

EVANGELISTIC LECTURES

Bless those who have raised their hands. Give them strength from heaven to obey Thee. Bless others who believe and want to do what is right.

Help every soul to accept this message that Thou hast sent. May it be that when Jesus comes we shall have Thy seal on our foreheads and be able to greet Jesus with joy at His appearing and go with Him to be with Him forever. We ask it in His precious name. Amen.

43. One Hundred Thieves Caught in One Church

There is only one right plan of church finance, and that is the plan set forth in God's Word. I invite you to consider three questions. First, Should the minister of the gospel be paid for preaching? The answer is found in Luke 10:7. The Lord Jesus, in speaking about those whom He sent out to preach, said, "The laborer is worthy of his hire!"

MY second question is, How much shall the minister of the gospel be paid? According to the principles set forth in the Bible, he should be paid a sufficient wage to support himself and his family. The practice in certain city churches of paying ministers large salaries of four, five, seven, ten, and sometimes twenty-thousand dollars a year, is contrary to Christ. The paying of these large salaries makes money a factor in the minister's call and is out of keeping with the spirit of true ministry.

To illustrate: A minister at a certain church in Baltimore is receiving \$4,000 a year. A church in Chicago hears about this man, and they want him to preach at their church. So they send word to this minister, if you will come to Chicago and preach at our church, we will pay you \$5,000 a year!" Next Sunday the minister in Baltimore gets up before his congregation, and says: "Brethren, the Lord has called me to Chicago!" Did He? No. It was that extra thousand a year which called him to Chicago. It was not the call of the Almighty, but it was the call of the "almighty dollar!"

Is it any wonder that people of the world who see such things, and hear such things, have lost confidence in religion, and think that religion is just another racket? As long as these city churches vie with one another as they do in paying men large salaries, this unfortunate situation will continue to exist.

The practice of paying large salaries to ministers puts the ministry on a commercial basis, which is something entirely foreign to the true spirit of the gospel ministry. It is proper and right that the doctor, the lawyer, and the dentist should make as much money as they can, provided they make it honestly. But being a minister of Jesus Christ cannot and must not be placed on a money-making basis. This practice of one church offering a minister \$500 or \$1,000 more a year than he is getting from another church is leading some ministers to preach for money and not for souls. They preach to please the people, and will not tell the people the plain truth for fear the salary would not be forthcoming.

No man can be a true preacher unless he is called of God. One of the evidences that a minister is called of God is that he will not be greedy for money. If a minister is greedy for money, he cannot be a true minister of God. The Bible condemns in scathing language ministers who preach for money. You never need expect to learn the truth from a man who preaches for money.

My third question is, How shall the money be secured with which to pay the minister? Shall the board of deacons assess each member a certain amount? If there is a shortage, shall the sisters give a "Bean Supper," or a "Rag Doll Party" or a "Fair," or a "Bazaar" to earn money for the church?

Here are two theater tickets (displaying) which have a story back of them. I was preaching in a certain city in Illinois when a certain church in that city was facing a shortage on the pastor's salary. What do you suppose they did? They rented the city opera house, and took certain people from the congregation, whom they organized into a -theatrical company. Then they put on a regular drama or play at the city opera house to raise money to meet the shortage on the pastor's salary. Strange to say, the preacher whose salary was all in arrears, acted a leading part in the play. In fact, he played the part of the devil in the drama.

They gave all the preachers in that city complimentary tickets. They sent me two tickets, one for my wife and one for myself. We did not attend. I resolved that wherever I preached the Word of God, I would exhibit, these tickets to the audience in condemnation of such unholy practices on the part of any professed Christian church. I will not give the name of that denomination for it would be embarrassing to some of our friends who belong to that denomination. But here (displaying) are the actual unused tickets to that church show at the city opera house.

I have some interesting things to show you tonight. 'Here (displaying) is a facsimile of a lottery ticket. A certain church Wanted to raise money to build a church building. They raffled off -three automobiles. Tickets were sold for one dollar apiece. Friends, I would rather preach in a barn than in a church paid for in a lottery. (Amens.) What is a lottery of raffling? It is gambling.

Christians may well hang their heads for shame. When the governor of a certain state sometime ago had to ask the legislature, to pass a law to, stop the gambling that was being carried on at church fairs and church bazaar.

Dr. Gallup, in one of his sample "polls," found that five persons out of every ten are indulging in some kind of gambling. Here are the figures: Nine per cent of the people who were interviewed admitted, that they gambled on the numbers game. Ten per cent admitted that they were betting on horse races. Thirteen per cent of the people had gambled on sweepstake tickets. Nineteen per cent were betting on elections. Twenty-nine per cent were playing cards for money. Twenty-three per cent on slot machines. Twenty-six per cent on punch boards. Twenty-nine per cent gambled in church lotteries. Think of it! Nearly three times as many people are gambling at church lotteries as at horse races. This is based on an actual cross-section poll of America. It indicates that the church or parish house is the most popular gambling house in America. What an indictment of modern Christianity!

