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**The Stewardship
of Money**
*or Giving the Glorious
Tenth*

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The Stewardship of Money

or

Giving the Glorious Tenth

The original meaning of a steward is a "housekeeper for a master." A parallel meaning is "dispenser of the master's goods and affairs." Sometimes it means the "treasurer of a city." In 1 Peter 4: 10, those who rightly use the gifts of God are called "good stewards," which put in the terms of today literally means "beautiful dispensers," or "bookkeeping servants of God."

That is the meaning of being a steward. We are intrusted with dispensing for God. Nothing in the household belongs by right of possession to the steward—he *dispenses* the master's goods to each heir. Indeed, the word has the meaning of dispensing the master's goods to the small children—unto the least of these. The good steward, then, is the beautiful dispenser of all the Master has intrusted to him, even to the "least of these."

The steward is given a compensation for his services by the Master. This is for his living, his comfort, the capital necessary for his making himself the very best possible steward; for the steward in the New Testament was often a slave, and later a freedman.

God allows us ninety per cent of what he gives to us as an income for our own personal expenses and enjoyment. He claims but a tenth as a requirement for his part.

Now, this is the teaching of the Bible, which faithful and true believers in that Book's

message to man must face; God has given us his goods for us to dispense as is pleasing to him. We are to keep that which is necessary for comfort, for living and for the enlargement of our capacity for usefulness. The great question with the good steward is:

“How can I so well dispense my income, my property, that God’s own work will get its full share from me, and when he comes for me to give an account of my stewardship, shall God be enabled to say, ‘You have dispensed well, you have managed my affairs honestly?’”

If you have retained for your own comfort and interest more than nine-tenths of all he intrusted to you, God can hardly say, “Well done,” and be honest to his inviolable self. So then, the claim that comes to every Christian heart is, not how much I should give, but of all that God has given me—

HOW MUCH SHOULD I KEEP?

The Book which men believe with an unswerving conviction to be the Word of God teaches that “The earth is the Lord’s and the fullness thereof; the world and they that dwell therein” (Psalm 24: 1). “Every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills” (Psalm 50: 10). “The silver is mine and the gold is mine, saith Jehovah of hosts” (Haggai 2: 8). “According as each hath received a gift, ministering it among yourselves, as good stewards (beautiful dispensers) of the manifold grace of God” (1 Peter 4: 10). “So then each one of us shall give account of himself to God” (Romans 14: 12).

This logic is direct and unavoidable. God claims the fullness of the earth; he intrusts it to us; we must give an account of our dispensing. Therefore, how much is mine?

God's Glorious Tenth, my abundant ninety per cent!

Jesus stood and saw them casting their gifts into the treasury. This haughty Pharisee gave much, but when he had given much, he had much left. A poor widow cast in all that she had—and Jesus commended her, because she cast in her all—because she had nothing left.

The judgment of Jesus Christ upon our offering is based not upon what we give, but upon how much we have left.

So then our Lord stands watching us. He knows precisely how much he has given us to dispense for him. God expects us to search the Scripture and learn whether—

THE BIBLE TEACHES GIVING THE TENTH

I call this the glorious tenth because the word "glory" comes from a word that means "estimate," "judgment," and I believe that the tenth always has been the least estimate that God has put upon our incomes to be made sacred to himself. The origin of the tenth goes as far back as the origin of the race.

The Bible teaches that the giving of a tenth was an inherent custom before the law.

Abraham gave tithes (which means one-tenth) of all to Melchizedek (Gen. 14: 20). And Jacob swore that he would give a tenth of all that God gave him, even without God's asking or commanding it (Gen. 28: 22). Melchizedek is certainly a type of Christ in his priestly relation, and, if it was inherently the custom of Jews, before the law, to give a tenth to the type, can God who sitteth in the heavens but laugh at our attempts to lower the standard, after the law, and under the warm, free hand of grace, in our offerings to the Perfect

High Priest? (Heb. 5: 9, 10.) Jacob, the deceiver, was at least more honest with God than many present-day receivers.

Then, the law prescribes the tenth. "And all the tithes (one-tenth) of the land, whether of the seed of the land or of the fruit of the tree, is the Lord's and is holy unto the Lord." The Jews were charged to leave the corners of their field unreaped that others might have that for their own, because it was the Lord's.

