

Proportional Giving

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Tithing. Could there be a more boring or more legalistic or a more uninspirational theme than tithing for a sermon? Even the word 'tithe' which simply means 'one tenth' has not been used in the Sydney Morning Herald in over 40 years. It's antiquated; both in usage and in content. You have to go to the Bible to find it. The word 'tithe' is spoken twice in the historical books, three times in the prophets, and 11 times in the Torah, the 5 Books of Moses. What was David Ritchie thinking anyway when he asked me to speak about proportional giving? This is another in our series of sermons on money. In fact it's the 4th in the series, so by now, anyone who has been here for the last 3 weeks is saying, "oy givalt, another 'stewardship' talk"...or "they are just after my money!"... or "*now* what else could they teach me about money"...or perhaps you have said what I consider the worst, "Of course this is all the Jewish guy can teach on... money!"

* Story of "Nachum and Moshe at St Mary's Cathedral. Convert. \$10,000."

But it was another Jewish man who spoke these words, "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cumin and rue and every kind of garden herb, and have neglected the weightier provisions of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness; but these are the things you should have done without neglecting the others." (quoted in both Matthew 23.23 and Luke 11.42)

And it was that same Jewish man who told the story of a rich man contrasted with a poor bloke, the rich man self-attesting to his own righteousness "I thank you God that I'm not like other men, I fast twice a week, I pay tithes of all I receive"

John Calvin wrote: "When we have entirely discarded all self-confidence, and trust solely in the certainty of his goodness, we are fit to apprehend and obtain the grace of God. "When," (as Augustine says,) "forgetting our own merits, we embrace the gifts of Christ, because if he should seek for merits in us we should not obtain his gifts," (August. de Verb. Apost. 8.) Not to dwell longer here, let us lay down this short but sure and general rule, That he is prepared to reap the fruits of the divine mercy who has thoroughly emptied himself, I say not of righteousness, (he has none,) but of a vain and blustering show of righteousness; for to whatever extent any man rests in himself, to the same extent he impedes the beneficence of God." (Inst. Chr. Religion. Vol. III)

Do you look at people as “almost Christian?” That is, do you notice unbelievers and say, “This one would make a fine Christian.” Or “when he gets saved, he’ll be very useful to God in this regard or that.” Oswald Chambers in *My Utmost for His Highest* on August 4 said, “It is not a question of our equipment but of our poverty, not of what we bring with us, but of what God puts into us; not a question of natural virtues of strength of character, knowledge, and experience---all that is of no avail in this matter. The only thing that avails is that we are taken up into the big compelling of God and made his comrades.” In other words, it’s not how able and how generous... it’s about how humble and breast beating we are about how ignoble we are. But this idea may better be expanded at another time.

For now, let’s break down the idea of proportional giving into some bite size portions, so you will be able to at least discuss this topic later on. By the way, this entire sermon will be available online tonight on my website, jewsforjesus.com.au. If you forget the web address, go look outside at my van. So here’s the outline...

- I. The idea of giving is God’s idea
- II. The idea of tithing is God’s strategy
- III. The tithe is non negotiable and not replaced
- IV. The tithe is minimal
- V. Systematic and spontaneous are not antithetical

I. The idea of giving is God’s idea

From the beginning, we see God as a giver. The last 3 weeks, we’ve seen that in our series. If this is your first time with us, let me be modular, that is, let this sermon be able to be a one-off occasion. The most famous verse in the Bible is a proof of this idea. For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. (John 3.16) God initiated the idea of giving. It’s His style of life. Quoting again, “And this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His own son as a propitiation for our sins.” (1 John). God the master of life, has taught us in his own activity of the idea of giving. It’s His idea. And God gives lavishly, effusively, if you will prodigally.

II. The idea of the tithe is God’s strategy

Abraham, the father of faith, conquered a confederation of kings as recorded in the book of Genesis. As a thanks to God, Abraham gave a tenth part of all the spoils from the confederate kings. These Abraham gave as a tribute to the most high God, who, being the possessor of heaven and earth, dispenses all spiritual and temporal favors, and demands the gratitude of all his subjects. By medieval times, almost all nations of the earth have agreed in giving a tenth part of their property to be employed in religious uses. The tithes were

afterwards granted to the Levites for the use of the sanctuary, and the maintenance of themselves and their families, as they had no other landed inheritance in Israel. (Adam Clarke commentary on Genesis)

