

John R. Rice

by

John R. Rice

$\begin{array}{c} {\rm Copyright~1954~by} \\ {\rm JOHN~R.~RICE} \\ {\rm in~book,} ~All~About~Christian~Giving \end{array}$

ISBN 0-87398-300-9

84, 000 copies printed

Price: 35 cents

PRINTED IN U. S. A.

Contents

1 <u>Gi</u>	ving Your Way to Prosperity	5
2 <u>Sir</u>	nners Ought to Trust Such a Saviour!	35
3 <u>C</u> h	ristian, Take the Step of Faith!	37

Honour the Lord with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase: So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine.—Prov. 3:9. 10.

There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty. The liberal soul shall be made fat: and he that watereth shall be watered also himself.—Prov. 11:24, 25.

Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith 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.—Mal. 3:10.

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.—Luke 6:38.

But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully.—II Cor. 9:6.

es, it actually pays to give unto the Lord on the tithe and offering basis. It pays in dollars and cents! One may prosper financially by the right kind of giving. Liberal giving to God means that God will give liberally to us.

I do not say that every one who sets out regularly, joyfully to give a tenth and more of his income will get to be a multimillionaire. But he will get sufficient for his needs; he will get more income than he would otherwise get. It is a clear promise of God, repeated many times in the Bible, that God obligates Himself to provide for the needs of those who trust Him and love Him enough to give liberally, enough to pay tithes and offerings for the support of the Lord's work, as God has prospered them.

This is one of the great paradoxes of the Christian faith. There are a number of great spiritual principles which go contrary to the philosophy of this world.

For example, the way to be saved and to know one is saved is not by working hard for it, keeping commandments, toiling to please God. Rather, it is by throwing away all claim to human goodness and resting on the finished work of Jesus Christ.

Among Christians, the way to rule is to be a servant of all.

In prevailing with God, the way up is down! For "he that humbleth himself shall be exalted," and we are commanded, "Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time" (I Pet. 5:6).

So it is with Christian giving. The world might say that if you save your money, if you do not give too much away, you will gain by it. But the Lord Jesus has taught us that giving is only sowing, and the reaping is greater than the sowing. He promises us that with the same measure we give, it shall be measured to us again.

Once when I preached on Malachi 3:10, showing that the Lord had plainly promised that if His people would prove Him by bringing tithes and offerings, He would pour them out a blessing they could not receive, would rebuke the devourers that destroyed their crops, a preacher brother said to me, "I do not think you should teach people that they will receive a financial reward for giving. You should teach them to give because of love for God and not for selfish reasons."

But I answered that the dear Lord had already settled that matter in the Bible. If God promises to repay those who give according to His plan and to prosper them in material things, then we ought to preach those promises. And since such glorious promises are in the Bible, since God promises such rewards for giving, why should we not hold up these promises as legitimate and proper incentives to giving?

"Do not teach people that tithing will pay; teach them that tithing is right," a good Christian brother says. But he forgets that doing right *always* pays, and the Bible is full of glorious promises that doing right will always have a reward from a righteous God.

But is it not encouraging selfishness to teach that God

will recompense and reward and prosper all who lovingly obey Him in money matters? No, it is not! There is a foolish idea abroad in the minds of many Christians that the Lord is interested only in spiritual matters and not at all in our daily needs. But that contradicts the plain teachings of the Bible everywhere. How often the Scriptures insist that God knows our weaknesses, our needs, and takes delight in caring for us! The dear Saviour taught us to pray, "Give us this day our daily bread" (Matt. 6:11). Again the Saviour said, "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?" (Matt. 7:11).

Is it wrong for a man to plan and toil to provide for the needs of his family? Is it wrong that people should feel a need for food and clothes and housing and other comforts and necessities of life? Well, if it is not wrong for people to plan and work for such things, why would it be wrong for them to believe that God would stay by them, would provide for them, would repay them in these necessary matters, when they lovingly do right about money matters, by tithes and offerings?

Is it wrong for an employer to promise wages to his employees who meet certain definite requirements and do a certain amount of work? Then why would it be wrong for us to tell people that God has promised them rewards for obeying Him in money matters?

It is not wrong to teach the farmer that if he makes an investment by sowing seed and tilling the soil, in due season he shall reap what he sowed. And it is not wrong to tell Christians what the Bible so often tells them—that giving in Jesus' name is simply sowing, and the Lord of the harvest guarantees the reaping!

I. "Exceeding Great and Precious Promises" in the Bible That Promise Material Rewards for Liberal Giving

It will do us all good to examine and study some of the precious promises that God has for those who give according to His plan, and let these promises sink down in our hearts.

First, notice Proverbs 3:9, 10:

Honour the Lord with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase: So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine.

