regard to their Christian faith, or not? Was it in respect of their feasting and celebrating Jesus their Saviour, or not? That, dear Eric B, is the ONLY 'question remaining' which you cannot but answer affirmatively. And having answered it affirmatively (how could you not?) you have affirmed the Sabbath is Christian, and is Christian Faith, because it is Resurrection Faith!

Eric B:

"What you still have not addressed is that even if it did mean "christ sabbath feast"; that still does not prove it is binding on everyone else. Once again: Romans 14:5ff, "One man esteems one day above another: another esteems every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. He that regards the day, regards it unto the Lord; and he that regards not the day, to the Lord he does not regard it. He that eats, eats to the Lord, for he gives God thanks; and he that eats not, to the Lord he eats not". Therefore; "let no one judge you" for it. But then they were not to judge others for not keeping it. Once again; I am not "admitting" your view; but granting you the benefit of the doubt just for the sake of that point. You still have not proven satisfactorily that the text is to be rendered "Christ sabbath feast" anyway. So you can't go on and act as if that is a given , and then continue to rewrite the context of the passage based on it.

GE:

Thank you Eric B, for getting nearer to the little but real things that make the difference.

Consider:

"... that still does not prove it is binding on everyone else."

I don't say the 'Law' must be "repeated" in the NT in order to be 'binding on' Christians ('on everybody else'). It is the anti-nomians who so insist. They (and you?), shout, the Letter the Letter! – not New Testament believers ordinary who also believe God's Law is still binding and as ever ... in and through and because of Jesus Christ!

If Jesus Christ has become the Law unto the Church, whatever flows from His Life and Work and Word – and ultimately from His Victory / Triumph – by the very working of God's Holy Spirit becomes to them God's Law and Demand and Command and Will and Power ... all those wonderful things expressing whatever as the Delight of God. That, to me, is God's Law, nowadays, under the New Testament. That, to me, had always BEEN God's Law, from eternity to eternity. Everything 'engraven' whether on stone or on paper or on a heart as hard as a rock, from the nature of it, indicated its temporariness ('temporality?'), transitoriness, incompleteness and in fact weakness and deficiency. (Not, like the SDA's, finality and indestructibility.)

If what I say is true, then in Colossians 2:12ff we have a perfect example of it, and a PRECEDENT CREATED by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead for the observance and indeed the celebration amongst themselves and before God and the world of His Holy Sabbath Day to the length of days.

Of course also, this is not the only text in the New Testament making of the Sabbath of the LORD your God, His Commandment. In fact, each and every text about the Sabbath in the New Testament Scriptures asks, to be understood from this perspective, that the Sabbath Day is the "Lord's Day". And if 'the Lord's Day' then also the People's Day of Worship Rest in Jesus Christ. That's NEW Testament 'Law'; that is what I believe!

Then too and not so joyous, is the clarion call of God's Sabbath Law, that the devil's false sabbath law must be countered, exposed, and vanquished! It is senseless in this our times to be Sabbatharian (or a-Sabbatharian), and not anti-Sundaydarian. Without mercy, viciously, uncompromisingly, exposing and extinguishing devil's worship in the Body of our Lord Jesus! Soft soothing salve will only help the ulcer fester more profusely. It must be removed at the core, and that is where it shot roots in the core of Christianity, the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. Sunday and Sunday sanctification and Sunday worship have no right of symbiosis with the heart of Christianity, Jesus' resurrection. It's a cancer that will infest the whole Body through putrefying lies.

Consider:

"... Once again: Romans 14:5ff..."

No please, not again!

Eric B:

"I know you're not an Armstrong offshoot. Still; you're method of changing the meanings of passages that disprove mandatory sabbath observance is very similar to theirs. (though I see that you go way beyond them in the extent you are willing to go to change the text!) ..."

GE:

No comment.

Eric B quoting GE:

"Jesus" appears seven times in this Letter for Jesus Christ. So what misconception it is "It is well known that "Jesus" in verse 8 is really a mistranslation of "Joshua"".

Eric B:

"...If you take this to be "the [spiritual] rest" of "Jesus Christ", contrasted" with "another day"; meaning "the literal sabbath"; then look what you have rendered: Jesus *DID NOT really give us rest...*"

GE:

I'm glad you said "If you...", because I did not. Therefore, no further comment necessary.

Consider:

"... then look what you have rendered: Jesus *DID NOT really give us rest ...* and that is why "therefore" we still need the literal sabbath!"

GE:

I shall just now ask you to recall this statement / supposition of yours.

Eric B:

"... and that is why "therefore" we still need the literal sabbath! I guess if He didn't; then we still would be under the OT Law; wouldn't we! (but then; we would have no hope at all; because "by the works of the Law shall no flesh be justified"!)

GE:

Everything you argue hangs on the tentative: "If you...".

Eric B:

"IF J_____ HAD given them rest..." is saying that [whoever this is] did NOT really give them rest..."

GE:

Recall Eric B above: "... then look what you have rendered: J_____ *DID NOT really give us rest ...*"

GE:

Now who's right? You say, "did NOT really"; and I say (according to you), "*DID NOT really*". Mine has two Emphatics in; yours only one; still, what's the difference?

But recall a few words back, and find the answer in your own supposition:

"...If you take this to be "the [spiritual] rest" of "Jesus Christ", contrasted" with "another day"; meaning "the literal sabbath"; then look what you have rendered: Jesus *DID NOT really give us rest...*"

"If you take ..." is the same sort of Supposition as "If Jesus gave ...".

Agreed? (I assume yes.)

