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COME AND REST AWHILE

“And the apostles gathered themselves together unto Jesus, and told him all things, both what they had done, and what they had taught. And he said unto them, Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while: for there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat. And they departed into a desert place by ship privately” (Mark 6:30-32).

Since the beginning of the nineteenth century the working week in the Western world has been reduced from seventy or more to less than forty hours each week. Many businesses now provide rostered days off, so that employees are free on one or two days every fortnight.

The changed working environment has been made possible by at least two factors. One factor is the development of fuel technology. The utilization of energy sources such as coal, oil and now nuclear fission, has freed mankind from much physical exertion. In many cases tasks that required man to earn his living by the sweat of his brow (*“face”* Gen. 3:19)—that is, physical labour—are now accomplished by engines of one kind or another: internal combustion engines as in most transport vehicles, and steam turbines to produce electricity which powers electric motors.

Also the need for human beings to be employed performing repetitive tasks has been reduced by the development of automated machinery. Some examples of recent devices are machines that assemble many parts of motor cars, computers and many household appliances. Additionally there are devices that provide for individuals to “check out” their personal shopping and “check in” for airline flights, thus relieving an employee of the task of repeating these processes for customers.

However these automatic devices have reduced the number of jobs available and hence they have had the potential to increase the unemployment rate. Indeed for several decades now the replacement of human labour with machines has promoted the unemployment rate to the fore-front of government policy: the unemployment rate is now regarded as a critical measure of the “economic health” of many developed nations.

Consequently leisure ranks as one of the modern dangers facing the human race, particularly in Western (developed) nations. It may not be considered to pose as large a threat as environmental pollution, nuclear war or over-population and famine, but it is a danger nevertheless.

Idleness

While unemployment does not directly produce any social problems, it results in idleness which presents challenges to human well-being, mentally and emotionally, and such disorders at an individual level can lead to wider problems at society level. As the Psalmist wrote: *“The transgression of the wicked... He deviseth mischief upon his bed; he setteth himself in a way that is not good...”* (Psa. 36:4). When one’s body is idle—when he is lying on his bed—one’s mind is likely to be occupied with mischief.

The Apostle Paul wrote to Timothy in a similar vein, : *“And withal they learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house; and not only idle, but tattlers also and busybodies, speaking things which they*

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ought not" (1 Tim. 5:13). While Paul's words related directly to women, the essence of his message is applicable to all who have "time on their hands". Idleness has the potential to lead to gossip and meddling in the business of others, about which the Apostle Peter warned: "*But let none of you suffer... as a busybody in other men's matters*" (1 Pet. 4:15).

Enterprise

In some technologically advanced countries the provision of facilities by which people can fill their leisure time is a fast-growing business. White Hutchinson, (<http://www.whitehutchinson.com/>) is "*a multi-disciplinary feasibility, design, production and consulting firm that creates compelling and financially successful leisure, entertainment, retail, dining, play, recreation and learning experiences and venues for... clients*". In their August 2009 "*Leisure eNewsletter*", White Hutchinson published data that may be interpreted as showing that, in the average American household, the total expenditure on leisure time activities, or goods designed to provide entertainment in leisure time, increased by 9.8% between 2000 and 2007. However many are still ill-prepared to cope with leisure time; they become bored, and are faced with nothing to do and the need to "kill time". Thus it is not surprising that education for leisure is now receiving the attention of educationists all over the world.

Frantic activity

At the other end of the spectrum are those who engage in such frenzied activity that they seem to have less leisure time than their forebears. They become slaves to the acquisition of possessions: expansion of property and increasing their assets and investments—the lifestyle often referred to as the "rat race". But they deem such acquisitions necessary to "keep up with the Joneses". Superimposed on all that is the waste of time caused by traffic congestions, supermarket queues, thronging department stores, and time spent watching mediocre and even childish television programs. Consequently the mix confronting Christians in the Western world in the twenty-first century is complex.

The Christian must always bear in mind that a disposition of increasing one's possessions is contrary to what should be the Christian's aspiration: "*But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment let us be therewith content. But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced*

themselves through with many sorrows. But thou, O man of God, flee these things..." (1 Tim. 6:6-11).

The Christian's work

The necessity to work for one's living certainly has Scriptural support, as the Apostle Paul wrote: "*For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat*" (2 Thess. 3:10). The Apostle also practised what he preached, working in Corinth as a tentmaker with Priscilla and Aquila (Acts 18:3). Consistent with the example of his own life, Paul wrote to the Thessalonians: "*And that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to **work with your own hands**, as we commanded you; That ye may walk honestly toward them that are without, and that ye may have lack of nothing*" (1 Thess. 4:11-12). In a nutshell the Apostle exhorted the brethren to not be dependent on others for their material needs.

In addition to providing for themselves Christians should assist others, particularly their brethren, as Paul wrote: "*Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love... Not slothful in business... **distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality***" (Rom. 12:10-13). In order to provide hospitality and to help others with material goods it is necessary to have accumulated more than is essential for one's own sustenance. Consequently, if one has the capacity and opportunity to accumulate more material wealth, the challenge arises whether to avail oneself of it so that one may distribute the excess to other brethren or to forego the opportunity and avail oneself of some leisure time—time away from work.