Here giving is put on an exalted basis. We add honor to the dear Lord with our gifts, just as some monarch in old times was honored by the gifts that were fit for a king. The Star of India diamond was given to the royal family of England. The queen of Sheba brought extravagant and costly gifts to King Solomon. So the giving of a Christian ought to be the kind which honors the Lord. The wise men from the East opened their treasures and presented gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh to the Baby Jesus (Matt. 2:11). What a privilege we have to honor the Lord God Almighty, creator of

Heaven and earth, sustainer of life, with our gifts! What a blessed privilege it is to bring gifts to the dear Lord Jesus Himself, our beloved Saviour!

The giving here mentioned is of material substance. It is well to sing praises, it is well to talk about God; but God is often dishonored when we think of Him only in terms of church services and not in terms of dedicated substance.

Notice, too, that the promise here is particularly to those who bring the *firstfruits* of their increase. God wants the first part. Just as a bridegroom wants the first place in the love and devotion of his bride and wants her to put him first in everything, humanly speaking, so God wants the Christian to put Him first. What we give to God ought to come before what we pay the grocer, or what we spend for clothes. The right kind of giving means that God is put first in our lives and first in money matters.

Then here is the blessed promise, "So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine." Let us not avoid the plain statement of the Bible. Let us not be guilty of unbelief. The field from which the firstfruits are given to God will bear better crops! The vines from which God gets the first grapes will make more grape juice! What is the reward of those who put God first in financial matters? It is the reward of plenty. That is the word that God uses, and we ought to believe it.

In Proverbs 11:24, 25 this great truth is taught again:

There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty. The liberal soul shall be made fat: and he that watereth shall be watered also himself.

Here the strange paradox is plainly stated. "There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth."

Satan says to the Christian, "You need this money. You will be without. Save it for yourself." But God says, "Sow it! It will bring forth, and you will have more. Scatter it for Me, and it will increase!"

And in some strange way, to withhold from God tends to poverty. God withholds His blessing when man withholds his giving.

But "the liberal soul shall be made fat: and he that watereth shall be watered also himself." God has promised, and He cannot lie. One who has a liberal heart shall be prospered. He who waters others shall be watered also himself.

When my sixty-four page book, *Bible Facts About Heaven*, was first written, I had a deep impression that God would use it to the saving of hundreds of souls and to the comfort of many thousands. I wanted to get it out widely. Yet I did not have money for printing and postage. I told one of the workers in my office, a very spiritual and generous Christian, "If you will find me a verse of Scripture to comfort me and assure me that God will provide the means, I will offer the new book free on a daily radio broadcast for two weeks as guest speaker on radio WMBI, Chicago."

After some days she brought me this Scripture, "The liberal soul shall be made fat: and he that watereth shall be watered also himself."

Through the courtesy of radio WMBI, the radio voice of Moody Bible Institute, I spoke on a thirty-minute program daily for two weeks. By agreement with the director, I offered free this gift pamphlet, beautifully printed and expensively bound.

I had had five thousand copies printed. But requests poured in for the pamphlet. The mail finally overran the radio department and they called on other help from another department of Moody Bible Institute to take over the mail and the mailing of the booklet which I had given free. The first five thousand were gone, and I urged the printer to print five thousand more as quickly as possible. A total of more than seven thousand copies went out in answer to requests of those two weeks' radio broadcast at a cost to me of hundreds of dollars.

But then cash orders began to pour in for the booklet. To this date we have printed 451,493 copies of the pamphlet. We have heard from hundreds of people who have been saved. It is one of my books which needs little advertising. Thousands of preachers have given it to bereaved and troubled people. God has helped it to pay its way.

So I sometimes say to my workers when we come to some financial stringency and need the special blessing of God to pay heavy printing bills and the weekly payroll that it is time to start giving things away. For God makes

the liberal soul fat, and he that waters shall be watered also himself, the Scripture says.

Cannot the Christian rest happily upon the plain promise of God?

Another precious promise of material prosperity to those who obey God and put Him first in money matters is given in Malachi 3:10-12:

Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith 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. And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith the Lord of hosts. And all the nations shall call you blessed: for ye shall be a delightsome land, saith the Lord of hosts.

It is true that this promise is directly to Israel. Verse 4 says, "Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the Lord, as in the days of old, and as in former years." Verse 6 says, "For I am the Lord, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed." Verse 9 mentions "this whole nation." And verse 12, quoted above, says that the land of Palestine "shall be a delightsome land," if Israelites will meet God on His promise. Yes, the promise is primarily to Israel. The offerings mentioned would include animal sacrifices to be offered in the temple at Jerusalem. The house mentioned was the temple, the very center of Jewish ceremonial worship. Those who would eat of the meat in God's house

would be the priests and the Levites, not Gospel preachers. The message is primarily for Israel.

