

NO LIBERTY WITHOUT LAW.

Part 3.

Value for money.

“The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.” (Matthew 8:20)

Resistance to any consideration of the Law of the Lord invariably stems from misconceptions concerning the New Testament record. What is largely forgotten today by those who disparage the Old Testament and who relegate its writing to the limbo of unimportant things, is that the New Testament is a sequel to the Old - the history of God's independent action arising out of the tragedy of Law violation perpetrated by Israel. The above quoted lament by the Lord Jesus Christ confirms this. In the Mosaic legislation, Israel's national Constitution guaranteed permanence - a freehold land inheritance which could never be alienated and an economic system which provided for all the needs of the people just as it did for the foxes and the birds. At the time of the First Advent, Israel as a nation, had become homeless pilgrims - sent out of the Promised Land under the Bill of Divorce (Deuteronomy 24:1-4) for spiritual adultery (Jeremiah 3:8) - awaiting Redemption and subsequent re-instatement in another Promised home (2 Samuel 7:10 and Deuteronomy 32:8). Thus, at that time, the words of the Lord adequately described the nation's condition for while the foxes indeed had holes and the birds their nests, Israel had no place of comfort and certainly no security in land inheritance.

Israel's condition at the time of the First Advent was precisely that which had been prescribed in Leviticus 26:33 for Law violation and to which Hosea had made reference when indicating that they would be 'wanderers among the nations' (Hosea 9:17). The English 'wanderer' is a very graphic illustration of the Hebrew nadad for it indicates those who have no permanent abode and consequently no secure economy upon which to thrive. The nation had lost its independence under the Mosaic legislation and as wanderers, were dependent upon others in terms of both land and economics.

National independence, guaranteed under the Law, was stated in Deuteronomy 28:1-13 under the following conditions. *“And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe and to do all his commandments which I command thee this day, that the Lord thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth . . . And the Lord shall make thee the head, and not the tail; and thou shalt be above only, and thou shalt not be beneath; if that thou hearken unto the commandments of the Lord thy God, which I command thee this day, to observe and to do them.”* Being the 'head' and not the 'tail' was conditional upon obedience to all the commandments of the Lord. As an added inducement to keep the Divine Constitution, the alternative to obedience was set before the nation in the words: *“But it shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe to do all his commandments and his statutes which I command thee this day; that all these curses (penalties) shall come upon thee, and overtake thee . . . The stranger that is within thee shall get up above thee very high; and thou shalt come down very low”* (Deuteronomy 28:15-43). This indeed happened and while national independence was shattered when the strangers devoured the land (Isaiah 1:7), it finally disintegrated when the nation lost its economic freedom.

As has been seen previously, the Lord's indictment against Israel was communicated initially through both Hosea and Isaiah the prophets, the latter bluntly stating that the alien had succeeded in depriving the nation of its independence through the appropriation of the land. As the result of this loss, the fundamental economy of the nation was undermined and the flood-gates of antinomianism (lawlessness) were opened. In his continuing account of the Lord's indictment against Israel, Isaiah equated the nation with Sodom and Gomorrah for he wrote: "*Hear the word of the Lord, ye rulers of Sodom; give ear unto the law of our God, ye people of Gomorrah Thy silver is become dross, thy wine mixed with water*" (Isaiah 1:10 and 22). The priorities in the Lord's indictment against Israel are thus very clear in that they take in the violation of the land-laws as fundamental to all others with those concerning finance closely linked.

Value in the Medium of Exchange

Today's generation exercises a patronising attitude toward ancient civilisations which are generally equated with primitive and sluggish attempts to formulate policies in economics which invariably failed. This attitude generally dominates when the Economic Law of the Lord is broached. Far from accepting that the Lord God could be interested in such matters as finance, men today look on the Law of Economics in the Bible as Moses' contribution to the long list of economic failures which underwrites the attempts of men in this direction. It should be stated with all emphasis that the Economic Law of the Lord communicated by Moses did not fail because of flaws in this, but because the nation failed to keep the 'law of the strangers' which was imperative to the perfect functioning of the nation's economy. In a closed economy such as that of Israel in Canaan and such as could happen again when world sanctions are imposed upon any of the modern states in Anglo-Saxondom, there was no way of evading any of the requirements of the Law for each individual knew that it was a sin before God to break the least of the commandments and that sin was like 'leaven' which would eventually corrupt the whole nation. The 'stranger', not permitted participation in the Law, would naturally work for the abolition of such legislation and would therefore corrupt any system in economics which did not make provision for him. This certainly happened in Israel.

