**A Test of Gratitude and Loyalty**

SW October 2, 1906

“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.” SW October 2, 1906, par. 1

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. SW October 2, 1906, par. 2

Herein is set forth a principle that is seen in all God's dealings with men. The Lord placed our first parents in the garden of Eden. He surrounded them with everything that could minister to their happiness, and he bade them acknowledge him as the possessor of all things. In the garden he caused to grow every tree that was pleasant to the eye or good for food; but among them he made one reserve. Of all else, Adam and Eve might freely eat; but of this one tree God said, “Thou shalt not eat of it.’ Here was the test of their gratitude and loyalty to God. SW October 2, 1906, par. 3

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. SW October 2, 1906, par. 4

It was by the Lord Jesus Christ himself, who gave his life for the life of the world, that this plan for systematic giving was devised. He who left the royal courts, who laid aside his honor as Commander of the heavenly hosts, who clothed his divinity with humanity in order to uplift the fallen race; he who for our sake became poor that we through his poverty might be rich, has spoken to men, and in his wisdom has told them his own plan for sustaining those who bear his message to the world. SW October 2, 1906, par. 5

The Lord has devised this plan because it is best for us. Satan is constantly working to foster in men worldliness, covetousness, and avarice, that he may ruin their souls, and hinder the work of God. The Lord is seeking to cultivate in us gratitude and liberality. He desires to free us from selfishness, which is so offensive to him, because so contrary to his character. In carrying out God's plan, men may, by his grace, so relate themselves to him and to their fellow men that they will be registered in the books of heaven as co-laborers with Christ in the great plan of redemption. SW October 2, 1906, par. 6

Not only does the Lord claim the tithe as his own, but he tells us how it should be reserved for him. He says, “Honor the Lord with thy substance, and with the first-fruits of all thine increase.” This does not teach that we are to spend our means on ourselves, and bring to the Lord the remnant, even though it should be otherwise an honest tithe. Let God's portion be first set apart. SW October 2, 1906, par. 7

The directions given by the Holy Spirit through the apostle Paul in regard to gifts, present a principle that applies also to tithing: “On the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him.” Parents and children are here included. Not only the rich, but the poor, are addressed. “Every man according as he purposeth in his heart [through the candid consideration of God's prescribed plan], so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity; for God loveth a cheerful giver.” The gifts are to be made in consideration of the great goodness of God to us. SW October 2, 1906, par. 8

And what more appropriate time could be chosen for setting aside the tithe and presenting our offerings to God? On the Sabbath we have thought upon his goodness. We have beheld his work in creation as an evidence of his power in redemption. Our hearts are filled with thankfulness for his great love. And now, before the toil of a week begins, we return to him his own, and with it an offering to testify our gratitude. Thus our practice will be a weekly sermon, declaring that God is the possessor of all our property, and that he has made us stewards to use it to his glory. Every acknowledgment of our obligation to God will strengthen the sense of obligation. Gratitude deepens as we give it expression, and the joy it brings is life to soul and body. SW October 2, 1906, par. 9

The duty and privilege of systematic giving to the cause of God is a matter that should by no means be neglected by ministers. God has called them to watch for souls as they that must give an account. He has commissioned them to bear his message to the churches. They should see that none are left in ignorance concerning this subject. They should seek to impress the people with a sense of their entire dependence upon God, and their accountability to him for all his benefits. SW October 2, 1906, par. 10