

How Christ Will Rule the World - 14

The Law of God, while teaching and encouraging honesty and integrity, also made provision for the practice of kindness and care for others. We saw previously how, when the grain was being cut and stacked for drying, some was to be left for the poor. It was similar with products of the vine and tree - the later maturing fruit was to be left for the less fortunate - Deuteronomy 24:19.

The law allowed freedom for people who were hungry to eat from another person's vineyard or grain field - Deuteronomy 23:24; Matthew 12:1. Such a compassionate law will ensure, that while some people will experience difficult times, as they always have, they will never be allowed to go without the basic necessities.

The lovely aspect of this is that this support will come, not through an enforced taxation for this use by a government agency. Not only will people be brought up to "love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your might" - Deuteronomy 6:5, but also to "love your neighbor as yourself" - Leviticus 19:18.

Belonging to those "righteous judgments" which were included in the Law of God was the setting of a year of release every seventh year. It was another of the regulations which were designed to prevent the amassing of wealth by a minority at the expense of the majority. Payment of any debts ceased, work contracts for debt repayment expired.

When such workers were released, they were to be treated with generosity - "when you send him away free from you, you shall not let him go away empty-handed; you shall supply him liberally from your flock, from your threshing floor, and from your winepress. From what the Lord has blessed you with, you shall give to him" - Deuteronomy 15:13.

Money lenders would naturally not want to issue a loan too close to the year of release or he would be risking a loss, but God offered His own Providential guarantee - "If there is among you a poor man of your brethren, within any of the gates in your land which the Lord your God is giving you, you shall not harden your heart nor shut your hand from your poor brother, but you shall open your hand wide to him and willingly lend him sufficient for his need, whatever he needs."

"Beware lest there be a wicked thought in your heart, saying, 'The seventh year, the year of release, is at hand,' and your eye be evil against your poor brother and you give him nothing, and he cry out to the Lord against you, and it become sin among you. You shall surely give to him, and your heart should not be grieved when you give to him, because for this thing the Lord your God will bless you in all your works and in all to which you put your hand" - Deuteronomy 15:7.

Another provision which obviates the need of the government to administer a welfare system, was a tithing - also coming with God's own Providential guarantee - in each district every third year - "At the end of every third year you shall bring out the tithe of your produce of that year and store it up within your gates. And the Levite - donating his energies to the service of God - because he has no portion nor inheritance with you, and - the less fortunate - the stranger and the fatherless and the widow who are within your gates, may come and eat and be satisfied, that the Lord your God may bless you in all the work of your hand which you do" - Deut. 14:28.