It would serve a very useful purpose at this stage to realise that while barter was practised in which men exchanged their labour and goods for the labour and goods of others, a system of money for value was also in operation. Abraham was part of this system for it will be recalled that in purchasing the cave of Machpelah, he paid "four hundred shekels of silver, current money with the merchant" (Genesis 23:16). A further instance of the use of 'money' is recorded in the transaction in which veils were bought for Sarah and her attendants, Abimelech paying "a thousand pieces of silver" for these (Genesis 20:16). Money was used in the purchase of food from Egypt when Jacob's sons bought this from their alienated brother Joseph (Genesis 43:21) and later, at the time of the exodus, one finds that this money was uncoined weighed value - the shekel - and had become a special system of which the standard examples were to be kept by the priests. While gold was considered as valuable, all transactions were made in silver which was the recognised currency of that time, the value of which was determined by weight.

With regard to the utilisation of existing standards, Leviticus 19:35-37 sets out the following: "*Ye shall do no unrighteousness in judgment, in mete-yard, in weights, or in measure. Just balance, just weights, a just ephah, and a just hin shall ye have; I am the Lord your God which brought you out of the land of Egypt. Therefore shall ye observe all my statutes, and all my judgments and do them: I am the Lord*". In this one may see again the priorities of the Lord for the first commandments here refer to the mete-yard, the standard measure determining the amount of land leased while the second concerns finance in that the 'weights' have to do with the talent, shekel and other weights of money. Measures (of the ephah and hin) have to do with capacity while the balances indicate a commodity economy rather than the money economy which today cripples nations and people. In the Law of the Lord, it is patently obvious that goods or

commodities had an established silver unit of value and that the increase in the volume of silver depended entirely upon the productivity or industry of the people. There was no such word as ‘inflation’ in the Israel economy for then the volume of money in circulation depended entirely upon the abundance from agriculture or industry. Today, with no righteous method of balancing gold against supply and demand, fluctuating prices and inflation are inevitable.

A Capitalist Economy

While throughout the Law of the Lord there are strict demands that all transactions conform to specific rules with every departure equated as a defilement of both men and land (Leviticus 18:24-30), the whole economy of the nation is designed as a capitalist one.

“Beware that thou forget not the Lord thy God, in not keeping his commandments, and his judgments, and his statutes, which I command thee this day: Lest when thou hast eaten and art full, and hast built goodly houses, and dwell therein; and when thy herds and thy flocks multiply, and thy silver and thy gold is multiplied, and all that thou hast is multiplied; Then thine heart be lifted up, and thou forget the Lord thy God, which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage . . . But thou shalt remember the Lord thy God: for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth, that he may establish his covenant which he sware unto thy fathers, as it is this day” (Deuteronomy 8:11-18).

From this, and contrary to the prevailing ideologies of socialism or communism, private capitalism is not only endorsed by God’s Law, but is actually supported. It will be noted in the above quoted scripture that the Lord ‘giveth thee power to get wealth’ and this power is the full application of the Law of the Lord which guarantees the individual his full share of wealth according to his productivity. It requires very little elucidation here to indicate that within all the various lands of Anglo-Saxondom there is a concerted effort toward socialism which is aimed at the abolition of private capitalism (in direct opposition to the Law of the Lord) and the implementation of state capitalism to which end communism is fully dedicated.

Individual wealth is acquired by initiative, productivity, inheritance or a gift. All these fall within the frame-work of the Law while there are stringent prohibitions against acquiring it through other means. For instance, there is the most positive prohibition against making capital out of a fellow-Israelite’s misfortune who, for a wide variety of reasons, has fallen on hard times.

“If thou lend money to any of my people that is poor by thee, thou shalt not be to him as an usurer, neither shalt thou lay upon him usury. If thou at all take thy neighbour’s raiment to pledge, thou shalt deliver it unto him by that the sun goeth down. For that is his covering only, it is his raiment for his skin: wherein shall he sleep?” (Exodus 22:25-27).

