



THE LOUD CRY HERALD MINISTRY

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CONTENT

HEADING	PAGE
• The watchmen	1
• Church members to do more	1
• Practice of tithes	2
• Tithing principles	2
• Cry Aloud, Spare not	3
• Miscellaneous counsels	4

“The gospel...requires greater provision to sustain it than was called for anciently; and this makes the law of tithes and offerings of even more urgent necessity now than under the Hebrew economy.” (RH, September 10, 1889 par. 16).

“The system enjoined upon the Hebrews has not been repealed or relaxed by the One who originated it. Instead of being of no force now, it was to be more fully carried out and more extended, as salvation through Christ alone should be more fully brought to light in the Christian age.” (3 Testimonies, 392).

“Every soul converted is to have the light in regard to the Lord’s requirement for tithes and offerings. All that men enjoy they receive from the Lord’s great farm, and He is pleased to have His heritage enjoy His goods; but He has made a special contract with all who stand under the bloodstained banner of Prince Immanuel, that they may show their dependence and accountability to God.” (Evangelism, 249-250).

Begin now to act like Christians. Make no excuse for failing to give the Lord His own. Now, while mercy’s sweet voice is still heard, while it is not yet too late for wrongs to be righted, while it is called today, if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts.” (Counsels on Stewardship, 991-00).

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RETURNING

TITHES & OFFERINGS

A continuous test of loyalty to God

In this newsletter, we examine the duty of every church member to faithfully return tithes and offerings to its rightful owner. The duty to return both tithes and offerings applies to both church members and church leaders with the latter being exemplary to the former.

THE WATCHMEN TO SHOW CHURCH MEMBERS THEIR SINS

The fifty-eighth chapter of Isaiah should be studied carefully and prayerfully. Here God's messengers are given a direct, forcible message: “Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins.” It is to church-members that this message is to be given...” (RH, June 25, 1901, par 1).

“God has a message for the sinners in Zion, and the bearing of this message is the work before Seventh-day Adventists. The warning must be given. “Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet.” Be earnest and decided...Let not the truth languish upon your lips. Let not your words be words of peace and safety.” (RH June 25, par 13).

“The time has come when things must be called by their right names....The inhabitants of the Noachian world were destroyed because, after being granted a period of one hundred and twenty years in which to choose between the evil and the good, they deliberately chose to follow their own wicked ways.... Once again, before the great destruction of the world by fire, there is granted a period of test and trial...Satan is seeking to lead men in positions of trust to seek the regeneration of the world by plans of their

own devising. These men desire to be reformers, but they fail because they do not work in Christ's lines. Can they reform others, when they cannot reform themselves? ...As God's witnesses, we have a message to bear to all the world. The Lord has many children who have never heard the truth for this time. God's servants must give them the final warning.” (Letter 121, March 15, 1905, to J. E. White).

“God will not treat men according to the position they occupy, according to their possessions, or their color, but according to the character they have formed. Thus will be decided the case of each one. The punishment of those who have had abundant opportunity to know the truth, but who in blindness and unbelief have contended against God and His messengers, will be proportionate to the light they have rejected.” (RH June 25, par 16).

“Decided efforts should be made to bring the message for this time prominently before the people. The third angel is to go forth with great power. Let none ignore this work or treat it as of little importance. The truth is to be proclaimed to the world, that they may see the light.” (Christ Triumphant, p. 350).

CHURCH MEMBERS TO DO MORE THAN UNBELIEVERS

“We have far more to fear from within than from without. The hindrances to strength and success are far greater from the church itself than from the world. Unbelievers have a right to expect that those who profess to be keeping the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus, will do more than any other class to promote and honor, by their consistent lives, by their godly example and their active influence, the cause which they

represent.

But how often have the professed advocates of the truth proved the greatest obstacle to its advancement! The unbelief indulged, the doubts expressed, the darkness cherished, encourage the presence of evil angels, and open the way for the accomplishment of Satan's devices.” (ISM 122.3)

COUNSELS ON PRACTICE ON TITHES

Stewardship, 71).

During the days of Ellen G. White, the church faced three problems with regard to both tithe and offerings.