But it is clearly true that God is here repeating His promise made elsewhere, that those who bring in tithes and offerings will find that He will open the windows of Heaven and pour out a blessing. God says that for tithers He will "rebuke the devourer," insects which destroy crops. For those who bring tithes and offerings God promises that "neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field." God here promises material prosperity to those who bring tithes and offerings.

If this were the only Scripture on the matter, we might think that God did not include New Testament Christians in this promise. But happily this is simply a restatement of a promise often given in both the Old Testament and the New Testament. It works for us today just as it did for men of Israel. God is as faithful in His care of saints who love and trust Him and obey Him in money matters today as He was with Jews who obeyed Him. It means material prosperity and financial reward for those who put God first in money matters. We are not now, in New Testament times, commanded to bring offerings to one central temple in the nation. We are not now to bring animal sacrifices. We are not now to support priests and Levites. But God still is honored by the gifts of His people, and God still repays those who trust and obev.

A blessed New Testament promise of Jesus is in Luke 6:38:

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.

This beautiful passage, this marvelous promise given by the mouth of the Lord Jesus, our Saviour, is in the midst of the beatitudes and side by side with many other strange and unworldly commands and promises for the Christian. Divine paradoxes are here clearly stated again. It is blessed to be poor, blessed to be hungry, blessed to weep, blessed to be hated for Christ's sake! All of these conditions and circumstances which seem to the world so evil are proven to be good because they bring such glorious rewards. The Christian is to love his enemies, to do good to those who hate him, to bless them that curse him, to pray for them who despitefully use him! For we are children of our heavenly Father, who is kind unto the unthankful and the evil. Then the dear Saviour says that as we treat others, we will be treated. "Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgive, and ye shall be forgiven." Oh, the blessed doctrine that it pays to do right, it pays to go the second mile, it pays to be like Jesus! So mercifully and tenderly will the Lord treat us, if we so treat unworthy human beings.

And in the midst of this passage Jesus promises, "Give, and it shall be given unto you," only we will receive more than we give, "good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over shall men give into

your bosom." God will see that men give back to us what we give to the needy, what we give to God's cause. They will use the same measure, but will heap it up, press it down, run it over! So God sees that people are rewarded who give in His name.

Dear Christian, do not be afraid to give out of your poverty. And you will find that God slips into your hand the key to all His treasury. Give pennies, and God will see that you get silver. Give silver, and God will see that you get gold.

Giving is compared to sowing in II Corinthians 9:6:

But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and, he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully.

One may plant one grain of corn or two and get a stalk of corn that may have two or three ears and hundreds of grains of corn. There is a divine law of sowing and reaping, and it operates in the spiritual world as well as in the material world. You may lend your money to a bank or to the government and get back the principal and the interest. You may give to God and He counts it a loan and pays back more than you give.

A farmer may sow his field and reap more than he sowed. But the Christian makes holy investment in the Lord's cause, along with love and prayer and faith, and he reaps, even of material things, more than he has sowed.

Oh, if we only knew how often our stinginess, our

niggardly giving results in some of our want, our lack of means!

The rest of the passage talks about the same matter:

Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work: (As it is written, He hath dispersed abroad; he hath given to the poor: his righteousness remaineth for ever. Now he that ministereth seed to the sower both minister bread for your food, and multiply your seed sown, and increase the fruits of your righteousness;) Being enriched in every thing to all bountifulness, which causeth through us thanksgiving to God. For the administration of this service not only supplieth the want of the saints, but is abundant also by many thanksgivings unto God.—II Cor. 9:7-12.

God is talking about giving of our means, and in this case giving for the poor saints in Jerusalem. He said that we ought to give, knowing that "God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work." Those who give as they ought will have sufficient and will be able to give again.

We ought to remember that God gives the seed for sowing and that God will "minister bread for your food, and multiply your seed sown."

Let us build our lives upon these precious promises, with perfect assurance that we can never be in God's debt. God pays His debts. God keeps His promises. God will see that if we sow bountifully, we shall reap bountifully. But if in our giving we sow sparingly, we will suffer for it.

II. God's Sacred Honor Is at Stake on This Tithing-Offering Matter

Some people lightly think that giving is only a secondary and separate part of the Christian life. They are mistaken. The issues involved here are right at the very heart of the Christian life. This matter involves the honor of God Himself. It involves the accuracy of the It involves the whole matter of whether Bible. Christianity works. It is so important that one cannot be a very good Christian without getting settled some great principles on the matter of giving. It is so important that one who really gets things right between him and God on money matters is very likely to be a successful. prosperous, spiritual, happy, soul-winning Christian. For God's honor is at stake. He must prosper financially and spiritually those who trust Him and obey Him on money matters.

