

Pam 1328

The Pastor
AND THE
Stewardship Campaign

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— By —
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All the missionary, educational and benevolent objects of our denomination are co-ordinated and conserved in "the Seventy-Five Million Campaign." This is as it should be. **Upon the practice of stewardship depends the final and complete success of the Seventy-Five Million Movement.**

ACTION OF CONVENTION

Our Convention at Jacksonville declared through its committee that the hour is at hand when we should give faithful, unceasing and whole-hearted teaching on the Bible doctrine of stewardship. It was further stated: "As this doctrine is related to money, we express our most earnest hope that its teaching may be so convincing and persuasive as will soon lead our people everywhere, all of our people, to give systematically and joyfully, and to adopt as their standard **the tithe as the minimum of giving.** To this end, we would also express the earnest hope that it will be the joy of the pastors, teachers, editors, secretaries, board members, of all who have been entrusted with official responsibilities in connection with the work of the churches, to give unceasingly their worthiest possible emphasis to this fundamental Bible doctrine of stewardship, not only by precept but also by example."

THE PASTOR

It is the earnest conviction of the writer that **the Pastor holds the key** to unlock the door of our churches to the fullest enlistment of our membership in this essential teaching of the New Testa-

ment. The Pastor is the divine leader and organizer of his church. From this duty he must not shrink. Some ministers conceive their calling to be to preach and let the membership organize itself as best it can. The preacher who prides himself in saying "I have nothing to do with finances" is derelict in one of the paramount obligations of his ministry.

Our Lord had much to say about money. "Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt and thieves do not break through nor steal." Paul declared—"The love of money is a root of all kinds of evil." In his farewell address to the elders at Ephesus the great Apostle said, "Take heed unto yourselves and to all the flock over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with His own blood." Here the leadership of the Pastor in the direction of all the affairs connected with the development of his church is clearly stated. We ministers should read with serious searching of heart the words of the prophet—(Jeremiah 50:6) "**My people hath been lost sheep; their shepherds have caused them to go astray, they have turned them away on the mountains; they have gone from mountain to hill, they have forgotten their resting place.**" I am profoundly convinced that wherever there is failure in the advancement of God's people in Christian growth and spiritual development it is due more to the failure of the leadership of the minister than to any other cause. To quote Dr. Charles E. Jefferson, "The first permanent officials of the local congregations in the days of the Apostles were overseers, superintendents, guides, bishops, pastors, herders of the sheep." Every

minister should strive to be worthy of the inscription which is to be seen on a solitary grave at the foot of the Apennines: "He was a good man and a good guide." All this applies with special emphasis to the doctrine of stewardship.

PERSONAL TESTIMONY

It may not be amiss for the writer to say that in his own ministry it has been his privilege to lead his membership in a number of campaigns in raising specific sums of money. These have been crisis in his experience but in every case the victory has come when he laid himself on God's altar and approximated Paul's great and heroic declaration—"I will very gladly spend and be spent for you." Sometimes it has been his duty to correct erroneous ideas and methods in the financial plans of his church and while he keenly felt that to thrust himself into the breach really imperilled his position as pastor yet he has in every case felt that God had enriched his life through these crises and that he may humbly say that in every case he has emerged certainly stronger in his own convictions, and he firmly believes in the esteem of his people.

But how is the Pastor to lead in this Stewardship Campaign?

1. **Personality.** He must set a worthy example for his membership. He must give himself in word and deed if he expects the membership to be educated and developed in the idea of stewardship. It had been the writer's habit through the years quietly to put his envelope in the basket or hand his check to the treasurer without making any display of his gifts. Lately he became convinced of his duty to place his envelope every Sunday in the

basket, thus setting an example for his people. "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in Heaven." A Pastor may be falsely modest in not humbly but positively letting his people know that he gives and gives systematically, according to the teachings of the New Testament. "Upon the first day of the week, let every one of you lay by him in store as God hath prospered him." In his effort to avoid the appearance of making himself conspicuous the Pastor can easily go to the other extreme and disobey the divine injunction as expressed in the direct exhortation to live so that "others may see your good works."