Tithes in their origin appear to have been a sort of eucharistic offering made unto God, and probably were something similar to the minchah, which we learn from Genesis 4. was in use almost from the foundation of the world. When God established a regular, and we may add an expensive worship, it was necessary that proper provision should be made for the support of those who were obliged to devote their whole time to it, and consequently were deprived of the opportunity of providing for themselves in any secular way. It was soon found that a tenth part of the produce of the whole land was necessary for this purpose, as a whole tribe, that of Levi which was 1/12th or 8% of the sons of Jacob, was devoted to the public service of God. When the land was divided, this tribe received no inheritance among their brethren. Hence, for their support, the law of tithes was enacted; and by these the priests and Levites were not only supported as the ministers of God, but as the teachers and intercessors of the people, performing a great variety of religious duties including leading worship and singing and music which otherwise they themselves were bound to perform. As God instituted this mode of supporting His ministers, so we may rest assured it was rational and just. Nothing can be more reasonable than to devote a portion of the earthly good which we receive from the free mercy of God, to his own service; especially when by doing it we are essentially serving ourselves. If the ministers of God give up their whole time, talents, and strength, to watch over, labor for, and instruct the people in spiritual things, justice requires that they receive their support from the work.

The laborer is worthy of his hire; and the maintenance of the public ministry of the word of God should not be left to the caprices of men. This week we may think 10% is fine; next week, after another company like HIH goes down or our shares in One.Tel are recalculated, we may think 3% is suitable for the lazy preacher who only works one day a week anyway! Beyond the caprice of men, think about this. He who is only supported for his work, will be probably abandoned when he is no longer capable of public service I have heard stories of aged and worn-out ministers reduced to great necessity, and almost literally obliged to beg their bread among those whose opulence and salvation were, under God, the fruits of their ministry!

Such persons may think they do God service by disputing against “tithes, as legal institutions long since abrogated,” while they permit their worn-out ministers to starve: -but how shall they appear in that day when Jesus shall say, I was hungry, and ye gave me no meat;

This makes no sense to me, but it happens. And it happens because of poor structures. The tithe was God’s structural strategy.

III. The tithe is non-negotiable and not replaced

In Leviticus 27 we read **Verse 30. All the tithe of the land**— This God claims as his own; and it is spoken of here as being a point perfectly settled, and concerning which there was neither doubt nor difficulty.

But perhaps you think this is just old stuff, old covenant, Jewish and not for you as a Christian. Amazing. This same section of Bible we read, Deuteronomy 14, also tells you to both care for poor people and to worship together. And if I see the Anglicare box outside this worship center I think we haven't dismissed the entire book now have we? I think most people pick and choose which of BOTH testaments they want to enjoin on themselves. But I'm not convinced tithing is done away in Christ. Remember what Y'shua said?

*Matt. 23:23 ¶ "Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spices — mint, dill and cumin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law — justice, mercy and faithfulness. You should have practiced the latter, **without neglecting the former.***

It sounds like Jesus here is emphasizing and reinforcing the relevance and importance of tithing AS WELL AS having the mercy and kindness of God whilst you do it. He sounds to be affirming the continuing validity of the tithe.

So, If you will, for a bit of historical perspective, let's look for a few minutes at Deuteronomy 14:22-15:11

22-29 the "tithe" is to be taken to the place the Lord shall choose as a dwelling for his Name, and there it is to be eaten joyfully in the presence of the Lord. Moses had already mentioned (in 12:6) the tithes along with the other things that the people were to bring to the chosen sanctuary, where they should eat and rejoice. Obviously the people would not consume a tenth of their total annual production in only a few days! Having already given directions for the support of the Levites by the tithes (Nu 18:21-28), Moses here spoke of the festive communal meals that the people were to enjoy when the tithes were brought to the tabernacle.

Every three years these tithes were to be brought to local city centers where they were stored for the use of the Levites, the aliens, and the poor. This care for non-landed people would lead to God's blessing on their agricultural work. This garnering of tithes was to come during the third year and the sixth year. After the sixth year, the sabbatical year was observed as a year when the fields lay fallow, after which the cycle recommenced.

The logistics of transporting the tithes would be difficult—perhaps impossible—for families living at a distance from the tabernacle. Thus the people could turn the tithe into cash and then, at the place the Lord would choose, convert it into food and drink desired for the celebration of God's blessing.

The year of canceling debts (15:1-11)

1-4 Israel was to have a very special internal relationship of brotherhood in its citizenry. If followed, there would be no poor or needy person among them because of the Lord's blessing (vv. 4-6, 10). The cancellation of debt itself would go a long way toward producing that blessing, and it would result in limiting the centralization of monetary assets in the hands of the more well to do. No evidence exists that the Mosaic economy in its details was ever fully implemented with its sabbatical years and years of Jubilee.

The assertion that "there should be no poor" among them at first glance may seem to conflict with v. 7 and especially v. 11. But apparently Moses proclaimed the ideal while being doubtful that the ideal would be fully realized (cf. 1Jn 2:1). But maybe we should say, since the poor will always be with us, we will always have opportunity to fulfill this commandment and do what God says. That is, if you come to a place of abundance like Australia enjoys and you can't really see the 'need', you still should comply with God's Ordinance. That's what God seems to say in this passage to me.