The issue is partly resolved by remembering that the Christian's concept of work is different from that of those who are not running for "*the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus*" (Phil. 3:14). For the believer, leisure does not mean free time from the requirements and commandments of Jesus Christ. Believers cannot take time off from living the Christian life, and pleasure and enjoyment must not conflict with Christian morals and ethics. Nor is the Christian life something to be followed only in leisure time, that is, time away from work. As the Apostle Paul wrote to the Philippians: "*Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but **this one thing I do**, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you*" (Phil. 3:13-15). The Christian must try to avoid all activities that detract from his or her consecration to do all to the glory of God, and consequently the Christian should make no separation

between leisure and other time. Christians are accountable to God at all times, whether working or relaxing. Christianity is not an elective or part-time pursuit. It is life itself, and embraces everything one does, says and thinks.

What one thinks is the responsibility of the individual. The Apostle Paul wrote: *"Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, **work out your own salvation** with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure"* (Phil. 2:12-13). In deciding how to occupy or expend one's time, the Apostle's admonition must be borne in mind: *"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"* (Col. 3:17).

Fellowship

Fellowship is a very important part in helping one to work out their own salvation: *"Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering... And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching"* (Heb. 10:23-25). The writer implies that forsaking the assembling of themselves together is an abandonment of the Christian's profession—very powerful words indeed!

However there is a danger in fellowship. Paul wrote: *"Of these things put them in remembrance, charging them before the Lord that they **strive not about words to no profit**, but to the subverting of the hearers. Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. But shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness"* (2 Tim. 2:14-16). For Christians, the objective must always be edification, both of themselves and of those with whom they fellowship, which is not achieved by purely intellectual or academic debate. As Paul wrote: *"**Let no man deceive you with vain words**: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience"* (Eph. 5:6).

Thus the Christian is responsible for the stewardship of the time God has given to him or her. Physical limitations of concentration and the need to provide for material necessities mean that Christians cannot study the Bible all the time; there is to be a balance between exertion—be it mental, physical or spiritual—and leisure time.

Redeeming the time

The Apostle Paul exhorted the Christians at Ephesus

(Eph. 5:16) and Colosse (Col. 4:5) to *"redeem the time"*. "Redeem" means "buy back". However time cannot be bought back in the sense of buying time that is past, thus enabling one to repeat or alter past actions. The Apostle wrote: *"Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light. See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, **Redeeming the time**, because the days are evil. Wherefore be ye not unwise, but **understanding what the will of the Lord is**. And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ; Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God"* (Eph. 5:14-21).

The sense of buying or redeeming time means to not continue to fritter it away on pursuits that do not have any eternal benefit, as might have been the case before one realised his or her calling of God. The Apostle exhorted the brethren to redeem the time by *"arising from the dead"* and filling their lives with praise and thanksgiving to God. Thus for a Christian to be always working in secular pursuits is not *"redeeming the time"*, but is enslavement to money, the acquisition of possessions, and prestige. On the contrary the Christian is exhorted to *"understand what the will of the Lord is"*, and *"having food and raiment, be content"* (1 Tim. 6:8).

"Redeeming the time" is not filling up time with a frenzied succession of activities; rather it is using the time available to the new creature in the service of God, as the Apostle Paul wrote: *"And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men"* (Col. 3:23).

The Christian who not only preaches such things but does them, will have time *"to lie down in green pastures"*, be led *"beside the still waters"* and *"the paths of righteousness"*, and eventually, by God's mercy and grace, *"dwell in the house of the Lord for ever"* (Psa. 23:2-3; 6).■

LEAN HARD

Child of My Love....lean hard,
and let me feel the pressure of thy care;
I know thy burden, child; I shaped it,
Poised it in Mine own Hand, made no proportion
In its weight to thine unaided strength,
for even as I laid it on, I said,
*"I shall be near, and while he leans on Me
This burden shall be Mine, not his"*
Thou lovest Me? I know it. Doubt Not Then;
But loving Me, lean hard.

THE HOUSE OF THE LORD

"I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord" (Psa. 122:1).

Psalms 122 does not state the occasion to which David referred when he expressed gladness that he was going to the "house of the LORD". However verse 2 might imply they were going to Jerusalem: "Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem" (Psa. 122:2), and David was joyful in anticipation of soon being in Jerusalem.

The Israelites were required to celebrate three feasts each year: the feast of Passover (Exod. 23:14-16, Lev. 23:4-5); the feast of Pentecost (Lev. 23:15-20) and the feast of tabernacles (Lev. 23:33-34). Those feasts were over and above the more frequent feasts they were also required to observe (Lev. 23:37-38). The assumption that David was going to Jerusalem is strengthened by the fact that, in later times, "much people" gathered at Jerusalem for the feast of Pentecost (2 Chron. 30:13), and Joseph and Mary went to Jerusalem every year for the feast of Passover (Luke 2:41-42). Nevertheless the reason David was going to the house of the Lord on the occasion mentioned in Psalm 122 is not stated.