One church used little socks like this (displaying a doll's sock) to raise money for the church. Attached to the sock was a card which contained this little poem:

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“This little sock we give to you is not for you to wear;
Please multiply your size by two and place inside with care,
In silver or in cents, twice the number that you wear
(we hope it is immense).

So if you wear a No. 10, you owe us twenty; see,
Which dropped in this little sock will fill our hearts with glee-
So don't forget the place and date, we'll answer when you-knock,
And welcome you with open arms, but don't forget your sock.”

I will not give the name of the church that used this method to raise money. Suppose I wanted to give my mother a present. Would I pass little socks among my friends to secure the money to purchase a present for her? No. I would not insult my mother that way, How much worse it is to insult Almighty God by trying to raise money for His cause by such methods?

Another church needed money, and they sent out little panties like this (displaying doll's under thing) with this-piece of poetry:

“These little parities are sent to you,
And this is what we want you to do.
Measure your waist line inch by inch,
And see that the tape lint does not pinch.
For each small inch you measure around,
Place a penny in your pocket sound;
And when returned, the pocket we'll search,
Arid with the money we'll pay for our church.”

Friends, I would rather preach in a barn than in a church that is paid for by such methods.

When Jesus Christ came here 1900 years ago, and found the Jews carrying on commercial business in the temple, what did He do? He drove them out. He said, “Make not My Father's house a house of merchandise.” If Christ were to enter these churches today where money is being raised for His cause by such unholy methods, He would drive them out like He did in old Jerusalem.

Is there some plan that God has ordained for the support of His ministers? Yes. God has ordained the tithing plan for the support of His workers. Notice in Leviticus 7:30 how all the tithe is the Lord's. “And all the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land, or of the fruit of the tree, is the Lord's: It is holy unto the Lord.”

What is the tithe? It is one tenth of our net income. Please note, that “all the tithe,” or One-tenth, “Is the Lord's.” Not fifty per cent of-that one tenth, but all the tithe is the Lord's. It is the Lord's whether you ever pay it or not. You cannot give the tithe to Him; it is the Lord's.

Just as the seventh day of every week belongs to God, so the one-tenth of our net income belongs to God. The seventh day is the Lord's holy day, even though most people are using it for their own business and their own work. It is still the Lord's even if men appropriate it to their own use, and fail to keep it holy. So the tithe is the Lord's whether a man pays that one-tenth or not. If a man is an infidel, and does not believe in God, one-tenth of every dollar that he makes belongs to God.

Everybody understands the principle that if you live in a house that belongs to another person, you are due to pay rent for the use of that property. Everything in this world belongs to God. In Psalm 24:1 David says, “The Earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof, the world and they that dwell in it” This world and everything in it belongs to God.

In Haggai 2:8 He declares, “The silver is mine and the gold is mine, said the Lord of hosts.” In Psalm 50:10 He says, “For every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills.” In Deuteronomy 8:17-18 we learn that it is the Lord that gives us power to get wealth. God is the one that keeps your heart beating. Every breath you take is from God. One tenth is due the Lord for the use of His property, just as rent is due the landlord for the house you rent.

If a landlord owns a farm, and furnishes everything such as stock, implements, fertilizer, Seed, he is entitled to one-half of everything that grows on that land. See how much better the Lord is with His tenants! He furnishes everything. He keeps, your heart beating. He keeps you alive. He gives your health in addition to temporal wealth, and all He asks, is one-tenth not a half!

You say, “Mr. Shuler; isn't this tithe a part of the old Mosaic law that was done away with when-Christ came?” The law of the tithe antedates the Mosaic law. You will find that. Abraham paid tithe at the Lord's direction. He lived hundreds of years before Moses was ever born. Jacob paid tithe. The law of tithing is not dependent on the Mosaic law for its binding obligation. It was in force long before Moses was born and the law of tithe remains after the Mosaic law was abolished.

Jesus endorsed tithe paying. I read in Matthew 23:23: “Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought you to have done, and not to leave the other undone.”

This word “ought” is stronger than the word “should.” To illustrate: We should be polite, but we ought to tell the truth. You see how “ought” is a stronger word than “should.” The use of “ought” in connection with telling the truth signifies a moral obligation; but there is no moral obligation to be polite.

Jesus uses the word “ought” in connection with tithe paying. Tithe paying is a moral obligation, just like being honest. If a man does not turn over that one-tenth to God, he is really violating the eighth commandment, which says, “Thou shall not steal.”