- Some leaders at church headquarters diverted funds entrusted to their care that instead of allocating the funds to the purpose designated by the donor, the money was used for other church projects.
- On occasion some church members withheld payment of the tithe, either in whole or in part, using it to cover personal emergencies at home.
- Sometimes church members decided that they—not conference officials—should choose what their tithes should be used for. (EGW CPT 8.5).

In the following paragraphs, we examine the counsels Ellen G. White gave as a solution to the ongoing problems by church officers and members alike.

TO THE DONOR

“The means thus dedicated has not always been appropriated as the self-sacrificing donors designed. Covetous, selfish men, having no spirit of self-denial or self-sacrifice themselves, have handled unfaithfully means thus brought into the treasury.” (EGWCPT 8.7).

“Those self-sacrificing, consecrated ones who render back to God the things that are His, as He requires of them, will be rewarded according to their works. Even though the means thus consecrated be misapplied so that it does not accomplish the object which the donor had in view—the glory of God and the salvation of souls—those who made the sacrifice in sincerity of soul, with an eye single to the glory of God, will not lose their reward.” (EGWCPT 8.8).

USE THE PROPER CHANNELS

“Some have been dissatisfied and have said: ‘I will no longer pay my tithe for I have no confidence in the way things are managed at the heart of the work.’ But will you rob God because you think the management of the work is not right? (EGWCPT 8.11).

“Make your complaint, plainly and openly, in the right spirit, to the proper ones. Send in your petitions for things to be adjusted and set

in order; but do not withdraw from the work of God, and prove unfaithful, because others are not doing right.” (EGWCPT 9.1).

TITHES NOT TO BE WITHHELD

In Mrs. White’s day some Seventh-day Adventists either withheld their tithes and offerings altogether, or diverted their tithe by applying it to projects of their own choosing.

This was done because the conference business, in the eyes of the member, was being improperly administered, and unworthy ministers were being paid from the tithe. (EGWCPT 9.10).

In an article entitled, “Existing Evils and Their Remedy,” Mrs. White wrote, in 1890 (EGWCPT 9.11): “You who have been withholding your means from the cause of God, read the book of Malachi, and see what is spoken there in regard to tithes and offerings. Cannot you see that it is not best under any circumstances to withhold your tithes and offerings because you are not in harmony with everything your brethren do? Unworthy ministers may receive some of the means thus raised; but dare anyone, because of this, withhold from the treasury, and brave the curse of God? I dare not. (EGWCPT 9.12).

“If the Conference business is not managed according to the order of the Lord, that is the sin of the erring ones. The Lord will not hold you responsible for it, if you do what you can to correct the evil. But do not commit sin yourselves by withholding from God His own property.” (EGWCPT 9.13).

In 1909 she wrote: “Let none feel at liberty to retain their tithe, to use according to their own judgment. They are not to use it for themselves in an emergency, nor to apply it as they see fit, even in what they may regard as the Lord’s work.” (EGWCPT 9.14).

“A very plain, definite message has been given to me for our people. I am bidden to tell them that they are making a mistake in applying the tithe to various objects which, though good in themselves, are not the object to which the Lord has said that the tithe should be applied.” (EGWCPT 9.15).

Even if a member does “set apart” the tithe as his income is received but does not bring it to the “storehouse” at regular intervals, he goes counter to inspired instruction and exposes himself to the temptation to borrow the tithe for personal use. “The Lord calls for His tithe to be given in to His treasury, strictly, honestly and faithfully, let this portion be returned to Him.” (Counsels on Stewardship, 82).

“That which has been set apart according to the Scriptures as belonging to the Lord, constitutes the revenue of the gospel, and is no longer ours. It is no better than sacrilege for a man to take from God’s treasury in order to serve himself or to serve others.” (9T, p. 246, 247).

“There are men whom God has blessed, whom He is testing to see what response they will make to His benefits. They have withheld their tithes and offerings until their debt to the Lord God of Hosts has become so great that they grow pale at the thought of rendering to the Lord His own,—a just tithe. Make haste, brethren, you have now the opportunity to be honest with God; delay not.” (Counsels on Stewardship, 97).

