

# Tithing

## A Criticism Answered

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### PREFACE

#### REFERENCES USED IN THIS PUBLICATION

- **American Standard Version** (ASV or AV) is a version of the Bible that was released in 1901. It soon came to have other names, such as the American Revised Version, the American Standard Revision, the American Standard Revised Bible, and the American Standard Edition. By the time its copyright was renewed in 1929, it had come to be known by its present name, the American Standard Version.
- **Diaglott** is a two-language polyglot translation, of the New Testament by Benjamin Wilson, first published in 1864. It is an interlinear translation with the original Greek text and a word-for-word English translation in the left column, and a full English translation in the right column.
- **King James Version** (KJV) references are used throughout this publication unless otherwise noted.
- **Revised Version** (RV) (or English Revised Version) of the Bible is a late 19th-century British revision of the King James Version of 1611. It was the first and remains the only officially authorized and recognized revision of the King James Bible.
- **Wuest:** Kenneth Samuel Wuest (1893–1962) was a noted New Testament Greek (Κοινή) scholar of the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century...produced his own English translation of the New Testament (the Wuest Expanded Translation – abbreviated WET) based on Nestle's critical text.

**Note:** Definitions of references pulled from Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia, January 2013.

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#### DISCLAIMER

This document has been formatted, proofed, and its verbiage modernized so as to save it into an easily read and/or printed electronic format.

If you point a finger of criticism at someone else, 3 fingers are pointing back to you.

*"Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, holding a straight course in the truth." [2Ti.2:15]*

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Dear Sir and Brother in Christ Jesus (Mr. F. M. H.). Your recent letter and article received. Let me express our appreciation of your eulogy concerning our literature, saying that "The Grace and Glory People have more light on more of the Scriptures than any other people with which I have come in contact." Nevertheless, I take the liberty to criticize your criticism of my article on *Tithing*. The sister to whom you refer may answer you for herself. Permit me kindly to call your attention to some plain points.

1. You intimate that we are fallen from grace because we teach tithing, and quote Galatians 5:4 "Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law." We believe that, but we do not teach justification by tithing. You dilate on Paul's letter to the Galatians, saying that he taught love and charity, but not tithing. How do you know that he did not teach tithing? The Apostle condemned the Galatian saints for turning from the simplicity of salvation by faith to being saved and perfected by circumcision and keeping The Law (compare Act.15:1, 5). He said "ye observe days, and months, and times, and years" [Gal.4:10]. Not once does he accuse them of trying to be justified, or perfected by paying the 10<sup>th</sup>. Not once did he ask them, "Have ye received the Spirit by tithing?" "Having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by tithing?" Paul nowhere in any of his precious epistles denounces tithing. Nowhere does he pronounce it an act of legality. You cannot find the first intimation in the New Testament that tithing was an act of legality, or that they who give the 10<sup>th</sup> have fallen from grace. Please do not read into any book of the Bible what is not there.
2. You say that "God shows in the Word that **ABRAM** is God's type of the 1<sup>st</sup> Adam; flesh, earthy, those in bondage, etc." Where do you get that? Not in The Book. Later, you say, "We cannot accept the personal opinions of people as being necessarily the truth." Neither can we. You make an unscriptural distinction between Abram and Abraham, teaching that Abram figures those under Law and Abraham those under grace. That is simply nonsense. You venture to condemn and contradict Heb.7:2, 4, 6—"Abraham gave a tenth of all (the spoils)" to Melchisedec by saying, "If the translator had understood the Old Testament record where it tells that **ABRAM** paid tithes, he would not ever have called the man **ABRAHAM** while referring to tithes in the New Testament." Who gives you authority to make such a statement? Do you not know that your accusation is against the Holy Spirit who inspired Paul to write "**ABRAHAM**" (Greek) and not "**ABRAM**?" The second letter "a" in the Greek has a

breathing, or tittle (a tiny hook) over it, which means “*h*.” The same mark is over the first “*a*” in the Greek AGIAI, meaning “*holy*.” The Holy Spirit did not allow it to be omitted in **ABRAHAM’S** name. Neither did He allow the translator to spell the name **ABRAM** to please any man’s fancy.