1. God Must Make It Pay for Christians to Do Right

Of course we know that there is a reward in Heaven for God's children. Aside from salvation, Christians are to be rewarded according to their works (I Cor. 3:10-15). Of course it is true that Christians ought to be willing to suffer for the dear Lord now, if need be, and when it can honor Him. This world is not our home. We have a better

time coming.

Yet if God be a righteous God, then it ought to pay us to do right.

A dear old man in his seventies urged me to come to Bridgeport, Texas, for a tent revival, many years ago. The godly old saint fell sick and died during the blessed revival campaign, after rejoicing over seeing great numbers come to Christ as Saviour. As he was sinking he kept asking for me, but the evening service was in progress in the big tent. Again and again he asked, "Has the meeting broken up yet? Where is Brother Rice?"

When I rushed to the home after the service closed, they told me that he had lapsed into unconsciousness and would not know me. But as I stood by the bed and took his hand, his eyes opened, he gazed about blankly for a moment, then recognized me. He took my hand in both of his old bony hands and held it to his breast. He told me that he would soon be with the Saviour. Then he said, "I have served him many a long year the best I could. It ought to be all right when I see Him."

Yes, you may be sure it will be all right in Heaven; but, thank God, it is all right now, too, for those who put God first and please Him. Jesus promised in the Great Commission, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." We have a right to His help in this life.

Simon Peter said to Jesus, "Lo, we have left all, and have followed thee" (Mark 10:28). Would it pay? Peter asked in his heart.

Jesus answered and said:

Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel's, But he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life.—Mark 10:29, 30.

One who gives up and forsakes loved ones and property for Jesus "shall receive an hundredfold now in this time," Jesus said!

Why is God so offended when people do not put Him first in money matters? Because they are saying in their hearts that it does not pay to serve God. Just following that famous passage on tithing in Malachi 3:10-12 is the following complaint of God:

Your words have been stout against me, saith the Lord. Yet ye say, What have we spoken so much against thee? Ye have said, It is vain to serve God: and what profit is it that we have kept his ordinance, and that we have walked mournfully before the Lord of hosts.—Mal. 3:13, 14.

Why had these Jews failed to bring in their tithes and offerings? Because they said in their hearts, "It is vain to serve God." They said it does not profit to keep God's ordinances and commands.

Let us face the solemn truth. If it does not pay to bring the Lord tithes and offerings, then it does not pay to serve God.

God's righteousness and holiness would fail, and people would have a right to think that it was fruitless to be good, that it did not pay to do right, that being a Christian did not help. God's honor is at stake.

2. A Faithful God Must Reword Those Who Put Him First

The demands of God are not simply for a certain amount of money. Is God really in a tight? Does He need our financial help? Does anybody believe that the mighty God, creator of the heavens and the earth, needs our pennies, or dimes, or dollars? No, but in His loving mercy He has simply chosen to let us cooperate with Him in His work. He made all the gold and silver. The cattle on a thousand hills are His. So it is not just that He wants our money. He really wants us to love Him, trust Him, and put Him absolutely first. That thought must be back of all true giving to God.

Back of all true giving there ought to be a simple trust that God takes care of His people and an earnest desire to put Him first. In Matthew 6:24-34 Jesus urges that a man cannot serve two masters; and mammon, or money, has a tendency to displace God. So the Christian is urged not to be thoughtful or anxious about what he eats or drinks or what he puts on. God clothes the lilies of the field. God feeds the fowls of the air. Shall not God feed and clothe His own, then? Jesus asks. And He says to all of us, "O ye of little faith."

Then He plainly says, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall

be added unto you" (Matt. 6:33). God asks for absolute surrender. He asks for the very first place in our lives. He asks for the firstfruits of all of our income. And He solemnly promises that if we seek first His kingdom, He will provide the food and the drink, the raiment and other needs. And God's honor is at stake.

A good employer tries to reward good work on the part of his employees. In the Sword of the Lord offices, among some ninety-odd workers, I treasure greatly those employees who will stay and do extra hours of work with no thought of pay, no thought of inconvenience. If one of these employees is sick, I am anxious to see that he is cared for. We promote such employees, honor them, increase their pay. Do you think God would be less faithful than a good employer in this matter?

My father-in-law had an old saddle horse, worn out in service. When he was too stiff to ride and too old to sell, he was still kept on the farm. He stayed fat with feed and care. A faithful master must take care of the animals which serve him well. Would God not be as faithful in caring for His own?

A grateful government gives ex-soldiers hospital care. It pays their tuition and fees in college. It sees that they get special privileges in buying homes. It gives them preferences in jobs. Do you believe that a holy God would not be as faithful in caring for those who put Him first on the money question?

