

PAM
2286

Yes... I TITHE

ABRAHAM commenced
JACOB continued :
MOSES confirmed it
MALACHI commanded it and
JESUS commended it

By LOUIE D. NEWTON, President
SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION



Executive Committee
Southern Baptist Convention

Nashville, Tennessee

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Yes... I TITHE

By Louie D. Newton

Before me lies a letter from a young deacon in a country church. He writes:

"I see in our state Baptist paper that Southern Baptists are putting on an effort to enlist a million tithers. Do you tithe?"

I am answering this forthright and reasonable inquiry as follows:

"Yes, I tithe, and have tithed since the third Sunday in July, 1902, when I gave my heart and my life to Jesus. And I am very happy in an experience of forty-four years of faithfully tithing every dollar that God has entrusted to me. I am glad that Southern Baptists are turning seriously to this matter of enlisting our people in tithing. I am doing my best to get the young people of this church to adopt the tithe as the irreducible minimum of their schedule of stewardship."

Dr. Pickard's Testimony

Dr. W. L. Pickard was widely known as a preacher and educator in Georgia, serving as pastor of the First Baptist Church, Savannah, at the time he was called to the presidency of Mercer University, in 1914. After his retirement, he lived at Tifton, Georgia. One day, as I rode with one of my deacons across South Georgia, I suggested that we stop in Tifton and speak to Dr. Pickard.

He was sitting under a tree in the backyard of his beautiful cottage home, resting for a few minutes from work in his vegetable garden. It was a very hot afternoon. As we sat talking with him, Mrs. Pickard brought a pitcher of lemonade. When it was time to go, I asked Dr. Pickard this question:

"Doctor, what was that formula I heard you give the students at Mercer one morning at chapel about tithing?"

He replied:

"Give the first tenth to the Lord. Use the next eight-tenths for the obligations of life. Save the last tenth. And whoever follows that formula will always have something for love offerings, and he will have the high satisfaction of the respect of God and man."

As we drove away, my deacon said:

"Pastor, you have said many fine things to us about tithing—quite sufficient to convince me that it was right, and I have, as you know, been tithing for several years; but I want to say to you that Dr. Pickard gave us the most effective statement on tithing I have ever heard."

The Right Mood for Giving

Before we proceed further with this discussion of tithing, I want to take up the mood of giving, believing, as I most certainly do, that one must have the right motive in giving, else it becomes a mockery in the sight of God and of man.

And I have not found a better paragraph on that subject than this, from the pen of that beloved teacher, Dean Charles R. Brown, of Yale:

"The right mood for giving is one of great, glad privilege. When you sacrifice in order to give, be not of sad countenance. Anoint your head, and wash your face, and smile . . . The Old Testament rule of giving, a tenth has stood the test of experience. The Jews were blessed in basket and in store, in heart and in soul, by their practice of tithing. Let people everywhere give as they pray and live. If they are compelled to live sparingly, let there be no reproach when their giving reflects their poverty. If they live bountifully, let them give also bountifully."

The right mood for giving is from a heart of love toward God. There is no other satisfactory standard. Men dare not give to be seen of men. God looketh upon the heart. It was the widow's motive, not the two 'mites, that caught the eye of Jesus. We love him because he first loved us, and we give gladly and cheerfully because he thus gave and gives to us.

Why Should I Tithe?

Let's face the question, Why should I tithe? Let the Bible answer: Leviticus 27:30-32; Genesis 28:22; Numbers 18:26; Deuteronomy 14: 22, 28-29; 2 Chronicles 31:5; Nehemiah 13:12; Malachi 3:8-10; Matthew 23:23; Hebrews 7:4-9; 1 Corinthians 16:2; Proverbs 3:9-10.

Why should I tithe? Because it is the least a Christian can afford to do. Because it puts giving on a systematic, proportionate basis. Because it is Scriptural.

It is not a question of raising money; it is a question of growing stewards of the manifold grace of God. It is not a question of securing tithes; it is a question of securing tithers. It is not a question of getting gifts; it is a question of getting consecrated givers.

What Would It Mean?