5-6 Israel would realize the ideal situation only if the people would fully obey the Lord. Obedience would not only bring rich blessings so that no poor would be among them, but they would also have monetary superiority over the nations around them.

7-11 Moses moved into the subjective bases for the Israelites' behavior—their thoughts and emotions—when he said that they should not be hardhearted, but should freely lend a brother whatever he needs. They must exercise care not to harbor a base thought that would limit generosity, such as "the year for canceling debts is near." They must give generously without a grudging heart. A warning is appended: the brother can appeal to the Lord, and the grudging-hearted will be found guilty of sin.

Hundreds of years later, at the time of Y'shua, the fraternity of the Pharisees was bound by these two vows — that of tithing and that in regard to purifications. As the mostvaried questions would here arise in practice, which certainly were not answered in the law of Moses, the "traditions," which were supposed to explain and supplement the Divine law became necessary. In point of fact, the Rabbis speak of them in that sense, and describe them as "a hedge" around Israel and its law. The result was a system of pure externalism, which often contravened the spirit of those very ordinances, the letter of which was slavishly worshipped. To what hypocrisy it often gave rise, appears from Rabbinical writings almost as much as from the Newer Testament. We can understand how those "blind guides" would often be as great a trouble to their own party as to others. [Edersheim, SketchesChapter 14]

So I believe the tithe is still a mandate and a fixture for us all.

IV. The tithe is minimal

I get upset when I hear an otherwise good Christian radio program that closes with the appeal, "Send your tithes and offerings to US." I say to myself, "Offerings, maybe; tithes, no!" Tithing, or giving 10 percent of one's income, is a good beginning standard. Most Christians are able to give more than just 10 percent, and a good number do. But if a person is only tithing, his local church should have primary consideration. You wouldn't think much of a wage earner who gave to every indigent beggar to the point where his own family had no food on the table for lack of funds. Yet that's exactly what many Christians do in their giving.

Many are shocked to hear this from a missionary. I guess somehow they thought that I, the leader of a faith mission, should be saying, "Support our mission first." I don't know that anyone supports our ministry less for my telling people that their first concern in Christian giving should be their local church.

One man, an old-age pensioner, wrote in anguish that he loved his church and had been a tither until his forced retirement. Because of a catastrophic illness, he had lost his home and savings. His pension was so low that he was living in one room and staying alive by eating canned dog food. He was anxiety-ridden over not being able to tithe. Belonging to a church that regularly scheduled sermons on "stewardship," he understood his pastor to be preaching from Malachi 3:8 that non-tithers were robbing God -- a passage, incidentally, meant for the people of Israel living in the land. That poor man was tortured with guilt, never questioning the presumption that if a Christian did not give 10 percent of his income, he was guilty of feloniously withholding God's due. He expressed deep shame and despair, saying, "I want to believe that God would provide if only I would trust him by tithing. Sometimes I wonder if I have enough faith even to be saved." That man was a victim of some over-zealous preaching on stewardship. I told him that his assurance of salvation should be based on Christ, not on his ability to give -- that he was saved by what God had given him, not by what he gave God!

** Story of "Rabbi/minister/priest: Throw up, outside circle is for God. Throw up, inside the circle is for God. Throw up, whatever he wants he catches, the rest is for us."

I do believe in proportionate giving, and I think that 10 percent of one's income is a good starting place. Arnold Fruchtenbaum says if you add up all the tithes required they total 23% of your income. Wow! But Arnold doesn't factor in the 7th year or the 50th year. Nor the 7th day for that matter. Last month Patty and Anne and I went to Thailand, where the work week is 7 days, not 5. No leave loading either. Remember in the Bible, Moses is writing to an agrarian people who ordinarily worked 7 days. Factor these required days off and you total 42%! After that, 10% sounds like a steep discount, doesn't it? Furthermore, I won't quibble about whether the tithe should be from gross income or net income. That

question removes the subject from the realm of the true nature of Christian giving. In conjunction with that, my next statement may be even more shocking: If you feel that you cannot give or do not care to give to support your local church or any Christian cause, then you should not give!

You see, only you can take upon yourself that obligation of giving to God. Theologically speaking, you could be saved if you never gave one donation to your own church or any other Christian cause. God does not love you more because you give a great deal or less because you give less. The basis of Christian giving is not giving according to some obligation, but giving out of love for God. The clearest teaching on giving is found in our Newer Testament passage II Corinthians 9:7: " Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.." What you give or do not give is a matter of what is in your heart. God loves us all anyway; but he has a special affection for those who cheerfully want to do *without* things because they love him.