II. **Precept.** The minister should teach the law of the tithe. Here are five propositions which I am convinced are impregnable in proving that it is our duty to give at least one tenth of all our income. 1. **The tithe is a fundamental principle** lying at the foundation of history and of life. This custom comes out of the study of history as taught by all nations and religions. The Greeks, Romans, Carthaginians and Arabians, as well as the ancient religions of Egypt and Babylonia, taught the duty of the tithe. Our Lord himself who is our supreme and final authority in all matters of faith and conscience confirmed this duty, which was incorporated in the Jewish law, and made the paying of the tithe obligatory for all time. (Matt. 23:-23). It should be sufficient to remark that a Christian ought to be at least as good as a Jew, and what is more, as consecrated to his religion as a heathen is to his cult and to his gods. This argument is most impressive and startling and overwhelming. 2. **The tithe is a necessary system.** It is not reasonable to suppose that our Lord would leave us to a mere whim or to the impulse or emo-

tion of the moment in the important matter of the stewardship of money. God is a God of order and of system. The universe is conducted in order, otherwise there would be only chaos where there is cosmos. Moral order is certainly as important as physical organization in the universe. 3. **The tithe is an indispensable standard.** Naturally we ask "How much?" There must be a definite standard somewhere. The universality of the tithe as a moral obligation seems to me beyond question. It is the universal minimum of the race as shown in the history of mankind so far as we have knowledge of the religions of the world. One seventh of our time and one tenth of our money belong to the Lord. But this is only the acknowledgment that "all things are yours and ye are Christ's and Christ is God's," and many should go far beyond the tenth. 4. **The tithe is an unrepealed law.** That our Lord restated and with his own authority announced the duty of the tithe is clear. Unless we are anarchists we recognize the value and importance of law. If I am not governed by some rule of authority then my impulse and feelings, which may be caused by physical or social conditions or other influences, good or bad, constitute the supreme court of authority in my moral universe. The absurdity and the peril of such an attitude of mind is manifest. 5. **The tithe brings a glorious reward.** The teachings of the Scriptures and the experience and observation so evident everywhere in human life confirm this proposition. "Give and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down and shaken together, and running over shall men give into your bosom." "It is more blessed to give than to receive." If our people would give at least the tenth of their incomes, not only would our giving be multiplied

to a sum which would astound us but our own lives would be enriched, and spiritual and material prosperity would be evident everywhere; the promise of the Gospel is for this life and also the life to come.

III. Plan. By sermons and by the distribution of pamphlets, by special studies and addresses at the mid-week service, by lectures from specialists and by campaigns in which the people may be "rooted and grounded in the faith" of this great doctrine, the church can be educated and developed to a high state of giving and led up to an appreciation of the duty of the tithe and the benevolent offerings of the membership can be vastly augmented. The Stewardship Commission is wisely urging all pastors to conduct classes in the study of Stewardship during October, which has been set aside as Stewardship month. Other ways will occur to the thoughtful, studious and ambitious pastor by which he may help to bring victory in the stewardship campaign.

IV. Perseverance. "Be not weary in well doing for in due season ye shall reap if ye faint not." Gladstone said, after the failure of one of the issues for which he stood and which finally triumphed—"I appeal to time." "Everlastingly at it with patience and purpose and a fixed faith in the cause, in the people and in the guidance of the Divine Spirit cannot fail to win. There is an ancient legend, that while the Greeks were besieging Troy they received an oracle to the effect that the city would never be taken till Achilles came to the front. The mother of Achilles had been assured that death would overtake him if he went to war, and moved by motherly fear, she contrived to have him hidden away disguised as a girl in the

court of Diomedes. Crafty old Ulysses, having heard of the oracle touching the need of the young soldier's presence before the walls of Troy, set out at once to search for him. In the guise of a peddler he effected an entrance into the castle of Diomedes, where before the eager eyes of a group of girls he spread out a glittering array of gewgaws such as girls are supposed to delight in, while, as if by chance, there was laid among them a heavy sword. Suddenly at a preconcerted signal arranged by Ulysses, a trumpet blast sounded at the gate, whereupon one of the girls, with flushing cheeks and kindling eyes, sprang forward, seized the sword and flashed it in the air, and stood forth every inch a soldier. Ulysses had found his man, and laying his hand upon his shoulder said: "Achilles, I want you." And Achilles went and Troy fell." Each Pastor is the Achilles sought by the Holy Spirit upon whose leadership depends the success of the conquest of the strongholds of ignorance, covetousness and selfishness. Is it thinkable that any Pastor will shrink from the call of duty and by timidity or cowardice fail to respond to Heaven's call remembering that upon his attitude and action depend the ultimate success of this divinely inaugurated campaign for a sublime and glorious triumph which will lift our denomination to the heights and thrill all Christendom!