Now, if you take this very Supposition to be the spiritual rest of "Jesus Christ", then look what you have rendered:

Jesus *DID really give us rest!* – No difficulty! That is what I did. I did NOT “take this to be “the [spiritual] rest” of “Jesus Christ”, contrasted with “another day”; meaning “the literal sabbath”. Not in the least! The trouble lies with your idea for using the word “meaning”, “...”the [spiritual] rest” of “Jesus Christ” contrasted with “another day”, meaning “the literal sabbath”. You – not I – make “another day”, meaning “the literal sabbath”.”.

“Another day” is an unfortunate translation (I don’t say it is a wrong translation!) of ‘allehs meta tauta hehmeras’ – literally and precisely, “another day AFTER THESE THINGS”. It is not stated as a supposition, but as a fact: “Had Jesus given them rest, He (God), AFTER THESE THINGS (He had spoken of BY AND IN JESUS) would not have spoken of (yet) another day thereafter.”

Jesus is God’s FINAL revelation. This Letter expresses this same truth in other words in other places (e.g., 6:6, 9:12, 9:26-27). Jesus – His “day” or ‘era’ – is God’s last Opportunity granted for repentance and for entering in into the Rest of God. “Day” therefore in verse 8b is not “Sabbath-keeping” in verse 9. They are totally unrelated literally and ‘spiritually’. The Sabbath is not God’s last chance to accept Jesus – Jesus is God’s last chance to us to believe in Jesus and to enter into His ‘spiritual’ Rest.

And “If you hear His voice today, (but notwithstanding) harden your heart”, I’m afraid it’s tickets with you. There’s not “another day after these things” – after this day “today” – Christ’s ‘day’ – to hearken and change your heart and enter in! God “limited” the day – it stops here, where God now for the last time invites, “boldly (quickly, no time to waste, fearless, because we have seen He is touched by our infirmities) come unto the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy”.

So pleads the writer with his readers, “If Jesus had given them rest, hearing His voice this day His, “today” – no next time in front”.

“That’s why God left you the Sabbath Day”, for you the People of God if you hear, to believe and enter into His Rest, “For He having entered into His Rest from His own works as God from His, RESTED!” “IT IS FINISHED!” [“God FINISHED” “on the Seventh Day”, 4: 4-5!] The Good News never lets go of historicity.

Notice the Participle use of “having entered” – eiselthohn in verse 10, it explains the REASON WHY, WHY God’s People have a Sabbatismos still remaining valid for them: “He (Jesus), having finished, having entered” = having rested the People of verse 8.

I say again: NO other reason or purpose or justification for the NEW Testament Sabbath Day! It is the faithfulness of God His Word of Oath,

“Jesus”, will be the reason for it, and nothing besides “added”! Jesus, his resurrection only!

So is received NEW Testament Law. We don’t look for what we should know or very well do know, will not be found – some repetition verbatim of the Fourth Commandment. If one cannot believe God at His Living WORD, how can one believe Him at his Written Word?

In the premise or conjunction, an Indicative is indeed used: “If Jesus rested them” – ‘ei gar autous katepausen’ – it is presupposed a fact, taken for granted true; not postulated a possibility, not a truth argued upon an untruth. If Joshua had been the subject however, the Supposition would have been untrue, because Joshua never rested the People.

“God (the Speaker from verse 3b), would not have spoken (Future Subjunctive ‘elalei’) of another day after these things” (“these things” before mentioned with reference to the history of Israel) had Jesus NOT given them (Israel in its broadest sense) rest!

Therefore Jesus (or the day of Jesus) here in fact spoken of by God (in Christ) in whom and by whom God indeed rested the People, IS that ‘day’ He “would have spoken of”.

With reference to Jesus having truly rested the People, God not only speaks of the Old Covenant, but also of the New and Eternal Covenant of Grace. (“Some” indeed DID enter, were indeed “faithful” – 3:2; “some provoked, howbeit not all” – 3:16. Those of old, entered into the SAME REST as “we which have believed do enter into” (4:3) under the New Testament – they while sabbatimos remained; we, while sabbatismos remains.)

Since therefore it is Jesus Christ the Rest spoken of here – “He won’t speak of another day after these things” – Jesus is God’s last Word to a People entering upon death to have them saved in time, “in time of need” (4:16).

So, finally, we have seen how a Supposition can function as the strongest possible Affirmative. Hence, “If Jesus had given them rest” means exactly THAT “Jesus had given them rest”. And for the purpose of our discussion this then is further given as the reason for why the Sabbath is still valid for the People of God, both before and after, in verse 8 and again in verse 10.

What is in between in verse 9, is not ‘the same thing’ – ‘sabbatismos’ is not ‘anapausis’. And further, the “another day” of verse 8b, does NOT mean “the literal sabbath”. It means the “day” of Christ – His immediate, Living Confronting us the People of God, inviting: “Today, if you hear MY VOICE ...!” It ‘really’ is, God’s-Rest-to-enter-in-Person, “Jesus”, the Last of God’s ‘days’ for us, the last time to us His Voice shall be heard.

Eric B:

“He mentions the seventh day; then says “IF Joshua (superseding Moses as the leader and enforcer of the Law) had given them rest...”. So this is contrasting the

literal day as not giving the true rest. Therefore, the true rest is something ELSE!"

GE:

"If Jesus had given them rest", just as well and much better than "If Joshua (superseding Moses as the leader and enforcer of the Law) had given them rest", is "contrasting the literal day as not giving the true rest."

Haven't I maintained just it?

"Therefore, the true rest (katapausis / Jesus / His Voice Today) is something ELSE" than the Sabbatismos. How else?

Eric B:

"So "the immediate provocation for 'therefore'" as you put it "- the fact Jesus...had entered into His own rest through resurrection from the dead" means that "...gives them rest [as He] Himself" rests. This is something different from the DAY of religious duty the Israelites had!"