A while back, another friend of our ministry wrote that he was giving us substantial support because he belonged to a church that did not believe in bringing the gospel to the Jews, or at least didn't want to support any Jewish mission. If he belonged to a church that was unwilling to support missions other than what could be controlled by his denomination, perhaps he ought to look for another church. If you cannot wholeheartedly give the major part of your donations to support your own local church and its projects, you ought to think seriously about changing churches.

Of course you won't find a perfect church in your neighborhood -- or in this world. And if you ever did, it would no longer be perfect after you joined it because we are all imperfect people here on earth, striving to grow toward the perfection we will achieve only in the heavenly presence of our Savior. Meanwhile, you need to belong to a church and you should support it in proportion to your income and resources. For the good of your own soul, you need to be a giver more than your church or any Christian organization needs to be the recipient of your donations. If you don't know that church membership includes an obligation to support the ministry of that church, then I'm glad you are here today to hear this message. Perhaps you ought to review first, your commitment to the Lord, and second, your commitment to your church.

I do hope that you will be able to continue to support Holy Trinity Church first, or to make that your priority for the first time if you have never before considered the matter. And I hope that as God prospers and leads, you will be able to uphold our Jews for Jesus ministry as well.

V. (And lastly) Tithing should be systematic and spontaneous

Whatever you do, it's important to remember that all of your giving is an act of worship and devotion to God. That's the way we receive gifts to our ministry because that's the way we believe they are given. True giving means giving up something. You could enjoy the worshipful act of being a sacrificial giver more than you could enjoy what you would be giving up. The key lies in contemplating what God has given you, what it cost him, and how pleased he was when you accepted his gift of salvation in Christ. The more you realize what God has given and continues to give you, the more you'll enjoy the worship of giving to him.

A woman needed a new dress and saw just what she was looking for at a very good price. But just about the only money left after paying the bills and buying groceries was money set-aside for her church. "Go ahead and buy the dress," her friend reasoned. "It's on sale now and you can always give more money to the church next month." The woman shook her head. "No," she said. "This money is my tithe. It's God's money already. I'm not about to borrow God's money to buy a dress, even if it is on sale."

She responded to her circumstances based on principles to which she was previously committed, following through on choices she had made long ago. That is what commitment to one's principles does--it rules out what may appear to be a choice, based on a past decision that takes precedence.

Whim and fancy make us change gears, but the church is an institution that needs pace and settled accounts. Systematic approaches to giving make sense to me. Not only because I was a maths teacher, but because it is reasonable. AND YET... with systems come the danger of Pharaseism, that is, the fulfillment of rules for the sake of pleasing God who is already pleased with our faith. Hence, there is a companion need, that of spontaneity and joy, as we read in our text, "with hilarity" or "joyfully". I don't think system and spontaneity are mutually exclusive. Smile as you turn in your weekly prepared envelopes.

To summarize, let's remind ourselves. God is a giver and his strategy in running things here includes tithing. 10% of your income is minimal and can be given in gladness to God for all His benefits to us.

I trust this message although a fairly simple functional message will speak to each of us over the next few months, and we will all be better givers to the parish. As unto the Lord. Originally I thought of bringing a chalkboard, taking random salary figures from the pews and after completing this most basic maths skill, I would sit down. I told David my sermon would only last one minute. Which some of you now think is 30 seconds too long. But we'll have to leave that also for another time.

May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight, oh Lord our Rock and Redeemer. (End of sermon)

For those reading online, our thoughts came from the Bible text of Paul to the Corinthians as follows:

2Cor. 9:6 ¶ Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously.

2Cor. 9:7 Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

2Cor. 9:8 And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.

2Cor. 9:9 As it is written: "He has scattered abroad his gifts to the poor; his righteousness endures forever."

2Cor. 9:10 Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness.

2Cor. 9:11 You will be made rich in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God.

2Cor. 9:12 ¶ This service that you perform is not only supplying the needs of God's people but is also overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God.

2Cor. 9:13 Because of the service by which you have proved yourselves, men will praise God for the obedience that accompanies your confession of the gospel of Christ, and for your generosity in sharing with them and with everyone else.

2Cor. 9:14 And in their prayers for you their hearts will go out to you, because of the surpassing grace God has given you.

2Cor. 9:15 Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!