THE STOREHOUSE

The question as to what and where is the storehouse continues to linger in the minds of Christians. “Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse that there maybe meat in Mine house.” (Malachi 3:10).

“The tithe is the Lord’s and should be brought to the “storehouse” through the church, in which the person’s membership is held, as an act of worship.” (TithPG 20.1).

“In recognition of the Bible plan and the solemn obligation that rests upon church members as children of God and members of His body, the church, all are encouraged to return a faithful tithe (one tenth of their increase or personal income) into the denomination’s treasury.” (TithPG 20.4).

“The portion that God has reserved for Himself is not to be diverted to any other purpose than that which He has specified. Let none feel at liberty to retain the tithe to use according to their own judgment. They are not to use it for themselves in an emergency, nor to apply it as they see fit, even in what they may regard as the Lord’s work” (9T, p. 247).

The tithe plan is weakened and disrupted when the individual member decides to direct his tithe to organizations or projects of his own choice....When this practice is followed, is the person really returning the tithe to God?” (TithPG 21.4). Tithes to be brought to the storehouse—the treasury of the church.” (TithPG 22.3).

TITHING PRINCIPLES AND GUIDELINES

“Honor the Lord with thy substance and with the first fruits of all thine increase.” (Proverbs 3:9). “Of all our income we should make the first appropriation to God.” (4T, p. 474).

“We are not to consecrate to Him what remains of our income after all our real or imaginary wants are satisfied; but before any portion is consumed we should set apart that which God has specified as His.” (Counsels on

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THE REVENUE OF THE GOSPEL

"That which has been set apart according to the Scriptures as belonging to the Lord constitutes the revenue of the gospel and is no longer ours." (9T 246.5).

"Men should testify to their interest in the cause of God by giving of their substance. If such an interest were manifested, the bond of Christian brotherhood would exist and increase in strength between all the members of Christ's family." (CS 38.5).

"The Lord has made the proclamation of the gospel dependent upon the labors and the

voluntary gifts of all His people." (9T 246.4)

"Let no one, when brought into a strait place, take money consecrated to religious purposes and use it for his advantage, soothing his conscience by saying that he will repay it at some future time." (9T 246.5).

"Let none feel at liberty to retain their tithe, to use according to their own judgment. They are not to use it for themselves in an emergency, nor to apply it as they see fit, even in what they may regard as the Lord's work." (9T 247.1).

"God desires all His stewards to be exact in following divine arrangements. They are not to offset the Lord's plans by performing some deed of charity or giving some gift or some offering when or how they, the human agents, shall see fit." (9T 248.1).

I am bidden to tell them that they are making a mistake in applying the tithe to various objects which, though good in themselves, are not the object to which the Lord has said that the tithe should be applied. Those who make this use of the tithe are departing from the Lord's arrangement. God will judge for these things." (9T 248.3).

"Men are tempted to use their means in self-indulgence, in the gratification of appetite, in personal adornment, or in the embellishment of their homes. For these objects many church members do not hesitate to spend freely and even extravagantly. But when asked to give to the Lord's treasury, to carry forward His work in the earth, they demur. Perhaps, feeling that they cannot well do otherwise, they dole out a sum far smaller than they often spend for needless indulgence. They manifest no real love for Christ's service, no earnest interest in the salvation of souls. What marvel that the Christian life of such ones is but a dwarfed, sickly existence!" (AA 338.2).

THE GREATEST CRIME

"Ye [are] cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, [even] this whole nation." (Malachi 3:9). A robber is one who takes that to which he has no right. From a spiritual stand point a robber is a professed Christian who retains what belongs to God in tithes and offerings. In secular government the most serious and violent crimes are murder, robbery, assault and rape. Robbery is listed as one of the serious crimes compared to theft. While theft is to steal property without force, a robber steals by instilling force or fear. Robbery also appears in the form of corruption and is a crime of opportunity. Due to its severity, official reaction to robbery is often swift and merciless and in some countries come in the form of execution of offenders. It is next to the crime of overthrowing a legitimate govern-

ment.

