

RAMBLING THOUGHTS ON GIVING  
(Continued from last issue)

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Some people reject the tithing system saying that it belongs to the law of Moses. This is not wholly so, for the tithing principle was practised long before the giving of the law. But even if we could find nothing in the New Testament to sanction tithing, would it be reasonable to suppose that God would require less under the gospel than under the law? In everything that Jesus did mention in contrasting law and gospel, the gospel of grace goes further than law. Why should giving be an exception? Would God exact more from the Jew under the law than from a Christian under grace? Jesus does sanction the giving of a tenth but in the New Testament, giving is not a matter of legality but of love, as in everything else. Legalism has no place in the New Testament. The tenth should be given from a motive of supreme love to God, and while it is a good minimum standard for all ordinary times and the most simple proportion to deduct, yet no one can say, "I have given my tenth, it does not matter to me now what happens to my brother. "No, the law of perfect line will share the last slice with the needy brother. This was the way the early church gave when the need demanded it.

We have heard comparison between the church and lodge in respect to works of charity. Some churches may not come up to the lodges in this matter, but if there were a rigid law in the church that compelled every joiner to pay a substantial sum to get in, and a regular yearly sum to stay, the church would have as much to give as the lodge. As it is, it costs nothing to join the church, and with quite a few, it costs them nothing to stay in. They expect free seat, free heat and light and a free gospel.

With not a few, giving is only an impulse. If something pleases them they give, if otherwise, they withhold. Some popular evangelist come along who tickles their ears, and they have a spell of liberality, but when that inspiration has subsided they could sit complacently by and watch the church go into bankruptcy without the least stir of emotion. If at church and the plate is passed they may give a dime, but if absent for the next ten Sundays the church gets nothing from them. In some churches where the pastor is dependent upon the offerings, if there is a vacant Sunday on account of a storm or other cause, the preacher just loses that week's pay. How would this work in the business world? This would not matter if when the next Sunday came, the offering would be just double, but this is seldom the case. Instead of twice as much, the offering will be just about the same as though no vacancy had occurred. This shows that giving is largely haphazard. I knew a case where the Sunday offerings went direct to the minister. The amount was about ten dollars. On account of storms the church was not opened for two Sundays; when the third Sunday came the offering was just the same, ten dollars; that meant the preacher was fined twenty dollars for two stormy Sundays. How would this work in business circles?

Only a few church members ever remember their home church when they are absent. They should consider the fact that the church expenses go right on whether they are present or not. They should consider the fact that they might want to come back some time and would want to see the church still existing.

Every member, young or old, should take his responsibility of financing his church. How can anyone be loyal to God and faithful to his church covenant and not do this? I have wondered if church members ever ask, "How would the church get along if everyone gives as much as I give?"

I have noted that the fellow who gives the least dislikes the most to have anything said about giving. Those who do their duty realize that the church and its work cannot be run without finances and they expect to give and are not put out when calls are made. The fellow that complains about the begging done in the church, is not giving much, and hates to be put in a corner where his closeness would be shown up. I may be very much mistaken but I have reasons for honest convictions that there have been cases where folks have withheld from joining the church for the simple reason that if they did, it would put them under obligation to support the church. These may be considered more honorable than those who covenant to do this when they join and then fail to keep their word.

Undoubtedly, the very best plan that ever was devised for financing the church is what is called the "Storehouse Plan" where every member systematically brings his offering to the church or storehouse and then all the bills are paid out of the gross amount paid in. If every member of even our smallest churches would do this regularly, even if it were not always a tenth, it would revolutionize our whole financial situation; there would be money enough for all departments of the home church and some to spare for extension work. God cannot smile on our loose methods of financing, and it becomes a thing to mock at by the critical onlooker.

How it must grieve the heart of God when He beholds the work of missions and evangelism held back and His cause in general languishing because of lack of funds when there is so much spent by professors of religion on selfish pleasures and luxuries. How shall the church of God ever justify herself for such conditions? We are all slow to believe what Jesus taught us about giving, nevertheless it stands written, "Give and it shall be given unto you; good measure pressed down and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again."