It is an experience often that when we preach about this "corner unreaped," a deacon will say: "It was fine, all except the part about money, and I am tired of hearing that."

The Jews gave the tenth. Ah, these miserable Jews were such honest men!

The New Testament more than commands the tenth. We believe what the New Testament says about baptism. But when we get to the questions of the tenth in the New Testament, we use the argument which our friends who are not Baptists use about baptism. They say: "Yes, the New Testament clearly teaches immersion, but it is not binding, I am free to baptize as I please."

The New Testament clearly makes the tenth, at the very least, binding and we argue: "There is no law in the New Testament, I will do as I please." But we are not honest! And the anti-immersionist can cast it into our teeth!

Here is the teaching: The Pharisees strictly gave a tenth. The Scribes gave a tenth. Jesus said (Matt. 23: 23), "Woe unto you Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, for ye pay a tenth of mint, and anise, and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy and faith; these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other (the tenth)

undone." Jesus says that even hypocrites ought to give the tenth. Are we honest?

But there is stronger ground than that. Was the Sermon on the Mount meant for Christians? It is the constitution of the Kingdom of God and the principle of living of all Christians. What is the text of the Sermon on the Mount? "Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no wise enter into the Kingdom of Heaven." Righteousness means doing the right, thinking the right, being right before God. "Except ye do better than the Pharisees and Scribes, whom I have said ought to give a tenth, ye are not fitted to be members of the Kingdom." You can not escape it. Avoiding it is a kindred thing to the Methodists and Presbyterians avoiding the question of immersion.

Try it! If you are afraid to try it, there is evidence of a stinginess, which every man or woman abhors. Try the Glorious Tenth!

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ON TITHING

1. *How can a student, who has no income, tithe?*

Just the same, as without any income, he buys books and clothes and sodas—tithing is the happy privilege one has of sacrificing through the days of meager finances. After returning from the World War for six months I made bare expenses but I kept the tithe paid.

2. *What should we tithe, net or gross income?*

If you make a regular salary tithe the gross. If you do business—keep account of all expenses in making the business transactions. Keep also an account of

every dollar received in the transactions
—tithe the difference.

3. *Should a person in debt pay the debt before tithing?*

No, pay the tithe out of the regular income and then pay your debt to your fellow man. Most any kind of a man likes the distinction of being honest, and only they are honest who pay their debts; to both God and man.

4. *Should borrowed money be tithed?*

No, that is simply a part of the debt and credit in the year's transaction. Money earned should be tithed. In the case of a housewife, who has an allowance, a skillful consecrated woman will provide for her tithe in the allowance just as she provides for sugar.

5. *Should the whole tithe be paid into the church?*

Rather through the church. I think that is what is meant by the storehouse of Malachi 3: 10. However, I believe in designating the tithe through the church as the practical thing. If I send a check to a college through my church the tithe goes into the storehouse first.

6. *How can farmers tithe?*

Keep an account of all expense and sales for the year, strike a balance and tithe it. Pay into the church weekly.

7. *How can Juniors and Intermediates, who have no regular income, tithe?*

Just like they pay a part of their so-called lack of income for delightful drinks and sweet candies. My mother

always allowed me as a Junior twenty cents a week for cutting kindling, and shoveling coal. I gave five cents a week to the Lord and had as good time as the rest of the big spenders on my 15 cents a week. But what a wonderful satisfaction that I had honored the Lord in a dignified way with my share!

In tithing the family income fathers and mothers should allow their boys and girls to do their proportionate part of the giving also.

8. *What blessings may we expect from tithing?*

Chiefly the greatest blessing is the confidence one attains toward his own integrity. Your giving the tithe justifies your Creator in trusting you with wealth. Much unhappiness is caused by people who are entrusted with money but do not know how to spend it. The tithe proves you to be so careful in handling your personal funds that you are proven worthy of being trusted by the business world in handling their money.

Another blessing is that you get into the company of the best people that ever lived on the earth in making an offering to their God. Romans, Greeks, Babylonians, Jews, Roman Catholics, Mormons, Buddhists, Moham-medans, Seventh Day Adventists practice a tithe,—the best of them do—and Christians cannot afford to fall below this standard.

The greatest blessing of all lies in the spirit that requires personal sacrifice in honoring the Lord.