



2 Cor. 3:18

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Issues In Galatians

David Clayton



*Some years ago the following article was published in **Old Paths**. We have decided to republish it because we feel that it is especially relevant at this time in light of our present emphasis on Righteousness by Faith, and the increasing agitation in some quarters on the question of the Feast days. We have slightly modified the article.*

Many Seventh-day Adventists, and in fact, most Christians who believe in the observance of the ten commandments, seem to have a problem in understanding the issues which Paul faced and the arguments which he presented at the time when he wrote the letter to the Galatians. The arguments of Paul in the book of Galatians are very important, and understanding them is critical to a proper appreciation of the purpose and place of the law, as well as to a proper appreciation of the gospel. In fact, one of the issues at the famous 1888 Minneapolis General Conference was the disagreement between E.J.

Waggoner and several of the leading delegates to the conference, on the question of the law in Galatians.

In more recent times some seventh-day Adventists have begun to advocate the observance of the laws given to Moses at Mount Sinai, and in particular, the feast days and festivals, namely, the Passover, the wavesheaf, the firstfruits, the day of Pentecost, the blowing of Trumpets, the day of Atonement and the feast of Tabernacles. Though they do not advocate the offering of animal sacrifices, for the most part they seek to observe these festivals in a similar way to how they were observed during biblical times, and at the exact times specified in the law.

However, in Galatians 4:10,11 the apostle Paul chastises the Galatian brethren for observing certain time periods. He says,

Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain. (Gal 4:10-11)

This seems to clearly suggest that the observance of set time periods such as was involved in the keeping of the feast days was unnecessary and even undesirable and was a cause of concern to Paul. However, those who advocate the observance of the feast days claim that Paul was not here referring to the biblical feast days but rather to pagan holidays and festivals which the Galatians had gone back to observing. They suggest that Paul could not have been referring to the feasts appointed by God. The following reasons are given:

1. Paul could not have referred to the

feasts appointed by God as “elements of the world” (Gal. 4:3) and as “weak and beggarly elements.” (Gal. 4:9)

2. Paul says that the Galatians were turning “again” to these weak and beggarly elements (Gal. 4:9). Since they had previously been pagans, involved in pagan worship and not in Jewish worship, then the only thing they could turn “again” to was paganism – not to Old Testament religion.

3. Paul declares that at that time (before they became Christians while they were involved with these elements of the world), they “knew not God,” and “did service unto them which by nature are no gods.” (Gal. 4:8)

On the face of it, this argument seems plausible. However a closer examination of the issues in the book of Galatians and the arguments presented by the apostle Paul there, will reveal that the issue was not pagan holidays at all, but rather was the observance of the festivals given to Israel at Mount Sinai.

What were the issues in the book of Galatians? What was the problem which prompted Paul to write this letter? What behaviour by the Galatians

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Open Face is dedicated to the promotion of the truths committed to the Advent movement, as believed and taught by the early Adventist pioneers. In particular to the restoration of those truths which have been cast down to the ground and trampled underfoot by the papacy, and adopted by her daughters.

Our purpose is to motivate our readers to commit themselves wholly to the task of personal preparation for the coming of the Lord, and to the taking of the final warning message to every nation, kindred, tongue and people.

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caused Paul such concern that he wrote such a forceful letter in such strong words? It is not difficult to discover the point of concern. Paul mentions it several times in his letter. Let us see what the basic issue really was.

THE ISSUE IN GALATIANS

I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed. (Gal 1:6-9)

Paul's concern was that the Galatians were turning to "another gospel." Yet it was not another gospel, because really, there is only one gospel. So this

was the root of the problem in the book of Galatians. The faith of the Galatians was being "perverted." What were these people doing who were trying to pervert the Galatians? What were they trying to persuade the Galatians to do?

THE ESSENCE OF THE "OTHER GOSPEL"

As many as desire to make a fair show in the flesh, they constrain you to be circumcised; only lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ. For neither they themselves who are circumcised keep the law; but desire to have you circumcised, that they may glory in your flesh. (Gal 6:12-13)

The main issue in this other gospel was that they were trying to compel (constrain) these Galatian brethren to be circumcised.

It is interesting to note that Paul circumcised Timothy (Acts 16:1-3). This makes it clear that there was nothing inherently wrong with circumcision itself. Paul makes this point in Galatians 6:15 where he says neither circumcision or uncircumcision matters when you are in Christ Jesus. Paul did not circumcise Timothy because he believed it was a necessary religious requirement, but simply in order to disarm prejudice among the Jews. He was simply following his principle,

"And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; to them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ,) that I might gain them that are without law. To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some. (1 Cor. 9:20-22)

However, when circumcision was done for religious reasons there were other things which would automatically fol-

low and this was what bothered Paul about the direction the Galatians were taking.

WHAT REQUIREMENT WENT ALONG WITH CIRCUMCISION?

