

# The Proper use of the Tithe

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## SELF-DENIAL, AND SUPPORT OF THE MINISTRY.

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COORANBONG, N. S. W., March 14, 1897.

LETTERS have come to me from Oakland and Battle Creek, making inquiries as to the disposition made of the tithe. The writers supposed that they were authorized to use the tithe-money in meeting the expenses of the church, as these expenses were quite heavy. From that which has been shown me, the tithe is not to be withdrawn from the treasury. Every penny of this money is the Lord's own sacred treasure, to be appropriated for a special use.

There was a time when there was very little missionary work done, and the tithe was accu-

mulating. In some instances the tithe was used for similar purposes as is now proposed. When the Lord's people felt aroused to do missionary work in home and foreign missions, and to send missionaries to all parts of the world, those handling sacred interests should have had clear, sanctified discernment to understand how the means should be appropriated. When they see ministers laboring without money to support them, and the treasury is empty, then that treasury is to be strictly guarded. Not one penny is to be removed from it. Ministers have just as much right to their wages as have the workers employed in the Review and Herald Office, and the laborers in the Pacific Press Publishing house. A great robbery has been practised in the meager wages paid to some of the workers. If they give their time and thought and labor to the service of the Master, they should have wages enough to supply their families with food and clothing.

The tithe is required of the minister. He does his share according to his ability, and should receive his due. The ministers are often placed where they have to lead out in donations in the places where they labor, and in defraying the expenses of tents, besides providing food for themselves. Many have families at home to support. If they were not traveling from place to place, less expensive clothing could be worn; the extra money paid for tents at camp-meetings and in donations, so frequently leave them no surplus that they feel restrained from acting a part in various enterprises which they would be pleased to participate in. This is expected of them, and in order to do this, they pledge. This pledge they are often a long time in paying: it hangs upon them as a debt which they are frequently

unable to lift. It is a great self-denial on the part of these men to thus separate from their families. They are forced to take up with all kinds of fare, and to eat all kinds of food, especially in countries where the standard of truth is first lifted.

The light which the Lord has given me on this subject, is that the means in the treasury for the support of the ministers in the different fields is not to be used for any other purpose. If an honest tithe were paid, and the money coming into the treasury were carefully guarded, the ministers would receive a just wage. The auditing committee has often been composed of men who were farmers. These could dress in coarse clothing appropriate for the work they were doing. They raised all they needed as a family to subsist upon, and they knew not what the outlay of a minister must necessarily be when he goes into a new field to labor for perishing souls. The outlook is often hard and discouraging. Some fields, when the work is first opened up, are encouraging; but the reare other fields that are not so. Both must receive the truth. The minister must labor and pray. He must visit the different families. Frequently he finds the people so poor that they have little to eat, and no room in which to sleep. Often means have to be given to the very needy to supply their hunger and cover their nakedness. Then what injustice to have a company of men as auditing committee who by a dash of the pen will disappoint a distressed minister who is in need of every cent that he has been led to expect. There would be just as much fairness in having a committee decide whether the men employed in our institutions should have their stipulated wages, or should have them curtailed as the human agent, who will himself be

in nowise affected by the strait places they may pass through, shall decide.

The minister who labors should be sustained. But notwithstanding this, those who are officiating in this work see that there is not money in the treasury to pay the minister. They are withdrawing the tithe for other expenses,—to keep up the meeting-house necessities or some charity. God is not glorified in any such work. We have to raise our voice against this kind of management. Let those who have comfortable homes, and are not called upon to leave their families, consider this matter. Gifts and offerings should be brought in by the people as they are privileged in having houses of worship, as in Battle Creek and Oakland, two of our largest churches. Let house-to-house labor be done in setting before the families in Battle Creek and Oakland their duty in acting a part in meeting these expenses, which may be called common or secular, and let not the treasury be robbed. There has not been money in the treasury to supply ministers for the service of God.