The tabernacle

In David's time the house of the Lord to which they were going was the tabernacle, carried forward from God's commandment to Moses: "And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, that they bring me an offering: of every man that giveth it willingly with his heart ye shall take my offering... And let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them. According to all that I show you, after the pattern of the tabernacle, and the pattern of all the instruments thereof, just so you shall make it" (Exod. 25:1-9 NKJV). Thus the tabernacle was the place where God dwelt amongst Israel.

The tabernacle was a portable structure which the Israelites took with them during their sojourn in the wilderness: "And when the tabernacle is to go forward, the Levites shall take it down; and when the tabernacle is to be set up, the Levites shall set it up..." (Num. 1:51 NKJV). "So it was always: the cloud covered it by day, and the appearance of fire by night. Whenever the cloud was taken up from above the tabernacle, after that the children of Israel would journey; and in the place where the cloud settled, there the children of Israel would pitch their tents. At the command of the LORD the children of Israel would journey, and at the command of the LORD they would camp; as long as the cloud stayed above the tabernacle they remained encamped" (Num. 9:16-18 NKJV). Such portability was facilitated by the

structure God had specified (Exod. chapters 25, 26 and 27), one feature being the walls were curtains (Exod. 26:1-13, 31-37).

Services

God also specified all other aspects of the tabernacle and the services pertaining to it.

Firstly, as already quoted, the materials with which it was to be built were to be a freewill offering made by the people (Exod. 25:1-2 NKJV).

Secondly, only the Levites were permitted to approach the tabernacle: "And the LORD spake unto Aaron... I have given the children of Levi... the service of the tabernacle of the congregation. Neither must the children of Israel henceforth come nigh the tabernacle of the congregation... But the Levites shall do the service of the tabernacle of the congregation...it shall be a statute for ever throughout your generations.." (Num. 18:20-23).

Thirdly, only the priests went into the tabernacle: "Now when these things had been thus prepared, the priests always went into the first part of the tabernacle, performing the services" (Heb. 9:6).

David

When David became king and the Israelites enjoyed a time of peace, David desired to build a permanent structure: "Now it came to pass when the king was dwelling in his house, and the LORD had given him rest from all his enemies all around, that the king said to Nathan the prophet, 'See now, I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of God dwells inside tent curtains'" (2 Sam. 7:1-2). However God reserved that privilege for Solomon: "Now David assembled at Jerusalem all the leaders of Israel... Then King David rose to his feet and said, 'Hear me, my brethren and my people: I had it in my heart to build a house of rest for the ark of the covenant of the LORD...But God said to me, 'You shall not build a house for My name, because you have been a man of war and have shed blood'... He has chosen my son Solomon to sit on the throne of the kingdom of the LORD over Israel... He said to me, 'It is your son Solomon who shall build My house... for I have chosen him to be My son, and I will be his Father'" (1 Chron. 28:1-6 NKJV).

The temple

In due course Solomon decided to build the house: "Then Solomon sent to Hiram, saying: 'You know how my father David could not build a house for the

name of the LORD his God because of the wars which were fought against him on every side, until the LORD put his foes under the soles of his feet. But now the LORD my God has given me rest on every side; there is neither adversary nor evil occurrence. And behold, I propose to build a house for the name of the LORD my God, as the LORD spoke to my father David, saying, 'Your son, whom I will set on your throne in your place, he shall build the house for My name''" (1 Kings 5:2-5 NKJV).

The spiritual temple

The above history would be insignificant were it not for the tabernacle and temple being symbolic: *"Now this is the main point of the things we are saying: We have such a High Priest... a Minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle which the Lord erected, and not man... (which) serve the copy and shadow of the heavenly things, as Moses was divinely instructed when he was about to make the tabernacle. For He said, 'see that you make all things according to the pattern shown you on the mountain'"* (Heb. 8:1-5 NKJV). God was very particular and specific regarding the construction of the physical tabernacle and temple because it was the fore-runner of His spiritual temple: *"Do you not know that you are the temple of God... For the temple of God is holy, which temple you are"* (1 Cor. 3:16-17).

Further, just as the physical tabernacle was the place where God dwelt amongst physical Israel so the spiritual temple is where God dwells amongst His spiritual Israel: *"...you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: 'I will dwell in them and walk among them. I will be their god, and they shall be my people'"* (2 Cor. 6:16).

Building the temple

Consistent with the physical temple being a fore-runner of the spiritual temple there is much similarity between the two.

One similarity is that the physical temple could not be built until God's due time—until Solomon was king. Similarly the spiritual temple could not be built until God's due time, as Paul explains: *"... the grace of God which was given to me for you, how that by revelation He made known to me **the mystery... which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men**, as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets..."* (Eph. 3:1-5 NKJV). God's plan that Christian believers would comprise God's spiritual temple was one of the mysteries which God did not disclose until after Jesus had paid the ransom sacrifice and had been glorified.