For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law. Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace. (Gal 5:3-4)

The problem with circumcision was that if you were circumcised you had an obligation to observe the **whole** law. Religious circumcision never stood by itself. A person who believed that circumcision was still required by God obviously had no excuse for not keeping the rest of the law. The same principle which made it necessary for him to be circumcised also put him under obligation to keep the whole law. Was there something wrong with observing the whole law? The fact is, when a person has found Christ, there is no need for him to observe the whole law. The law pointed to Christ and when a person finds Christ, he has found the reality to which the law pointed. If a person felt that he was obligated to observe the law, it was an indication that such a person felt that Christ was not enough. Such a person was seeking to be justified with the help of law, rather than purely by the grace of Christ, and Paul says to such people, "Christ has become of none effect unto you!!"

Now when the Galatians went back to law-keeping, what was it that was manifested in their lives? What was it that Paul saw in their lives which made him become very concerned about them and fearful that they were about to lose their salvation and afraid that all his work for them had been in vain?

WHAT HAD THE GALATIANS ALREADY STARTED DOING?

Ye observe days, and months,

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Christ's Life in Me

None of us can define life. We do not know what it is, what it consists of, but we know that it exists. In many places the Bible tells us that we are a part of the body of Christ, it also tells us that we have the life of Christ. Many illustrations used in the Bible emphasize this point. For example there is the illustration of the vine and the branches.

Do we understand these verses to be describing a real relationship or a figurative one? I take them at face value and I believe that in doing this I am applying a meaning which is perfectly reasonable. The fact that new agers have distorted the truth and made it into a lie does not negate the reality of what is true. New Agers believe that we are all inherently god. According to them we only need to discover that we are. But the truth is that we have been made partakers of the life of God. We are partakers of His life, whatever that is. You and I cannot define this, but the Bible calls it the holy spirit which is a very real, literal thing.

The new birth is not simply a human response to motivation, it is the result of divine life uniting with human life and the Bible teaches that this union is a literal union, as real as the physical union between a man and his wife when they consummate a marriage. I am not saying that it is the same kind of union. One is physical, one is spiritual, but the fact that something is "spiritual" does not mean that it is not real.

We do not know very much about spiritual things, but surely we know enough to know that they are literal - that is, they are real, not figurative. God is spirit, angels are spirits, we have a spiritual side to our nature, are all these things figurative or are they literal? Likewise, the spirit of God in us is a literal thing which unites with our spirit and so we become in a very literal sense a partaker of the actual

life of God.

This in no way denies the place of the word of God in the life of the Christian because it is through the word that God makes us know what is real and true. As we learn of these real spiritual things we may believe in them and therefore experience them. Furthermore, since we are only human with only human memories and human attention spans, we need to feed on the word continually and to keep these things always before our minds lest we forget. These realities are experienced by faith, but faith is only exercised *consciously*, therefore, if we do not remember the truth, then we cannot believe the truth and therefore cannot live the truth.

I do not believe in "automatic" Christianity, but I do believe that Christians are truly partakers of the very life of Christ and are therefore a part of His spiritual body. That is, His life, His spirit has become a part of their existence and they have become a part of His, even if the reality of this experience can only be maintained by faith.

TWO ASPECTS OF LAW

There are two aspects to the law, the written law (the letter) and the living law (the spirit, or Christ). The written word is exactly that. It is written. The only thing it can do is instruct. There is no power in what is written, that is why it kills. However the living law works in cooperation with the written word in the sense that when faith is exercised in the written word, when it is believed, then what is written becomes a reality in the life of the believer through the power of that living word (2 Cor. 3:17).

To be governed by the written law is an experience which leads only to frustration. This is what Paul teaches and he is very strong in teaching it. We must make a distinction between the administration of the law and the law itself. A man may be perfectly able to

tell me what is good, but if he can only instruct, but not help in obtaining that good, then clearly he is not the right person to deal with people who are weak by nature. So the government of law is not the best even though the law is good. The government of the spirit is far better because the spirit does not only instruct, but enables and empowers.

If we do not believe that the spirit is an actual literal aspect of God or an extension of the life of God, then of course this is something which we cannot accept. But if the spirit is a literal aspect of God which literally unites with my spirit (a literal aspect of my being), then it is easy to understand the difference between the government of the spirit (the New Covenant) and the government of the law (the Old Covenant).

When Christ unites His life with mine, I am not suddenly omniscient. I do not know all things. I still need the word and will need it as long as I live in this world. What changes is my nature. My nature is *supernaturally* changed. This is not the result of human effort this is an act of God, experienced by faith. But although I have the very nature, the instincts of Christ, I do not have the knowledge of Christ and therefore I am just a babe in Christ. Only as I feed on the word will I become mature in knowing the will of Christ and therefore in better representing Him in the world. This is called, growth in Christ or character development.

We have the nature of Christ, but nature is not equal to identity. We have been made a part of His life because He has given us of His very nature, but we still remain individuals, we have our own identity, even though we have His life. Maybe if we could more perfectly define life and spirit we could be better able to come to grips with what these statements in the Bible mean.