“And if thy brother be waxen poor, and fallen in decay with thee; then thou shalt relieve him: yea, though he be a stranger (Hebrew: ger, legal guest), or a sojourner; that he may live with thee. Take thou no usury of him, or increase: but fear thy God; that thy brother may live with thee. Thou shalt not give thy money upon usury, nor lend him thy victuals for increase” (Leviticus 25:35-37). The same feature may be seen in Deuteronomy 23:19-20 where the previously noted difference in the Hebrew words simply translated as ‘stranger’ in the English translation becomes apparent. *“Thou shalt not lend tax upon usury to thy brother; usury of money, usury of victuals, usury of anything that is lent upon usury. Unto a stranger (Hebrew: nokriy, one of mixed, spurious or incestuous origins) thou mayest lend upon usury; but unto thy brother thou shalt not lend upon usury: that the Lord thy God may bless thee in all that thou settest thine hand to in the land whither thou goest to possess it.”* From these Scriptures and the

prohibition against usury one may see that there is no incentive to invent means to lure people into debt for, in the Law of the Lord, no profit could be made from such a debt. Herein lies the master-piece of economic legislation for while credit is provided for in times of individual stress, such credit as a help and true favour provides the necessary assistance *without the multiplication of the debt*. While this Law was very much in evidence in the early years of the Christian dispensation, S. Stein in his *"Interest Taken by Jews from Gentiles"* indicates that it had become the practice of the 'Jews' to ascribe 'his money to a gentile and he lends it to an Israelite on interest'. From this, one may see the reason behind the Lord's denunciation of the Jews who, having usurped Israelitish identity, made the commandment of God of none effect by their traditions (Matthew 15:6). This invalidation of the commandments of the Lord was added to when the Jews created an intrinsic value in the money itself for all will surely remember the incident, just prior to the Crucifixion, when the Lord drove the money-changers out of the Temple. This was the time of the Passover, an event which made certain financial requirements of the people who were to pay half a shekel of silver (Exodus 30:12-15). As has been stated previously, Israel, under the 'bill of divorce' had become homeless pilgrims, but this did not prevent them from individually returning to Jerusalem to keep the Passover and at that time, the city was flooded with visiting true Hebrews. Various coins from many lands would have to be converted to the proper offering - the shekel and the money-changers performed this service making considerable profit in the transaction. The sale of doves too netted a fine profit to the monopoly within the Temple which used the Name of God in justification of their money market. Small wonder at the hostility of the Lord against them.

Money for Sale

Prior to passing on to the extension of the money-changers in the money-market of the Temple to the modern time, a final word on loans made under the Mosaic legislation. It has been suggested that the Lord Jesus Christ approved of interest on commercial loans - the instances of Luke 19:23 and Matthew 25:27 being cited in support of this. It should be noted that these are parables and parables are allegorical illustrations, not actual happenings. In these, the context was undoubtedly the Kingdom Gospel and the principle of interest in this is that referred to and not in money itself. The Law states: *"At the end of every seven years thou shalt make a release. And this is the manner of the release: Every creditor that lendeth ought unto his neighbour shall release it; he shall not exact it of his neighbour, or of his brother; because it is called the Lord's release"* (Deuteronomy 15:1-2). The word 'exact' in this text is translated from the Hebrew *nagas* which militates against endowing the subject with interest of any kind for it means to tax, tyrannise or harass. Thus, at no stage is a loan of any kind the basis for exploitation for gain, but a mechanism of assistance when a fellow-Israelite finds himself in dire straits.

A.M. Wade in his *"Christianity and Economics"* makes the following observations in the evolution of the modern monetary system which may be seen as the extension of the system which, being totally opposed to the Divine Law of Economics, was so roundly condemned by the Lord Jesus Christ.

"With the advent of the machine and steam power, conditions were set for a rapid increase in activity, to finance which new money was necessary. The old system of borrowing from a money-lender did not meet the requirements because he could not create new money - money being in the form of coin. Queen Elizabeth's sailors had rendered valuable assistance in this matter by their acquisition of much silver and gold bullion, but this was not a permanent source of supply. However, money-lenders made a great discovery which met the needs in one way, though it was costly in the end.