Other notes on selected texts: John Calvin said,

"says of this scene, "Our divine Master, not confining himself to words, has by a parable set before us, as in a picture, a representation of true humility. He brings forward a publican, who standing afar off, and not daring to lift up his eyes to heaven, smites upon his breast, laments aloud, and exclaims, " God be merciful to me a sinner," (Luke 18:13.) Let us not suppose that he gives

the signs of a fictitious modesty when he dares not come near or lift up his eyes to heaven, but, smiting his breast, confesses himself a sinner; let us know that these are the evidences of his internal feeling. With him our Lord contrasts the Pharisee, who thanks God "I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess." In this public confession he admits that the righteousness which he possesses is the gift of God; but because of his confidence that he is righteous, he departs from the presence of God unaccepted and abominated. The publican acknowledging his iniquity is justified. Hence we may see how highly our humility is valued by the Lord: our breast cannot receive his mercy until deprived completely of all opinion of its own worth. When such an opinion is entertained, the door of mercy is shut. That there might be no doubt on this matter, the mission on which Christ was sent into the world by his Father was "to preach good tidings to the meek," "to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn; to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness," (Isaiah 61:1-3.) In fulfillment of that mission, the only persons whom he invites

to share in his beneficence are the “weary and heavy laden.” In another passage he says, “ I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance,” (Matthew 11:28; 9:13.)”

Therefore if we would make way for the call of Christ, we must put far from us all arrogance and confidence. The former is produced by a foolish persuasion of self-righteousness, when a man thinks that he has something in himself which deservedly recommends him to God; the latter may exist without any confidence in works. For many sinners, intoxicated with the pleasures of vice, do not think of the judgment of God. Lying stupefied, as it were, by a kind of lethargy, they do not aspire to the offered mercy. It is not less necessary to shake off torpor of this description than every kind of confidence in ourselves, in order that we may run to Christ unencumbered, and while hungry and empty be filled with his blessings. Never shall we have sufficient confidence in him unless utterly distrustful of ourselves; never shall we take courage in him until we first despond of ourselves; never shall we have full consolation in him until we cease to have any in ourselves.

(Inst. Chr. Religion. Vol. III)

John Chrysostom on Luke 16: **1**. When lately we made mention of the Pharisee and the publican, and hypothetically yoked two chariots out of virtue and vice; we pointed out each truth, how great is the gain of humbleness of mind, and how great the damage of pride. For this, even when conjoined with righteousness and fastings and tithes, fell behind; while that, even when yoked with sin, outstripped the Pharisee’s pair, even although the charioteer it had was a poor one. For what was worse than the publican? But all the same

This is also from Calvin’s institutes: Now, as far as I can see, there are four ends to which our vows may be properly directed; two of these, for the sake of order, I refer to the past, and two to the future. To the past belong vows by which we either testify our gratitude toward God for favors received, or in order to deprecate his wrath, inflict punishment on ourselves for faults committed. The former, let us if you please call acts of thanksgiving; the latter, acts of repentance. Of the former class, we have an example in the tithes which Jacob vowed (Genesis 28:20), if the Lord would conduct him safely home from exile; and also in the ancient peace offerings which pious kings and commanders, when about to engage in a just war, vowed that they would give if they were victorious, or, at least, if the Lord would deliver them when pressed by some greater difficulty. Thus are to be understood all the passages in the Psalms which speak of vows (Psalm 22:26; 56:13; 116:14, 18). Similar vows may also be used by us in the present day, whenever the Lord has rescued us from some disaster or dangerous disease, or other peril. For it is not abhorrent from the office of a pious man thus to consecrate a votive offering to God as a formal symbol of acknowledgment that he may not seem ungrateful for his kindness. The nature of the second class it will be sufficient to illustrate merely by one familiar example. Should anyone, from gluttonous indulgence, have fallen into some iniquity, there is nothing to prevent him, with the view of chastising his intemperance, from renouncing all luxuries for a certain time, and in doing so, from employing a vow for the purpose of binding himself more firmly. And yet I do not lay down this as an invariable law to all who have similarly offended; I merely show what may be lawfully done by those who think that such a vow will be useful to them. Thus while I hold it lawful so to vow, I at the same time leave it free.

(book 4)

Deuteronomy 14:22-15:11

The indictment "You will be found guilty of sin" may be one made directly by the Lord to the conscience or a formal one made by a priest (23:21-22; 24:15; cf. Lev 20:20; Nu 9:13; 18:22).

Edersheim: Suffice it, that, generally speaking, a member of the first degree was called a "Chaver," or "Ben hacheneseth," "son of the union" — an ordinary Pharisee; while the other three degrees were ranked together under the generic name of "Teharoth" (purifications). These latter were probably the "Chasidim" of the later period. The "Chaver," or ordinary Pharisee, only bound himself to tithing and avoidance of all Levitical uncleanness. The higher degrees, on the other hand, took increasingly strict vows. Any one might enter "the order" if he took, before three members, the solemn vow of observing the obligations of the fraternity. A novitiate of a year (which was afterwards shortened) was, however, necessary. The wife or widow of a "Chaver," and his children, were regarded as members of the fraternity. Those who entered the family of a "Pharisee" had also to seek admission into the "order." The general obligations of a "Chaver" towards those that were "without" the fraternity were as follows. He was neither to buy from, nor to sell to him anything, either in a dry or fluid state; he was neither to eat at his table (as he might thus partake of what had not been tithed), nor to admit him to his table, unless he had put on the garments of a "Chaver" (as his own old ones might else have carried defilement); nor to go into any burying-place; nor to give "therumah" or tithes to any priest who was not a member of the fraternity; nor to do anything in presence of an "am haaretz," or non-"Chaver," which brought up points connected with the laws of purification, etc. To these, other ordinances, partly of an ascetic character, were added at a later period. But what is specially remarkable is that not only was a novitiate required for the higher grades, similar to that on first entering the order; but that, just as the garment of a non-"chaver" defiled a "Chaver" of the first degree, that of the latter equally defiled him of the second degree, and so on.