Another similarity is that God did not allow David to build the temple because he was a man of war and his

building it could have been construed as it being built by his own efforts. Solomon was the one through whom God built the temple, likewise the spiritual temple is not being built by Man's own strength but by One whom God has chosen: *"...you are... members of the household of God, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, **in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord**"* (Eph. 2:19-21). Jesus is the One through whom God is building His spiritual temple: *"Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our confession, Christ Jesus, who was faithful to Him who appointed Him, as Moses also was faithful in all His house. For this One has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as He who built the house has more honor than the house. For every house is built by someone, but He who built all things is God. And Moses indeed was faithful in all His house as a servant, **for a testimony of those things which would be spoken afterward, but Christ as a Son over His own house, whose house we are if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm to the end**"* (Heb. 3:1-6).

Yet a further analogy is that much of the material for the physical temple came from outside Israel, for example the cedar came from Lebanon (1 Kings 5:1-6). Likewise many of the members of the spiritual temple are not of the stock of Israel but are Gentiles: *"Therefore let it be known to you that the salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles, and they will hear it!"* (Acts 28:28), and: *"that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ through the gospel"* (Eph. 3:6).

The stones for the temple were prepared "off-site". They were so perfectly prepared that when they were brought together there was not need for any further shaping: *"And the temple, when it was being built, was built with stone finished at the quarry, so that no hammer or chisel or any iron tool was heard in the temple while it was being built"* (1 Kings 6:7). Likewise the stones of the spiritual temple are prepared individually but fit together perfectly: *"... you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner stone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit"* (Eph. 2:19-22).

Sacrifices

The principal service by which the Israelites were required to demonstrate their loyalty to God was offering sacrifices: *"Now when these things had been*

thus prepared, the priests always went into the first part of the tabernacle, performing the services. But into the second part the high priest went alone once a year, not without blood, which he offered for himself and for the people's sins committed in ignorance; the Holy Spirit indicating this, that the way into the Holiest of All was not yet made manifest while the first tabernacle was still standing. It was symbolic for the present time in which both gifts and sacrifices are offered which cannot make him who performed the service perfect in regard to the conscience--concerned only with foods and drinks, various washings, and fleshly ordinances imposed until the time of reformation. But Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation. Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption" (Heb. 9:6-12).

Likewise the priests of the spiritual house are required to offer sacrifices which show their loyalty and devotion to God: "... Jesus Christ... has made us kings and priests to His God and Father..." (Rev. 1:5-6). Therefore "you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for **a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices** acceptable to God through Jesus Christ" (1 Pet. 2:4-5). The priests of the physical tabernacle and temple had to bring animal and produce as sacrifices to God—the spiritual priests offer up spiritual sacrifices: "Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship" (Rom. 12:1). The Christian's sacrifice is their time, money and talents in service to God which translates into services to others: "Through Him then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name. And

do not neglect doing good and sharing, for with such sacrifices God is pleased" (Heb. 13:15-16).

The finished work

The construction of the spiritual temple is not yet complete, but the finished work will indeed be glorious: "Who is left among you who saw this temple in its former glory? And how do you see it now? In comparison with it, is this not in your eyes as nothing?... According to the word that I covenanted with you when you came out of Egypt, so My Spirit remains among you; do not fear! 'For thus says the LORD of hosts: 'Once more (it is a little while) I will shake heaven and earth, the sea and dry land; and I will shake all nations, and they shall come to the Desire of All Nations, and I will fill this temple with glory'', says the LORD of hosts. 'The silver is Mine, and the gold is Mine', says the LORD of hosts. **'The glory of this latter temple shall be greater than the former'**, says the LORD of hosts. 'And in this place I will give peace', says the LORD of hosts" (Hag. 2:3-9). The Christian can only wonder about its glory.

Regarding the promised reward for the Christian today the Apostle John was told to write: "He who overcomes, I will make him a pillar in the temple of My God, and he will not go out from it anymore; and I will write on him the name of My God, and the name of the city of My God, the new Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God, and My new name" (Rev. 3:12).

The promise of being a pillar in the glorious future temple of God should motivate every Christian to "lay aside every weight... And run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God" (Heb. 12:1-2).■

TRUSTING

I follow Christ in His sure footsteps up the mountain

On the treacherous winding and steep trail;
Where He firmly plants His feet I plant mine,
There is not much light and my failing human eyes
can barely see,
At times all I can see is my glorious Master forever
moving forward there in front of me,
The heights would be dizzying were it not for the
dark mist closing in behind us, separating us from my
dark past.
I hear the sound of loose falling rocks as they
plummet down great distances,

This would produce fear were it not for the always
present necessity of staying close to the strong warm
figure in front of me.

*

Trusting in Jesus I find sweetest rest
Just simply trusting I know I am blest
Never a danger and never a fear
Now can affright me since Jesus is near
Trusting in Jesus by night and by day
O, how His presence illumines my way
Knowing He loveth and careth for me
Why should my heart ever sorrowful be?

OUR SCHOOLMASTER

“Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ” (Galatians 3:24).

Translators seem to differ regarding the lesson to be learned from Galatians 3:23-26, the difference possibly arising from the meaning of the Greek word “*paidagogos*” from which the word “*schoolmaster*” in the King James Version is translated.