ISSUES IN GALATIANS

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and times, and years. I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain. (Gal 4:10-11)

These Galatians were now fulfilling what Paul had expected: If a person was circumcised he was obligated to keep the whole law. They had already gone back to observing days, months, times, years, etc., and this was clearly in connection with their commitment to turn to the way of circumcision with its attendant observance of the law.

Is there something wrong with this? What is wrong with observing the law and being committed to the law in this way?

WHY NOT OBSERVE THE LAW?

For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them. But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith. And the law is not of faith: but, The man that doeth them shall live in them. (Gal 3:10-12)

Paul says it plainly: Those who are of the works of the law are under a curse. "The just shall live by faith ... but the law is not of faith," therefore, it is clear that "the just" do not live by the law. The ones who seek to live by the works of the law end up with a curse.

As we seek to understand Paul's statements concerning the law in the book of Galatians, it is helpful if we recognize that there were four basic aspects to the law: These divisions are not stated in the Bible but are clearly evident. There was the moral law, there were the sacrificial and typical laws, there were the civil laws, and of course there were the health laws. Of course, none of these laws can save a person, none of them can contribute to salva-

tion, not even the moral law. However, if we can understand the purpose of each of these sections of the law, it will make it easier for us to understand why some aspects of the law have passed away completely, while the moral law still remains as a definer of right and wrong.

THE MORAL LAW

The ten commandments were set apart from all the others and are often referred to as the moral laws because they are clearly based on eternal principles, applicable to all ages and have to do with how a person relates to God, and to his fellowmen. These were written upon stone and in this way are clearly separated by God Himself from all the other laws given to Moses.

It is true that Christians are not "under" the moral law in the sense that the law is not the reason why we do good. It is not the law which controls the behaviour of the Christian. It is Christ's life in the Christian which produces holy behaviour, not the commands of the law. But if we understand what morality is, then we will understand why, even though we are not under the moral law, yet the moral law still must exist as a guide of life for believers. Morality has to do with what is inherently right or wrong. It has to do with things which are right in themselves and not just because they have a temporary or cultural or situational importance. When something is moral, it cannot be only relevant for a limited time, but is right forever, and in any situation.

Now it is true that additional laws were given which dealt with various situations in which the moral law was applicable. As Ellen White puts it, these laws were given to "guard the ten commandments." These other "guardian" laws were helpful but certainly they could not prescribe how a person should behave in every single situation. God gave these other laws only because of the spiritual immaturity of the Israelites, and only until they should

become mature enough to understand the intent of the law and apply it from the perspective of a changed nature.

The apostle Paul appealed to only one principle with respect to the moral law.

Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law. (Rom 13:8-10)

Rather than giving more detailed instructions and definitions concerning the law, Paul declared that if a Christian concentrated on the one great principle of loving his fellow men, then he would have satisfied all the requirements of the law (obviously the last six points of the law. It was not more details which were needed, but rather an understanding of the principles.

THE FUNCTION OF THE MORAL LAW

There are three basic functions of the moral law.

Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, (1 Tim 1:9)

First of all, it promotes civil and social justice and restrains evil. The ungodly do not know God, neither are they led by the holy spirit, but they do have a guide which makes them know what is right and what is wrong. They have the Ten Commandments which declares to them the wickedness of their ways and shows them the behaviour which God requires of them.

What shall we say then? is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet. (Rom 7:7)

Secondly, the moral law defines and condemns sin and makes us aware of our need of Christ. Without the moral law, nobody would have any sense of guilt. Nobody would understand how wretched and sinful he is nor appreciate his need of Christ.

So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty. (James 2:12)

Thirdly, the moral law is a rule of life for believers. James makes it very clear that we shall be judged by the law, or the Ten Commandments. Even though true commandment-keeping goes beyond the letter of the law, yet this is the standard which God will use to judge us, in determining whether or not we really accepted Christ, so that no Christian can be excused by saying that he does not have a way of knowing how God wants him to behave.

CIVIL LAWS

The civil laws were necessary for keeping society in order. These included laws such as, if a man plucked out the eyes of another, the judges should pluck out his eyes. Eye should be given for eye, tooth for tooth etc. These laws still exist today, but are not administered by God's people but by the civil government, because God's people are no longer all together in one nation, but rather are scattered in all lands and among all people. We are told by the apostle Paul that these governmental or civil powers are put there, are ordained by God to be a terror to evildoers (Rom. 13:3,4).

HEALTH LAWS

Of course there were also the health laws. God wanted His people to be healthy. However, we must understand the circumstances under which these laws were given and we must adjust accordingly. When the Israelites were

in the wilderness they were commanded to carry a little shovel around with them so that when they went to the toilet they could dig a hole and then cover the waste afterwards. Does this rule still apply today? If we accept the law without understanding, we would say yes. But when we understand that the purpose of God was to prevent disease, then we still apply the principle in being careful with our toilet habits but not the letter of taking a shovel around with us.