Brother, have you read Genesis 15? It begins thus: “*After these things the word of the LORD came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not Abram. I am thy shield and thy exceeding great reward.*” God had promised him a 7-fold blessing [Gen.12:1-3], and a son and progeny like the stars of heaven in number [Gen.15:4-5]. Then we read, “*and he believed in the Lord, and He counted it to him for righteousness.*” Is a man in the flesh, or counted earthy when God counts him justified? His name was **ABRAM**, not **ABRAHAM**. Was he in the flesh when believing? More. “*In the same day the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates*” [Gen.15:18]. Then in Genesis 17:1-4, we read that the Lord appeared to Abram and repeated His covenant with him, saying, “*As for me, behold, my covenant is with thee and thou shalt be a father of many nations.*” That was when his name was still **ABRAM**, which you term fleshly, earthy and legal. Now, because God had already told him that he should be the father of many nations, He changed his name from **ABRAM**, high father, to **ABRAHAM**, father of a multitude, the number of which He likened to the stars of heaven and the sands of the sea. And you say that as Abram he represented the flesh, the world, the earth, the carnal, the legal? How dare you do it?

3. You say, “I do not belong to Abram, or to his son Ishmael. I am now of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.” God said, “*I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead (Ishmael), but of the living*” [Mat.22:32]. Do you mean that you are an Israelite? For the descendants of Jacob are called Israelites. Where are the dead likened to Ishmael? And where did the Lord say, “I am not the God of Ishmael?” What you say about Galatians has much truth in it; but pray tell me on what ground do you mix in tithing over and over, when it is not even intimated, either pro or con? You state that “Abram had Ishmael by the bondwoman, and Abraham had Isaac by a freewoman.” But on the top of the next page you contradict yourself, quoting Genesis 15:4 (which refers to Abram), and saying, “We know now that this was Isaac to come.” You say, also, “Abram, the first covenant, was made of the seed which was of the earth, earthy, in bondage.” That is as ridiculous as it is unscriptural. Neither Abram nor Abraham was ever under Law, except the rule of grace by faith.
4. You referred to Romans 4:4, “*Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt,*” and add, “Don’t you see? If we desire to be under any part of the law, even tithing, then that one thing is not of grace, but of debt.” Paul’s one and only effort in Romans 4 is to prove that justification from our sins is by faith in God’s grace, entirely apart from works or self-effort. I never heard, or read, of

anyone trying to get saved by paying a 10<sup>th</sup> though you say, "The unbeliever, under the law, should pay tithes." Tithing was never required of unbelievers. We do not tithe to be justified nor to keep justified, nor to be perfected, but we tithe because we are justified and because the 10<sup>th</sup> belongs to Him who has justified us and keeps us.

5. Brother, you refer to Matthew 23:23, where Jesus Christ endorsed tithing, and exclaim, "Why, oh, why does Brother Copley quote that Scripture to God's children?" For 2 reasons: ¶ They to whom Jesus spoke were God's people professedly. He never told sinners to tithe. And, • I quoted it to give Christ's sanction to the blessed rite. Do you ignore and set aside the Beatitudes in Matthew 5? They were a part of the Sermon on the Mount, which was addressed to Israel. So you think that we strain at a gnat and swallow a camel. Ha! Ha! Well, you simply have not yet learned the deep joy and unlimited freedom of walking in the steps of our father Abraham, or Abram if you prefer; for he was both a "high, or exalted father," and a "father of many," which latter includes me. If tithing had originated with Moses, we might think it was legal. Praise God for freedom in Christ; for tithing originated with Abraham 430 years before The Law was given through Moses.
6. You say, "As the original shows and is in harmony with Genesis 14:20," Paul meant to say Abram instead of Abraham, when he wrote that "*Abraham gave the tenth*" of the spoils to Melchisedec [Heb.7:4]. If you mean the original Greek text, you are radically wrong. I fear that the error originated in your mind. Of course the original in Hebrews 7:2-6 is in harmony with Genesis 14:20. Yes, Abraham gave tithes of all to Melchisedec, an expression of faith and obedience toward God, and of praise for the victory which He wrought through Abraham's hands. Have you considered the meaning of Hebrews 7:9?

*"And as I may so say, Levi also, who receiveth tithes, payed tithes in Abraham."*

That proves the priority of Abrahams' act, and that tithing began with him instead of Moses and that in the perfect will of God. The priesthood of Jesus Christ came not after the order of Aaron, but after that of Melchisedec. If Abram was in the flesh, carnal and earthy, as you claim, how could the "*priest of the most high God*" accept his offering and bless him? Either Abram was in God's will, or both were out of His will.