Definitions

The definitions of “*paidagogos*” given by some Bible dictionaries are:

- Strong’s Concordance: a *boy leader*, that is, a servant whose office it was to take the children to school; (by implication [figuratively] a *tutor*);
- Young’s Concordance: child conductor;
- Vine’s Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words: a guide, or guardian or trainer of boys, literally a child leader, a tutor;
- Easton’s Bible Dictionary: As so used, the word does not mean teacher, but pedagogue... i.e., one who was intrusted with the supervision of a family, taking them to and from the school, being responsible for their safety and manners.

The Greek word “*paidagogos*” occurs only three times in the New Testament. The table below lists all three instances and its translation in five translations of the Bible. Some translations imply the role was leader, guide or guardian without any suggestion of them giving instruction, while other translations imply it means tutor or instructor.

The Law as a guide or guardian

The role of a guide or guardian is to ensure their charges stay on the correct path, both literally and symbolically. Part of that task might be to exercise control and stop them from engaging in certain activities. Such was the case with Israel; the need for a restraining influence is evident from the incident recorded in Exodus 32:15-22: “*And Moses turned, and went down from the mount... And it came to pass, as soon as he came nigh unto the camp, that he saw the calf, and the dancing: and Moses’ anger waxed*

hot... And Moses said unto Aaron, What did this people unto thee, that thou hast brought so great a sin upon them? And Aaron said, Let not the anger of my lord wax hot: thou knowest the people, that they are set on mischief”. Israel directly contravened God’s direction: “*And God spake all these words, saying, I am the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before me. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God...*” (Exod. 20:1-5). Thus is evident why Paul wrote: “*Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made...*” (Gal. 3:19).

When Christ came the role of the Law as Israel’s guardian was completed: “*But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster*” (Gal. 3:25). However the majority of Israelites did not recognise they had reached “the place of their tuition” and continued to observe their obligations under the Law: “*Brethren, my heart’s desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth*” (Rom. 10:1-4). The majority of Israelites failed to realise that the practices which were obligatory under the Law were no longer required.

In that vein the Apostle Paul wrote that the Law was a “... *handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us...*” (Col. 2:14). The Law was a guide to the Israelites before Christ came but it was contrary to them after He came because it blinded them to the fact that indeed their Messiah had come.

The Law as an instructor

The other meaning of “*paidagogos*” is instructor or tutor. It might be difficult to comprehend how the Law was an instructor in the sense of teaching them or educating them because their minds were “*shut up unto the faith*” (Gal. 3:23)—what

Translation	1 Corinthians 4:15	Galatians 3	
		Verse 24	Verse 25
Diaglott	Interlinear: child tender Smooth: leaders	Interlinear: child leader Smooth: pedagogue	
KJV	Instructors	Schoolmaster	
NIV	Guardians	In Charge	Supervisor
RSV	Guides	custodian	
RV	Tutors	tutor	

God had closed could be opened only by Him: *“According as it is written, **God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear...**”* (Rom 11:8).

One possibility is that it was the repetitive and burdensome nature of their obligations under the Law that could have led them to Christ. Under the Law they were required to offer numerous sacrifices, a summary of which is given in Number 28. Frequent and ongoing repetition has the potential to influence the person performing them in two ways.

Firstly, repetition can cause the person performing the tasks to yearn for something better—a desire for change—in the same way as Solomon concluded that there had to be a greater purpose to life than what he observed: *“I have seen all the works that are done under the sun; and, behold, all is vanity and vexation of spirit”* (Eccl. 1:14). Solomon realised the futility (vanity) of the repetitive nature of the things around him, which realisation led him to *“search out by wisdom concerning all things that are done under heaven”* (Eccl. 1:13). It can be argued that a similar realisation amongst the Jews would have prepared them mentally to look for something more meaningful than the burden of the Law, and therefore could have led them to recognise Jesus as the fulfilment of the Law as He declared: *“I am not come to destroy the Law but to fulfil it”* (Matt. 5:17).

Secondly repetition can cause one to lose sight of the significance or meaning of the task—in modern day parlance it might be said they become bored with the task, and that was the case with the Israelites: *“To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the LORD: I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he goats... Bring no more **vain oblations**; incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting. Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth: they are a trouble unto me; I am weary to bear them: (Isa. 1:11-14). The Israelites lost sight of the significance of their sacrifices and performed them mechanically, rather than with conscious appreciation of their meaning, to the extent that the Lord regarded them as “**vain oblations**”. Thus they did not appreciate the significance of the sacrifices and therefore they meant nothing to them.*

Retrospect

In the temporal world it is not unusual for the full significance of instruction to not be realised until after the tuition is over and the student reflects on previous lessons or experiences—that is, retrospectively. Since

it was after the giving of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost when Paul wrote to the Galatians, they were in a position to reflect upon the ceremonies of the Law and its ceremonies, and such reflection could have led them to realise that the Law was an *“example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle...”* (Heb. 8:5).

