

GRACE GAZETTE

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Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed.

Hebrews 12:12-13

TITHING REVISITED

For to their power, I bear record, yea, and beyond their power they were willing of themselves; Praying us with much intreaty that we would receive the gift, and take upon us the fellowship of the ministering to the saints. And this they did, not as we hoped, but first gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God. 2 Corinthians 8:3-5

Our purpose in writing the article last week entitled "Tithing" was not particularly to set forth a discourse about how the children of GOD should handle their money. Neither was it to attack those who esteem some days above others before the LORD. What we hoped to do was to address the fact that the principle upon which the freeborn children of GOD are to conduct themselves is not the same as the legal principle which religious men and the Jews of ancient times operated upon. The principle of law is one which defines and regulates each activity of mens lives. It offers men no freedom because by its very nature it is a binding force. "Do this and live, disobey and you will perish." The principle of law has no provision for mercy nor does it recognize any obedience but that which is perfect. (see Gal.3:10) Man has no natural capability of keeping the law therefore the principle of law will always be a stumbling block and a source of condemnation to him. (see Rom. 7:5; 8:3; Eph. 2:3)

GOD's law is just and good. It does not need any improvements nor can it be enhanced or diminished by anything a man may say or do. GOD's law does not change. Some have erroneously thought that the sum total of the law of GOD is set forth in the Ten Commandments which were given to Moses on Mt. Sinai. But the law of GOD is greater than the Ten Commandments. These commandments were written in stone and specifically given to the Jews. If this were "the" (exclusive, complete) law of GOD then the Gentiles would have had no law and would be guiltless. For where there is no law, sin cannot be imputed (laid to the account). (see Rom.5:13) Yet Paul said "*But the scripture hath concluded all under sin*" (Gal 3:22) The scripture plainly sets forth the fact that all men are law breakers, those to whom the Ten Commandments were given and those who have never heard of them. So we must conclude that the law of GOD is more pervasive than just that which was given to the Jews.

The LORD JESUS CHRIST is the LAWGIVER. HE clarified and established (set forth in no uncertain terms, once and for all) "the" law of GOD when HE said, "*Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.*" (Matt 22:37-39). There is no greater nor more complete law than this.

Now while HE established the law (which condemns every man and leaves us without excuse) HE also established the fact that the sons of GOD are to live by a different principle than just the bare "requirements of the law". HE said "*whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloke also. And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain.*" (Matt 5:39-41) The scripture sets forth the fact that in the establishment of the new covenant that HE would

write HIS law upon the hearts of HIS people. By this it does not mean that they would just “know” what the law is (as the Jews could read tables of stone or parchment scrolls) but that HE would implant a new “principle” within them causing them to also delight themselves in HIS law.

It is this principle which is the basis of the Christian’s life rather than the principle of law. *“For the law (or principle) of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law (or principle) of sin and death.” (Romans 8:2)* There is no law against the fruit of the SPIRIT. (see Gal.5:23) *“For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure” (Phil 2:13)* GOD’s true children are not law keepers but law lovers, not only hearers but doers. Paul said, *“For I delight in the law of God after the inward man.” (Romans 7:22)*

Many of those who faithfully tithe (give 10 percent of their increase) do so out of a genuine desire to honor the LORD. We would never wish to discourage any of GOD’s children from walking according to their conscience nor would we ever instruct someone not to tithe. We do wish to point out however that the LORD never instructed HIS children to tithe. In fact HE only took notice of an amount that was given or that should be given (that I am aware of) three times. Once was when HE commended the widow who cast in the treasury, two mites. Of her HE said, *“she of her want did cast in all that she had.” (Mark 12:44)* Another was when the woman anointed HIM with costly ointment and HE lovingly said, *“She hath done what she could.” (Mark 14:8)* The other was when the rich young ruler asked what was expected of those who enter the kingdom and HE said, *“go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor.” (Mark 10:21)* The principle which should govern the generosity of the children of GOD is not that of the law. We are not to be concerned with percentages and minimums wherein we try to fulfill some prescribed amount. Rather the principle that should govern us is this, he who is forgiven much, loveth much (see Luke 7:40-50). The principle of love demands all that we have. To give less is to fall short. The man who feels that this is too much has forgotten that he was purged of his sin. *“But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.” (2 Cor 9:6-7)*

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