Let those who take such delight in devoting so largely of their means to clothing their bodies, consider that they are using God's money, that might be invested in bearing the truth to those that are perishing in their sins. They need the gospel presented to them, they need to be taught that they must be clothed with the garments of the righteousness of Christ, else they cannot have a place with the saints in light. Those who have had great light, and yet continue to follow the fashions of the world in dress, are using the Lord's money to gratify their pride. They are robbing the cause of God of the means which might far better, for their present and

eternal good, be invested in missionary work. When those whose names are on the church books shall be converted, they will no longer delight in their display of dress in the house of God. This is looked upon by the Lord's holy Watcher from heaven, who traces the whole history from cause to effect. He sees what might have been done with the means, had it been used to glorify God, rather than to minister to their pride, and separate their souls from God. The Lord will not serve with the selfish indulgence of these men and women. Had they clothed themselves with modest apparel, as the Holy Spirit has specified they should do, they would have had the blessing of God. The atmosphere surrounding their souls would not be as a spiritual malaria to others who newly come into the faith. Such examples of show and of the love of dress, of following the fashions of this degenerate age, — this leaven of pride and extravagance is gathering to itself, until the whole lump will be leavened. Let the money expended for bicycles be invested in the cause of God.

The church without living godliness is like the fig tree, to which Christ, hungering for food, came and searched for fruit, and found nothing but leaves. This is as it is with many who profess religion; and our position, having as we have, great light, great opportunities, great privileges, will bring the curse that came upon the fig tree, upon all who have a name to live, and are fruitless. When Christ uttered the words, "Let no fruit grow on thee henceforth forever," presently "the fig tree withered away."

The Lord is coming speedily, yet, notwithstanding his professed people read the signs of

the times,— of famines, of thousands being swept away by earthquakes and floods, by fire, by calamities by sea and land, by plagues, by war and bloodshed,— the love of self so deadens the spiritual senses, that the day of the Lord will come upon them as a thief in the night, and he declares, "They shall not escape." The Lord is to judge both quick and dead at his appearing and his kingdom. Will these stand in their pride and self-glorification before that tribunal, when the judgment will sit, and the books will be opened, and every man shall be judged according as his works have been?

Christ declares, "I know thy works." Does the Lord seem to be too far away, too indistinct, to produce any appreciable effect on the conduct of the human agent? Shall the hellish shadow of Satan ever be penetrated by living faith? Christ is a personal, present Saviour, one who is ordering all things for his own glory. He is accessible at all times if we will come to him in contrition of soul. I would urge upon all in Battle Creek to wake from your spiritual death-like slumber. Unless you do, it will pass into the slumber of eternal death.

Those who have used the tithe-money to supply the common necessities of the house of God, have taken the money that should go to sustain ministers in doing his work, in preparing the way for Christ's second appearing. Just as surely as you do this work, you misapply the resources which God has told you to retain in his treasure-house, that it may be full, to be used in his service. This work is something of which all who have taken a part in should be ashamed. They have used their influence to withdraw from God's

treasury a fund that is consecrated to a sacred purpose. From those who do this, the blessing of the Lord will be removed.

The tithe-money must be kept sacred. There are ministers who receive nothing for their labor; for there was no money to pay them. This I saw would be; for the management is wrong. Let every member of the church deny himself in dress, at the table, in house furniture, in carpets, in many things that are enjoyable, but not a necessity. There are souls to be saved. Can you be called workers together with Christ, can you be wearing his yoke, and yet your indulgence be cutting off the supplies of God's house? I was permitted to hear your faithless bemoaning of "the hard times." You should deny yourselves in many ways, and be thankful for that which you have. Talk no more your unbelief. If the brethren in responsible positions would talk faith and courage to all the workers in the Office, if you would talk self-denial in the church, if you would practise it in your own families, if you would bear a clean-cut testimony, which you have not borne, if you would all be mouthpieces for God, and present to the church the necessity for self-denial, the humiliation of the soul, praying for the Lord to forgive your pride, your foolish, senseless vanity, the Lord may pass by, and leave you a blessing.