One blessed saying of the Lord Jesus that we have is not quoted in the Gospels. Rather, it is quoted by the

Apostle Paul in Acts 20:35, where he urged the preachers at Ephesus "to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive."

If Jesus said that it is more blessed to give than it is to receive, is not His honor at stake to make it come true?

In II Corinthians 9:7 a wonderful rule for giving is put down:

Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.

Oh, God wants happy giving! God loves a cheerful giver.

Of course God loves everybody. But someway there is a special warmth of affection toward those who give cheerfully, hilariously, joyfully. We are told that John was "the disciple whom Jesus loved" (John 20:2). We are told that "Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus" (John 11:5). They were such cheerful givers. Again and again they took Jesus and the twelve apostles into their modest home and cared for them. Mary once brought a most expensive gift, "a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus" (John 12:3). Judas Iscariot said it was money wasted, said it was worth three hundred pence, a great deal at that time. But I can see how Jesus loved Mary, Martha and Lazarus with a special affection. How the Saviour's affection overflows toward those who give joyfully and deeply and with loving abandon!

Well, then, is not the honor of Jesus Christ at stake? Will He give back to those who give to Him? Will He love those who love Him? The dear Lord Jesus encourages all of us to put Him absolutely first and to prove this by our giving. Will He not see, then, that we are cared for who obey Him? Does God reward those who put Him first? His honor must be vindicated by His care for those who give as He tells us to give.

3. Are the Promises in the Bible True?

See how deep this question goes. The promises of the Bible are so clear, the promises that God will reward people who put Him first in money. Read again Proverbs 3:9, 10. Read again Proverbs 11:24, 25. Read again the words of Jesus in Luke 6:38. Read again the solemn promise and statement of truth in II Corinthians 9:6. If these promises are not true, then the rest of the Bible is not true either. If God does not keep His word about rewarding people for faithful and scriptural giving, then God may not save those who trust Jesus Christ, and God may not answer prayer. The integrity of the Bible, the truth of the Christian religion is bound up in this matter. God must fulfill His promises.

This means that not only will the Christian who serves God faithfully with the firstfruits of his income, with tithes and offerings, be cared for materially and prosper, but he will grow into a profound faith. He will prove that there is a living God. He will prove that the Bible is true.

That is what God had in mind when He said,

Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith 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.

Prove God on this money question and, thank God, you will prove Him as a prayer-hearing God, you will prove Him as a Saviour for sinners. Prove the Lord on this matter of giving according to His promise, then when you find that it works, you will know that the Bible is true and that all its promises are yea and amen!

You see, the very honor of God is involved. God must prosper people who do right and put Him first on money matters.

III. Experience Proves the Faithfulness of God in Prospering Materially Those Who Put Him First in Matters of Possessions

This is a wonderful theory; it certainly is enticing to hear that God has promised to prosper people, increase their crops, destroy insect pests, and use other people to pay us back for all we give to Him and His cause. I say, it sounds wonderful—but does it work?

Thank God, it does work. Experience has proven to millions of people that God actually pays back, many fold, all that people do for God with tithes and offerings given in His name.

With the widow of Zarephath, God proved that what was given in His name would be multiplied and rewarded in material things. The story is told in I Kings 17:8-16:

And, the word of the Lord came unto him, saying, Arise, get thee to Zarephath, which belongeth to Zidon, and dwell there: behold, I have commanded a widow woman there to sustain thee. So he arose and went to Zarephath. And when he came to the gate of the city. behold, the widow woman was there gathering of sticks: and he called to her, and said, Fetch me, I pray thee, a little water in a vessel, that I may drink. And as she was going to fetch it, he called to her, and said, Bring me, I pray thee, a morsel of bread in thine hand. And she said, As the Lord thy God liveth, I have not a cake, but an handful of meal in a barrel, and a little oil in a cruse: and, behold, I am gathering two sticks, that I may go in and dress it for me and my son, that we may eat it, and die. And Elijah said unto her, Fear not; go and do as thou hast said: but make me thereof a little cake first, and bring it unto me, and after make for thee and for thy son. For thus saith the Lord God of Israel, The barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail, until the day that the Lord sendeth rain upon the earth. And she went and did according to the saving of Elijah: and she, and he, and her house, did eat many days. And the barrel of meal wasted not, neither did the cruse of oil fail, according to the word of the Lord, which he spake by Elijah.

What a strange thing the prophet of God did! Here is a widow with no visible means of support. She has come to extremity, to the end of her resources. One handful of meal in a barrel, a little oil in a cruse—these were all she

had in her pantry. A great drought was on. It had not rained; famine was haunting the land. This widow had started to gather a few sticks and cook the last little cake of bread for herself and her son, then they would die of starvation. But the prophet of God insisted that she should first make him a little cake! The starving woman was asked to feed God's man before she filled her own empty stomach. And what came closer to her heart—she was asked to deprive her own starving son for a bit while she cooked some of the last handful of meal into a cake for the prophet!