GE:

It in fact is something different from and far Greater than the DAY of religious duty the Israelites or the Christians ever had.

Eric B:

"You will notice that the name "Joshua" is never otherwise used in the NT. It was basically the same name; and the translators got it mixed up. Of course; it fits well into your theory, so that will slant you in that direction."

GE:

True, "the name "Joshua" is never otherwise used in the NT". It also could basically have been the same name than Joshua. As in "Jesus" here, it means, "God with us, Saviour of His People".

Eric B:

"I don't see where you prove that the two words ('anapausis' and 'sabbatismos') cannot be interchanged when they are both describing types of "rest"."

GE:

It is noteworthy that the writer does 'interchange' different words for the single concept of God's 'spiritual' Rest for the People – His Rest in Jesus Christ and through Him – namely, the words 'anapausis' and 'katapausis'. Of greater significance though is the fact the writer interchanges these words (to describe the single concept of God's 'spiritual' Rest for the People – His Rest

in Jesus Christ and through Him), pertaining the OLD Covenant or Dispensation of the Law wherein the Sabbath stood prominent as Commandment of the Law. At the same time the writer refers the Sabbath as “the Seventh Day”, twice. He does not call it a ‘rest’ – anapausis’ or ‘katapausis’.

Then, speaking about the NEW Covenant or “day” or ‘era’ of Jesus Christ, the writer employs the same ‘interchangeable’ words, either ‘anapausis’ or ‘katapausis’, to describe the single concept of God’s ‘spiritual’ Rest for the People – His Rest in Jesus Christ and through Him. “Day” and “rest” – ‘hehmera’ and ‘anapausis’ / ‘katapausis’, are perfectly interchangeable concepts (as described above) in verse 8: “If Jesus had given them rest (katapausen), then would He not afterward have spoken of another DAY”, OR, “would He not afterward have spoken of another”, “REST”.

These two ‘interchangeable’ words, “rest”, and “day”, indicating the same concept of God’s Rest in Jesus Christ, the writer uses to the same end: TO GIVE BASIS to God’s “Sabbatismos for the People of God”. It makes sense to say the Rest (Jesus), is “WHY there is a Sabbatism / a keeping of the Sabbath Day still valid for the People of God”.

‘Anapausis’ / ‘katapausis’ and ‘sabbatismos’, though “both are describing types of “rest””, cannot be used interchangeably because they are describing different types of “rest”. Both types of “rest” are ‘spiritual’ because they both have to do with the worship in Spirit and in Truth of God. Yet they are not one, not the same, but different, the one being Jesus Christ in Truth; the other “a keeping of the Sabbath for the People of God” in faith; the one a Person, the other a Day; the one of God’s doing, the other of – or rather – FOR the People’s doing. Even so it’s not theirs, not of their doing, but it is God’s and of His doing, “available” / “remaining”, “for”, “the People”.

Eric B:

“I don't see how all of this stuff I am saying is somehow proving your point. The passage is speaking of spiritual rest in contrast to physical rest on a day. You apparently don't get this.”

GE:

You’ve said it! You obviously don’t get it!

Eric B:

“There can be no spiritual application of literal rest on a day”

GE:

If not spiritual, the Church's physical assembling and physical worshipping on the physical Day of physical Worship-Rest to God must be most abominable to Him, being man's supreme work of self-righteousness – to God who is worshipped in Spirit and in Truth or not at all but blasphemed in the face through the hypocrisy of arrogant worshippers!

Eric B:

"... because (to you) it is already spiritual; right? So you continue to think of it meaning the literal day, and when I point out what it really means, I am really proving your point."

GE:

Huh?

Eric B quoting GE, Eric B highlighting:

"It is FOR THEM, as Jesus Lord of the Sabbath declared: The Sabbath (Day) was made / energised / created FOR MAN - not only **for his sake the salvation of him, but for also his duty and keeping being already and eternally saved** through Jesus' resurrection from the dead.

Eric B commenting:

"So it is to keep man "already" saved? God already saves us, but we must keep it that way by resting on a sabbath? Here lies the problem. That is just a slick rehash of works-justification. We don't initially earn it; but we just "keep" it through our works. But when we get to the resurrection, it will ultimately be because of our works, then!"

GE:

No certainly, you are right, and I have expressed myself wrongly here – actually ambiguously. But you have read me now often enough in other statements to know what you here distracted is not my 'doctrine'.

Certainly the Sabbath or its keeping does NOT save any man, but it is an instrument of God's appointment to the service of the worship of Him by the People, and indispensable as the PLACE AND OPPORTUNITY IN SPACE AND TIME for Christian worship as the Community of the saints and for the proclamation of the Word and witness to the world in doctrine and faith and practice – exactly as it happened in the Colossian Church. That is what I meant, saying, "The Sabbath (Day) was made not only **for his sake, the salvation of him, but for also his duty**". "The salvation of him" is what is "for his sake" – the free gift of grace – not the Sabbath. And so it was not intended. You must be honest, I did not mean those things you accuse me of having said.

Eric B quoting GE:

Not I, but God, is so "still pitching some 'duty' ". He never ever left man without duty. In fact we the redeemed are saved, the Bible says, "unto good works". But what privilege and blessing duty is, especially when duty from God, and because of such great Reason as Jesus having entered into His own rest and as having given them (us) rest thereby! God "still" invites you, to enter into a sabbatismos still left, still valid, for the People of God His Church. "Today, if you hear His Voice –if you hear Jesus Christ God's Voice– harden not your heart!" 'For if Jesus gave (you) rest, there remains for (your) enjoyment and duty, a keeping of the Sabbath Day of the LORD – for thus has He entered into His own rest as God from His.' (Paraphrased of course but I believe as near to the true intent of the Scripture as possible.)