I call upon editors, I call upon every responsible man in the office of the Pacific Press to believe in Jesus Christ and the truth for this time. Let your works show that you do believe your words of murmuring in the past to be wrong, that it is time now for you to cast your net on the right side of the ship, the side of faith. For the rest of your days, while probation lasts, show what

can be done by a self-denying, self-sacrificing, consecrated, living church.

There is a work to be done in the Office and in the Sanitarium. There is a work to be done in the churches of California. A different testimony must go forth from lips touched with the live coal from off the altar. When you are in Christ, you can bear a living testimony. But throughout the churches there is selfishness and sin, dishonesty, unbelief, criticism, and fault-finding. It is high time now for you to awake out of sleep. Believe with all your heart that Christ died for the world, that he died for you, and that you must have an abiding Christ, and carry a message inspired by the Holy Ghost. We read that in olden times holy men spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. This is what we need; this is what we must have. It is not a divided heart, a monotonous message, that we have to bear; it is a living message to dying men. Then talk not of appropriating the tithe that is to send forth ministers to preach the word. Go to work, and see if you cannot speak words that will melt and subdue hearts. I am terribly alarmed. I say again, Put away your unbelief. You make the people selfish and unbelieving because you talk selfishness and unbelief. You are to work now in an opposite direction, after seeking the Lord with all your heart.

We need money here to carry forward the work. But we have no such resources to draw upon as you have in Oakland and Battle Creek. We cannot sustain ministers in the field; for there is no money in the treasury. I know from the light given me of God that there should be many workers in California. There should be workers



in Michigan, and yet men are questioning in regard to using the tithe for other purposes than that which the Lord has specified. In California, in all our cities in America, in the highways and byways, men and women should go forth as consecrated workers, who will proclaim the message of warning. In Michigan, and Battle Creek especially, it has been thought that Dr. Kellogg was working disproportionately for the poor and wretched ones, in medical missionary lines. Then why does not the General Conference go to work? Why does it allow the treasury which should be kept for the purpose of sustaining the ministry, to be drawn upon, and diverted to common things? Why should it permit its ministers to be half paid, and at the same time talk so begrudgingly of that which they do receive? When this work shall cease in our churches, a living testimony will go forth from human lips, under the operation of the Holy Ghost.

Burdens have been borne, projects have been entered into, and time has been given to matters that God never intended any of you to study upon, or to undertake. Now, for Christ's sake, change the order of things. In the place of having ministers drawn from their fields of labor to learn more, encourage them to communicate what they do know. You have robbed a world that is perishing in its sins, of labor it should have had. If these men will work, if they will study, and consecrate themselves to God, if they will do the work with earnestness, with zeal, with faith and prayer, we shall see something done. Satan has stolen a march on us. God desires that we shall put on the whole armor of righteousness. He says, "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on

the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil." Read carefully the injunctions here given by the inspired apostle, and "be ye doers of the word."

Mrs. E. G. White.

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#### ALL THINGS BELONG TO GOD.

And all the good that man enjoys comes because of the mercy of God. He is the great and bountiful Giver of all. His love is manifest to all in the abundant provision which he has made for man. He has given us probationary time in which to form characters that will fit us for the courts above. And it is not because he needs anything that he asks us to reserve part of our possessions for him.

The Lord created every tree in Eden pleasant to the eyes and good for food, and he bade Adam and Eve freely enjoy his bounties. But he made one exception. Of the tree of knowledge of good

and evil they were not to eat. This tree God reserved as a constant reminder of his ownership of all. Thus he gave them an opportunity to demonstrate their faith and trust in him, and their perfect obedience to his requirements.

So it is with God's claims upon us. He places his treasures in the hands of humanity, but requires that one tenth shall be faithfully laid aside for his work. He teaches us the lesson that he requires this portion to be placed in his treasury. It is to be rendered to him as his own; it is sacred, and is to be used for sacred purposes, for the support of those who carry the message of salvation to all parts of the world. He reserves this portion, that means may ever be flowing into his treasure-house, and that the light of truth may be carried to those who are nigh and those who are afar off. By faithfully obeying this requirement, we prove that we realize that all belongs to God.