But she did it! She believed God would repay. She made a cake for the prophet; and, behold! there was still meal in the barrel. There was still oil in the cruse. And so it continued long days. God saw that the barrel of meal did not waste and the cruse of oil did not fail until God should send rain on the earth and the famine would be over! And so it happened. That widow found that she could safely trust God with her handful of meal and her bit of oil. And so we will find, too, if we will but try God out.

That little boy who gave his lunch to Jesus—the five little barley biscuits and the two small fishes—learned that Jesus would multiply the loaves and fishes (John 6:1-13). Five thousand men besides women and children ate that day and had plenty. Twelve baskets full were left. I have an idea that that boy was one of the biggest eaters that day. He saw that there was plenty. It was the best food he had ever tasted! The apostles themselves passed the baskets, and again and again he took fish and

bread, until he could eat no more. Perhaps he then stuffed a couple of fish sandwiches into a pocket to eat on the road home later. He found that when one gives the dear Lord Jesus the best and the first, he is rewarded with more loaves and fishes.

Countless thousands of Christians have testified to me that they have proved God on this matter. They tell me that it pays to tithe. They tell me that ninety cents goes farther with God's blessing than a dollar without God's blessing. They tell me that increased wages, less sickness, new jobs, better crops, have come because they put God first in tithes and offerings. And I believe them. Their testimonies are so detailed and explicit and unanimous that an honest investigator must be convinced.

Years ago I was in a revival campaign in a country community in West Texas. In a daytime service I set out to teach people gathered under a brush arbor that God demanded first place in everything, that He wanted tithes and offerings from the loving and believing hearts of His people. Present in the service that day was a dear country preacher, Brother Kuykendal. He was then, and had been for years, county missionary in Palo Pinto county, preaching in churchless communities, building up weak churches, selling and giving away Gospel literature as a rural missionary. He asked if he might tell how God had dealt with him about tithing. I gladly asked him to proceed. He arose and told his story about like this.

"Some years ago when I was county missionary of this

county the famous Baptist businessman, H. Z. Duke, who founded the Duke and Ayers Nickel Stores over a wide area, came to this county and, speaking as a Christian layman, urged the men and women everywhere to try God and see if He would not make good His promises to bless them in material things when they gave tithes and offerings to His cause. After Mr. Duke had spoken in one community, I took him in my buggy to another community.

Mr. Duke said to me, 'Brother Kuykendal, do you believe in tithing?'

"I certainly do,' I said. 'I believe in tithing and I preach it myself.'

"But, Brother Kuykendal, do you practice tithing?"

"Sadly I had to answer, 'No, I do not. I believe in tithing, but I cannot practice it. You see, I have thirteen children at home. Every meal fifteen of us sit down at the table. I receive only \$125 a month, \$1500 a year as salary. I have to maintain my own horse and buggy for constant travelling. It is just impossible to take care of all the needs of a family of fifteen out of \$125 a month and have money left to tithe. So I believe in tithing, and I preach it, but I cannot practice it.'

"Mr. Duke was a very kindly man. He said, 'Brother Kuykendal, would you like to tithe? Would you tithe if I would back you up financially so you could be sure you would not lose by it?' "Nothing would please me more,' I said.

"So Mr. Duke made me the following proposition:

"I want you to set out to give God at least \$12.50 every month, as soon as you get your salary. Then as you feel led, you may give more. I promise you that if you need help, I will give it. Simply write me a letter and say, "Brother Duke, I am giving a tithe, but I miss the money. I need it for my family. I have given this year so much." I promise you that I will send you a check by return mail. Are you willing to try tithing on that basis? "I hesitated a moment, moved with emotion, and Brother Duke said, 'I have thirty-two stores. I have plenty of money to make good my promise. I will be glad to do it. Will you risk me and start tithing on my simple promise that I will make good any amount you have given, any time that you find you miss it and need it? Will you trust me about it?'

"I gladly accepted his offer. I said, 'Yes, Brother Duke, I have long wanted to tithe, but I felt I simply could not do it. Now, thank God, I can tithe and I will be glad to. And I will not feel like a hypocrite when I tell others they ought to tithe.'

"So I started tithing for the first time in my life. Every month I took out first of all one-tenth of my salary and gave it to the Lord's cause; then, as I felt led, I gave more. In the back of my mind I always had this thought, 'Mr. Duke promised me that he would make it up any time I need it. He will send me the money if I simply ask him for it.'

"But a strange thing happened. It seemed our money went farther than before. I would preach in some country

community and somebody would tie a crate of chickens on the back of my buggy. Somebody would put a ham under the seat. Or a godly woman would put some home-canned fruit in my buggy.