"Silversmiths had been in business offering to provide safe storage of gold and silver plate and of money, for the landed gentry, for a fee. They would issue receipts against

the valuables deposited, hence these pieces of paper represented the value of the deposit concerned.

“The silversmith, having established a reputation for honesty in the community, would find that his receipts, or notes of credit, were being exchanged for cattle and produce in local business deals thus relieving the buyers of the need to withdraw money to make the purchase, which would then be followed by the seller making a journey to deposit the money, with all the accompanying risks of highway robbery.

“With all this store of plate and money it was obvious that the silversmith was able to lend a percentage of it safely, hence he was in business to lend money and charge interest for its use. Providing he issued notes up to the value of his own money in cash, plus that on deposit with him, he was acting perfectly honourably. (Note: This would not increase the total amount of money in existence, but it would put into circulation that which would otherwise be lying in deposit.) But now we come to the great discovery - **CREDIT CREATION.**

“Having built up a reputation for integrity, the silversmith’s notes acquired the value of currency in the locality. The silversmith then awoke to the fact that he could issue additional notes safely, without the knowledge of the public. He could therefore increase his income from interest charges on ‘money’ loaned. He found from experience that on average, only one client in ten preferred to borrow cash, with all the risk of loss. In view of this it was learned that up to ten times the reserve could be issued by this piece of trickery. All would go well until the day when rumours circulated that the silversmith was insolvent, and depositors demanded their money in cash.

“Needless to say that while the going was good, this kind of money lending was highly profitable. In the earlier periods the silversmith made a charge for his services. But when he discovered that he could lend up to ten times his deposits, he was able to pay some interest to his depositors so that he could lend ten times the amount and at much higher interest also than he paid to depositors. This is how the banks operate today, but the public are not aware of the fact. Monetarists talk about the Government printing too much money, but they never allude to the practice of the banking system issuing vastly more (from five to ten times) in credit. Such concealment of the truth about the money system makes nonsense of all the arguments on the media and in the press. But in the financial pages this difference is acknowledged under the code of M1 for currency (what one might think of as real money, available for payment of wages and taxes) and M3 for total money supply, consisting mainly of this non-material, mysterious, credit created by the banks as an inverted pyramid of money available to customers as overdrafts, costing nothing to create.

The Formation of the Bank of England in 1694

“This question of money supply was a vexed problem throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Although local needs were met in one way, by the local money-lender, with his ‘elastic’ system of credit, it was not adequate for the growing needs of industry where large sums were required for investment. (Note: The money-lender did not provide a continuing source of new money, even under his system of deception. For, by the time his clients had paid their interest they would be unable to re-pay their principal. In other words, they would generally end in debt. The money-lender was really taking something out, not putting something in.) “Unrealised by the Government of the day, presumably, it was the duty and privilege of the State to provide all the means of exchange necessary for the well-being of the nation, and failing sufficient supplies of gold and silver it should have provided other means. In reality, wooden tallies had been in continuous use as debt-free credit instruments for nearly six hundred years. But for some unaccountable reason the Government surrendered its right of issue to this new privately owned company - the Bank of England.

“The Bank agreed to raise the sum of 1,200,000 pounds in cash to lend to the King (King William III) at 8 per cent interest. They were granted the right to issue notes to the value of their capital and to lend these at 8 per cent to the public. In this way they received permission to create paper money providing they held 100 per cent cover in cash.

“Needless to say this new Company, responsible also for the keeping of all State accounts for which it received an annual payment, made enormous profit. The new money available as debt to the Bank was soon taken up and the Bank then went over to the system already described, of issuing many times its cover, but this time in Bank notes, carrying the authority of the State.

“In passing, it should be remembered that in all these cases of borrowing money, from the money-lender or the Bank of England, or any bank, it is necessary to deposit an adequate security in case of failure to discharge the debt in due course. The lender in that case can fore-close on the security.

“Until a few years ago banks denied that they created money. This system is now termed ‘fractional reserve’. The bank holds onto a fraction of the deposits placed with it. In other words, 100 pounds deposited allows the bank to lend 1,000 pounds.

“Briefly, then, we see that for some obscure reason a fundamental mistake was made by surrendering to a private institution the sovereign right to issue money, costing only the printing, or in the case of Government accounts, mere figures in books, and to levy interest charges for this so-called money, with consequent debt of compound interest.