. "The plague or leaven of the Pharisees" was not an uncommon expression; and this religious sore is ranked with "a silly pietist, a cunning sinner, and a woman Pharisee," as constituting "the troubles of life" (*Sot.* 3. 4). "Shall we stop to explain the opinions of Pharisees?" asks a Rabbi, in supreme contempt for "the order" as such. "It is as a tradition among the Pharisees," we read (*Fathers according to R. Nathan*, 5), "to torment themselves in this world, and yet they will not get anything in the next." It was suggested by the Sadducees, that "the Pharisees would by and by subject the globe of the sun itself to their purifications." On the other hand, almost Epicurean sentences are quoted among their utterances, such as, "Make haste, eat and drink, for the world in which we are is like a wedding feast;" "If thou possessest anything, make good cheer of it; for there is no pleasure underneath the sod, and death gives no respite...Men are like the flowers of the field; some flourish, while others fade away." (Chapter 14)

From Edersheim (Sketches) Another offense lay in the thought, that tribute, hitherto only given to Jehovah, was now to be paid to a heathen emperor. "Is it lawful to pay tribute unto Caesar?" was a sore question, which many an Israelite put to himself as he placed the emperor's poll-tax beside the half-shekel of the sanctuary, and the tithes of his field, vineyard, and orchard, claimed by the tax-gatherer, along with that which he had hitherto only given unto the Lord. Even the purpose with which this inquiry was brought before Christ — to entrap Him in a political denunciation — shows, how much it was agitated among patriotic Jews; and it cost rivers of blood before it was not answered, but silenced.

(chapter 4)

Let's read some of the Older Testament verses on tithing or as some say 'proportional giving.'

Lev. 27:30 ¶ 'Thus all the **tithe** of the land, of the seed of the land or of the fruit of the tree, is the LORDS; it is holy to the LORD.

Lev. 27:31 'If, therefore, a man wishes to redeem part of his **tithe**, he shall add to it one-fifth of it.

Num. 18:21 ¶ "And to the sons of Levi, behold, I have given all the **tithe** in Israel for an inheritance, in return for their service which they perform, the service of the tent of meeting.

Num. 18:24 "For the **tithe** of the sons of Israel, which they offer as an offering to the LORD, I have given to the Levites for an inheritance; therefore I have said concerning them, They shall have no inheritance among the sons of Israel.'" "

Num. 18:26 "Moreover, you shall speak to the Levites and say to them, 'When you take from the sons of Israel the **tithe** which I have given you from them for your inheritance, then you shall present an offering from it to the LORD, a **tithe** of the **tithe**.'

Deut. 12:17 "You are not allowed to eat within your gates the **tithe** of your grain, or new wine, or oil, or the first-born of your herd or flock, or any of your votive offerings which you vow, or your freewill offerings, or the contribution of your hand.

Deut. 14:22 ¶ "You shall surely **tithe** all the produce from what you sow, which comes out of the field every year.

Deut. 14:23 "And you shall eat in the presence of the LORD your God, at the place where He chooses to establish His name, the **tithe** of your grain, your new wine, your oil, and the first-born of your herd and your flock, in order that you may learn to fear the LORD your God always.

Deut. 14:24 "And if the distance is so great for you that you are not able to bring the **tithe**, since the place where the LORD your God chooses to set His name is too far away from you when the LORD your God blesses you,

Deut. 14:28 ¶ "At the end of every third year you shall bring out all the **tithe** of your produce in that year, and shall deposit it in your town.

Deut. 26:12 ¶ "When you have finished paying all the **tithe** of your increase in the third year, the year of tithing, then you shall give it to the Levite, to the stranger, to the orphan and to the widow, that they may eat in your towns, and be satisfied.

2Chr. 31:5 And as soon as the order spread, the sons of Israel provided in abundance the first fruits of grain, new wine, oil, honey, and of all the produce of the field; and they brought in abundantly the **tithe** of all.

2Chr. 31:6 And the sons of Israel and Judah who lived in the cities of Judah, also brought in the **tithe** of oxen and sheep, and the **tithe** of sacred gifts which were consecrated to the LORD their God, and placed them in heaps.

