

The Tutor Brought Us to Christ

by Harry Osborne

Did you ever take your child to the dentist and then demand that he back off and let you fix the cavity? Would you take a child to a surgeon and demand that he let you use the scalpel? Why not? Because the dentist and surgeon are specially trained and talented for that purpose. Your place in helping your child in such situations is to bring the child to the one who is able to remedy the problem.

In New Testament times, there was a servant called a *paidagogos* by the Greeks. The *paidagogos* had a similarly limited job regarding the education of a child. This servant was charged with leading a child to the teacher. The *paidagogos* was to train and discipline the child, but the imparting of knowledge was the responsibility of the teacher. When he delivered the child to the teacher, his duty was fulfilled.

Paul uses this word in Galatians 3:24-25 (translated as "instructor," "schoolmaster" and "tutor" in different versions) when speaking of the law which came through Moses. Notice the way he expresses the purpose and place of the old law in this context:

Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor. For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ (Gal. 3:24-27).

The old law is not viewed as a continuing teacher of God's will for man, but as the trainer and disciplinarian that brought man to the master teacher - Jesus Christ. Since Christ has come into the world and taught us the complete will of God, it must follow that we are not bound by the regulations of the old law today. It served its purpose in directing man to Christ through principle and prophecy. It is now Christ who directs through His word (Heb. 1:1-2).

Abrogation of the Old Law

The bulk of 2nd Corinthians 3 deals with the same point. The writer declares that the old law was always intended to "pass away." He rebukes those who did not understand this saying, "*but their minds were hardened: for until this very day at the reading of the old covenant the same veil remains, it not being revealed to them that it is done away in Christ*" (2 Cor. 3:14).

In Colossians 2:14, the same writer speaks of the time at which that old law was taken away. Regarding the Lord's handling of the old law, the text says, "*having blotted out the bond written in ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us: and he hath taken it out of the way, nailing it to the cross.*"

Ephesians 2 is a parallel passage to Colossians 2 dealing with many of the same principles. Paul introduces the distinction between the Jews and the Gentiles that existed as long as the old law was in effect:

Therefore remember that you, once Gentiles in the flesh — who are called Uncircumcision by what is called the Circumcision made in the flesh by hands — that at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ (Eph. 2:11-13).

How could that be accomplished since the old law demanded a separation between Jews and Gentiles? As long as the law of Moses was in effect, that separation was *mandated* by law. That is why Paul shows the old law had to be taken away to accomplish the eternal will of God – the blessing of all nations in Christ:

For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace, and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity. And He came and preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were near. For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father. Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and 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, in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit (Eph. 2:14-22).

Once the law was given to Moses, God clearly commanded that no changes by addition or subtraction could be made to that law (Deut. 4:2). Thus, the commands mandating the separation of Jews and Gentiles could only be taken away by Christ, who has perfectly fulfilled the law and “has broken down the middle wall of separation” by abolishing it and giving a new law that provided for Jews and Gentiles to be united in Christ by His blood.

The book of Hebrews goes into great detail in dealing with this same point. In chapters five through seven, the writer proves that we now have a different priesthood than that which existed under the law of Moses. Therefore, he concludes, *"For the priesthood being changed, of necessity there is also a change of the law"* (Heb. 7:12). The eighth chapter of the book shows a new covenant has taken the place of the old just as Jeremiah 31:31-34 had prophesied.

Application of the Principle

Thus, the Bible plainly shows that the old law which came through Moses is no longer binding upon us, since we have now come to the teacher - Christ. We must listen to the teaching of Christ in order to learn what God expects of us today. Turning back to the old law for instruction is as out of place as taking our children to a surgeon and the trying to do the surgery ourselves. We would be charged with medical malpractice for such an action. Can we not see that the one who tries to use the Old Testament to authorize religious practice today is just as guilty of scriptural malpractice?

Many religious practices today are justified upon the basis that they were practiced in Old Testament times. The observance of the Sabbath by a variety of Sabbatarian groups (Seventh-day Adventists, Seventh Day Baptists, the Worldwide Church of God, etc.). The Catholic and Orthodox churches continue the practice of burning incense as a part of their worship. And, of course, instrumental music in worship is practiced by almost every denominational church today. All of them justify their practice in part by an appeal to the Old Testament where the use of instrumental music was authorized. Whether they appeal directly to the use of instruments in the temple or to the practice of David, both show a dependence on the Old Testament for authority in religious practice today. Where would such reasoning end?

It is interesting, however, to ask a staunch Southern Baptist, who so justifies instrumental music, if he is willing to apply his logic to the Catholic practice of burning incense. When asked to accept incense burning, he suddenly sees a problem with other aspects of Old Testament worship. But if

the Old Testament can be used properly to establish the legitimacy of instrumental music, why not include incense burning as well? And how about animal sacrifice, would that not be justified since it was also practiced in the Old Testament? How about polygamy like David practiced? If Old Testament practices are authorized for people today, all of these practices and many more would be a part of the practice of faithful Christians. The practices stand or fall together.

Conclusion

Are we to follow that old law to govern our religious practices? No, we are to find Christ's will and follow it as our authority in all things (Col. 3:16-17). It is the word of Christ that will judge us in the last day, not Moses' words (Jn. 12:48). This was the point taught to those on the mount of transfiguration (Matt. 17:1-8). The point was clearly made to the disciples present that Jesus was the sole communicator of God's will, replacing Moses and the prophets. Peter did not forget the lesson, but later proclaimed this truth, noting that Moses and others spoke of the change of law (Acts 3:22-24).

Therefore, in every aspect of our life, we must seek the instruction of Jesus Christ. He is the teacher in whom we should place total trust and confidence. He has all authority and has declared all that we need to know (Matt. 28:18-20; 2 Pet. 1:3). We must diligently seek His will (2 Tim.2:15).