Eric B:

"Yes, we are saved unto good works. But this passage is not talking about that. It is contrasting us with Israel."

GE:

This passage is talking to us as God's Israel, the Church of all ages and worlds, "for (whom) the Sabbath was made" and "for (whom) a Sabbatismos – Sabbath-keeping – still is valid".

Eric B:

"Israel had the sabbath, (and though many were chastized for not keeping it throughout the OT;) by the time of the NT; they were not only keeping it; but had added all sorts of further strictures upon it. Yet they still had "not entered into His rest". Yet you persist in trying to make some "duty" of physical rest the true spiritual rest!"

Eric B quoting GE:

No, that Rest He gave them IS Jesus Christ who had given them rest, and "If Jesus had given them rest", **and AS the Rest "entered" = "finished" = "rested" = "obeyed", THEN**, there "Therefore remaineth a keeping of the Sabbath for the People of God".

Eric B:

"But that's not what the text says. Obeying what the text says is to CEASE from one's own works (not "WORK" as one does on a day; but rather "religious duties"!) What you have described (in interpreted as keeping a day) is to continue in one's "works" and not enter the true rest!"

GE:

Consider:

"... to continue in one's "works" and not enter the true rest!"

You oppose the two principles one may in fact by faith enter the true rest and may continue by faith in good works. Throughout the Scriptures both principles are at work simultaneously and the one without the other does not exist. Having entered in the true rest will see the same person or Corporate Body of the Church continuing in God's field of labour. Which is of grace and itself is a grace and token of mercy, a gift and a privilege, as I have many times said before. (Have you ever been unemployed yet wanting in nothing? Have you tasted what it is to sit having nothing to do while you don't need to do anything? Well, I have. To have work to do, is to have found peace and rest!)

Eric B:

"Obeying what the text says is to CEASE from one's own works (not "WORK" as one does on a day; but rather "religious duties"!)"

GE:

Forgive me for using your own words again to explain what I think would have been true and according to the doctrine of Christ: Obeying what the text says is to CEASE from one's own works of righteousness – not "WORK" as one does on a day, nor one's "religious duties", but works of "unbelief" (whereby also most "did not enter"), vain complacency, hypocrisy and pride, and, worst, works of one's OWN righteousness! Cf., if God says, "YOU shall do no work", I say, God shall do no work especially on the Sabbath Day; if God says, "You shall rest on the Sabbath Day, I say, you will not rub out corn neither go through the fields on the Sabbath Day; if God says "the Seventh Day is the Sabbath of the LORD", I say, the First Day is the Lord's Day; if God says because of Christ, I say, because of the letter of the Law; if God says, by resurrection of Jesus from the dead, I say, for the sake of order in the Church. Etc. under which I could have quoted quite a few of your slogans.

Therefore, What I, according to you, "have described / interpreted as keeping a day, is to continue in one's "works" and not enter the true rest", for sooth is nothing of the sort.

Eric B quoting GE:

Now, please, why don't you this time quote me verbatim like you often do? Because you can't, because I never was "trying to change (the

"or") to "OF". Shows how inattentive and / or prejudiced you read my arguments.

I cannot make out which 'eh' you refer to; but here's a list of all the possibilities:

Eric B:

"First you make this charging accusation of inattentiveness or prejudice; then you go and admit that you don't even know which word is in question. Which "or" has been changed to "of" in your translation? It is obviously "eating and drinking, OR in respect of a holy day", which you change into "eating and drinking OF feast"."

GE:

Negative! I show you the whole list of 'EH's', and NO one has been changed by me into 'OF'. The 'OF' – as I explained thoroughly – is NOT by Ellipsis, but by Inflection: in the Suffix heort-EHS. "Eating and drinking" is present by Ellipsis though – "eating and drinking OF Feast". This is how I wrote it since we began our discussion, and you haven't noticed?

No! You refuse to admit, hanging on like a terrier: "Regardless of whether it is from "ellipsis" or not; you still replaced "or" with "of". I translated correctly, showing, the Genitive, which the KJV does not do that clearly. Sometimes the English language can also take things for granted, you know? The problem is not with the KJV so much as with your scheming to escape from being convinced of truth.

Eric B:

"Yes it (judging) is the big deal; because you are trying to make all of the possessives refer back to "eating and drinking" rendering the text "eating and drinking of feasts, or *eating and drinking* of sabbaths or *eating and drinking* of moons; etc". But What I am saying is that it is JUDGING in regard to eating or drinking; or JUDGING in regard to feast days; or JUDGING in regard to new moons, or JUDGING in regard to the sabbath."

GE:

First, to remove a little obstacle to getting to the gist of my viewpoint (referring you again to the very last point above): "... all of the possessives refer back to "eating and drinking" in fact! But not in the order you smuggle in, "rendering the text "eating and drinking of feasts, or *eating and drinking* of sabbaths or *eating and drinking* of moons; etc". (Prettily with an "etc"!)" "All

of the possessives refer back to "eating and drinking", but not with all the Plurals you have, and also not with the Singular you omit! So that 'rendering the text' the way you do, is far from 'rendering the text' the way I do. My way renders the text exactly: "eating-and-drinking-of-feast, whether eating-and drinking-of-month's(Sing.)-feast, or, eating-and drinking-of-Sabbaths'-(Plural)-feast": In all, two recurring events: "of month's" (probably the Lord's Supper), and, "of Sabbaths" – undoubtedly the weekly "Sabbaths' Day".

