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# AN EXPERIMENT IN GIVING



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## FOREWORD

The stewardship of substance has ever been of concern to followers of Jesus Christ.

The early disciples manifested a degree of generosity that is without parallel in history. In times of great emergency, the more devout sold their lands and houses and laid the price at the Apostles' feet where distribution was made "unto each, according as any one had need." (Acts 3: 34f.) Others out of their "deep poverty" gave with joyful liberality, and "beyond their power." (II Cor. 8: 2f.) The widow gave "all that she had, even all her living." (Mark 14: 42.)

As Christians of today give, they constantly face the need of some principle to guide them in their giving. We believe that principle is found in the tithe—one tenth of all one's increase—brought regularly into the treasury of the Church, as a minimum gift.

The principle of tithing is sustained by the Scriptures at many points, but no where more conclusively than in Malachi 3: 10:

*"Bring ye the whole tithe into the store-house, that there may be food in my house, and prove me now herewith, saith Jehovah of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it."*

Here, God holds up to a whole nation the principle of the tithe as the taproot of spiritual loyalties. He presents the tithe as an experiment in giving, and challenges his children to try it.

Christians of today may well try this experiment in the light of their kingdom task!

## I. THE BASIS FOR THE EXPERIMENT.

1. *The example of the ancient Jew.* The Jew gave one-tenth of all his increase, and in addition to this his offerings. Surely the Christian should contribute as generously to the support of the world-wide task of his Saviour, through the Church, as the Jew did for the cause of his God, through the Temple!
2. *The need of the modern Christian.* The giving of the tithe will serve as a basic principle to guide the Christian in his stewardship of substance. It will encourage the development of a more responsible stewardship of all his talents.
3. *The missionary task of Christianity.* Great areas of missionary endeavor are in dire need of the kind of assistance that only increased offerings can give. Scores of our finest young people have heard the Macedonian call, but they cannot answer that call until Christians become more liberal in their gifts to missions!
4. *The testimony of God's Word.* The Bible teaches tithing. It is definitely a part of the moral law of the Old Testament (Malachi 3: 10; Lev. 27: 30). For those who are living under the grace of the New Testament, the tithe should be the "minimum," the "maximum" all!
5. *The approval of the Lord Jesus Christ.* Jesus recognized the principle of the tithe, as practiced by the Jew, and approved it. (Matt. 23: 23.)

## II. THE BLESSINGS FROM THE EXPERIMENT.

1. *Unqualified "happiness" will be enjoyed.* (Malachi 3: 10.) God definitely promises immeasurable "blessings" (happiness) to those who tithe. This happiness will consist of blessings—material or spiritual—let them take whatever form is pleasing to the Father.
2. *Spiritual horizons will be broadened.* The Christian will develop a deeper interest in the affairs of the kingdom of God throughout the world. New fountains of liberality will spring up within him.
3. *A greater salvation will be experienced.* The Christian will have about him a stable safeguard to protect him from the deadly lure of riches. "For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil; which some reaching after have been led astray from the faith, and have pierced themselves through with many sorrows." (I Tim. 6: 10.)
4. *The kingdom of God will be benefited.* Even a casual observer can visualize what would happen in the average Church if the membership would adopt this principle of stewardship as the minimum basis for giving.
5. *Jesus Christ will become more real to the giver.* "Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." (Matt. 16: 24.) The giving of the tithe in no way constitutes a "cross," but the regular giving of the tithe, through the Church, will lead to a greater spirit of self-denial!