Neh. 10:37 We will also bring the first of our dough, our contributions, the fruit of every tree, the new wine and the oil to the priests at the chambers of the house of our God, and the **tithe** of our ground to the Levites, for the Levites are they who receive the tithes in all the rural towns.

Neh. 13:12 All Judah then brought the **tithe** of the grain, wine, and oil into the storehouses.

Mal. 3:10 "Bring the whole **tithe** into the storehouse, so that there may be food in My house, and test Me now in this," says the LORD of hosts, "if I will not open for you the windows of heaven, and pour out for you a blessing until it overflows."

More from Edersheim (Chapter 5 Sketches) The brief notice of Lydda given in this narrative of the apostle's labors, is abundantly confirmed by Talmudical notices, although, of course, we must not expect them to describe the progress of Christianity. We can readily believe that Lydda had its congregation of "saints," almost from the first, since it was (*Maas. Sh. 5. 2*) within an easy day's journey west of Jerusalem. Indeed, as the Talmud explains, the second tithes (Deuteronomy 14:22; 26:12) from Lydda could not be converted into money, but had to be brought to the city itself, so "that the streets of Jerusalem might be garlanded with fruits." The same passage illustrates the proximity of Lydda to the city, and the frequent intercourse between the two,²⁸ by saying that the women of Lydda mixed their dough, went up to Jerusalem, prayed in the Temple, and returned before it had fermented.

In Leviticus we read

Lev. 27:32 *The entire tithe of the herd and flock – every tenth animal that passes under the shepherd's rod – will be holy to the LORD.*

Lev. 27:33 *He must not pick out the good from the bad or make any substitution. If he does make a substitution, both the animal and its substitute become holy and cannot be redeemed.'"*

Verse 32. *Whatsoever passeth under the rod*— The signification of this verse is well given by the rabbis: "When a man was to give the tithe of his sheep or calves to God, he was to shut up the whole flock in one fold, in which there was one narrow door capable of letting out one at a time. The owner, about to give the tenth to the Lord, stood by the door with a rod in his hand, the end of which was dipped in vermilion or red ochre. The mothers of those lambs or calves stood without: the door being opened, the young ones ran out to join themselves to their dams; and as they passed out the owner stood with his rod over them, and counted one, two, etc., and when the tenth came, he touched it with the coloured rod, by which it was distinguished to be the tithe calf, sheep, etc., and whether poor or lean, perfect or blemished, that was received as the legitimate tithe." It seems to be in reference to this custom that the Prophet Ezekiel, speaking to Israel, says: I will cause you to pass under the rod, and will bring you into the bond of the covenant — you shall be once more claimed as the Lord's property, and be in all things devoted to his service, being marked or ascertained, by especial providences and manifestations of his kindness, to be his peculiar people.

Mr. Ainsworth, the whole of whose writings are animated with the spirit of piety, concludes this book with the following

excellent remarks:- “The tithes in Israel being thus sanctified by the commandment of God to his honor, the maintenance of his ministers, and the relief of the poor, it taught them and teaches us to honor the Lord with our substance, (Proverbs 3:9,) acknowledging him to be the author of all our increase and store; (Deuteronomy 8:13-18; Hosea 2:8;) to honor his MINISTERS, and to communicate unto them in all good things, (1 Timothy 5:17, 18; Galatians 6:6,) that they who sow unto us spiritual things should reap our carnal things, (1 Corinthians 9:11,) and to give ALMS of such things as we have, that all things may be clear unto us, (Luke 11:41,) even to sell that we have, and give alms; to provide ourselves bags that wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not. Luke 12:33.” They who forget their Maker, his ministers, and the poor, are never likely to hear that blessed word in the great day: “Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you; for I was hungry, and ye gave me meat; thirsty, and ye gave me drink; naked, and ye clothed me; sick and in prison, and ye came unto me.”

From Numbers: Clarke: **Verse 28. Thus ye also shall offer a heave-offering**— As the Levites had the tithes of the whole land, they themselves were obliged to give the tithes of this tithe to the priests, so that this considerably lessened their revenue. And this tithe or tenth they were obliged to select from the best part of the substance they had received, ver. 29, etc. A portion of all must be given to God, as an evidence of his goodness, and their dependence on him. See the end of chap. 20.

Deut.

Verse 22. Thou shalt truly tithe— Meaning the second tithe which themselves were to eat, ver. 23, for there was a first tithe that was given to the Levites, out of which they paid a tenth part to the priests, Numbers 18:24-28; Nehemiah 10:37, 38. Then of that which remained, the owners separated a second tithe, which they ate before the Lord the first and second year; and in the third year it was given to the Levites and to the poor, Deuteronomy 14:28, 29. In the fourth and fifth years it was eaten again by the owners, and in the sixth year was given to the poor. The seventh year was a Sabbath to the land, and then all things were common, Exodus 23:10, 11, where see the notes, See “Exodus 23:11”, and see Ainsworth on this verse.