And has not the Lord a right to demand this much of us? Did he not give us his only begotten Son because he loved us and desired to save us from death? And shall not our gratitude offerings flow into the Lord's treasury, to be drawn therefrom to advance his kingdom in the earth? God is the owner of all our goods, and shall not gratitude to him prompt us to make free-will offerings and thank offerings, thus acknowledging his ownership of soul, body, spirit, and property? Had God's plan been followed, means would now be flowing into his treasury; and funds to enable ministers to enter new fields, and workers to unite with ministers to lift up the standard of truth in the dark places of the earth, would be abundant.

## WHAT CHRISTIANITY IS.

Christianity has a much broader meaning than many have hitherto given it. It is not a creed. It is the word of Him who liveth and abideth forever. It is a living, animating principle, that takes possession of mind, heart, motives, and the entire man. Christianity — O that we might experience its operations! It is a vital, personal experience, that elevates and ennobles the whole man. Every man is responsible to God, who has made provision for all to receive this blessing. But many do not receive it, although Christ has purchased it for them at infinite cost. They have not grasped the blessing within their reach, and therefore they have retained their objectionable traits of character, and sin lieth at the door. While they profess piety, Satan has made them his agents to pull down and confuse where he thought best. They exert an influence deleterious to the souls of many who need an example that would help them heavenward.

Who are the subjects of the kingdom of God? — All those who do his will. They have righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. The members of Christ's kingdom are the sons of God, partners in his great firm. The elect of God are a chosen generation, a peculiar people, a holy nation, to show forth the praises of him who hath called them out of darkness into his marvelous light. They are the salt of the earth, the light of the world. They are living stones, a royal priesthood. They are in copartnership with Jesus Christ. These are they that follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth.

# *The Tithe Question*

## A Personal Responsibility

A LETTER TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE COLORADO CONFERENCE

“Elder Watson My brother, I wish to say to you, Be careful how you move. You are not moving wisely. The least you have to speak about the tithe that has been appropriated to the most needy and the most discouraging field in the world, the more sensible you will be.

It has been presented to me for years that my tithe was to be appropriated by myself to aid the white and colored ministers who were neglected and did not receive sufficient properly to support their families. When my attention was called to aged ministers, white or black, it was my special duty to investigate into their necessities and supply their needs. This was to be my special work, and I have done this in a number of cases. No man should give notoriety to the fact that in special cases the tithe is used in that way.

In regard to the colored work in the South, that field has been and is still being robbed of the means that should come to the workers of that field. If there has been cases where our sisters have appropriated their tithe to the support of the ministers working for the colored people in the South, let every man, if he is wise, hold his peace.

I have myself appropriated my tithe to the most needy cases brought to my notice. I have been instructed to do this; and as the money is not withheld from the Lord's treasury, it is not a matter that should be commented upon; for it will necessitate my making known these matters, which I do not desire to do, because it is not best.

Some cases have been kept before me for years, and I have supplied their needs from the tithe, as God has instructed me to do. And if any person shall say to me, Sister White, will you appropriate my tithe where you know it is most needed, I shall say, Yes, I will; and I have done so. I commend those sisters who have placed their tithe where it is most needed to help to do a work that is being left undone; and if this matter is given publicity, it will create knowledge which would better be left as it is. I do not care to give publicity to this work which the Lord has appointed me to do, and others to do.

I send this matter to you so that you shall not make a mistake. Circumstances alter cases. I would not advise that any should make a practice of gathering up tithe money. But for years there have now and then been persons who have lost confidence in the appropriation of the tithe who have placed their tithe in my hands, and said that if I did not take it they would themselves appropriate it to the families of the most needy minister they could find. I have taken the money, given a receipt for it, and told them how it was appropriated.