Eric B:

"Still; if I put all of that word-for-word translation you cited together; I can get "Not therefore then, anyone, YOU let judge, in drinking and in eating / celebrating, or with regard to OF feast;* OF month's, or OF Sabbath's." 'that' and either(*) is added by ellipsis; right?"

GE:

I truly appreciate your honesty – it should lead us somewhere somehow to where the parallel lines hopefully will meet.

To answer:

No, regrettably, 'that' and either(*) is NOT added by ellipsis. "That" = 'EH' = "or". Remember our rather lengthy discussion of the Pronominal quality of 'EH'?

WITHIN 'EH', "eating and drinking" is presented by Ellipsis. No different than ordinary English: "Do not you let judge you anyone in eating and drinking ('en' plus Dative 'brohsei kai en posei'), OR ('eh', = "that") with regard to eating and drinking":– "eating and drinking" derived from 'en merei' plus the required Dative of Relativity and Incidence –brohsei kai posei– which you won't find written there, but which is repeated there through Ellipsis (which is present there by omission). [*See Blass Debrunner (cited at the end) for the Conjunctive nature and function of 'eh'.*]

Eric B:

"But that (Ellipsis) is an assumption; because without it; I could see where the possessives would refer back to "judge". So another proper ellipsis would be "Let no one judge you in regard to eating and drinking or *the observance* of feast, or [*the observance of*] new moons; or [*the observance of*] the sabbath day".

GE:

Consider:

“But that (Ellipsis) is an assumption; because without it; I could see where the possessives would refer back to “judge”.”

Even supposed as without Ellipsis then, the text simply forces one to ‘refer back’ – the principle I build ‘my interpretation’ on: It is an “eating-and-drinking-OF-feast”! Obligated!

Consider:

“So another proper ellipsis would be ... [*the observance of*]”

GE:

Exactly! Here at last it seems the parallel lines do meet!

You may call it “observance”; I call it a “feasting” / “celebration” seeing it is an ‘observance’ by “eating and drinking” spiritually of Jesus Christ (not excluding by a possible physical eating). Point is: Ellipsis functions; is legitimate!

Only ask yourself a few questions:

Where is “[*the observance of*]” mentioned, because it must be truly present in the nearby context to be implicated through Ellipsis? It is mentioned in the words “eating and drinking of feast”, or in only the words “eating and drinking”! Therefore yes, “proper ellipsis would be “Let no one judge you in regard to eating and drinking or *the observance of feast*”!

Also ask yourself:

For being of what nature, does Paul condone and the judging party the ‘world’ condemn, the “observance” or ‘celebration’ or ‘feast’ “concerned” (Dative and ‘en meret’)?

Was the “observance” Christian, or was it un-Christian?

Did Christians, feast it – “observe” – it? (Christians did!)

Who else, could have “observed” it? (Nobody!)

Did Paul condone it, or did he condemn it? (He condoned it!)

Therefore: The “observance” was Christian!

Eric B:

“The whole debate ultimately hinges on this; because if Rom. and Col. are saying the same thing: let no one judge ANYONE over ANY days; but whoever keeps a day keeps it unto the Lord; then all of this grammar and stuff means nothing. Once again; granting you the benefit of the doubt: “Let no one judge you for eating of your sabbath-feasts”. This nowhere says “all Christians are bound to

keep the sabbath". Nowhere does it say that it is still a binding "duty" for all. But it does go right long with Romans 14. If they so choose to keep the day (and its "feast") unto the Lord; let no one judge them for it. Yet you have to dismiss this like nothing."

GE:

For you, "The whole debate ultimately hinges on this; because if Rom. and Col. are saying the same thing...", "BECAUSE IF" – not for me. If we could agree not to agree on this point, we would have made good progress.

But just take the word "judge", and from just it, see how Romans 14 and Colossians 2 are NOT "saying the same thing":

In Romans Paul says, "Don't one judge the other" – he presupposes brethren in the faith the one turning against the other.

Paul therefore finds fault with the Church in Romans: You are not acting like Christians! You are divided, and make of the non-essential the essential!

In Colossians Paul says, "Do not you, let judge you, anyone!" – he presupposes brethren in the faith standing united against a common foe. Paul therefore sympathises with the Church and "comforts" them (2:2). He takes up the cudgels for them: What you practice is your Christian inheritance and right and with your implementation of it there's no fault to be found: You are behaving like Christians; keep on enjoying, "don't let anybody judge you in it!"

The 'judging' in Romans was sinful and revealed inner weakness and the pride of the believers. The 'being judged' in Colossians implied the commendable; was referred paragon of the Freedom in which the Church stood undaunted against the world.

In Romans the Church 'judged' and it 'condemned' one another; in Colossians the world 'judged', and the world 'condemned', the Church.

In Romans brother judged / condemned brother unjustly, disregarding the other's devotion. In Colossians the world regarding its blameless devotion judged / condemned unjustly the Church.

Paul in Romans reprimands the Church sternly; in Colossians Paul, while condoning and defending the faith and action of the Church – "presented holy, unblameable" (1:22) "in Christ" before the Judgement seat of God, warns and rejects with contempt the world's unjust judging of the Church.

Yes, the concept 'judged' is used in both passages, but in each with many and largely different connotations. Romans 14 and Colossians 2 are NOT "saying the same thing".

And so we could go on and shall see there's NOTHING "the same thing". The whole debate ultimately does NOT hinge on this. I thought we have long ago lost Romans 14. I do not submit to hermeneutics of Colossians 2:16-17 by alien invasion. I also won't submit to hermeneutics by alien invasion of Romans 14, where you after everything said, again shuttled in from vastest space, "whoever keeps a day keeps it unto the Lord".