"A neighbor farmer said, 'Brother Kuykendal, God has blessed me so that I cannot get all my corn in the crib this year. I have a big wagon load extra that I cannot keep. May I put it in your crib for your buggy horse?'

"Another neighbor drove over with a great hay wagon full of hay for the cow.

"It was very strange, but that year we had no doctor bills. The children's clothes seemed not to wear out so badly. It was a happy, happy time. I never did have to call on Mr. H. Z. Duke to make up the money I had given to the Lord in tithes.

"Then one day, when the year was about gone and the test was about over, I suddenly realized with shame that I had believed what H. Z. Duke said. He promised to make good anything I lacked because of tithing, and I believed him. But my heavenly Father had made the same promise, and I had not believed Him! I had taken the word of a man when I did not take the promise of God! Now I had proven God's promises and found that He took care of me and my big family on a small salary. I found that \$112.50 per month took care of our family better, with God's blessing, than \$125 did without being under the blessed covenant which He has made with those who seek first the kingdom of God and who tithe."

That godly country preacher stood there before the

congregation weeping. With the deepest emotion he said,

"Now I have tithed for many years. My salary has been increased year after year. We have always had enough. We have never been shamed. The greatest spiritual blessing of my life, aside from my salvation, has been in learning to trust God about daily needs for my home and a big family."

God has proven to everybody who ever tried Him that He would keep His promise. He provides for those who seek first the kingdom of God, those who bring Him the firstfruits, those who give tithes and offerings.

I could not close this chapter without giving my own heartfelt testimony. As I have written this chapter I have been moved to tears again and again, because the floodtides of memory bring to mind so many blessings of the past. I have six daughters. Now for twenty-seven years I have had no regular salary. I gave up all my life insurance. I vowed I would not take a regular salary. would have no regular agreed income. Both as a pastor and evangelist I have simply depended upon God and have made no requirements for myself financially. The Sword of the Lord has never paid me a cent of salary. I have had great expense in publishing books pamphlets and in publishing The Sword of the Lord through those years before it was incorporated. I have spent many, many thousands of dollars on radio programs. I have held many large independent revival which I took campaigns for all the financial responsibility. Thank God, He has never failed me!

At this writing four of my girls have graduated from college. Another is a senior. The sixth one is in Wheaton College Academy. God has always provided the money for tuition, the money for clothes, for piano lessons, voice lessons. God has taken care of us. That has been so in the past; it is so to this very day.

Sometimes I will go for months in regular engagements and have enough love offerings from revival campaigns to take care of our needs, and hardly any money will come by mail especially designated for me. At other times when I am so burdened with editorial work I must decline revival services and have no other means of income, God begins to put it on the hearts of people to send offerings for me and the family. He never fails.

In the past there were times when I trembled. I wondered if the faithful God would continue always to supply our needs. Thank God, that trembling now seems to be gone forever. We spend very little time praying about our own needs. I pray much, of course, about the great work He has put in my hands, The *Sword of the Lord*, revival campaigns, radio broadcasts, the free literature work, the continual writing burden He has put upon me. These things put me on my face in earnest, pleading prayer again and again. But, thank God, I have learned to make my requests known to God and have peace, without any fret about daily provision.

I started tithing when I was a boy. Before I went off to college to work my way through I knelt under a chaparral bush in West Texas in the ranch country and promised

God that I would always give Him a tenth and more. He knows that I have done it, and most of the time, several dimes out of every dollar. There were times of deep poverty, but always there was enough. There were times when there was no human promise, no human prospect of supplies, but the supplies came. Glory to God who keeps His promises! I give it as the testimony of my heart, a testimony of long years of service, that God prospers in financial matters, in possessions, in daily supplies, all who put their trust in Him enough to prove Him with tithes and offerings. It pays to tithe!

* * *

Sinners Ought to Trust Such a Saviour!

If someone reads this who has not personally trusted Christ to forgive your sins and save your soul, I want you to consider how many reasons there are for trusting such a Saviour! Those who give Him their hearts, who depend upon Him for forgiveness, who set out to serve Him daily, never regret it. Don't you see how foolish it is to turn away from such a Saviour? How much there is to lose by going on in sin! And how certain you are to gain when such a righteous and merciful God offers forgiveness through His Son, Jesus Christ!

If you will trust Christ as your own Saviour, repent of your sins, take Him into your heart forever, won't you please sign the following statement, and copy it in a letter and mail it to me today and I will be so glad to write you a letter of counsel and encouragement in the Christian life. Say yes to God about your own soul, then sign and copy this letter and mail to me if you will.