SACRIFICIAL LAWS

When a person transgressed the moral law, the sacrifices satisfied the demands of the broken law. They provided atonement for the sinner. If the moral law was not broken, then the sacrificial law was not necessary. Of course the sacrificial laws were only symbol or type. They never truly dealt with the real issue of cleansing or of removing sin. They only illustrated the reality. By their very nature they had to pass away when the reality was fulfilled.

OTHER TYPICAL LAWS

The feast days were also only typical (although for the Israelites they also were reminders of historical events such as preservation of their firstborn on the night when the angel of death passed through Egypt). They pointed forward to major events which were to take place in the plan of salvation such as the death of Christ, the cleansing of God's people from sin and the outpouring of the holy spirit. These also obviously, would never have been necessary if there had been no transgression of the moral law, and as such, they were only temporary institutions intended to teach God's people in their spiritual childhood, of the major events to take place in the plan of salvation. When God's people became spiritually mature, it would not be necessary any longer for them to act out these symbols of salvation, but rather, to experience the reality.

Little girls play with dolls and this is quite appropriate. They talk to the dolls,

feed them, change their clothing and make houses for them. We think all this is quite in order and even quite cute. But would we feel the same way if we saw a grown woman doing the same thing? Most likely she would end up in a mental institution. Children need these playthings, these toys as they are growing up. They help them to learn lessons which actually are helpful when they become adults. But now that we are adults and no longer children, why should we go back to playing with toys? Why go back to a religion that was only intended to be a teaching tool?

WHAT WAS THE LAW'S PURPOSE?

Now why was the law given if it was not able to save people? Why did God give something if it was not complete or if it was not fully effective? Why?

Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator. (Gal 3:19)

Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. (Gal 3:24)

Here it tells us plainly what the purpose of the law was. It was a schoolmaster to bring us to Christ. It was added, "till the seed should come." It had a definite purpose for a limited time. How can we miss it? How can we believe that we still have an obligation to the law when the Bible says so clearly that we are no longer under the schoolmaster? The schoolmaster's purpose was to take us to Christ. Now that we have come to Christ the schoolmaster is obsolete; no longer necessary.

WHAT CHANGE TOOK PLACE WITH THE COMING OF CHRIST?

But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster. (Gal 3:25)

To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. (Gal 4:5)

As far as the Bible is concerned, the plan of salvation has several stages. There are stages to God's plan for recovering man from the damage caused by sin. Under the period which is called the time of the law, salvation was, as always, by faith. But faith was found and expressed through the observance of the law, through the observance of rituals and ceremonies. To find salvation you were expected to go through those forms and rituals. That was the way in which faith was expressed. While many of the patriarchs did find faith in this way, the system was limited and unsatisfactory, and was only intended to be a temporary measure.

However, on this side of Calvary we are spiritually mature and are able to grasp spiritual concepts without having to act out the ceremonies which symbolize the things which we believe.

WHY WERE THE ISRAELITES PLACED UNDER GOVERNANCE OF THE LAW?

Now I say, That the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all; But is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father. Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world: (Gal 4:1-3)

Paul uses two symbols in the book of Galatians to describe the state of God's people in the past. Firstly, he describes them as children, and secondly he describes them as servants (slaves). In reality, the status of both is the same because, as he tells us in Galatians 4:1, the child is no different than a servant (slave) even though he will one day inherit everything.

Notice that Paul says, "we." He is not speaking about the Galatians only. He is including himself. He is speaking of the church on the whole. He says that the heir, the Father's legitimate child is no different than a servant (and we

need to remember that the Greek word used here, "*doulos*," means slave). Let us see what Paul is saying here.

A small child who is under the control of good parents makes very few decisions for himself. His parents tell him when to bathe, what to eat, which clothes to wear, who to play with, when to go out and when to come in etc. Somebody else makes all his decisions for him. He has no freedom to do the things which he wants but must always do the will of others. Is this bondage? If an adult found himself in that kind of situation how would he feel? He would consider himself to be no different than a slave, yet this is how most parents treat their small children. This bondage is necessary for the child's protection as well as for the child's training.

When the Bible uses the word bondage here, it means bondage in the sense of being completely under the control of another person. This kind of bondage is terrible when you are an adult, but when you are a child it is necessary. We need to understand this. When we are children, it is necessary that we be under "bondage," in this sense.

A man who observes rules without understanding is in bondage. Why does he obey? Because the rule constrains him and not because he wants to or because his mind is in harmony with the rule. Bondage in the sense that he is controlled by external forces.

Now Paul says we were in bondage "when we were children." Does he mean when we were three years old? Who is the "we," here? He is speaking about the people of God. He is not speaking of the Galatians as former heathen, he is speaking of the church of God, including the Galatians, as an institution which was once in a state of spiritual infancy. As a Jamaican I may say, "we obtained our independence in the year 1962." However, as one of the people of God I would say that once our people were in bondage in Egypt and we became independent when Moses led us out of Egypt. This is how Paul is speaking to the

Galatians. As a part of the people of God whose heritage included the worship of the Old Testament.