"All of this grammar and stuff" is the Text; is the Word – God's Word, not mine. "It means nothing" to you; it means everything to me. So you throw in the towel, but won't separate with your world-title belt.

Eric B:

"Once again; granting you the benefit of the doubt: "Let no one judge you for eating of your sabbath-feasts". This nowhere says "all Christians are bound to keep the sabbath". Nowhere does it say that it is still a binding "duty" for all."

GE:

Granting me, "the benefit of the doubt"? What doubt?

Yes, I say the text "says "all Christians are bound to keep the sabbath"" – not so much by "the letter" – but by showing they in fact did, and thereby for later generations created a perfect, undeniable, precedent. But what they did they did on grounds of Christ's doing, and therefore by irrevocable precept – not only precedent. Look what New Testament Law looks like!

I have always said the Sabbath is "for the People of God" and not for everyone – not for "anyone" else who may even judge all Christians for 'keeping the Sabbath'. So for example imagine yourself accepting and enjoying the Sabbath Day!

What does "Let no one judge you for eating of your sabbath-feasts" tell you? That "all Christians are bound to keep the sabbath", or that Christians are FREE to keep the Sabbath? "The love of Christ constraineth us."

Eric B:

"If they so choose to keep the day (and its "feast") unto the Lord; let no one judge them for it."

GE:

"If they so choose ..."

Not reiterating the same objections against your referring to Romans 14, now asking you: Who chooses? Is it up for grabs by anyone according to anyone's liking? "Joying and beholding your order", says Paul, while he

comforts the Church in her feasting her Sabbaths' Day, challenging the whole world and all principalities and powers of the kingdom of darkness, Don't you dare judge the Church if they so choose! Is that your choice, that it isn't binding – not inviting, not begging, not pleading, "Enter in, enter in!"? I won't say it does – it's up to you to 'decide' if, or not. You, decide, mighty man!

Eric B:

"But then it (to decide) becomes impossible to anyone false or true; when they all have convincing grammatical arguments like this."

GE:

"... when they all have convincing grammatical arguments like this." All? And everyone differently? You think it possible based on the single Text? You think it possible linguistically for one and precise language, the Greek, they all, have convincing grammatical arguments? Come on! Name but one, and show, his convincing grammatical arguments "like this", nevertheless against 'this' and proving 'this', wrong and false! Only one!

Eric B:

"Because the JW's claim there should be an indefinite article before theos in John 1:1. They argue that in other places, like "a prophet is without honor in his own country"; that an indefinite article is not in the Greek; but it is added there --by "ellipsis". But we can disprove it by other means. Like the fact that while there can be more than one prophet; (for one to be singled out with an indefinite article); there can only be one God; so there is no such thing as "A god" to us."

GE:

Your example? BY analogy of one false application of Ellipsis you do away with all Ellipsis and deny its function in this specific and totally unrelated instance? If "the JW's claim" is that one instance, then you overwhelm me with the credit due all those who so thoroughly have dismantled "the JW's" false "claim".

Eric B:

"(GE believe(s) God has preserved His word properly translated) Not really because you believe this passage reads something totally different from what we have been

reading. I believe that God has not allowed His word to be changed; even by "imperfect humans" that much."

GE:

This passage may be read as is from the KJV with exactly the same meaning as I would have rendered it with. It all depends on what predisposition one reads it with.

Now let me tell you one thing you obviously are unaware of, that "what we have been reading" in this passage mostly has never been "what we have been reading", but what we have been brain-washed to read INTO it!

First of all one could freely generalise and say everybody always says this passage condemns Sabbath-keeping – says, "judge", means condemning what is WRONG, and that the WRONG condemned, is Sabbath-keeping (like in Romans 14) , 'they say'.

But by reading the exact same lines, word for word the same, the thought is conveyed to the honest and open mind that here –in Colossians 2– is a judging spoken of, not of Sabbath-keeping nor of Sabbath breaking, and as a WRONG justly judged, but of a RIGHT, unjustly judged!

Next one could freely generalise and say everybody always says in this passage it is Paul who judges and condemns Sabbath-keeping – that he tells the Church, and I quote: NAB, "Let nobody prescribe to you to keep the Sabbath!"

But by reading the exact same lines in the KJV, word for word the same, the thought is conveyed to the honest and open mind, that here is Paul comforting and reassuring the Church NOT to allow herself be judged for her Sabbaths' Day or its, correct, feasting!

And so I can go on and lift out opposing impressions allegedly obtained from the text, but falsely so, they having originated in and having been fetched and imported from Tradition, and not from the Text!

So what little value can you attach to "what we all have been reading". We have all been listening to tradition, and have not really been reading.

Back to the original! There we have every word and all the convincing grammatical factors against which to test opinion, interpretation and tradition or whatever what is not the text or according to the text itself. (Don't go to another passage that has nothing to do with the issue here!)

Eric B:

"Then *what in the world are we arguing about?* (if not about working on the Sabbath) I am arguing against the idea that one must "keep" the day; by following the OT command not to do any work on that day (with the exception of removing

"the Jews' additions; of course).

What you said I could agree with; especially that people's taking it to their convenience means He is not Lord of that day (to them). This is what I realized when I was first shown from Col., Rom.14 and Gal. that I can keep the day "unto the Lord" myself, but not judge others over it. What 'fun' was that, then? I'm no better than the Sunday keepers. What's the purpose of keeping it, then? The sabbath then lost all of its significance. It was just a tool to try to be better than others. That was never what it was about in God's eyes, but that was what it was to the Jews and the Judaizers, and to these modern sects and cults today. And that is why I argue against it; not because I am pushing Sunday.

