

The Good News

OF THE WORLD TOMORROW

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EVOLUTION

Does the Bible
Teach It?

**He Couldn't Afford
to Tithe**
By Herbert W.
Armstrong

The Man Who Couldn't Afford to Tithe

By Herbert W. Armstrong

It was late in 1933 — the very depth of the Great Depression. Ed Smith was a well driller by profession, but nobody seemed able to afford to have wells drilled.

Ed and his wife Emma attended services I was then holding in a one-room country schoolhouse 12 miles west of Eugene, Ore. Ed made no profession of Christianity until later. But he attended services, and went up and down the countryside discussing Bible doctrines with his professing Christian neighbors.

"You've got to pay tithes and obey God," he insisted. "The Bible says so. It's PLAIN!"

One of his neighbors became irritated.

"Look here, Ed," the neighbor exploded, "why do you come around here trying to talk me into these things, when you don't obey the Bible or pay tithes yourself?"

"Because," came Ed's quick and ready answer, "I don't profess to be a Christian, and you do. Besides," he added, "I can't afford to tithe, anyway."

Thousands like him

There are thousands who, like Ed Smith, reason in their own minds that they can't afford to tithe, even though, like Ed Smith,

they realize the Bible commands it. I heard about the above conversation, and preached a sermon on the question of whether the

the only sensible way of life, entirely apart from the matter of salvation — and that, even if one is finally lost, he who sins little shall be punished with *few* stripes, but he who sins much with *many* stripes (Luke 12:47-48).

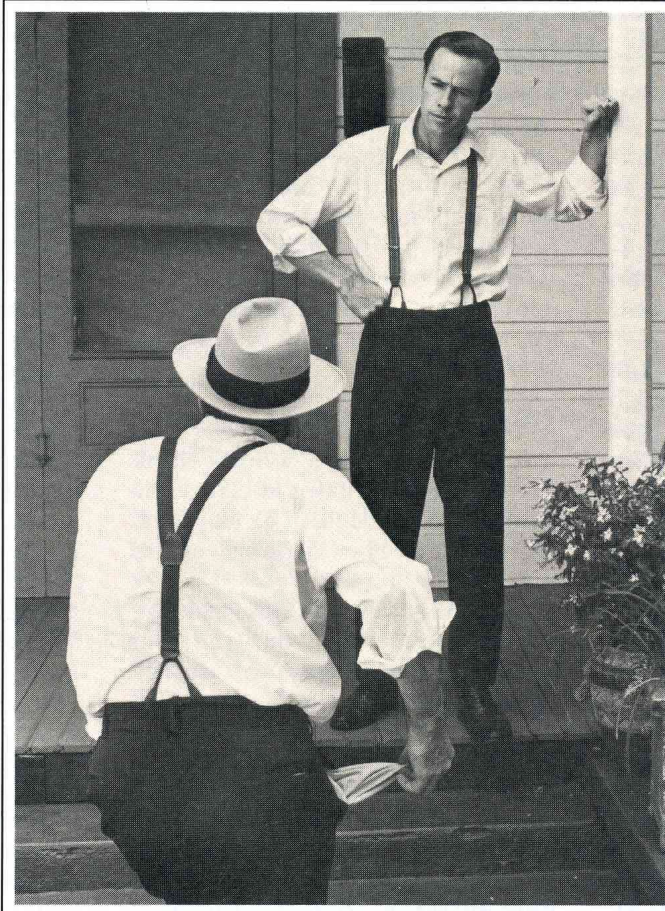
I pointed out God's promises to *prosper* the tithepayer, and that this is a definite LAW God has set in motion, which operates inexorably and automatically on the just and the unjust alike.

Ed began to obey the Bible. At the very next service — we were holding services at this little schoolhouse three times a week, and three other nights a week in a hall in downtown Eugene at the time — Mrs. Smith smilingly handed me a \$1 bill. "That's Ed's first tithe," she said triumphantly. "We are now down to \$10, and Ed decided to start tithing with what we have on hand."

The very next service she came to me with another happy smile.

"Here's a \$5 bill," she said. "The very next day after Ed gave God's Work a tenth of all he had, a customer who had owed him \$50 for a year came and paid up. So here's the tithe of that \$50. After paying the total \$6 tithe, we now have \$54 on hand instead of the \$10 we had the other day."

It was beginning to *pay*! But only *beginning*! By the next service, as I remember it, Ed had received his first order in one or



unconverted should obey the Ten Commandments and pay tithes, or whether, as Ed had reasoned, these things were only for Christians.