What would it mean to get Southern Baptists to adopt tithing as the minimum basis of their giving? In the first place, it would mean some pleasant surprises. Any person who adopts the tithe as the minimum basis of his giving will be surprised at the amount of money he has for the Lord's work. He will be surprised at the deepening of his spiritual life. He will be surprised at the ease of meeting his own obligations with what is left after he gives the first tenth to the Lord.

What would it mean to our Co-operative Program? Dr. Ellis A. Fuller has recently estimated that if Southern Baptists would

tithe their incomes, it would mean that we would give five times what we are now giving. He goes farther to show that it would mean \$500,000,000 annually for the Lord's work, and on the basis of our present distribution of funds, it would mean that we would have \$200,000,000 for the southwide work of the Southern Baptist Convention. Staggering figures, you say. Well, that is what it would mean.

Can It Be Done?

Certainly, it can be done. If some are now tithing, why shouldn't others tithe? All that is needed to enlist the first million tithers amongst Southern Baptists is for enough pastors to earnestly, persistently present it to the people.

Do you remember the story of the miller, who started taking out a tithe of all the grain he ground for the members of a certain country church, keeping the tithed grain in a separate bin, and turning the money over to the treasurer of the church? Within a year, they had painted the meeting house, outside and inside, repaired the cemetery fence, put in electric lights, raised the pastor's salary, and given twice as much to missions as ever before. If you ask me if that is the best way to get people to tithe, I will quickly answer, no. But it is a rather impressive way of showing that it can be done. I never did hear the sequence of the story as to whether the people continued to tithe in that particular church. I believe people ought to tithe because it is right, not because the miller is taking out a tithe of their grain.

The Story of Mr. Rockefeller

When I was working my way through Columbia University as a reporter on the *New York World*, I interviewed the late Mr. John D. Rockefeller, Sr. In the course of the de-

lightful visit with Mr. Rockefeller, I asked him if it was true that he was a tither. He answered:

"Yes, I tithe, and I would like to tell you how it all came about. I had to begin work as a small boy to help support my mother. My first wages amounted to \$1.50 per week. The first week after I went to work, I took the \$1.50 home to my mother, and she held the money in her lap, and explained to me that she would be happy if I would give a tenth of it to the Lord. I did. And from that week, until this day, I have tithed every dollar God has ever entrusted to me. And I want to say this to you, young man, if I had not tithed the first dollar I made, I wouldn't have tithed the first million dollars I made. Tell your readers to train the children to tithe, and they will grow up to be faithful stewards unto the Lord."

There, I fully believe, is the key to the situation. We have got to begin with the boys and girls of today if we hope to have a generation of tithers tomorrow. Consequently, I stress tithing with every child that joins our church. I usually meet with this question, But how can I tithe when I do not earn any money? And I always come back with this suggestion, But you do have an allowance. Tithe that. And you could earn some money, if you would let your father and mother know that you wanted something to give. Invariably they find a way to begin tithing immediately. And often, to lead their parents with them.

A Personal Testimony

I would like to give a personal testimony. When I became a Christian, at age ten, my mother told me that I should honor the Lord with the first fruits of all his increase. I asked her how I could do that. She suggested that I pick up the eggs every afternoon, and that I might have one out of every ten eggs I

brought into the house. She paid me at the rate of fifteen cents per dozen for my portion of eggs. That was the way I earned the money that I began tithing as a boy of ten. Later, when I was earning more money—picking cotton, cutting cord wood, raising hogs, pigeons, rabbits, etc., I had more money for the Lord. But the principle was established, and I never thought of forsaking what my mother taught me.

My father strengthened this teaching by giving me a sow, suggesting that I keep books on my hogs so that I would be able to know what a tithe of my income was. The first time that sow had pigs, there were ten of them, and I sold the best one first, and gave the money to the Lord. After that, it was easy. When I planted my first cotton crop, there were ten acres, and I measured off one of the ten acres, and dedicated it to the Lord. I gathered a 500-pound bale on that acre, and gave it to the Lord. That, my friends, is the way a country boy worked out the matter of tithing. It was not difficult, then, to tithe my salary, when I became a man.

Yes, I tithe. And I believe a million other Baptist boys and girls can be enlisted in tithing, this year.

This tract can be obtained free of cost from your

Baptist state secretary.