I can still respect the significance of the sabbath, and if I could start my own church; I would probably choose Sat. to meet on. But not forbid anyone to work, or whatever else.

You must realize, that you spoke of a "duty", and "lawlessness", and all that stuff just like the SDA's, Armstrong groups, SNG and all the rest arguing that no one should work on it. (the difficulty faced in getting the day off is supposed to be part of one's "trials of the faith"; thus further proving its whole significance to God). That is why I argued so long. But if there is no ban on working, then there is no real debate."

GE:

Consider: "if there is no ban on working, then there is no real debate."

I think you're seriously wrong here. The real debate about the Sabbath only starts when the side-issue of work on the Sabbath Day had been settled – it doesn't end there. (I always think of the figure from the Letter to the Hebrews of the two-edged sword. God's Word is sharper, says it, than this sword when dealing with the Sabbath-truth.) Barth's famous words: "the monstrous scope of the Sabbath" or of its truth or doctrine, are most appropriate. This respected theologian wrote more than one large paragraph on the Sabbath doctrine, and each word of it carried weight, the side issue of work on the Sabbath Day regardless.

My stance on work on the Sabbath Day I hope to have taken on the grounds of Christ's virtue and merit, not because of any dismissal from duty. I'm supposing an absolute irrevocable, inescapable DUTY. God's Law is valid –

today, as ever before or beyond, and more so than ever before or after because now God's Law is Jesus Christ Living Confronting me – you – whomever He graciously may will to confront. In Christ is the Sabbath Day confronting me, you, the Church Corporate Body of Christ's Own. There is no Church where is no Sabbath Day. If my work or not working interferes with this God's design for His Day, namely for His Worship, then the Law looms over me like a dark cloud.

Such work is easy to recognise and easy to indicate: such works are works like of serving Mammon and greedy and selfish interest.

If one's duty – one's whole duty as his Christian duty – requires of him to work on the Seventh Day of the week the Sabbath of the LORD your God, then fine – it's his duty. May God find every workman of His working when He comes. But we know with Whom we have to do – God is not mocked.

Colossians is about God's glory in the face of Jesus Christ, the Church celebrating her Sabbaths' Day for His worship. Colossians 2:16-17 entails the grand vista of the "monstrous range" of the Sabbath and its doctrine.

Colossians does not presuppose small issues of million pounds penny pinching or global yet ever so bourgeois social relationships.

Colossians concerns the Body of Christ's as the Witness and Proclamation to the world and before God and among one another of the Crucified and Risen who is the Inspiration and Power and Dictum of its every breath and movement.

There therefore is this very real debate between you and me about the very real reality and pertinence of the Sabbath Day for believers in and followers of Jesus Christ.

The Sabbath is not for our may-be's – it is for the sure promises and mercies of God!

Eric B:

"You're trying to say it was the civil law (or not so civil) of the pagans that was the "handwriting of ordinances" that was nailed to the Cross. But Paul is referring to the Law of Moses. It was the Old Covenant that was superseded. Gentile laws have nothing to do with it, as they never condemned anyone *before God*."

GE:

Consider:

"Gentile laws have nothing to do with it (the "handwriting of ordinances"), as they never condemned anyone *before God*."

Gentiles and emperors condemned and put to the stake Christians they thought as before God, thinking indeed themselves to be God. Civil law in those ancient times was holy and divine law in the eyes of its makers. Wiping out God's People and their Faith was, the religion of the day.

Consider:

"handwriting of ordinances" that was nailed to the Cross ... Paul is referring to the Law of Moses."

Sure he does! And the law of Moses was civil law while religious law; 'ceremonial' law while 'moral' law; 'sacrificial' law while 'spiritual' law; "law of Moses" while Law of God. But we see Jesus. We see Him, and taking in his body ALL law – even laws of men and governments and courts – to the Cross! To the cross, and to it, nailing it, taking it out of the way, abolishing it: Wave this useless "court-order against us" that "condemns" us, is "contrary us" – ignore it, it's "made a shame" of by Christ! Don't you be judged! The Christian finds his comfort and strength in Jesus Christ even in the case of being brought before the courts of law of the land – through real "hand-written ordinance by law". It was the very situation of discomfort of the Colossian Congregation feasting their Sabbaths' Day in the hostile world that prompted Paul to write to them.

Still you think, "Still (I) think it is only laws that they "added" that were abolished." How can you still think so? Haven't I argued those Laws even what God had commanded in the Old Covenant were abolished? Like sacrifices, etc., even the Ten Commandments? And WITH them, the Sabbath? And with THEM, even the laws and ordinances of rulers and lands!

What I have denied all along and 'still' deny, is that ANY laws, "were push(ed)" upon the Church 'religiously'. What I on the contrary have argued is that judgement was being served upon the Church by "statutory" 'decree' – 'cheirographon tois dogmasin' = "by enactment of a legislative body (the "rule" / "government" ('emperor') of the "world") expressed in a formal ("written") document" = court order = "to judge". In the particular circumstance of the Colossian Congregation that ultimately meant to be "condemned". I have all along maintained "pushing laws" is not what "to judge" means. Here's the true point of difference between us – laws weren't 'pushed', they were "taken out of the way"!

Eric B:

"They took exceptions for specific REASONS. It was the Jews who were threatened because of Christ in His own right. What He stood for meant the end of their system. The pagans were not threatened at all by what they saw as just a new tribal god among all the others. It was their

refusal to worship the emperor that made them take exception."

GE: I can't see that the Christians' "refusal to worship the emperor ... made them (the pagans) take exception", but that they "were not threatened at all by what they saw".