7. You expatiate on spiritual sacrifices with which we agree heartily. Then you add, "But Brother Copley would put us in the place of the people under the law, paying tithes; and when he receives them, then he places himself under law, as that kind of priest who always pays tithes. So where would we all be? No other place, but under the law." Let me ask you, Brother, did Melchisedec put himself

under Law by receiving tithes from the Patriarch? According to your logic he did. But there was no Law in force then. All was of grace, under grace, and by grace. You certainly put the lofty, noble “*priest of the most high God*” in a wrong light, by saying that Abram was a type of flesh, earthy, carnal and legal. It seems to me that your view belittles the grace shown to Abraham.

Are you not treading with unclean feet on holy ground? Who gives you authority to speak so daringly of a sacred, sublime personage, whom you yourself admit to be a type of Christ?

No! No! my Friend. Abram was not in the flesh, not a type of the flesh, not earthy or carnal, not a type of law-keeping by his ministry to the great priest. He was in the perfect will of God. The Holy Spirit instructed him to give the 10<sup>th</sup> to Melchisedec. You say that Abraham did not tithe after his name was changed. How do you know? What moved Jacob, his grandson, to pay tithes? The plain inference is that Abraham paid tithes and taught Isaac to do so, and he in turn taught Jacob. Remember, they were all under grace and lived by faith. You may label Jacob as a crook and think that he did not mean what he said about tithing; but note one of the most precious portions in Holy Writ that God said to him...

*“And, behold, I am with thee and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of.” [Gen.28:15]*

May I tabulate some things to be considered about Melchisedec and Abraham?

- Melchisedec...
  - was king of Salem, king of peace.
  - He was king of righteousness [Heb.7:2].
  - He was the priest of the most high God.
  - Christ was a priest forever after the order of Melchisedec.
  - He was a minister of grace.
- Abraham...
  - was employed of God to introduce tithing. We have no record in the Scriptures, not even an intimation, that it was ever revoked.
  - Moses adopted it, not as part of The Law, but as walking in the steps of Abraham, the friend of God and Father of the faithful, and because “*all the tithe is the Lord's*” [Lev.27:30].

Paul never condemned tithing. He never classed it with works, or Law.

8. “*For if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their (Jews’) spiritual things, their duty (duty of the Jews) is also to minister unto them (Gentiles) in carnal things*” [Rom.15:27]. Brother, why have you reversed the meaning of this verse? You object to me using this and Acts 11:29-30 relative

to tithing, because you think that “tithes were not to be paid to poor saints, but to the priests” only. Perhaps you have not gone as deep into the subject as you imagine. Evidently you have not read Deuteronomy 12:18, 14:29, and 26:12-13 where Moses instructed all, including “*the stranger, the fatherless and the widow*” to eat of the tithes” (see also Deu.15:11). You forbid me intimating tithing in the chapters on giving and those pertaining to salvation. Why then do you inject tithing in portions pertaining to salvation, as Galatians, etc.?

9. You say, “It is a duty, not a debt,” to support the preacher and minister to the poor. What is the difference between a duty and a debt? “*Duty is an obligatory service, that which one is bound to do; debt, that which is due, an obligation*” (Dictionary). The words **debt** and **pay** seem to worry some folk terribly. They are very solicitous about us who proclaim grace, lest we come under The Law by using these words. Are you afraid of **obedience** which implies duty or debt? You say that “tithes and the sheaf offering were not paid through love, but of command.” Are you afraid of John 14:15 and 15:17? Jesus said, “*If you love me, keep my commandments.*” “*These things I command you that ye love one another.*” Are you familiar with Deuteronomy 6:5 and Matthew 22:37-40:

*“Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy mind...Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself ... On these TWO COMMANDMENTS hang all the law and the prophets.”*

Oh, you may exclaim; Jesus spoke to Israel. Very good. To whom did Paul speak in 1 Corinthians 13? And John in 1 John 2:8 and 3:23?

You seem to be afraid of **COMMANDMENTS** under grace. Evidently you have overlooked the record concerning the manna [Exo.16]. Israel was not to let any manna remain overnight; for the people should trust God day-by-day for their food. Moses was wroth because some disobeyed, but they were not destroyed, because they were under grace. The Law had not yet been given. On Friday, they gathered twice as much, so as not to gather any on the Sabbath, which typified God’s rest for Israel. Some of them went out to gather manna on the Sabbath, but none had fallen. Labor on the Sabbath was forbidden, because that disturbed the rest in type that Christ came to give. Hence, the Lord was displeased and said unto Moses, “*How long refuse ye to keep my **COMMANDMENTS** and my **LAWs**?*” [Exo.16:28]. The Apostle was not afraid of God’s laws and commandments under grace. He said, “*Being not without law to God, but under law (or within law) to Christ*” [1Co.9:21]. Breaking the Sabbath under grace entailed no curse as it did under The Law (see Num.15:32-35).

