

The Modern Crusade

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Edited by
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THE TITHE LAW.

By FRANK T. GLASGOW, *Lexington, Va.*

The needs of our Church are:

1st. Men.

2nd. Money to sustain the men in the service of the Church militant.

The great commission is still in force: "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." Is the Church of God reasonably meeting this obligation?

Haman procured decree for the extermination of the Jews; Esther a counter-decree, not rescinding the former; but legalizing resistance to its execution. Hence the necessity that it should be known to all Jewry. Mordecai undertakes to make it known to all the Jews; to each Israelite in a kingdom embracing 127 *provinces* and in probably as many languages; from Hindoostan on the East, to Ethiopia on the West. *This he accomplished in less than nine months!*

A minister is said to have once asked an English soldier, if Queen Victoria were to command the British Army to place a decree in the hands of every creature on earth, how long this would require? After thinking the matter over, he said: "I think we could do it in about eighteen months."

With a view of measuring up to their duty, the various evangelical churches are now planning to make concerted efforts to evangelize the entire world, if possible, in our own time. How are the means to be secured to sustain this great undertaking? Coming, as these funds necessarily in the main must, from the rank and file of our people, it is urged, primarily, that there is great need of a wise and definite plan of systematic beneficence in general use over the Church. What elements should enter into such plan for each individual?

1. It should be an intelligent plan; having reference to his financial condition and income, on the one hand, and to the relative merits of the various subjects of his bounty, in the different departments of church work, on the other.

2. It should be, not haphazard, but a methodical plan.

3. It should be one which will distribute the burden of church support equitably amongst its members.

4. One that will cause least friction on part of any, and most co-operation on part of all.

5. One that can be easily understood, and applied by each person to his own financial condition.

True, large bulk-sums are gratefully received by the church, though given seldom, or only once in a lifetime. Yet regular and steady giving, throughout the years as they come and go, by the rank and file, must, and ever will be the main reliance of the church. In view of this fact, it is urged that a wise expediency suggests that each individual set apart for religious uses, some *fixed ratio* of his income, and distribute this to the various church causes in such proportions as his judgment approves. This underlying principle, of setting apart a *fixed ratio* of income, cannot be emphasized too much. This agreed to, the only remaining element to be settled, is the ratio to be adopted.

What evidence have we of God's view at any time in the past, upon this very important subject? Glancing over God's dealings with man, does not *one-tenth* appear to have been the Divine Rule? Practically, about a tenth of the people (one out of twelve tribes), was set apart to do all the official acts of religion. And the Tithes was the rule in relation to property.

This is the only system of religious finances which bears the stamp of God's approval; it was *God-appointed*. The Israelite gave one-tenth of his gross income; *he deducted the Lord's one-tenth* before he took any for himself. This was assigned to the Levites, as their living (not for civil uses). In Israel there were three kinds of offering, Tithes, Alms and Free-will offerings. The first (for the worship of God) was public, and compulsory. The others, voluntary. "The tenth shall be holy unto the Lord." "The Tithe is the Lord's"—*His peculiar property*. "Ye have robbed me," said God to Israel. "Wherein have we robbed thee?" Ans. "In Tithes and offerings." The Tithe a *debt* contributed to the worship of God, *and not a charity*.

The Tithe was once obligatory; has it been repealed? It will not suffice to say that it passed away with the Mosaic dispensation. True, it was then in force, but it was not then instituted. We are told that Jacob, a remote ancestor of Moses, paid Tithes; and that Abraham, Jacob's grandfather, paid Tithes to Melchizedek. Nor is there any

express repeal in the New Testament. The quotation frequently made from I. Cor. 16, "Upon the first day of the week, let every one of you lay by him in store as God hath prospered him" does not contravene the Tithe. On the contrary this quotation itself implies the idea of ratio: "As God hath prospered you."

Again, we are told that many of the ancient heathen nations have tithed in their religious practices; and it is argued from this fact, and from the fact that tithing prevailed prior to the Mosaic dispensation, that its practice may have been coeval with the history of the human race. That, just as in the case of Sabbath which was instituted by God in the beginning; and of the idea that the shedding of blood was essential for the remission of sins, which by tradition became common amongst most of the people of the earth, Christian and heathen, ancient and modern; so likewise the law of the Tithe may have been divinely instituted in the beginning, and the knowledge of it acquired by the peoples of the earth in a similar manner.

We may fairly conclude, however, that no one can afford to dogmatize on the question, as to whether the Tithe is now binding, or whether it has been repealed. And yet irrespective of its present legal status, is it not eminently wise and expedient to adopt and practice it? The fact is, it *has either been repealed; or it has not been repealed!* Let us face both alternations: If it has not been repealed, *it is now obligatory*, and that ends the matter. If it has been repealed, by the analogy of other repeals, it was removed to make way for something larger.

ILLUSTRATIONS.

The Passover ceased, to make room for the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

Bloody sacrifices were abolished, when the great antitypical sacrifice had been made on Calvary.

The temple was removed, that Jehovah might fill the whole earth with His presence; and that His children might worship Him anywhere, "in spirit and in truth."

The Jew gave a tenth, and he only knew the Christ through the obscurities of symbol and prophecy. We know the dying love and tender sympathies of the Son of Man. What should be the measure of our gratitude?

The Egyptians gave a tenth to the worship of an ox; the Greeks

and Romans gave a tenth to their unclean deities; the Mormans give a tenth to their infamous religion! As an expression of our love, and a symbol of our liberty, shall we give less than the heathen do?"

In Israel there were three kinds of offerings: Tithes, Alms, and Free-will offerings. The first (tithes for the worship of God), were public and obligatory. The others were voluntary.

If we adopt the Tithe, we cannot well go wrong. One-tenth of gross income, less business expenses. If practicable, give more. But give systematically a Tithe, and you will find that you will at times give more.

What are results of such a practice?

1. The comfort it brings to the giver. The confusing question, "How much am I to give this year?" is settled, and does not recur to be constantly overhauled and debated.

2. It is the plan with a promise attached, "Give, and it shall be given unto you; full measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, shall men give into your bosom."

"Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of Hosts, 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."

3. If generally adopted and practiced, it is the plan which will with certainty raise an ample fund for the continued prosecution of all the work of the church. Some are now tithing. The number is gradually increasing.

May God help us in this critical hour, and save us from mistake! May He kindly lead us to surrender at discretion, and gladly bowing at His feet, to say, "Lo! I come, I delight to do thy will, Oh! My God."