Meanwhile the religion of the Gentiles more than the Jewish religion was in fact historically threatened by the New Faith. Christians were killed by the thousands by the pagan religious authorities for no other reason they felt and in fact were threatened by the New Faith. The religion of the followers of Jesus of Nazareth notwithstanding persecution or precisely because of persecution, posed the 'threat' that soon was to replace the ideology, authority and religion of pagan emperors, law and order.

During the first century despite the short periods of persecution under them, the Jews were the bearers of the Gospel rather than its opponents. That was when Paul wrote his Letter to the Colossian Church.

Therefore the laws whereby the Church was "judged" / "condemned" / "incriminated" ('krinoh') were laws of the pagan world-state and pagan world-religion, "against" them, and "contrary", that is, "opposing" them. They were not laws "added" whereby the Church supposedly was to be 'educated', 'corrected', 'improved', 'converted', or, 'misled', 'tempted', 'corrupted', to the Jewish religion and Judaistic idealism. Not here in Colossians.

Eric B:

"Of course it's impossible (to have Christ and worship both Him and the emperor)-- before God. But the pagans didn't know that. So many other groups worshipped their gods; and then gave homage to the emperor, and there was no conflict. The pagans did not automatically know that Christ was not just some new god being created by His followers."

GE:

You're making an overkill of no kill. The gentleman protests too much.

Eric B:

"You're still talking about what believers knew (there's no either or in serving Christ). I'm talking about what the pagans knew. They were blinded. 1 Cor. 8:5-7 "For though there be that are *called* gods, whether in heaven or in earth, (as there be gods many, and lords many,) But TO US there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him. Nevertheless *there is not in every*

man that knowledge..."

GE:

This Scripture you're quoting is true in what it says in itself. What has it got to do with Colossians 2:16-17 though? That the world of pagans and pagan non-gods would not judge and condemn the Christians for believing in Christ and keeping His Sabbath's Feast? I think it would imply just the opposite! "TO US there is but one God, the Father ... and one Lord Jesus Christ ... Nevertheless *there is not in every man that knowledge*" – meaning trouble for "us"!

Eric B:

"Well before, you looked like you were holding this "another day" up as a continued sabbath for today. What would be the point of holding up "if Jesus gave the rest, then he would not have spoken of another ___", then?"

GE:

"(A)nother day" I have last time explained is metaphor for "rest", and "rest" is metaphor for Jesus. Jesus is God's rest, is His last (and only) redemption and salvation. After this "rest" which God had given us in Jesus Christ, there comes no further 'rest'. Jesus' 'day', is the last 'day', is the last "Today!" on God's calendar for the world. I am the Way, said Jesus – there's no second 'way' to God and His Rest or Salvation. There never had been another before. God has only this one day for everyone, "TODAY, if you hear His Voice, harden not your heart!" "The GOSPEL, was preached unto them, like unto us"!

I am the door, said Jesus, and no other door is to open for anyone tomorrow; and by none other than THIS Door any before had entered in. "There is no other day after these things" which is after Jesus, after His rest, after His "day", after His "having entered into His own rest as God"! And no other Day had there been before for any man how godly; he was unable to create his own.

There's no Jesus after "this Jesus whom you have crucified but whom God raised from the dead". (Peter) "There is no other Name given!" Not ever before; not ever "after these things". This is the day! Today! Christ's day! "There is no other day after these things" – after His "having entered into His own rest as God": "THEREFORE"! What concerns us here, what has direct bearing on us, today, "seeing Jesus had given them rest", "HAVING entered in into His own rest Jesus" (Participle-use), is this: "Therefore there remains a keeping of God's Sabbath Day for His People!" "God thus concerning the Seventh Day had spoken: And God on the Seventh Day rested from all His works." You have never seen Law have you not seen it in the New Testament!

Having problems to grasp? I regret I cannot be of better help even though the Sabbath is such an urgent matter in the eyes of God and of those He employed to write down His Will to us. O Jesus, be merciful! O Christ be Thou mine Rest!

Eric B:

“and the spiritual rest is not "keeping" a day. But then now you seem to be saying something like that at times...”

GE:

What it seems to me you are saying, is, “the spiritual rest is not(,) "keeping" a day” at all; while what I am trying to say is, “the spiritual rest” does not exclude, but essentially includes, the “"keeping" a day”, namely the Sabbath’s.

“The spiritual rest is not "keeping" a day” is what I’ve been saying all along! But the keeping a day should be a spiritual keeping, and a spiritual rest as well, or it will not be acceptable to God, nor can be “the Lord’s Day”, but must be man’s day in truth for the worship of himself – idolatry.

Even though righteously, ‘spiritually’, and acceptable to God dedicated and celebrated (“kept”), the ‘sabbatismos’ is NOT the ‘anapausis’. The ‘anapausis’ always will remain Christ, and the ‘sabbatismos’ always will remain the Day of the Sabbath kept.

Another word, please, asking,

I don't want to plead innocent of having increased transgression where words multiplied. (OT warning!)

I don't want to make excuses either. I'm guilty.

Lots of my 'judging' though was no more than rhetorical, especially in my 'court scenes', not to be taken too personally.

With the Church of all times I confess:

I believe in God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit; I believe the Scriptures the Written Word of God and final authority in matters of faith and life and worship.

I believe in the Holy Communion of the saints, the Congregation of the Elect in the Name of Jesus Christ, the work and creation of the Holy Spirit, for the worship, witness and proclamation of Him in the world.

Therefore I believe God equipped His Church with the Lord's Day, as it always had been the Sabbath of the unchangeable and faithful LORD your

God, that Jesus Christ accordingly finished all the works of God "in fullness of Sabbath's-time" and that God rested and took great delight in the exceeding greatness of His Power when He raised Him from the dead.