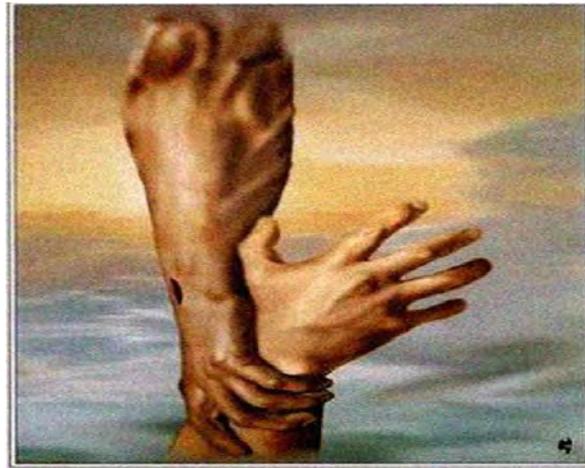


(Anno Domini, abbreviated AD or A.D. expressly complies with Isaiah 61:2 & Luke 4:19, i.e. "To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD." (Isaiah 61:2)



18 Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, 19 And not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God. 20 Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances, 21 (Touch not; taste not; handle not; 22 Which all are to perish with the using;) after the commandments and doctrines of men? 23 Which things have indeed a shew of wisdom in will worship, and humility, and neglecting of the body; not in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh. (Col 2:18-23)

There are but two main approaches to theology into which all others fall – **Polemic** and **Irenic**. This subject is seldom mentioned today for the modern cleric would prefer to ignore the Polemic in favor of the less demanding Irenic approach. The Book of Colossians definitely falls under the category of Polemic. Polemic theology represents a strong defense of Truth and an active rebuttal of error. Irenic, on the other hand, is the preferred model for modern seminaries, coddling ministers, and most church denominations. It purports to have an 'open mind' to consider the points of view of each party to disputes in theology, doctrine, and biblical texts. God's Word, of course, is not subject to our diversity of opinion – it clearly states what it means, and means precisely what it says – PERIOD! Compromise and dilution of truth are the fruits of irenic theology.

The Reformers were so polemical in their defense of the Gospel that they were willing to be burned at the stake rather than recant a single line, or word, of Scripture. The modern wonders of pulpit verbosity attempt to parse and question every word to see if it really means what it claims to mean. Paul addresses these spineless prophets in Colossians and many other of the epistles. He lays the axe to the root in Jude: "*These are spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear: clouds they are without water, carried about of winds; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots; Raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever.*" (Jude 1:12-13) The eloquent verbosity of words they speak, though large, amount to less than a comma in spiritual meaning. The false promise of the cloud that arises over the desert of Iran in late afternoon vanishes in scattered vapors at

sunset. So do the phony words of the false prophet when the sermon is over. They are truly as wandering stars. And what, you may ask, is a wandering star? They are not stars at all but rather meteors that, unlike stars and planets, have no fixed track or orbit upon which to proceed. They are loose cannon on the deck of a "Man of War" during a raging storm at sea. They are not guided by a Hand that assures a continual direction and path. They do not rest their thoughts upon Scripture, but mere imagination!

Paul bears out this same line of thought in the first verse of today's text: "*Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind.*" Do not be seduced, as was Eve, before the wretched tree in Eden. Do not give heed or listen to the false voice. Do not linger where error is preached. The voluntary humility to which Paul refers is a contrived and false humility so pretended by those pulpit dandies of today who claim to preach the Word on Sunday's and chase the women the rest of the week. When angels of God appeared to the prophets, the angels refused to be worshipped for they are creatures like unto us. Only that which was the Angel of the Lord (Jesus Christ) was to be worshipped. We do not worship any creature such as angels, saints, or Holy men. Only God deserves worship! Learn the lesson of St. John the Revelator when confronted by angels and saint: "*And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See thou do it not: I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.*" (Rev 19:10)

"And not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God." Jesus Christ is the Head, and the church is the Body! Ministers who preach another Gospel are those who count the Head (Mind of Christ) as nothing worth. They have their rewards and it is hoped that we will not fall into sharing with them in it. Every organ and branch of the body is controlled by the Head – either consciously or autonomically (deep subconscious). If the Head is severed, what do you suppose happens to the Body? It dies! But the Head of the Church shall never die, and neither will the Church; however, those infected and cancerous limbs that threaten the whole body will be severed from the Body and cast upon the ash-heap. All of the body receives its life and meaning from the head, and that is the same for the Church and her Head – the Lord Jesus Christ. The greater the spiritual nourishment consumed by the Body, the greater the blessings and presence of God to it.

"Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances." Married couples, the longer they are together, begin to act and think like their mate. This is all in accordance with the will of God that they two become One flesh. We have a Lord who led the way for us in carrying the cross, of dying to self, and of a glorious resurrection to eternal life. Though we may have been paralyzed by fear to go on that Way ere He came, we now have faith and courage for the journey because our King has led the Way. In fact, He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. We must die with Christ to our sins. Christ died for our sins in order that we may die TO our sins. We die with Him and for the hope of redemption. The rudiments of the world are carnal and sensual. But the rudiments of heaven are love and spiritual wisdom. Why do we dispute so intensely over those things long gone and nonessential to the spiritual, and neglect those essential things of truth and love that Christ taught us by His Word? We argue over issues such as "wine or grape juice," "full immersion or sprinkling/pouring," "liturgical or non-liturgical," ad infinitum! Why not follow the simple counsel of God and be done with it? Being subject to ordinances means relying on something other than the grace of the Lord Jesus

Christ for your salvation.

*“(Touch not; taste not; handle not; Which all are to perish with the using;) after the commandments and doctrines of men?”* There are no rules, laws or regulations, formulas or recipes, for salvation apart from the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. Why dawdle, as children, in the mud-holes of the busy thoroughfares of life? Was there ever a single reclusive monk who was saved by his deprivation of joy? All such formulas that appeal to the denial of self for the sake of salvation have their origins in the human mind.

*“Which things have indeed a shew of wisdom in will worship, and humility, and neglecting of the body; not in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh.”* The modern church has brought in street rappers, heavy metal artist, youth matchmakers, and, yes, even the serving of alcohol in some pews. The world loves these things, so the limp-wristed geniuses of ‘pretend-church’ have thrown open the doors of the church to admit the world instead of going into all the world teaching them the Gospel of Christ. Walking on one’s knees up the stairs to kiss the ring of the Pope will not gather a single approbation from Heaven, but may instead earn a frown. The self-flagellation of Roman Catholics and Muslims denies the sacrifice made on the cross by Christ at Calvary. Do you beat yourself with a whip of nine thongs? Fine, you deserve it for your sins. But that is not what redeems you from those sins. It is the suffering of the only perfectly innocent Man that has ever, or will ever, walk upon the face of the earth – the Lord Jesus Christ! That is faith worth staking one’s life upon. That is worthy of a Polemic theology that denies error and admits only to truth!