“The Government, having parted with its power to issue money, could not escape rising debt, for obvious reasons, which have no defence in reason and justice. Here, therefore, is the origin of the national debt.

“This unbelievable story receives no attention in the textbooks of economics, or in the speeches of politicians. No technical knowledge is required to see the utmost folly of a nation committing itself to national finance on this principle of debt to a private company, and later, to the privately operated banking system. It is no wonder that monetary reformers, drawing conclusions from this system, are not taken seriously. Would any rational person believe that a nation would do it? What is more, would any thinking person, learning the truth of what happened, believe that such legislation would remain unrepealed during the following three hundred years?

“The inevitable consequences of such unscientific accountancy are naturally of two kinds, as per double entry book-keeping debit and credit.

“Firstly the credit side, claimed by the lender - the banking system.

“The Bank rapidly became immensely rich and powerful. Gladstone records that in all financial matters, the Bank of England exercised supreme control. The inescapable results of debt finance are high taxation in the attempt to re-pay capital and interest on the national debt - a completely impossible task slumps, until a new round of credit had been negotiated, then booms, at roughly ten year cycles, bankruptcies, imprisonment for debts, heavy taxation, and bad industrial relations, with unflinching inflation obviously geared to the cost of the credit, created by the banking system, though always spoken of as being created by the Government.

“Every manufacturer who had borrowed money to purchase a building and its equipment committed himself to repayment on demand (as it is with over-drafts) plus interest, probably at 8 per cent. This means that in nine years he must re-pay twice the sum borrowed.

“Let us envisage all borrowers acting in unison together with the Government, starting off with the new Bank of England, founded to provide money for the expanding

economy, borrowing 10 million pounds. After nine years the Bank can demand 20 million pounds re-payment or fore-close on securities, or alternatively the borrowers could take out a further loan. The money on loan will still be required in circulation unless there is to be a slump. If every penny were paid into the Bank a debt of 10 million pounds would remain. But 10 million pounds is needed in circulation, hence to maintain the position a new loan of 20 million pounds is required which will create a debt of 40 million pounds nine years later. The system therefore is not one of supplying money or credit to the nation, but one of extracting from the nation resources for the use of that which has cost nothing to create.” (End of Quote).

From this summary by Mr. Wade, together with the intriguing history of modern banking provided by the Encyclopaedia Britannica one is able to see the consequences - the ‘but’ clauses of the Law of the Lord in operation. The modern development of true Israel in the Anglo-Celto-Saxon and kindred people are now caught in a web of financial intrigue and cannot extricate themselves. However, time is running out and one can already feel the Hand of the Lord in world affairs. While men pessimistically face the future of world socialism which is nothing less than state capitalism and are prepared to surrender to the evils of an anti-God system as the hope for a future world, they forget that He who keeps Israel neither slumbers nor sleeps (Psalm 121:4). God’s Perfect system for Economics based on true value for wealth is yet to be the experience of His People and will be forced on them even though they may not want it. It was for this purpose that He created the people and as His Word is ‘Yea and Amen’ it shall surely prosper in the thing hereunto it was sent (Isaiah 55:11). God declared His Word to Israel and in Israel and the day is fast dawning when, through the operation of His Divine Constitution, nations shall say: “Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people, for what nation is there so great, who hath God so nigh unto them, as the Lord our God is in all things that we call upon him for?”

SCRIPTURAL FACT VS. MAN'S FICTION

“And ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof: it shall be a jubile unto you; and ye shall return every man unto his possession, and ye shall return every man unto his family.” (Leviticus 25:10)

As one reviews the modern fiscal systems with the complexity of manipulation, together with the increasingly stringent controls over the money earned by the sweat of man’s brow, a sense of both hopelessness and helplessness is engendered which permeates every strata of human society. An individual, having totally committed himself to providing security for his family through labour in the field of his choice, is now face to face with the fact that his money is not his own and that the sum total of his life’s labour can be wiped out - not by some natural catastrophe, nor even by an Act of Parliament, but at the dictates of private corporations who determine the currency barometers of the world.