The fact remains that we cannot separate duty and debt and obedience and love. “*We are debtors, not to the flesh to live after the flesh*” [Rom.8:12]; but we owe to God an eternal debt of love, and Christ

reigning in us enables us to pay that debt. *“Owe no man anything but to love one another”* [Rom.13:8]. By obedience we are paying that debt continually, and yet we owe a debt of love continually. You conclude by referring to “those who have been blind on this subject, and who have been trying to keep laws that our Savior gave His life to fulfill.” Did Jesus Christ fulfill the requirement of tithing? If so, when did He do it? So important was circumcision before The Law was given, that God threatened to kill Moses because he hesitated to circumcise his son when his wife objected to it [Exo.4:24-26]. Yet circumcision was brought to an end through the death of Christ on the cross [Col.2:11]. Water baptism is the present symbol under grace. It figures, not only our death with Christ, but our resurrection also [Rom.6:3-5]. As Christ, the true Bread from heaven [Joh.6], is the anti-type of the manna, so also is He the anti-type of the Sabbath rest, or keeping of the Sabbath (compare Mat.11:28-30 with Heb.4:9-11). The shadow ended with the coming of the Glorious Substance, Jesus Christ [Col.2:16-17]. But when did tithing end? It was not instituted as a figure, a symbol, a shadow, or a type. *“Let him that is taught in the word, communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things”* [Gal.6:6]. Is that not a commandment? And, if the communication of **OFFERINGS** should be continued, why not the communication by **TITHING**? Do you wonder why God threatened Moses with death for not being willing to circumcise his son, but expressed displeasure only about breaking the Sabbath though both were under grace? The former referred to the old creation; the latter referred to the rest of the new creation.

10. Finally, exactly why do we believe in tithing? For the same reason that Moses believed it. He walked *“In the steps of that faith of our father Abraham”* [Rom.4:12] and so do we. Moses taught that *“all the tithes of the land...is the Lord's: it is holy unto the Lord”* and *“the tenth shall be holy unto the Lord”* [Lev.27:30-32]. No writer in the New Testament ever revoked that statement, though it was uttered to Israel under The Law. That shows why Abraham gave the 10<sup>th</sup>; it belonged to the Lord in his day and in Moses' day. Therefore, who dare say that the 10<sup>th</sup> does not belong to Him today? If it does not belong to Him, to whom does it belong? Someone says, “Under grace all belongs to God.” Did not all belong to Him in that sense under The Law? Do you give all to Him? You say “Yes, but I do not **PAY** tithes. I am not under law.” Paul uses the words **give** and **pay** interchangeably in Hebrews 7:4, 9. That hair-splitting difference between giving and paying was exploded before under point 9 above. If Abram and tithing are legal twins, where are Abraham's grace offerings?

Understand, we are not following Moses, but Abraham. We are not under Law in observing tithing. As in all other acts of obedience to God, we rejoice to know His will and take great pleasure in doing it. We are not at all under bondage. We are happy to follow in the footsteps of *“the friend of God.”* If you object to us gathering some details from Moses' words, we cite you to 1 Corinthians 9:8-11: *“Say I these things as a man? Or saith not the law the same also?”* Paul's

readers were not in the place of legality. Those things were “*written for our admonition*” [1Co.10:11]. We derive spiritual benefits from Old Testament writings without being in bondage to anything or any person. The testimonies of saints who tithe are profoundly interesting and instructive. They receive spiritual blessing through paying tithes. They do not look at this gracious rite through Moses’ eyes, but through the eyes of Abraham. I call it a gracious rite because it was instituted under grace. If our father in the faith gave the 10<sup>th</sup> and the prototype accepted it, how much more should we, the children in faith, give the 10<sup>th</sup> to the great High Priest?

Beloved Brother, I praise My God for the privilege of answering your criticisms. Much added light has dawned upon me on the subject, and I am convinced overwhelmingly that we are right. My prayer is that you and others may be delivered from the bondage of your supposed liberty and come into the glorious freedom of full “*obedience of faith*” [Rom.16:26] in the perfect will of God.

Sincerely in Christ Jesus,  
A. S. Copley

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