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MISREAD TEXTS OF SCRIPTURE.

"*Prove me now.*"—Mal. iii. 10.

BY THE EDITOR.

Few passages of Holy Scripture are more frequently misread and misapplied than this. It is continually quoted to man, and pleaded with God, as if the Lord had challenged us to test His faithfulness by our importunity and faith in prayer; "Prove me now, and see 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." Whereas it has no reference whatever to prayer, but to another and much more practical method, if we may so say, of proving God's faithfulness to His promise.

"Prove me now *herewith*, saith the Lord of hosts,"—a very important word is that "*herewith!*" The two previous verses explain it. "Ye have robbed me, even this whole nation,"—evidently by withholding from the service of the Lord the tithe He claimed of the produce of their lands and of their labour. And the "devourer" had destroyed the fruits of the ground, and their vine had "cast her fruit before the time in the field;" and the Lord remonstrates with them in the words so often only partially quoted,—"*Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, if I will not open the windows of heaven and pour you out a blessing.*" Prove me, not with your psalms or your *prayers*—for these were so odious to Him that He characterizes them as "*the dung of their solemn feasts*"—but with your tithes, the money, or its equivalent, that they had wrongfully kept back from the service of the Lord!

There is a lesson here some people need very much to learn. *Money* given to the Lord will bring down a blessing that *praying* will not! Prayers of a certain kind are cheap, and worth about as much as the blessing the priest was willing to give the mendicant to whom he had refused a halfpenny. "If it is not worth a halfpenny, your Riverence," said the boy, "I don't care about having it." The boy wasn't far wrong. And the Lord cares about as little for the prayers that make no account of the tithes that belong to Him.

On the other hand, the consecration of our *money* to the Lord shows that our whole nature is moved, for the last thing and the hardest thing about some men to convert, is the *pocket*. We once heard a sermon on the words, "*But rather give alms of such things as ye have, and behold all things are clean unto you*" (Luke xi. 41), in which the preacher argued that he who has received grace to overcome the temptations of avarice and selfishness, holds the key to the conquest