The Hon. L.H. Hollins, in his work *“Inflation, its Cause and the Cure”*, quoting The Hon. Reginald McKenna, Chairman of the Midland Bank just prior to the Second World War, states: “All inflations and deflations of the currency come from a private corporation (The Bank of England), whose policy is not controlled by Parliament”. It is indeed small wonder that the honest man in-the-street is becoming resentful and that the embers of this are flaring, fanned by demands for changes in the economic and financial systems of the world.

Ignorant of the fact that a perfect system of economics is ready at hand, the world in general and Anglo-Saxondom in particular continues to wallow in the theology of delusion which insists on depriving God’s People of the knowledge of the Lord’s Political Reality and the reality of His Political Constitution for them. Ignoring the warning recorded by Isaiah the prophet (Isaiah 55:8), theology persists in ‘explaining God’ Whom they mould according to their own finite reasoning and Whose Divinely-given Law they reject as totally incompatible with modern living. Within this rejection,

it is contended that 'the Mosaic statutes were suitable only for a nomadic and primitive people with absolutely no relevance in modern society'. To support this view, illustrations are drawn from passages in Scripture which undoubtedly had a bearing on life as it obtained when Moses, under the authorisation of God, presented the Law to Israel. *"When you see the ass of your enemy fallen under its load, and you can ease and free it for him, you shall help to free it with him"* (Exodus 23:5, Ferrar Fenton). Such an illustration, far from providing evidence of the so called parochial limitations of God's Law, exposes the deliberate bias of men against the discipline demanded by the Lord of His people.

By contending that modern man does not use the 'ass' as a means of transportation (which is undeniably the case in the relevant Scripture), those who resort to such gymnastics expose the fact that they have mixed their priorities by placing the proverbial 'cart before the horse'. By seizing on the illustration of the ass they have missed the principle of constructive cooperation between companies - be they transport or any other - which the Law demands. This Scripture provides the incentive to maintain a free enterprise system helping your competitor (the word 'enemy' in the relevant Scripture being translated from the Hebrew sane which indicates one who is an opponent competing in trade) to maintain his business thus guarding against monopolistic take-overs by the giant companies.

The contrast between business as practised today and that as laid down in the Law of the Lord is precisely that which Moses prescribed when he said: *"See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil"* (Deuteronomy 30:15). Business, under the present system which has been equated with that set up by the king of Babylon, centres on destructive competition which becomes war at all levels, together with its attendant consequences of misery, suffering, want and destitution. This is that against which the Lord warned in the passage of Scripture which men use in support of their contention concerning the so called parochial nature of the Law of the Lord - the story of the 'enemy', his ass and the difficult circumstances of the 'heavy load'.

Money and Usury.

In returning to the subject of money and the utilisation of established standards as laid down in Leviticus 19:35-37, it should be noted that, apart from references to the fact of its existence, not very much is recorded concerning it. What does emerge from the Scriptures is that money is metal - gold and silver, coined or stamped, having a unit of value in itself. Modern currency, which includes token coins, government notes and bank notes, are merely promises to pay in money the face value of that which has been embodied in the currency and which, by man's law, has been made legal tender. As is obvious from the money markets of the world today, the currency system lacks stability and, like the promises of man, has no stable measure of value. For centuries, both gold and silver, by weight, were the unit of value used in all ancient business transactions - illustrations of which may be found throughout the Bible (Genesis 23:16; 43:21). King David, it will be recalled, paid fifty shekels of silver to Araunah for the threshing-floor and later, six hundred shekels of gold for the entire field in which this was located (2 Samuel 24:24). The point to note is that money was in circulation and that the money was a unit of value fixed in its relation to goods without any fluctuation in the standard of the value of the metal. The command of the Lord: *"Just balance, just weights, a just ephah, and a just hin shall ye have"* (Leviticus 19:36) was intended as the stabilising standard of money while in Deuteronomy 25:13-15 is the warning against manipulation in this. *"Thou shalt not have in thine bag divers measures, a great and a small. But thou shalt have a perfect and just weight, a perfect and just measure shalt thou have: that thy days may be lengthened in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee."* The 'thou shalt not' in this instance, apart from corroborating the fact of fixed standards of value, was intended as an instruction against the deliberate fluctuating of prices by merchants.