THEME: THE BEGINNING OF MONTHS

**Text:** This month shall be unto you the beginning. (Ex. 12:2)

We are in the month of beginnings. New pages we are turning, new records we resolve to write; new beginnings of habits we resolutely avow to start. With the old of yesterday we are finished; give us the new man, with new resolves, new ambitions, new longings to be better.

As we are in the New Year may we:—

I. Seek Pure Fountain Heads of Satisfaction. A. May we seek the Divine, God's approbation, Holy Communion, abiding under the shadow of the almighty.

What refreshing draughts men have received when they have gone to the right sources for their satisfaction. Gone to God. Oh that men would seek God's approbation, seek His smile of approval, rather than that of the world. And we must not underestimate the great force that, as God's children, we will be called upon to stem. Namely the power of Satan who will come to the unwary as an angel of light, and if unable to beguile with his devilish ingenuity, will pounce with a roar and tear and rend like a roaring lion

It meant something for Paul to say (I have fought a good fight, I have kept the faith). It meant that his source of supply was pure. It meant that he would be called upon to stand out against sin where ever his lot was cast. It will mean that we will have to stand out against wrong where ever we find it, and this will mean many times we will have to stem the strongest current known to the world, Public Opinion. Men have been influenced by this to take the lower way; caused to fluctuate and go down, because they failed to seek out and find pure fountain heads of satisfaction. Moses did and man could not look upon his countenance. Paul did and Jesus became his Star and Crown, and his exceeding Great Reward.

Our country is cursed with legalized drunkenness and debauchery, because in the past the churches had gone to sleep. Drugged into an unawareness to the danger, by the opiates of hell, because along the way they had become satisfied with the good of the form of the church, rather than being on the alert, because they had ever sought the best. The church has had power in the past to stem the current in former days, and can again, if she will put on her strength, which is Christ. No wonder it is said: The devil trembles when he sees the weakest saint upon his knees. The thing that calls a saint to prayer, is his own knowledge that he is unable to cope with the situation, unless God helps. Oh how we need to learn to stay put. Learn to dwell in the Secret Place of the Most High, that we may abide under the shadow of the Almighty. Let the ragings of hell, the power of the netherworld try to overthrow such an individual, or church, and (the Spirit of the Lord will raise up a standard against him). Glory to God.

B. Man is no better than that which satisfies him. Watch the world racing on their endless round. Racing for pleasure. Trying to extract out of sin an essence that will satisfy. How hopeless. Dancing the old year out and the new year in. Butterflies playing with flames of eternal damnation and if not rescued, will know that "the wages of sin is death." God alone is able to satisfy the cravings of the soul? Why? Because He created the same for Himself, and anything short of His abiding presence, can never satisfy.

C. Oh that man might realize that he becomes tainted with that which fulfils his craving. If this is base then he becomes lewd; if holy, then holiness of character marks him.

Famed Jenny Lind saw this when at the height of her career she left the opera for a simple Swedish home. Sitting one evening as the sun was slowly sinking over her native hills she was reading the Bible, when a noted critic came to her and asked her why it was that she had deserted her career for retirement. Pointing to the hills arrayed in their beauty and to the Bible, she said, my career was blinding my eyes to these things. Paul determined to know nothing among them, nothing that would retard or hold him back, "save Jesus Christ and Him crucified."

II. Keep our eyes unblinded by the physical and earthly; that we may see the heavenly the spiritual.

A. Too many of us are torn between time and eternity. The legitimate things of this life claim too much of our attention. We do not give enough time to soul exercise. When a person becomes lean spiritually, they can trace the same back to a time when they did not take time to be holy, or attend the means of grace, and when this is so, the legitimate becomes illegitimate. Our conversation should be in heaven. As we journey through this life, we should journey as to another land. Our citizenship is in heaven.