St Chrysostom on the pharisee and the publican: Since he made his soul contrite, and called himself a sinner; which indeed he was; he surpassed the Pharisee, who had both fastings to tell of and tithes; and was removed from any vice. On account of what, and through what? Because even if he was removed from greed of gain and robbery, he had rooted over his soul the mother of all evils — vain-glory and pride. Whereas he publicly came forward as an accuser of the whole world; and said that he himself was better than all living men. And yet even if he had set himself before ten only, or if five, or if two, or if one, not even was this enduring; but as it was, he not only set himself before the whole world, but also accused all men. On this account he fell behind in the running. And just as a ship, after having run through innumerable surges, and having escaped many storms, then in the very mouth of the harbor having been dashed against some rock, loses the whole treasure which is stowed away in her — so truly did this Pharisee, after having undergone the labors of the fasting, and of all the rest of his virtue, since he did not master his heart and tongue, in the very harbor underwent shipwreck of his cargo. For the going home from prayer, whence he ought to have derived gain, having rather been so greatly damaged, is nothing else than undergoing shipwreck in

harbor.

From Edersheim (Sketches) : From Jewish writings we learn, that at the time of Hyrcanus a commission was appointed to inquire throughout the land, how the Divine law of religious contributions was observed by the people. The result showed that, while the "therumah," or priestly "heave-offerings," was regularly given, neither the first or Levitical tithe, nor yet the so-called "second" or "poor's tithe," was paid, as the law enjoined. But such transgression involved mortal sin, since it implied the personal use of what really belonged to the Lord. Then it was that the following arrangements were made. All that the "country people" (am ha-arets) sold was to be considered "demai" — a word derived from the Greek for "people," and so betraying the time of its introduction, but really implying that it was "doubtful" whether or not it had been tithed. In such cases the buyer had to regard the "therumah," and the "poor's tithe" as still due on what he had purchased. On the other hand, the Pharisees formed a "Chavurah," or fraternity, of which each member — "Chaver," or "companion" — bound himself to pay these tithes before use or sale. Each "Chaver" was regarded as "neeman," or "credited" — his produce being freely bought and sold by the rest of the "Chaverim." Of course, the burden of additional expense which this involved to each non-"chaver" was very great, since he had to pay "therumah" and tithe on all that he purchased or used, while the Pharisee who bought from another Pharisee was free. One cannot help suspecting that this, in connection with kindred enactments, which bore very hard upon the mass of the people, while they left "the Pharisee" untouched, may underlie the charge of our Lord (Matthew 23:4): "They bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers."

But the rigorous discharge of tithes was only one part of the obligations of a "Chaver." The other part consisted in an equally rigorous submission to all the laws of Levitical purity as then understood. Indeed, the varied questions as to what was, or what made kosher or "clean," from earlier in Deuteronomy 14, divided the one "order" of Pharisees into members of various degrees. Four such degrees, according to increasing strictness in "making clean," are mentioned. It would take too long to explain this fourfold gradation in its details.

Rebecca Riots,

disturbances that occurred briefly in 1839 and with greater violence from 1842 to 1844 in southwestern Wales. The rioting was in protest against charges at the tollgates on the public roads, but the attacks were symptomatic of a much wider disaffection caused by agrarian distress, increased tithe charges, and the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834. (see also

Index: United Kingdom, riot)

The rioters took as their motto words in Genesis 24:52: "And they blessed Rebecca, and said to her, ' . . . may your descendants possess the gate of those who hate them!' " Many of the rioters were disguised as women and were on horseback; each band was under a leader called "Rebecca," the followers being known as "her daughters." They destroyed not only the gates but also the tollhouses, the raids being carried out suddenly and at night, usually without violence to the tollkeepers. Emboldened by success, the Rebeccaites in 1843 turned their attention to other grievances. The government dispatched soldiers and police to South Wales, and the disorder was quelled. An act of 1844, known as Lord Cawdor's Act, amended the turnpike trust laws in Wales and lessened the burden of the tollgate system.

From Britannica

The chief centres of the devotional life of the medieval church were parish churches served by a priest and a variable number of assistants. The priest was normally appointed by the bishop on the presentation of the patron, whether a religious corporation or a layman. The parish was maintained out of the land attached to the church (the glebe) and the revenues from the faithful. From the 9th century, the payment of tithes, a tenth of the annual proceeds of agriculture and trade, had been obligatory for Christians; although many tithes passed to religious corporations or vanished into the hands of unscrupulous collectors, they remained the largest single element of many parochial revenues.