Dr. Curtis Hutson P. O. Box 1099 Murfreesboro, Tennessee 37130

Dear Dr. Hutson:

Yes, I have read Dr. Rice's sermon "Giving Your Way

to Prosperity." According to his testimony, and the testimony of other Christians, it pays to serve God. One never loses by surrendering to Him, loving Him, serving Him. I confess that I am a poor lost sinner. So I have decided here and now to give my heart to Jesus Christ. I will depend upon Him to forgive me. I will depend upon Him to take care of me and help me to live right and make me happy. This moment I claim Jesus Christ as my own Saviour and set out to live for Him.

Signed _	
Address	

Christian, Take the Step of Faith!

Dear Christian who has read the sermon on "Giving Your Way to Prosperity," if you have not already tried God out by giving on the tithe and offering plan, I beg you to take that great step of faith today. Start out to lay aside one-tenth of all your net income for God. Give God the first tenth. Then you may give freewill offerings as you feel led and as your heart's love prompts you to do. Will you take this step because it is right? Will you take this step because you love the Lord? Will you start tithing because you believe the Bible, and you can risk the dear Lord to repay you and prosper you? Try God today and see!

If you will here and now start out definitely to put God first in money matters and to give Him the tithe, will you please sign the following coupon? Go on record between you and God. And show it to any members of your family and copy it in a letter, and mail it to me today. That is simply to make the decision open and definite and permanent. Will you sign it?

Dr. Curtis Hutson P. O. Box 1099 Murfreesboro, Tennessee 37130

Dear Dr. Hutson:

I have read Dr. Rice's sermon on "Giving Your Way to Prosperity." I believe that the Bible is true. I believe God will do what He has promised. I acknowledge that I owe God everything I am and have. Therefore I believe that I ought to give God not less than one-tenth of my net income. I believe that He will prosper me for doing what He commanded me to do. Therefore I here and now set out to give God one-tenth of my income plus such freewill offerings as the Lord leads me to give and as my heart's love prompts me to give. I will ask God where to give the money. I will pray for His leading and try to give according to the will of God and for the greatest usefulness in His work. I trust God to repay me and bless me as He promised to do.

Signed	
Address	
Date	

New Books By Dr. Hugh Pyle

One More Night With the Frogs

"Among the most striking sermons used in THE SWORD OF THE LORD have been some strong Bible messages by Dr. Hugh Pyle. They are scriptural, but scriptural sermons are not always interesting. These are interesting with practical applications and are pertinent to daily living and the affairs about us. You will like these messages! 11 chapters, 173 pages. New addition to Sword Economy Series.





The Truth About the Church of Christ

"Describing in simple terms the errors of the modern sect that boldly claims to be the one true church. How does it stand up in the light of the Bible?" Don't be deceived by those who make salvation a matter of baptism or good works or holding out faithful and miss the point of salvation by grace alone through faith. You will like this.

Let's Start an Avalanche!

Do these things disturb you?

- ◆ Threat of huge taxes on big-cars—(would this include church buses?)
- ◆ TV profanity and blasphemy
- Pornography on grocery and drugstore shelves
- Possibility of de-criminalization of marijuana
- The saccharin ban, while legal tobacco and booze destroy millions.

These and other important issues discussed in this new, inexpensive pamphlet.



For Sword of the Lord books check your local Christian bookstore and save postage and handling fees. If no local store, order from Sword of the Lord Publishers in Murfreesboro, Tennessee 37133.

TWO GREAT COMMENTARIES!



The King of the Jews

A verse-by-verse commentary on the Gospel of Matthew, by Dr. John R. Rice. Dr. Robert G. Lee, pastor-emeritus of Bellevue Baptist Church, Memphis, Tennessee, three-times past president of the Southern Baptist Convention, writes as follows:

"A really wonderful commentary on the Gospel according to Matthew. Of all the commentaries on Matthew's Gospel that I have read and studied during the years I have been pastor, I must say this is, for me, the best."

> 28 chapters, 504 pages,



Filled With the Spirit

Dr. Tom Malone, founder and pastor, Emmanuel Baptist Church, and president Midwestern Baptist College, Pontiac, Michigan, says:

"I recommend a great book on Acts. There are several helpful volumes on Acts. . . . I think it safe and fair and honest to say that many books on Acts miss the two great spiritual thrusts of the book, namely the power of the Holy Spirit for soul winning and evangelism and missions through the New Testament Dr. John book. . .includes all the scholarly background, the detailed verse-by-verse explanation plus the warm application of the doctrine and ministry of the Holy Spirit. This is a commentary on the book as it truly is, the Acts of the Holy Spirit, rather than the Acts of the Apostles."

> 28 chapters, 555 pages,

For Sword of the Lord books check your local Christian bookstore and save postage and handling fees. If no local store, order from Sword of the Lord Publishers in Murfreesboro, Tennessee 37130.