I write this to you so that you shall keep cool and not become stirred up and **give publicity to this matter, lest many more shall follow their example.”**

January 22, 1905 Spalding & Magan p. 215

## More Than One Channel Through Which Means Can Be Disbursed

**“Some men or councils may say, That is just what we wish you to do. The Conference Committee will take your capital, and will appropriate it for this very object. But the Lord has made us individually his stewards. We each hold a **solemn responsibility to invest this means ourselves....** It is not in the province of the Conference or any other organization to relieve us of this stewardship. If you lack wisdom, go to God; ask him for yourself, and then work with an eye single to his glory. By exercising your judgment, by giving where you see there is need in any line of the work, you are putting out your money to the exchangers. If you see in any locality that the truth is gaining a foothold, and there is no place of worship, then do something to meet the **necessity.... God does not lay upon you the burden of asking the Conference or any council of men whether you shall use your means as you see fit to advance the work of God in destitute towns and cities, and impoverished localities. If the right plan had been followed, so much means would not have been used in some localities, and so little in other places where the banner of truth has not been raised. We are not to merge our individuality of judgment into any institution in our world.... Do we individually realize our true position, that as God's hired servants we are not to bargain away our stewardship; but that before the heavenly universe we are to administer the truth committed to us by God? Our own hearts are to be sanctified, our hands are to have something to impart as occasion demands, of the income that God entrusts to us.”****

Pamphlet No. 80 p. 41, 42 Sept. 19, 1895

**“Those who have had experience in the work of God should be encouraged to follow the guidance and counsel of the Lord. Do not worry lest some means shall go direct to those who are trying to do missionary work in a quiet and effective way. All the means is not to be handled by one agency or organization.... **To those in our conferences who have felt that they had authority to forbid the gathering of means in certain territory I now say: This matter has been presented to me again and again. I now bear my testimony in the name of the Lord to those whom it concerns. Wherever you are, withhold your **forbiddings. The work of God is not to be thus trammled.... This wonderful burden of responsibility which some suppose God has placed upon them with their official position, has never been laid upon them.**”****

Spalding & Magan p. 421, 422 Jan. 6, 1908

**“The Lord has shown me that men in responsible positions are standing directly in the way of His work, because they think the work must be done and the blessing must come in a certain way, and they will not recognize that which**

comes in any other way. My brethren, may the Lord place this matter before you as it is. God does not work as men plan, or as they wish; He "moves in a mysterious way, His wonders to perform." Why reject the Lord's methods of working because they do not coincide with our ideas? God has His appointed channels of light, but these are not necessarily the minds of any particular set of men. When all shall take their appointed place in God's work, earnestly seeking wisdom and guidance from Him, then a great advancement will have been made toward letting light shine upon the world. When men shall cease to place themselves in the way, God will work among us as never before."

Special Testimonies Series B #10 p.24

## Unsanctified Ministers Should Not Be Supported From God's Treasury

"It would be poor policy to support from the treasury of God those who really mar and injure His work, and who are constantly lowering the standard of Christianity."

Testimonies Vol. 3 p. 553

"No man should be set apart as a teacher of the people while his own teaching or example contradicts the testimony God has given His servants to bear in regard to diet; for this will bring confusion. And your disregard of health reform is unfitting you to stand as the Lord's messenger."

1896 Manuscript Release #7 p.338

## We Are Held Responsible as to How Our Means Are Used

"There are fearful woes for those who preach the truth, but are not sanctified by it, and also for those who consent to receive and maintain the unsanctified to minister to them in word and doctrine.... All who preach the truth will not themselves be saved by it. Said the angel: "Be ye clean, that bear the vessels of the Lord."

Testimonies Vol. 1 p.261

"If God pronounces a woe upon those who are called to preach the truth and refuse to obey, a heavier woe rests upon those who take upon them this sacred work without clean hands and pure hearts. As there are woes for those who preach the truth while they are unsanctified in heart and life, so there are woes for those who receive and maintain the unsanctified in the position which they cannot fill."