So Paul says, when we were children back there in Old Testament times, we were no different than slaves. We were under governors and tutors, we were in bondage, entirely under the control of a legal system. We were under the elements of the world. Notice that these "governors and tutors" are also called "the elements of the world."

WHAT NEGATIVE EFFECT DOES THE LAW HAVE?

Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar. (Gal 4:24)

"Mount Sinai gendereth to bondage," or produces bondage. What does Mount Sinai represent? What happened on Mount Sinai? It was there that the law was given. It was there that the first covenant was instituted and Paul says, there were two covenants, the one from Mount Sinai produces bondage. Again we read in Galatians 4:25:

For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children. (Gal 4:25)

Who is this talking about? It is talking about the Jews. Earthly Jerusalem is in bondage with her children (the Jews). Mount Sinai produces this bondage. Why were the Jews in bondage? They were following Mount Sinai. The law was still their governor.

So Paul says that we, the people of God, when we were children (spiritually) were in bondage, and this does not mean that we were in bondage under sin. If we look at the use of this word "bondage" in the book of Galatians, we will see that it consistently refers to being under the government of the law. The administration of law produces bondage. Those who still observe the law are in bondage. We, the people of God who once

were under law were in bondage. The false brethren were trying to bring the Galatians back into that kind of bondage.

And that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage: (Gal 2:4)

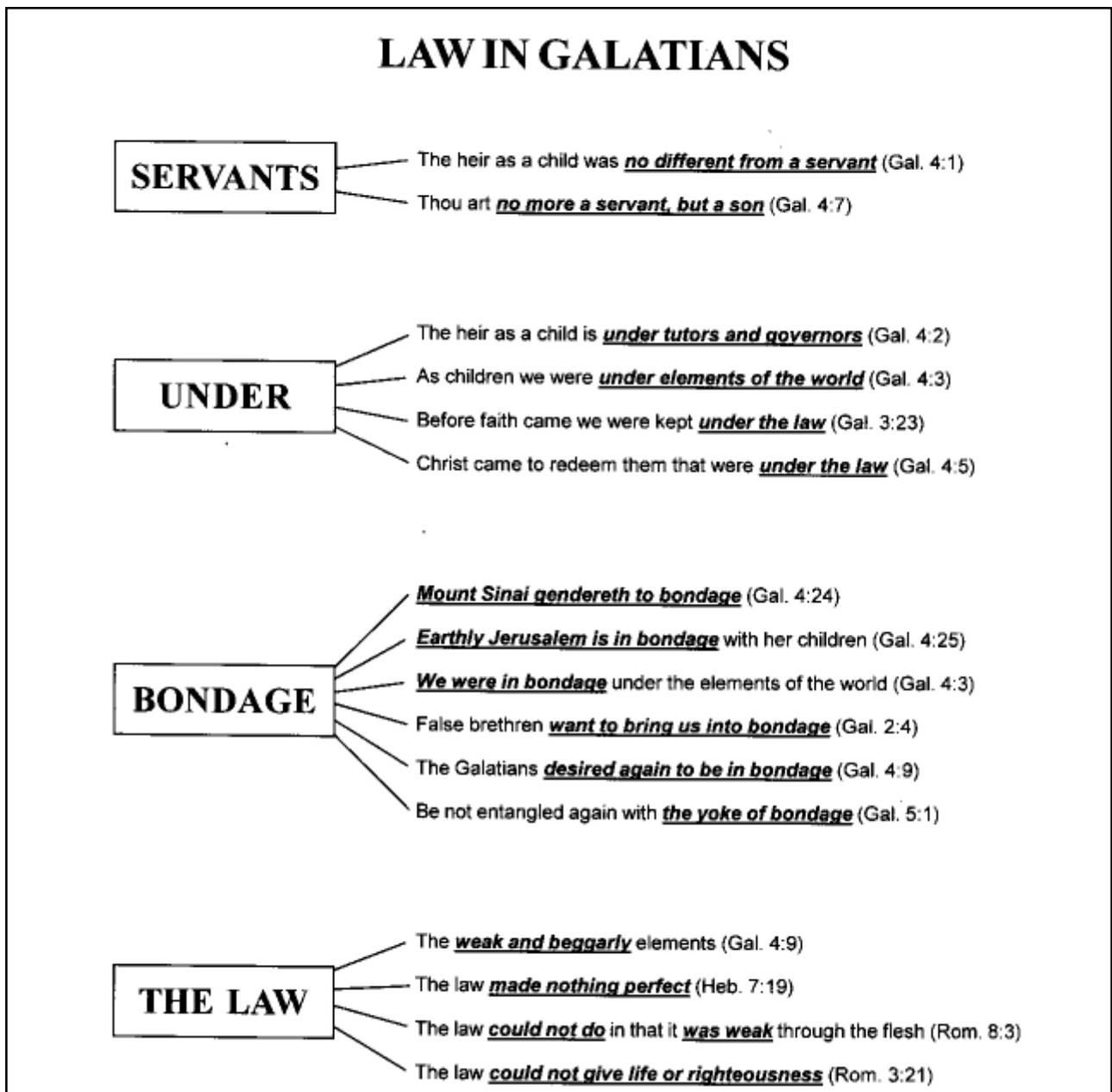
Normally Adventist would never associate the word “bondage” with the law, because the law was given by God. But Paul who was taught the gospel by Christ Himself (Gal. 1:11,12) declared that by seeking to bring them