I pointed out that God's law was put in motion for *man's good* — it *is* THE WAY of life that brings peace, happiness, prosperity — the full, abundant, interesting life — success, joy *here and now*, as well as eternal life through Christ for the saved.

I showed that it *PAYS*, and is

two years to drill a new well, for which he received cash payment. Before he finished that job, another was contracted. Soon he had three or four jobs coming in at once, and was forced to begin employing men to work for him.

Ed Smith was only one of many I have known who learned by experience that one cannot afford *not* to pay God the tithe that BELONGS to God!

I remember Ed Smith did encounter some troubles of a different nature later, when his wife and son were sent to the state

give (Deut. 16:16-17). It is only when they withhold and misappropriate the tithe and offerings that He fails to prosper them. For through John He tells us, "I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health" (III John 2). "Honour the Lord [Eternal] 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).

Try it! "Prove me now herewith," challenges the Eternal to us, in a prophecy for *our* day

HIM, not to you (Deut. 10:14). You are in the position of steward handling that which *belongs to another*. He is your silent partner, and the first tenth, in addition to offerings, is His share. The rest He gives freely to you.

But if you appropriate for yourself His share, *you are stealing*, and ROBBING GOD (Mal. 3:8). Would you pay your debts with money another man had left in your trust? If a man working in a bank does that, we call it *embezzlement*!

The only *sure* way to know you have God as partner and that He is taking care of your interests is to obey Him in tithing.

When God receives His portion of all your income, God becomes your partner, sharing in your profits. He causes His partners to prosper, so if you are in debt, take God into partnership *first*, and watch Him prosper you until finally you are out of debt! Remember the debt you owe God comes FIRST.

Some will say, "I never tithed, and I know God never frowned on me, for I have the feeling in my heart that I am His child without having to tithe."

God has blessed you according as you have *yielded* to Him according to the light He has revealed to you, from His Word! While you have the light, WALK in it, *lest darkness come upon you!* (John 12:35-36). "GROW in grace, and in the KNOWLEDGE of our Lord" (II Pet. 3:18). See also Romans 11:22.

If every professing Christian would accept this plain instruction from God, honoring HIM instead of themselves with their substance, the Work of the Eternal would go forth with such mighty power that the world would be shaken to its foundations!

Seek ye FIRST the Kingdom, and your material needs shall be ADDED. Try it! Take God at His Word! Prove HIM (Mal. 3:10)! *See how you begin to prosper!* Be a faithful steward; make God your PARTNER! Receive His BLESSING! God's Work is waiting upon YOU! □

"Prove me now," challenges the Eternal . . .

tuberculosis hospital, and he finally broke down in real repentance, accepting Jesus Christ as Savior. He came to me, according to the command of James 5:14-15, and both his wife and son were completely healed and returned home.

This is a true story, and the name is not fictitious. Ed Smith died a number of years ago, but I'm happy to remember these incidents in his life in the hope they may start many others on the right and *profitable*, as well as the Christian, way of life.

Why did God ordain tithing? Was it to place increased burden and taxation upon us? Let us not misunderstand God's love and wisdom!

It isn't that God really *needs* your first tenth. He could have established some different system for carrying on His Work. But to have done so would have robbed *us* of the blessing that flows back to us if we are faithful in tithes and offerings!

The tither is invariably a prosperous man. I do not mean necessarily *wealthy* — but one whose actual needs are always supplied. Tithers, if faithful and obedient to the Eternal, are not often found in want. "Not because I desire a gift: but I desire fruit *that may abound to YOUR account*" (Phil. 4:17).

God promises His children shall always have something to

(Mal. 3:10), "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" — financial blessings! Are you behind financially? In debt? Your unfaithfulness in tithing and offerings *may be the reason!*

Tithing while in debt

Yet so many say, "I don't think it would be right for me to tithe while I'm in debt." Yes, it is right, and the other way is *WRONG*.

"There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death" (Prov. 14:12, 16:25). God's Word tells us what is RIGHT, and God tells us to pay to His Work the *firstfruits* of all our income (Prov. 3:9-10).

Regarding our material and financial needs, even debts, God says, "Seek ye *first* the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matt. 6:33). *The tithe is the debt that you owe God*. This debt is FIRST in time and principle. Pay your debts to God, make Him your PARTNER in your finances and receive His blessing in temporal affairs. This will enable you to pay your debts, or to get a job, or to have your needs supplied more quickly than if you evade His debt.

Remember your ALL belongs to