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The Mosaic church was financed by the tithe. I read in Numbers 18:21, "And behold, I have given the children of Levi all the tenth in Israel for an inheritance, for their service which they serve, even the service of the tabernacle of the congregation."

God's plan for the support of the church in the days of Moses was the tithing system. God's ministers, who carried on the work of the church, received their living out of the tithe that was contributed by the rest of the Israelites.

God has ordained the same plan for the support of the gospel ministry. I read in I Corinthians 9:13, 14: "Do you not know that they which minister about holy things live of the things of the temple? and they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar?" In this 13th verse Paul was speaking about the plan, that was followed for the support of the work of God in the days of Moses. Then he goes on to say, "Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel."

In precisely the same manner that God ordained the tithing system for the support of His ministers under the Mosaic law, He has ordained the same plan for the support of the gospel ministry. The gospel minister is to live from the tithes of those who accept the gospel. This is how to pay the preacher without using your own money.

What about those hundred thieves that were caught in one church? Let us look at Malachi 3:8. "Will a man rob God? Yet you have robbed Me. But you say, Wherein have we robbed Thee? In tithes and offerings." If a man doesn't turn over that one-tenth to God, he is a robber and a thief. I think you will agree with me that there are many churches where there are far more than a hundred people who do not pay tithe. There you have one-hundred thieves in one church.

"Will a man rob God?" This is a striking question. If He said, Will a man rob his fellow man, you would not be surprised, because that is going on all the time. But, "Will a man rob God?" Will a man rob the One who gives him everything? "Yet," He says, "you have robbed Me." And when they raise the question, "Wherein have we robbed Thee?" the answer comes back, "In tithes and offerings." If a man does not pay tithe, he is a thief. I Corinthians 6:10 declares that no thief will ever enter the kingdom of heaven.

Do you know that our government recognizes God's claim on a man's money is first? "In the beginning God." In paying income tax the government allows a man a 15% deduction for charitable purposes. In other words, a man can pay the tithe to God, that is 10 per cent, and he can give 5 per cent in freewill offerings. Then when he comes to figure up his income tax, he is permitted to deduct the 15% and his income tax is figured on the remaining 85%. So even the government recognizes that God's claim on a man's money is first.

Someone says, "I think all this is correct, but I could not afford to pay one-tenth of my salary. I do not make very much money. It takes all I make to pay the bills. If I took out one-tenth from my salary, we would not have enough to live on. I just cannot afford to do it." Brother, you just have that wrong. You cannot afford not to pay tithe.

Let me read to you why in Malachi 3:10 "Bring you all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in Mine house, and prove Me now herewith, said 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."

Notice who is talking here. The One who says this is the One Who never fails to do what He says. If this were the promise of man, you might have cause to question it, but you never need question the promise of God. "Bring you all the tithes . . . and prove Me," He says, "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."

Nine-tenths with God's blessing, actually goes further than ten-tenths without His blessing. Nine-tenths plus God, is better than ten-tenths minus God. I have talked with hundreds of people in regard to this matter, and I have never met any one who really tithed, but that he found Malachi 3:10 to be true. (Amens.)

This shows that God is a true God. His promises never fail. I never met anyone that really tithed, but who would tell you that he has found by experience that nine-tenths with the blessing of God actually goes further than ten-tenths without His blessing.

I can testify to the glory of God's name, after paying tithe many years, that I have found that nine-tenths goes further. I have come to the place where, if it were not an obligation, I would want to do it because nine-tenths with God's blessing goes further than ten-tenths without it.

I will test this out right here. I find that today there are people in every denomination who are tithe payers. There is an increasing number of people who are paying tithe to the Lord. How many here who have actually tithed will stand to testify that you have found that the nine-tenths goes further with God's blessing, than the ten-tenths without it? Let us see? "Ye are my witnesses." Thank you. (A large number of those present stood.)

I will repeat it again. I have never found anybody who has actually carried out God's instructions, but what has found that His promises are true. So you see, dear friends, you cannot afford not to pay tithes. You cannot afford to lose this blessing. "Bring you all the tithes into the storehouse. . . . and ... I will ... open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing that there shall not be room enough to receive it." Above all you cannot afford not to do it from the standpoint of losing heaven by robbing God.

I have another question on which I hope everybody will stand. It will at least give everybody a chance to act on the Lord's instruction. How many here believe that the tithing system is right, and you are willing to stand to say that by the help of the Lord you will accept His proposition to bring all the tithe into the storehouse, and let Him give you the blessing? (Nearly the entire audience stood.)

FULFILLING ALL RIGHTEOUSNESS

(Some thoughts on the question of whether the people, who have been immersed before they accepted the true Sabbath, should be re-immersed when they accept God's message for these last days.)