back to the system of law, back to circumcision along with the rest of the law of Moses, false brethren were seeking to bring the Galatians back into bondage. However, when we understand that “bondage” is good for a child, but not for an adult, we will appreciate the fact that there is a time when bondage is necessary. During the time of the Old Testament, this system was good because of the spiritual immaturity (childish state) of the people of God. Now, when we are spiritual adults such bondage is not only unnecessary, but is a harmful thing. This is why Paul was astonished at the Galatians’ desire to be again under the law.

But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage? (Gal 4:9)

There can no question that this was what Paul was referring to when he admonished the Galatians in chapter 5:1 to be not entangled again with “the yoke of bondage.”

Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage. Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if



ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing. For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law. Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace. (Gal 5:1-4)

Please look at the included chart and you will see that there is a consistency in Paul's teaching in the book of Galatians with respect to this word "bondage." Mount Sinai produces bondage. Earthly Jerusalem and the Jews are still in bondage. We (God's people) were once in that bondage. False brethren want to bring us back into that bondage. The Galatians desired to be in that bondage: they had gone back to observing days, weeks, months, years, so Paul counsels, "be not entangled again with this yoke of bondage." It is very clear. So we see that for a child bondage is good. Bondage is very necessary, but when a person comes to maturity, such bondage is an irksome, degrading, limiting and unnecessary yoke.

WHAT IS THE STATUS OF GOD'S PEOPLE NOW?

But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ. (Gal 4:4-7)

The apostle Paul uses several symbols to refer to the same thing: they were at one time under law, they were at one time under the schoolmaster, they were at one time under tutors and governors, they were at one time under bondage, they were at one time under the elements of the world.

Under the law you have no choice. Un-

der the law, whether you like it or not you have to do it, under the law, whether or not you understand you have to carry out the prescribed actions. It is a way of life for children. The parent may say, "please don't put that there." So the child says, "why daddy?" the parent says, "just do it." Whether or not he understands the child must obey. This kind of rule is necessary for children, but for adults it is highly unsatisfactory. So we once were children, but Paul says we are no longer servants, we are now sons.

WHAT CHANGE OCCURS WHEN A PERSON IS NO LONGER A SERVANT?

Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you. (John 15:15)

The servant does not know what his master is doing, but he has to obey anyway. There are some people who keep the Sabbath just because the law says so. They go through the motions because the rule prescribes it, but what is the true purpose and meaning of the Sabbath? Only the son knows and therefore only the son can give the service which pleases the Father. Only the son can keep the Sabbath in the spirit, rather than in the letter. Let me give an illustration which will clarify the point which I am making:

The sign at the door says, "please wipe your foot before you come in." The rain has just fallen and the yard is full of mud. So two children approach the door and they enter one behind the other. The first one wipes his feet once and then steps inside. Has he obeyed the law? He certainly has. No one can accuse him of doing otherwise, but as he walks inside there are still tell-tale signs as he leaves a trail of muddy footprints on the clean floor of the living room, testimony to the fact that he did not wipe his feet properly. Nevertheless, he did obey the law. He did what was required.

The second child comes to the door and he removes his shoes, then he steps across the threshold without once wiping his feet. Did he obey the law. No, he did not. Did he keep the spirit of the law? Did he fulfill the intent of the law? Yes, he did, as is evidenced by the fact that there is no trail of dirty footprints behind him as he walks into the living room. He did not obey the letter of the law, but he fulfilled the righteousness intended by the law. He fulfilled what the law was intended to produce. The behaviour of the first is that of a child, a servant, one under bondage. That of the second is that of an adult, a son, a person delivered from the law.

For most it is a question of what the law says. But the real question is, what was the purpose of this law? What was the intent of the law? What did the Father desire when He gave this law? We need to consider the principle, rather than the letter.

The Jews insisted that the hands should be washed before eating, but suppose the hands were clean? This did not matter. It did not make any difference to them. The law said so and the law had to be obeyed. There was no intelligence in their obedience. All that mattered was what the law said. The law was their master. They were under the law, they did not know what their Master was doing.

Now this is the problem with being under the law. Firstly, the law can instruct you, but it cannot enable you to do what it demands. It cannot change the nature. Secondly, it cannot tell you how to deal with every situation which may possibly arise. It can tell you the basics, but it does not deal with principles. These are the reasons why the Bible indicates that being under the law was not desirable as a permanent situation.

This is why we must understand the reason for the types and the place they had in God's plan. In looking at the question of whether or not the feast days are still to be observed, the question is not, "what does the law say?" The question is, "what was the goal, the intent, the purpose of these feast-

day laws?" Their purpose was to teach us of the realities of the different phases of salvation history. As children, we acted out these symbols every year. As it were, we learned by playing with toys and models. Now that we are adults we have left these limited and childish elements of the world behind. Now we deal with the realities and not the toys.