The book of Hebrews draws many parallels between the Law and the Christian faith and in that sense the Law was and still is a tutor: *“Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: We have such a high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; A minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man”* (Heb. 8:1-2). The fact that Jesus is referred to as the high priest of a tabernacle perpetuates the significance of the tabernacle—just as the physical tabernacle in the wilderness was a physical manifestation of the Law to natural Israel so the **true tabernacle** is a spiritual manifestation to spiritual Israel—it being understood that God regards all Christians as Israelites, the Gentiles being grafted into the good olive tree: *“For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles... if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree; Boast not against the branches... For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in”* (Rom. 11:13-25).

Paul wrote to the Galatians to also enlighten them that the “Israel of God” (Gal. 6:16) is **not** comprised solely of those who were “Jews by nature” (Gal. 2:15), but *“that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ”* (Gal. 3:14). As he wrote to the Ephesians: *“Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh... That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel... But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ... who hath made **both one**, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances... Now therefore ye are **no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God**”* (Eph. 2:11-19).

Further Hebrews 9:5 reads: *“Then verily the first covenant had also ordinances of divine service, and a worldly sanctuary. For there was a tabernacle made; the first, wherein was the candlestick, and the table, and the shewbread; which is called the sanctuary.*

And after the second veil, the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of all; Which had the golden censer, and the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold, wherein was the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant; And over it the cherubims of glory shadowing the mercyseat; of which we cannot now speak particularly” (Heb. 9:1-5). The “worldly tabernacle” contained lessons for the Hebrew Christians, however it was inappropriate for the writer to detail them at that time because they were spiritually immature: “...we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are **dull of hearing**. For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be **the first principles of the oracles of God**; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat” (Heb. 5:11-12). Thus the physical tabernacle contained many pictures of the spiritual tabernacle from which the Christians of later times were to benefit. The writer deems the pictures to constitute the first principles of the oracles of God—something basic which every Christian should understand.

Broader application

Paul’s letter to the Galatians was written after the gospel had been taken to the Gentiles, Cornelius being the first Gentile to convert to Christianity (Acts 10). Thus there is great significance in the words of Romans 15:4: “*For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope*”. The “things written aforetime” are the things written in the Old Testament, and matters pertaining to the Law and its sacrifices comprise a large proportion of the Old Testament. The books of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua, Samuel, Kings, Ezra, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Zechariah contain details pertaining to the Law, or arguments centred around the tabernacle or temple. Hence the Apostle Paul declares that the Law and its ceremonies are relevant to the Christian in the twenty first century because a knowledge of them gives comfort and hope.

To the Old Testament records may be added some 140 references in the New Testament to the temple or its ceremonies. Jesus taught in the temple on many occasions (John 18:20) and acted to preserve its sanctity: “*And Jesus went into the temple of God, and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the moneychangers, and the seats of them that sold doves, And said unto them, It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves*” (Matt. 21:12-13). While the physical manifestation of the Law through the physical tabernacle is past, the spiritual temple remains (1 Cor. 3:16).

Contrasts

Another effective teaching technique is to contrast similar aspects, and the instruction which the Law provides to Christians today is powerful because of the contrasts between it and the spiritual temple.

One contrast is the ancestry of the High Priest. Aaron and his successors were from the tribe of Levi (Deut. 21:5) whereas Jesus’ ancestry had no connection with the tribe of Levi: “*If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, (for under it the people received the law,) what further need was there that another priest should rise after the order of Melchisedec, and not be called after the order of Aaron?... For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Juda; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood. And it is yet far more evident: for that after the similitude of Melchisedec there ariseth another priest*” (Heb. 7:11-15). Jesus’ earthly “father” (Joseph) was a descendant of Judah, not Levi. Additionally Jesus Christ was a priest after the order of Melchisedec and not after Aaron, which makes **it yet far more evident** that the Christian’s righteousness does not stem from the practices of the Law.

Characteristics of the High Priest

A comparison between the characteristics of the High Priests reveals two more contrasts between the physical and spiritual tabernacles.

Firstly, the High Priest under the Law had to offer two sacrifices, firstly the bullock “for himself” (Lev. 16:11) and secondly the goat “for the people” (Lev. 16:15). However the “High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus” (Heb. 3:1) offered only one sacrifice: “*For such an high priest became us... Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people’s: for this he did once, when he offered up himself. For the law maketh men high priests which have infirmity*”, whereas Jesus was “*holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners*” (Heb. 7:26-28). Secondly Christ Jesus does not need to offer up sacrifices “daily”, that is not even every year, but once only: “*But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands... Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us*” (Heb. 9:11-12).

Summary

Thus the Law was a “paidagogos” in both senses of the word—a guardian to Israel of old and a tutor (instructor) to the Israel of God, regardless of whether they be Jews by nature or wild olives who have been grafted into the good olive tree. May all Christians learn well the lessons from their schoolmaster. ■

ISRAEL: A TEST OF FAITH

The Middle East is in turmoil and Israel is in the middle of the region, surrounded by countries hostile to its very existence. In the south, Egypt has evicted President Mubarak and held elections but they have not yielded a peaceful solution—rival factions continue to struggle for power. To the east and north are Jordan and Syria with genocide prevalent in the latter. To the north-west is Lebanon where Hezbollah harbours deep antagonism towards Israel. Further north is Iran which has declared its intention to annihilate Israel. To the west/south-west is Gaza which continues to pound Israel with rockets. The only border from which Israel does not face an antagonistic foe is the west, and that is the Mediterranean Sea.