1892 Gospel Workers p.245

"Whoever imitates the great deceiver becomes his aid. Those who give their influence to sustain an evil work are doing Satan's drudgery." Testimonies Vol. 5 p.102

**“Ministers who are neglectful of the duties devolving on a faithful pastor, give evidence that they are not sanctified by the truths they present to others, and should not be sustained as laborers in the vineyard of the Lord, till they have a high sense of the sacredness of the work of a minister of Christ.”**

Testimonies Vol. 3, p. 233

**“I call upon God's people to open their eyes. When you sanction or carry out the decisions of men who, as you know, are not in harmony with truth and righteousness, you weaken your own faith, and lose your relish for communion with God.”**

May 1, 1895 Pamphlet # 154 p.35

## Those Who Should Be Supported From the Lord's Treasury

**“The tithe should go to those who labor in word and doctrine, be they men or women.”**

October 24, 1899 Manuscript Release Vol. 1 p.263

**“Instruction has been given me that there is a withholding of the tithe that should be faithfully brought into the Lord's treasury, for the support of the ministers and missionaries who are opening the Scriptures to the people, and working from house to house.”**

Review & Herald, April 20, 1905

**“In enlightening and confirming souls in the truth the publications will do a far greater work than can be accomplished by the ministry of the word alone. The silent messengers that are placed in the homes of the people through the work of the canvasser will strengthen the gospel ministry in every way; for the Holy Spirit will impress minds as they read the books, just as He impresses the minds of those who listen to the preaching of the word. The same ministry of angels attends the books that contain the truth as attends the work of the minister.”**

Testimonies Vol. 6 p.315

**“I was shown that the truth once published now, will stand, for it is the truth for the last days;... I saw that all the light they had received in some places had come from the paper; that souls had received the truth in this way, and then talked it to others; and that now in places where there are several, they had been raised up by this silent messenger. It was their only preacher. The cause of truth should not be hindered in its onward progress for want of means.”**

Early Writings p.96



# Improper Uses

Advent Review Dec. 2000

## N A D REPORT

### 100 Tithes and Offerings in North America

Almost \$1 billion was given by members as tithes and offerings in 1999. Here's how the \$990,269,701 was divided among gifts for tithe, world mission, and local church:

	Percent
Tithe Returned...\$610,309,119 .....	62
Offerings for World Mission...\$51,998,308..5	
Offerings for Local Church Mission...\$317,962,274.....	33

  

### How Tithe Dollars Are Spent

Local churches send all the tithe to the local conference, where percentages are sent on to the union, the division, and the General Conference. The funds are spent in the following ways:

OPERATIONS	WORLDWIDE APPROPRIATIONS	LOCAL CONFERENCE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>General Conference: 2.0%</li> <li>World Missions: 2.0%</li> <li>World Council of Churches: 2.0%</li> <li>World Methodist Council: 2.0%</li> <li>World Council of Churches: 2.0%</li> <li>World Council of Churches: 2.0%</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>World Council of Churches: 2.0%</li> <li>World Council of Churches: 2.0%</li> <li>World Council of Churches: 2.0%</li> <li>World Council of Churches: 2.0%</li> <li>World Council of Churches: 2.0%</li> <li>World Council of Churches: 2.0%</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Education: 2.0%</li> <li>Other: 2.0%</li> <li>Other: 2.0%</li> <li>Other: 2.0%</li> <li>Other: 2.0%</li> <li>Other: 2.0%</li> </ul>

*Note: The word "Operations" in the LOCAL CONFERENCE column is circled in the original image.*

"Meeting expenses of local churches and Conference offices."

Office of General Counsel  
Telephone (202) 727-6200



General Conference of

## Seventh-day Adventists

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April 10, 1989

Mr.

Dear Brother :

Thank you for your recent letters concerning trademarks. Elder Wilson's office asked me to respond.

First, enclosed is a copy of the questions and answers we have released on the question. Perhaps you already have seen it in the January 12 issue of the Adventist Review.

Second, you inquired whether tithe is used to pay church litigation. The treasury informs me that all litigation is paid from the annual appropriation made at the Annual Council, and that appropriation comes from tithe.

If you have additional questions, please write.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Robert W. Nixon". The signature is written in a cursive, somewhat stylized script.

Robert W. Nixon  
Associate General Counsel