ELEMENTS OF THE WORLD

But is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father. Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world: (Gal 4:2-3)

But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. (Gal 3:23)

Was Paul referring to the law when he spoke of "the elements of the world?" The word "elements" is taken from the Greek word, "stoicheion" and means, "the elements, rudiments, primary and fundamental principles of any art, science or discipline." (Strong's # 4747).

The law dealt with the rudiments or fundamental principles of the religion of Christ. Its services had no eternal worth, but related only to this world and as such, were "elements of the world."

- a. Its principles of governance were based on the flesh, the carnal. It was bodily observance without understanding.
- b. It consisted of outward observance of rituals which had no power in themselves.
- c. It dealt with symbols of reality, rather than the realities themselves.
- d. It could not meet the need of every situation.
- e. It gave people fellowship with forms and ceremonies rather than with God.

The apostle Paul declares that as Christians we no longer live in the world (Col. 2:20) but we live in heavenly places

(Eph. 2:6). In fact he states that we no longer know any man after the flesh (2 Cor. 5:16). The point is that we have become heavenly beings and should operate on the principles of heaven. This is why Paul says in Col 2:20-23; 3:1

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, (Touch not; taste not; handle not; Which all are to perish with the using;) after the commandments and doctrines of men? Which things have indeed a show of wisdom in will worship, and humility, and neglecting of the body; not in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh. (Col 2:20-23)

If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. (Col 3:1)

What he is saying is that since you are a spiritual person, the things of earth cannot affect you in a spiritual sense, so the rules which apply to this earth which forbid touching, tasting handling are not the rules which govern those who are risen with Christ. Such restrictions have to do with this life, with things of this world, with "elements of the world." These worldly principles

which are based on sight, sense, touch, carnal observances, don't apply to you anymore. You are not of this world. We are spiritual beings, therefore, "if you are led by the spirit you are not under the law." Your reason for behaviour is a new heart and a new mind, and all the things which were intended to bring you to this place are no longer applicable.

WEAK AND BEGGARLY ELEMENTS

Objection might also be raised to the fact that Paul refers to the Galatians as turning again to the "weak and beggarly elements" to which they desired again to be in bondage. The objection is, "would Paul have described the laws given by God Himself as "weak and beggarly?" Again, let us seek to understand what the words mean. The word "beggarly" is translated from the Greek word "Ptochos", and in Vines expository dictionary several variations are given for the meaning. However, the one which seems to be most applicable in this context is "poverty-stricken, powerless to enrich." This is a perfect description of the law in its entirety. It was helpless and weak in the sense that it could never make man perfect. It could demand perfection, it could describe perfection, it could teach the way of perfection, but it could never accomplish perfection. Paul makes this clear in the following verses:

Pennsylvania Campmeeting

You are invited to attend a campmeeting in Pennsylvania from July 11-15, 2007.

This meeting is being hosted by Calvin and Paula Bickle and the theme will be, "Let's Prepare for Heaven. Speakers will include Willis Smith, David Clayton, Lynnford Beachy, Richard Stratton, Calvin Bickel and others.

One highlight of the meeting will be a herb walk during which you will learn how to identify and use herbs. The herbalist in charge will be Tony McCallum.

The public and other churches are also invited to this meeting, it will be open to all who wish to come.

This is a tent campmeeting so please bring food and items needed for camping. There will be two showers available.

Interested parties may contact Calvin and Paula Bickel at 814 676-8660.

Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law. (Gal 3:21)

For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did; by the which we draw nigh unto God. (Heb 7:19)

For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh... (Rom 8:3)

What was the aim of God for His people? Life and righteousness. The law could point the way to this, but it never could produce it. If it could have, then righteousness would have been by the law. But the law made nothing per-

fect.

In the Old Testament God was dealing with the church as a whole and the church as a whole was in a state of infancy. They had to grow from infancy to adulthood. The system then, was perfect for infants. We don't expect the same level of perfection from children as we expect from adults, but we expect obedience as far as they can understand and we judge them according to their level of comprehension. A child can never be as perfect in maturity as an adult can be, but a newborn baby may be perfect for her stage of development. What you expect is that when you say "no," she is able to obey. That is perfection for her stage. So for the Israelites, perfection consisted of obedience as far as they were able to

understand. But when the fullness of time was come God sent forth His Son to "redeem them that were under the law," that we might become spiritual adults. Infancy and infant behaviour is no longer acceptable.

These are the real issues in the book of Galatians. The problem was *not* that the Galatians were returning to paganism, but that they were turning to Judaism. The concern of the entire book is the relationship of the Christian to the law. Therefore Paul's reference to "days, months, times and years has nothing to do with pagan holidays, but rather with the feast days prescribed by the law.