To those who charge that the Law of the Lord had validity only in the days in which it was given, the above quoted passage concerning the prohibition against the practice of using different standards (weights and measures) should be noted. In today's business dealings, commodities in the hands of the merchants are valued at a certain price - a price which immediately decreases the moment when a purchaser takes possession of the goods no matter what the usable value of these may be. A modern illustration of this may be seen when an automobile is purchased, driven ten kilometres and then re-sold to the dealer who has already depreciated the vehicle according to his standard of values. As must be obvious, such changing and varying values tend to enrich the seller at the expense of the buyer establishing, in the modern context, that the possession of money, no matter how acquired, is more desirable than the possession of goods - a vindication indeed of the charge that "*the love of money is the root of all evil*" (1 Timothy 6:10). This is that against which the Law of the Lord gives a warning, and is as valid today as it was in that day when Moses passed it on to Israel.

To the above mentioned prohibition against different standards of value is added the warning against exploitation, within the monetary sphere, of those who fall on hard times. This comes within the category of usury. This subject is one which has challenged the exegetical skills of scholars for the past two thousand years and remains an issue which is invariably left to the conscience of the individual. While uncertainty abounds concerning this subject, the historical narrative of the Scripture indicates that usury per se was one of the main causes of the down-fall of Israel. Is it purely coincidental that Jeremiah, in protesting his innocence when persecuted by his brethren, mentioned the subject of usury in this? "*I have neither lent on usury, nor have men lent to me on usury; yet every one of them doth curse me*" (Jeremiah 15:10). It is patently obvious that this subject figured prominently among the many causes which resulted in Israel's removal from the land of Canaan.

The prophet Ezekiel too was used by the Lord to communicate the fact that usury, among other sins, contributed to Israel's demise in the land of Promise. "*The word of the Lord came unto me again, saying, What mean ye, that ye use this proverb concerning the land of Israel, saying, The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge? As I live, saith the Lord God, ye shall not have occasion any more to use this proverb in Israel He that hath not given forth upon usury, neither hath taken any increase, that hath withdrawn his hand from iniquity, hath executed true judgment between man and man, Hath walked in my statutes, and hath kept my judgments, to deal truly; he is just, he shall surely live, saith the Lord God (He that) Hath given forth upon usury, and hath taken increase: shall he then live? he shall not live: he shall surely die; his blood shall surely be upon him*" (Ezekiel 18:1-13). It is thus more than a little evident that the Lord God of Israel viewed the violation of the Law prohibiting usury as a major sin.

This being so and in view of the wide-spread practice of taking usury or interest in Anglo-Saxondom since the seventeenth century with today's economy built almost entirely upon it, a *Biblical definition* should be considered. There are, of course, many theories about this subject and a lot of speculation has endowed investment returns with the nature of usurious practices. However, as in all things, one should let God's Holy Word provide its own definitions and, as Moses said: "*What thing soever I command you, observe to do it: thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it*" (Deuteronomy 12:32). The Biblical definition of usury is established by each context in which the word is found and there is certainly no ambiguity in the text. The prohibition against usury is always found in the context of the poor from whom no increase or interest may be taken in the event of a loan having been given. "*If there be among you a poor man of one of thy brethren within any of thy gates in thy land which the Lord thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not harden thy heart, nor shut thine hand from thy poor brother*" (Deuteronomy 15:7); "*If thou lend money to any of my people that is poor by thee*" (Exodus 22:25); "*And if thy brother be waxen poor, and fallen in decay with thee take thou no usury of him, or increase*" (Leviticus 25:35-36). From these - and there are many other

corroborating passages - one may see that the poor of the land is the context in which the prohibition against usury appears. The Israelites, as distinct from the Jews, were and are not a commercial people nor were loans required for business, hence the void in prohibition against interest in the context of loans or investments in profit-making businesses. The taking of increase, in the sense of a reasonable return on financial investment in trade is nowhere forbidden in the Scriptures.

It was, of course, perfectly legitimate to take increase from a 'stranger' (Deuteronomy 23:20) - the stranger in this case being the nokriy or one of incestuous origins. Such an increase fell within the tithe or one tenth and which was then handed to the Levites who utilised it within the Israel community.