A realistic evaluation of the situation leads one to conclude that Israel's only hope of survival is for God to intervene and protect it. But in the light of history one may well wonder if Israel can realistically expect God to do so: He has saved them twice already from virtual extinction—from Egypt and Babylon.

The exodus

Not only did God “rescue” Israel from Egypt but He miraculously cared for them during their 40 years sojourn through the wilderness, leading them with a cloud by day and fire by night: *“And it came to pass, when Pharaoh had let the people go, that God led them not through the way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near... But God led the people about, through the way of the wilderness of the Red Sea... And the LORD went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light; to go by day and night: He took not away the pillar of the cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night, from before the people”* (Exodus 13:17-22).

After He delivered them from the Egyptian pursuit at the Red Sea, God continued to provide for them in miraculous ways during their journey through the wilderness: manna for food (Exodus 16:1-15); water from a rock (Exodus 17:1-7); clothes and shoes that did not wear (Deut. 8:4; 29:5). So remarkable was God's protection that it was remembered for more than 1000 years and recalled as an exhortation to them when they returned from 70 years captivity in Babylon (Neh. 9:1-21). Also God drove out seven nations from the land so that it could be theirs (Deut. 7:1-2; Acts 13:19).

However the people sinned again and began worshipping false gods, beginning with Jeroboam who appointed priests who were not descendants of

Levi (1 Kings 12:26-33). For a time Hezekiah redeemed the situation in Judah (2 Kings 18:1-8) but King Hoshea did not have the same influence in Israel, and so God gave Israel into the hand of Shalmaneser, king of Assyria: *“Israel obeyed not the voice of the LORD their God, but transgressed his covenant, and all that Moses the servant of the LORD commanded, and would not hear them, nor do them”* (2 Kings 18:12). In view of such transgression can they reasonably expect God to continue to provide for them yet again?

Babylon

Hezekiah was succeeded as king of Judah by his son Manasseh. However *“Manasseh...did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD, after the abominations of the heathen... he reared up altars for Baal, and... worshipped all the host of heaven, and served them... And he built altars for all the host of heaven... he wrought much wickedness in the sight of the LORD...”* (2 Kings 21:1-6).

Thus Israel and Judah sinned grossly before the Lord so that God sent His servant Nebuchadnezzar to take them captive to Babylon for 70 years: *“... And the LORD hath sent unto you all his servants the prophets... but ye have not hearkened, nor inclined your ear to hear... Therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts... Behold, I will send... Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, my servant, and will bring them against this land, and against the inhabitants thereof... And this whole land shall be a desolation, and an astonishment; and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years”* (Jer. 25:4-11).

Nevertheless God promised that, when the 70 years had been fulfilled, He would bring them back to their land: *“For thus saith the LORD, That after seventy years be accomplished at Babylon I will visit you, and perform my good word toward you, in causing you to return to this place... Then shall ye call upon me... and I will hearken unto you. And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart”* (Jer 29:10-13).

God honoured His promise—He blotted out their sins, directed Cyrus to do His bidding and so Israel returned to God: *“Remember these, O Jacob and Israel; for thou art my servant: I have formed thee; thou art my servant: O Israel, thou shalt not be forgotten of me. I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins: return unto me; for I have redeemed thee... for the LORD hath redeemed Jacob, and glorified Himself in Israel”* (Isa. 44:21-23).

Diaspora

In A.D. 70 Israel lost its sovereignty when the Romans captured Jerusalem and destroyed the temple. However they were not taken captive to any one country but scattered amongst many nations: *"I scattered them with a whirlwind among all the nations whom they knew not. Thus the land was desolate after them..."* (Zech. 7:14).

And so the land of Israel lay desolate for centuries. However God also planned to gather them again: *"Therefore say, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Although I have cast them far off among the heathen, and although I have scattered them among the countries, yet will I be to them as a little sanctuary in the countries where they shall come. Therefore say, Thus saith the Lord GOD; I will even gather you from the people, and assemble you out of the countries where ye have been scattered, and **I will give you the land of Israel.** And they shall come thither... I will put a new spirit within you; and ... give them an heart of flesh: That they may walk in my statutes, and keep mine ordinances, and do them: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God"* (Ezek. 11:16-20).

Ezekiel repeated the promise that Israel would return to its own land: *"Thus saith the Lord GOD; When I shall have gathered the house of Israel from the people among whom they are scattered... **then shall they dwell in their land that I have given to my servant Jacob.** And they shall dwell safely therein, and shall build houses, and plant vineyards; yea, they shall dwell with confidence... and they shall know that I am the LORD their God"* (Ezek. 28:25-26).