The crime of robbery is to deprive a government of its resources which it can use to sustain and maintain itself and this is nothing but an attempt to overthrow a government. Whoever retains what belongs to God, commits not only a serious crime, but is attempt to overthrow the government of God. "The upbuilding of the kingdom of God is retarded or urged forward according to the unfaithfulness or fidelity of human agencies (ChS 211.1).

God regards this a very serious crime. "To defraud God is the greatest crime of which man can be guilty; and yet this sin is deep and widespread." (CS, p 86).

"The work of evangelizing the world has been greatly hindered by personal selfishness. Some, even among professing Christians, are unable to see that the work of the gospel is to be supported by the means that Christ has given them." (9T 52.1).

There is an important lesson in The Lord's prayer. We cannot pray this prayer without recognizing and working towards the coming of His kingdom (Matthew 6:10).

"God is our Father, who loves and cares for us as His children; He is also the great King of the universe. The interests of His kingdom are our interests, and we are to work for its upbuilding." (Hvn 22.1).

Do not keep, but take the tithes. "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house..." (Mal. 3:10). The word "bring" implies that I cannot keep the tithe in my house and for myself, but that it must leave my house (taken away) to the storehouse. A curse is upon the withholder. "The curse of God will surely come upon those who rob him in tithes and offerings." (RH, April 20, 1905 par. 19).

A TEST OF LOYALTY

"Honor the Lord with thy substance, and with the first fruits of all thine increase: so shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine. This scripture teaches that God, as the Giver of all our benefits, has a claim upon them all; that His claim should be our first consideration; and that a special blessing will attend all who honor this claim." (CS 65.1, 2).

"So the Lord has imparted to us heaven's richest treasure in giving us Jesus. With Him He has given us all things richly to enjoy. The productions of the earth, the bountiful harvests, the treasures of gold and silver, are His gifts. Houses and lands, food and clothing, He has placed in the possession of men. He asks us to acknowledge Him as the Giver of all things; and for this reason He says, Of all your possessions I reserve a tenth for Myself, besides gifts and offerings, which are to be

brought into My storehouse. This is the provision God has made for carrying forward the work of the gospel.” (CS 65.4).

“The Garden of Eden with its disobedience and the Garden of Gethsemane with its obedience are presented before us.” (5BC 1103.5). In the Garden of Gethsemane there we find sleeping disciples (5BC 1104.2) who represent “a sleeping church.” (2T 205.1). Therefore, “Solemn are the responsibilities resting upon those who are called to act as leaders in the church of God on earth.” (AA 92.2).

A FALSE RELIGION

True religion is distinct from church religion because church religion is not true religion. “And in that day seven women shall take hold of one man, saying, We will eat our own bread, and wear our own apparel: only let us be called by thy name, to take away our reproach.” (Isaiah 4:1).

“...there may be an apparent connection with Christ without a real union with Him by faith. A profession of religion places men in the church, but the character and conduct show whether they are in connection with Christ.” (DA, 676.5).

PRINCIPLE SAME AS THE SABBATH

“God gives man nine tenths, while He claims one tenth for sacred purposes, as He has given man six days for his own work and has reserved and set apart the seventh day to Himself. For, like the Sabbath, a tenth of the increase is sacred; God has reserved it for Himself. He will carry forward His work upon the earth with the increase of the means that He has entrusted to man.” (3T 395.2).

“Our heavenly Father bestows gifts and solicits a portion back, that He may test us whether we are worthy to have the gift of everlasting life.” (3T 408.3).

“The Lord graciously entrusts to His stewards His treasures, but of the tenth He says: This is Mine. Just in proportion as God has given His property to man, so man is to return to God a faithful tithe of all his substance. This distinct arrangement was made by Jesus Christ Himself.” (6T 384.2).

NOT FOR OFF SETTING YOUR DEBTS

“The man who has been unfortunate, and finds himself in debt, should not take the Lord's portion to cancel his debts to his fellow men. He should consider that in these transactions he is being tested, and that in reserving the Lord's portion for his own use he is robbing the Giver.