It has been noted previously that the break-down in Israel's economy in the land of Canaan was due to the integration of 'strangers' and the accommodation of these within the Israel community. As has happened all through the history of God's People Israel extending into that of their modern descendants the Anglo-Celto-Saxon and Kindred People, whenever a 'stranger', of all types referred to in the Hebrew text, are integrated with them, they have lowered their own standards to the detriment of the nation as a whole. In the land of Canaan, the Law-demanded discrimination against these strangers (Exodus 12:43 and 45; Deuteronomy 23:20) was abolished mainly through the failure of the Levitical teachers who corrupted the covenant (Malachi 2:8) and left the nation without the guidance of the Law (Hosea 4:6). The dictates of the Law became a 'strange' or 'alien' thing (Hosea 8:12) with all the prohibitions discarded in favour of a new liberalism which treated all men as equal in all respects. The Law prohibiting usury in the Israel context while permitting it in that of the 'stranger' soon lapsed and, as the Scriptures make abundantly clear, usury was rampant in Israel at the time of the captivities.

The Babylonian captivity of the southern kingdom of the house of Judah certainly did not purge these people of the pre-disposition toward accommodating strangers. Prior to the return from Babylon, the land became the domicile of un-named strangers (Ezekiel 33:24) who sought integration with the 42,360 of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin in the task of re-building Jerusalem (Ezra 4:1). The pressures exerted then finally won the day and once again the Law was flouted when the whole economic structure of the seventy weeks nation (Daniel 9:24) staggered under exorbitant interest rates which dominated all transactions (Nehemiah 5:3-13).

The Jubilee and Debt Release

Since that time, the whole world has been held to ransom by the financial strangle-hold that man's system has imposed upon it. Debt has piled upon debt with both king and subject held in a grip of iron from which there is no escape. The Law frowns upon *unnecessary borrowing*, for it is commanded that *'thou shalt not borrow'* (Deuteronomy 15:6) it being reprehensible to *'banquet upon borrowing'* (Ecclesiastes 18:33) or to build one's house *'with other men's money'* (Ecclesiastes 21:8). *"The rich ruleth over the poor, and the borrower is servant to the lender"* (Proverbs 22:7). These latter statements derive from God's fore-knowledge that His Perfect Law (Psalms 19:7) would be abused - hence His warning of the consequences of this.

The perfection of the Law takes into account the fact that life has many variables and that despite a perfect Constitution individual initiatives change from family to family. When reference is made to the 'poor in the land', the cause of their status is not generally given. This is one of the variables against which the Law of release is provided. *"And at the end of every seven years there must be a cancelling of debts, and this shall be the way of cancelling. Every creditor shall cancel the loan he made to his neighbour or to his brother: he shall make no demand for repayment, because the Lord's release has been proclaimed. A foreigner you may press for payment, but whatever of yours was due from a brother you shall cancel. However, there should be no poor among*

you, for the Lord your God will abundantly bless you in the land He will give to possess as an heritage, if you listen to the Lord your God and rightly observe all these commandments which today I am enjoining upon you” (Deuteronomy 15:1-6 Berkley version).

This Sabbatical year is referred to in three Books - Exodus 23:10-11; Leviticus 25:2-7 and Deuteronomy 15:1-6, and centres on two aspects of life in the economy of Israel. The first concerns the land which was to be rested with no cultivation of any kind to be practised during the year. The second involves the individual who, for unstated reasons has fallen into debt and which debt is then cancelled. A further release may be noted in the Jubilee, the fiftieth year after the succession of seven sabbatical years which was intended to check the tendency that might arise when the disposal of family inheritances to strangers was contemplated. “... *thou shalt number seven sabbaths of years unto thee, seven times seven years; and the space of seven sabbaths of years shall be unto thee forty and nine years And ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof: it shall be a jubile unto you; and ye shall return every man unto his possession, and ye shall return every man unto his family.*”

In this Jubilee which was inaugurated on the Day of Atonement, the God-prescribed liberty flooded the land heralding a new beginning with a clean slate and no bondage or debt. The soil was kept under the same condition of rest as had existed during the preceding sabbatical year while every Israelite returned to ‘his possession and to his family’ i.e., he recovered his right in the land originally allotted to the family of which he was a member. If, for some reason or other, an Israelite became a bondman and the period of seven years was not completed (no Israelite could be bonded for more than seven years because of the Sabbatical year of release - Exodus 21:2), the Jubilee released him in the overall liberty proclaimed throughout all the land.