

EXPERIENCES IN TITHING. VII.

Testimonies. At a missionary meeting in St. Stephen, N. B., testimonies were asked from any present who gave a tithe. Several responded:—No. 1, "The tenth is the Lord's money and he should have it." No. 2, "I find it convenient always to have something in my box when it is called for." No. 3, "Since I tried the plan I have been able to give six dollars to missions where I only gave one before, not because I have been more prospered, but when I did not tithe, the money was spent for other things and when a call came there was no money." No. 3, "I have a box marked 'The Lord's money box' and all the money that finds its way into that box is used for the Lord's work."

God's word God said, and He never took it **on tithing** back, "Will a man rob God, yet ye have robbed me." But ye say, wherein have we robbed thee? In *tithes* and *offerings*, (Mal. 3: 8). The new Testament writers did not see the need to enforce so plain a truth just as they did not the duty of keeping one-seventh of the time holy to God. Our great Teacher, however, to prevent our love of money drawing us aside from the Truth puts a "foot-note" to Malachi, that we ought to tithe even our "mint, and anise and cummin," the very smallest sources of revenue, (Matt. 23: 23).

We owe the tithe to God as a *sacred debt* which demands payment *before* all other debts. And He who owns all the "silver and the gold" has promised to help us, pay our debts and give us sufficient besides, if we *first* pay our *rent*, (Mal. 3: 10).

If a gift is to be acceptable to God, the giver must first give *himself* (2 Cor. 8: 5). Some ungodly men purchase respectability (?) and think they can also get a ticket to admit them into heaven, by giving to the church. Even those that earn their money in ruining body, mind and soul of their fellowmen with alcoholic drinks, think God will accept their blood money.

To give because we expect to profit by it is a motive unworthy of a Christian. It is nevertheless true that if we give the Lord one-tenth, we enjoy the nine-tenths more than we would the ten-tenths. In many cases God rewards temporally those that give the tithe. The nine-tenths goes farther, if it does not become larger than the whole formerly. To give one-tenth is not liberality, it is honesty with God. Liberality has to do with "free-will offerings," after the tithe is paid. Considering the need of the world one ought to reduce his expenses as much as possible, consistent with provision for his own, and give the balance to God's needy children, self-indulgence and fashion should not prevent us sending the Bread of Life to perishing souls.

Mistawasis, I. R.

A. W. LEWIS.

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A "Tither" from Nova Scotia says: "My mind was first directed to this matter twenty-five years ago on reading letters in the *Home and Foreign Record*, by Rev. E. A. McCurdy. Afterwards I read a series of tracts on 'Systematic Beneficence,' published by the Presbyterian Board, and a series of essays on *proportionate giving*, entitled 'Gold and the Gospel.' About a dozen years ago I decided to adopt giving at least the tenth. On January 1st, 1883, I opened up a book account with the Lord, Dr. and Cr. My business was partly agricultural and partly manufacturing, and I found a difficulty in estimating my actual income over and above outlay for wages, raw material, wear and tear, necessary improvements, etc., but having done the best I could I went on.

At the time I had a heavy debt on my property and the question often arose in my mind whether it was right to give to the Lord so large a proportion of my income as the one-tenth, while I owed my fellow-man. My experience has cleared my mind on that point. My financial obligations to my fellow men have been paid, and I can look back upon my dozen years of proportionate giving as the most successful years of my life. I would not go back to the old haphazard, spasmodic method of my earlier years.

The weakness of the tithing system is that the tenth is not an adequate proportion for Christians of the present day to give. I believe it was the proportion under the patriarchal dispensation, but as we come to the Mosaic dispensation a much larger proportion was demanded, and under the Gospel a still more liberal proportion is required. But adequate or inadequate as the tithing system may be, my convictions intensify with experience, that to give a consecrated portion to the Lord is better and more scriptural than to give without rule or method."

An "Ontario Farmer" giving a word of caution says:—"We refer to the goody-goody, sure-way-to-get-rich, lack-of-hard-sense, tone of some of the letters on this subject. We do not wish to be understood as in the least saying that 'our hands have gotten us this wealth,' or that God's blessing in temporal things does not descend on those who honor Him with the tenth of the increase, but only that prosperity does not come in the supernatural, not-to-be-accounted-for manner, suggested by letters that sometimes appear. We believe that the impressions which such letters sometimes give are wrong impressions, and may do much harm by setting against the whole plan those whose good sense causes them to question the logic presented. We believe God works through natural means, that prosperity, generally speaking, is the result of good judgment, industry, integrity, patience, economy, etc., and that it is because these virtues are induced, or at least strengthened by the plan of giving the tenth, that tithers are on the whole more prosperous than other people."