Prophecy Nugget



Prophecy was my first love. When I became a Christian this was all I studied night and day for the first few years. I early obtained a copy of the book, "Daniel and the Revelation" by Uriah Smith and devoured it. It was a few years before I realized that the book was not perfect and that there were interpretations in it which were not necessarily one hundred percent accurate. Nevertheless it gave me a good background in understanding the prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation.

Since those early days, I have learned a lot more and my perspective on prophecy has broadened. I have learned about historicism, futurism and preterism (whew). I won't say which of those categories I fit into (maybe at times it is not all so clear-cut as these terms might suggest), but I am certain of one thing and it is that God is not circumscribed by man's limitations. I reject the idea of limiting the study of God's word to only those ideas which are described by any of those terms, "historicism," "Preterism," or "futur-

ism."

Recently, however, I saw a perspective on the study of prophecy which may be the single most useful tool which I have ever encountered in my approach to prophecy. What is this tool? It is simply this:

The single purpose of *all* prophecy, is simply to reveal Christ and to lead men to a relationship with Him. This may not seem like such a revolutionary idea but the truth is, most of the prophetic studies which I have ever listened to or read have all had as their main focus, the fortelling of the future. Many may give lip service to the concept that Christ is the purpose of all prophecy, but in actual fact, the emphasis is always on the prediction of future events.

There are several places in the Bible which make it clear that Christ is the whole purpose of prophecy. 2 Peter 1:19 says:

We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do

well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: (2 Pet 1:19)

There we see it. The purpose of prophecy is that the daystar (Christ) may arise in your hearts. It shines as a light until this purpose is accomplished. John 13:19 says:

Now I tell you before it come, that, when it is come to pass, ye may believe that I am he. (John 13:19)

The funny thing is that I often quoted that particular text and left off the last four words! This was not intentional, but the fact is, our perspective often affects the way we see things and really, that is how I remembered the verse! "I have told you before it come, that when it is come to pass you may believe!" I saw it as saying that the purpose of prophecy was to produce faith in the word, when the word came true. But in fact, the verse plainly says that the reason why Christ

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Tape of The Month

Our tape for the month of April is entitled ***"The Goal of The Law."*** This tape will be sent as usual to those who are on our tape list. If you are not on this list and would like to have this message in audiotape or CD format, then write and let us know. We will be happy to send it to you.

The Heart of **ROMANS**

Most Seventh-day Adventists know that in 1888 at the General Conference Held in Minneapolis, God sent a special message to the Church through Elders E.J. Waggoner and A.T. Jones. These messages have long been discussed and debated, but for the most part, little understood or experienced. Although the actual messages were not preserved, almost all the sermons and books of these two men, from that time forward were an expansion on that message which was given in 1888.

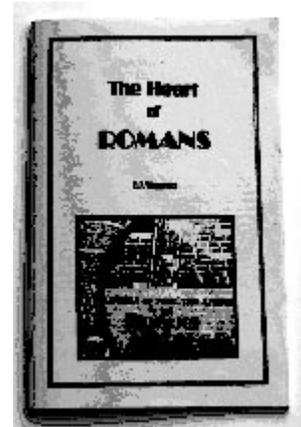
At the 1891 General Conference Waggoner continued this emphasis on Righteousness in Christ when he gave a series of studies on the book of Romans. These studies have been reprinted in totality in a book entitled, *"Bible Studies in the Book of Romans."*

We have decided to republish a part of this book consisting of Studies 8-12 which covers from chapter 5:6 - 8:16 of Romans. We believe it will be helpful to those who prefer to get right to the main issues without first having to wade through the introduction and preliminary build-up. It is our hope that this little booklet, focusing only on the most critical points will help us to be better able to appreciate what was the real heart of the message and in understanding, to experience the wonderful experience into which it was intended to lead us.

If you would like to have a copy of this booklet, then write or call us at:

Restoration Ministries,
P.O. Box 23, Knockpatrick,
Manchester, Jamaica W.I.

phone: (304) 932-4543; Jamaica: (876) 603-0821



Prophecy Nugget

Continued from Page 10

foretold the future was so that the disciples would believe that He was the One.

In fact, most of the verses which we use to support an emphasis on prophecy all teach this truth that Jesus is the purpose and the goal of prophecy.

The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to show unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John: (Rev 1:1)

This verse could be interpreted to mean, “the Revelation *given* by Jesus Christ.” However, it could just as eas-

ily mean, “the Revelation *concerning* Jesus Christ.” I believe the second meaning is the true meaning of the verse and when we approach the study of Revelation with this perspective, I am confident that those portions which have puzzled us will open up to our understanding and those portions which we think we understand will take on an entirely different meaning.

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)

This text is a favourite of Seventh-day Adventists. It is the text which we use to prove that God’s people of the last days will have the gift of prophecy

among them (usually applied to Ellen White’s writings). But one very important truth to be gleaned from the text is the fact that the role of the spirit of prophecy is to testify of Jesus!

In fact, it is not only the gift of prophecy, but the Bible teaches that the ultimate purpose of all spiritual gifts is that we all may come to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; ... Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ: (Eph 4:11-13)



Open Face

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