“He is debtor to God for all that he has, but he becomes a double debtor when he uses the Lord's reserved fund in paying debts to human

beings. “Unfaithfulness to God” is written against his name in the books of heaven. He has an account to settle with God for appropriating the Lord's means for his own convenience. And the want of principle shown in his misappropriation of God's means will be revealed in his management of other matters. It will be seen in all matters connected with his own business. The man who will rob God is cultivating traits of character that will cut him off from admittance into the family of God above.” (6T 391.1).

“If the heart, the soul, the strength, the life, are surrendered wholly to God, if the affections are given wholly to Him, we shall make Him supreme in all our service. When we are in harmony with God, the thought of His honor and glory comes before everything else. No person is preferred before Him in our gifts and offerings. We have a sense of what it means to be partners with Christ in the sacred firm.” (6T 103.4).

A CORRUPT TREE

The Bible gives ample examples that a tree is known by its fruits. “Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.” (Matt. 7:20). It is also written “Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit.” (Matt. 7:17). What happens to a tree that bringeth evil fruit? It is written: “Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.” (Matt. 7:19).

NO OTHER GODS BEFORE ME

Withholding the tithes and offerings is a violation of the first commandment. Robbery is stealing, therefore violates the first commandment which says, “thou shall have no other gods before me.” (Exodus 20:3). Returning of tithes and offerings requires that we put God first and when we withhold, we put someone else in the place of God and is therefore a violation of the first commandment.

Hasten to restore the pledge. “[If] the wicked restore the pledge, give again that he had robbed, walk in the statutes of life, without committing iniquity; he shall surely live, he shall not die.” (Ezekiel 33:15-16). In paying the tithes, do not return part of the tithes and keep part for yourself. (Acts 5:3).

Not returning tithes is to reject Christ. Remember, “Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth [it] not, to him it is sin.” (James 4:17). Not returning tithes, is to reject Christ, “Then cried they all again, saying, Not this man, but Barabbas. Now Barabbas was a robber.” (John 18:40). Whoever does not return tithes is a corrupt tree, “Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit.” (Matt. 7:17).

Are trees to be hewn? A corrupt tree must be hewn down, “Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.” (Matt. 7:19). Thou shalt have no other gods before me.” (Ex. 20:3). This is the first commandment of the decalogue. It enjoins all to have no other gods before them, but to love God first (Mark 12:30) and the neighbour second (Mark 12:31).

We cannot love God without recognising Him as supreme in all life considerations. If we love Him first, we shall not violate any of his commands including the injunction ““Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse...” (Mal. 3:10). This is a divine command and failing to obey it is to commit sin. A curse is pronounced on anyone who violates it. (Mal. 3:9). Because the Malachi commandment demands from every Christian to consider God first, this is the first Commandment. It is the first commandment that demands consideration of God first in all things, “Thou shalt have no other gods before me.” (Exodus 20:3). The earth and the fullness thereof is God's (Ps. 24:1), all the creation is his (Ps. 50:10-15) and silver and gold is also his (Hag. 2:8). As a recognition of his supremacy over all his creation, man who was given dominion over the earth, must honour God with his substance (Prov. 3:9). This is a continual test of faith and loyalty on the part of man.

TAKE TO THE STOREHOUSE

The storehouse is at the church. For the children of Israel and the children of Levi shall bring the offering of the corn, of the new wine, and the oil, unto the chambers, where [are] the vessels of the sanctuary, and the priests that minister ...” (Neh. 10:38-39). In the tabernacle was designated a chamber, a room or compartment, where the tithe was kept. Therefore, the tithe was brought to a central place, the chamber where it was kept and from which the Levites were sustained. This system was instituted so that the house of God should not be forsaken. “Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse” (Malachi 3:10), is God's command. No appeal is made to gratitude or to generosity. This is a matter of simple honesty. The tithe is the Lord's; and He bids us return to Him that which is His own.” (Ed 138.4).

A DIVINE PROMISE

When you return, the remainder is blessed. “When that which God claims is rendered to Him, the remainder will be sanctified and blessed to our own use. But when a man robs God by withholding that which He requires,

“Wherever there has been any neglect on your part to give back to the Lord His own, repent with contrition of soul, and make restitution, lest His curse rest upon you.” (CS, p 98).