Jeremiah confirmed that Israel's return would be the start of a new era in God's dealing with His people: *"Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt... I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more. Thus saith the LORD, which giveth the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night... If those ordinances depart from before me, saith the LORD, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before me for ever. Thus saith the LORD..."* (Jer. 31:31-37). God's promise was unconditional—only if the sun, moon and stars ceased to regulate day and night would His promise not be fulfilled. The promise applies to both Israel and Judah who will then be united (Ezek. 37:15-22).

At that time not only Israel but all nations will know the sovereignty of God, : *"... and the heathen shall know that I am the LORD, saith the Lord GOD, when I shall be sanctified in you before their eyes. For I will take you (Israel) from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will **bring you into your own land.** Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean... A new heart also will I give you... and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them. And **ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers;** and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God"* (Ezek. 36:21-28).

Prominence

Israel's return to favour with God will be recognised by all nations: *"In those days it shall come to pass, that ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you"* (Zech. 8:20-23). The nations will recognise that God is favouring Israel above themselves and will seek to learn of God's ways: *"And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem"* (Isa. 2:3). The heathen will seek to learn the word of the Lord.

Further there will be penalties for those nations that refuse to come to Jerusalem: *"And it shall be, that whoso will not come up of all the families of the earth unto Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, even upon them shall be no rain. And if the family of Egypt go not up, and come not, that have no rain; there shall be the plague, wherewith the LORD will smite the heathen that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles"* (Zech. 14:16-18).

So, in spite of God's previous dealings with Israel, He *".. **hath not cast away his people...**"*. Rather He *"**hath given them** the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear; unto this day... For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of **this mystery,** lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins...**For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance...**"* (Rom. 11:1-34). The test for the Christian is to have faith in God's promises.■

WHATSOEVER THINGS ARE PURE

A pure substance is unadulterated, that is, it does not contain any material other than what it is deemed to be. For example pure gold does not contain any material other than gold—it is not an alloy such as brass (a mixture of copper and zinc), nor does it contain any impurity such as clay.

Purity was of great importance in the tabernacle: the gold had to be pure gold (Exod. Chap. 25 verses 10-11, 17, 23-24, 29, 31, 36, 38, 39; chap. 28 verses 14, 22, 36); the oil for the candlestick had to be pure olive oil (Lev. 24:2); and the anointing oil had to be made from pure spices (Exod. 30:23). Likewise when Solomon built the temple he overlaid it with pure gold (1 Kings 6:20-23).

The above examples refer to concrete (tangible) objects. However in his letter to the Philippians Paul used the concept of pure in an abstract sense—he exhorted them to apply the concept of purity to the things which occupied their minds. He wrote: *“Finally, brethren... whatsoever things are pure, think on these things”* (Phil. 4:8).

Doctrine

Pure things, may be regarded as “plain” or “simple”, that is, not contaminated by spurious concepts. In that sense the gospel is simple. Paul referred to the gospel as simple. He wrote: *“But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ”* (2 Cor. 11:3).

The gospel is simple also in the sense that one does not need a sophisticated level of education or complex argument to understand it. On the contrary, Jesus said (God) *“has hid these things from the wise and prudent and revealed them unto babes”* (Matt. 11:25), but has *“revealed them unto us by his Spirit”* (1 Cor. 2:10), and it was in that vein that Paul exhorted the Philippians to not get tangled up with complex arguments which distort and adulterate the gospel, but rather to think on the pure gospel.

The same challenge confronts the Christian in the twenty-first century, especially those who live in the Western world. Indeed the temptation maybe even greater due to the prevalence of numerous *“oppositions of science falsely so called”* (1 Tim. 6:20) which present elevated (“learned”) arguments. Thus it is imperative the Christian holds to the simple (pure) gospel of Christ—that God imposed death on all mankind because of Adam’s transgression, and that He cancels the condemnation because of the ransom sacrifice of Jesus (Rom. 5:19; 1 Tim. 2:4-6).

No level of sophisticated thought can change that basic doctrine: *“Remember them... who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow... Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever. Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines...”* (Heb. 13:7-9).

Conduct

The challenge of thinking only on pure things also applies to Christian conduct, and Paul exhorted the Philippians to think on those aspects of mankind’s conduct which are pure and not devious or seductive. To that end the Christian should constantly remind themselves that *“... the whole world lieth in wickedness”* (1 John 5:19), and that is why Paul wrote: *“Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you”* (2 Cor. 6:17).

Separation from the world has the potential to bring criticism—one’s attitude may be deemed “holier than thou”. But so be it! As Paul exhorted Timothy: *“Lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be partaker of other men’s sins: keep thyself pure”* (1 Tim. 5:22). Likewise James wrote: *“Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this... to keep himself unspotted from the world”* (Jas. 1:27).

After warning Timothy of some of the perils he would face, Paul gave him some positive advice equivalent to the advice he gave the Philippians: *“But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness”* (1 Tim. 6:11). The concept of “flee” is not just resisting but taking positive action to remove oneself from the environment where the attitudes Paul had previously outlined were practised.

In similar vein the Apostle Peter exhorted his readers: *“... gird up the loins of your mind, be sober... as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation”* (1 Pet. 1:13-15). Holy things are pure, unadulterated, and are the abode where the Christian’s mind is to dwell.■

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