**“The Support of the Poor” The Present Truth 3, 24.**

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There are many Christians who use their tithe as a sort of charity fund, from which they make all their gifts and offerings, of whatever kind. But the Bible recognises no such plan as this. The poor are to be supported, but not with the Lord’s tithe. In ancient times the following was one provision made for the poor: “And when ye reap the harvest of your land, thou shalt not wholly reap the corners of thy field, neither shalt thou gather the gleanings of thy harvest. And thou shalt not glean thy vineyard, neither shalt thou gather every grape of thy vineyard; thou shalt leave them for the poor and stranger; I am the Lord your God.” Leviticus 19:9, 10. See also 23:22; Deuteronomy 24:19-21. {PTUK December 15, 1887, p. 373.1}

Some may argue from Deuteronomy 26:12, 13 that the tithe was to be used for the support of the poor, but in this text we see not only the careful provision made for the poor, which the Lord’s tithe was devoted to the one object for which it was designed. We quote the text: “When thou hast made an end of tithing all the tithes of thine increase the third year, which is the year of tithing, and hast given it unto the Levite, the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, that they may eat within thy gates, and be filled; then thou shalt say before the Lord thy God, I have brought away the hallowed things out of mine house, and also have given them unto the Levite, and unto the stranger, to the fatherless, and to the widow, according to all thy commandments which thou hast commanded me; I have not transgressed thy commandments, neither have I forgotten them.” The command here referred to is found in Deuteronomy 14:22-29, where, in addition to the requirement to give to the stranger, the fatherless, etc., this statement is made: “And thou shalt eat before the Lord thy God, in the place which he shall choose to place his name there, the tithe of thy corn, of thy wine, and of thine oil, and the firstlings of thy herds and of thy flocks.” {PTUK December 15, 1887, p. 373.2}

Now when we read in Numbers 18:21, “And thou shalt not let any of thy seed pass through the fire to Molech, neither shalt thou profane the name of thy God: I am the Lord,” we are forced to the conclusion that the tithe of spoken of in Deuteronomy 14 and 20 is not the same as that which was devoted to the Levites on account of their service in the sanctuary, for the stranger could not by any possibility be counted as one of the Levites. We can harmonize the two Scriptures only on the ground that the tithe which the people themselves, together with “the Levites, the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow,” were to eat, was a *second tithe,* taken after the tithe for the Levites had been given them. This view of the question is taken by all commentators of whom we have any knowledge. And there are some who claim that every third year a third tithe was collected. We quote a few testimonies:- {PTUK December 15, 1887, p. 373.3}

“Another important privilege enjoyed by the poor was, what was called second tithes and second firstlings. Besides the tenth received by the Levites, the Israelites were obliged to set apart *another* tenth of their garden field produce; and in like manner of their cattle, a second set of offerings, for the purpose of presenting as thank offerings at the high festivals. Of these thank offerings only certain fat pieces were consumed on the altar; the remainder, after deducting the priests’ portion, was appropriated to the sacrifice feasts, to which the Israelites were bound to invite a stranger, the widow, and the orphan.” *Horne’s Introduction, Vol. 2, Part II, chap. viii*. {PTUK December 15, 1887, p. 373.4}

“Besides the first-fruits, the Jews also paid tithes or tenths of all they possessed. Numbers 18:21. They were in general collected of all the produce of the earth (Leviticus 27:30; Deuteronomy 14:22, 23; Nehemiah 13:5, 10), but chiefly of corn, wine, and oil, and were rendered every year except the sabbatical year. When these tithes were paid, the owner of the fruits further gave another tenth part, which was carried up to Jerusalem, and eaten in the temple at offering feasts, as a sign of rejoicing and *gratitude to God.* These are called *second tithes*.”—*Ib., Vol. 2, Part III, chap. iii*. {PTUK December 15, 1887, p. 373.5}

“Every year a tithe was paid to the Levites; and besides that a second tithe, which was carried to Jerusalem and eaten there; and every third year it was eaten at home, in their towns and cities in the country instead of it, with the Levite, poor, and stranger, and was called the poor’s tithe.”-*Dr. John Gill, on* Deuteronomy 26:12.He gives other testimony to the same effect, in his comments on the succeeding verses, and on Deuteronomy 14:23-28, and Leviticus 27:30. {PTUK December 15, 1887, p. 373.6}

“Let there be taken out of your fruits a tenth besides what you have allotted to give to the priests and Levites. This you may indeed sell in the country, but it is to be used in those feasts and sacrifices that are to be celebrated in the holy city.” {PTUK December 15, 1887, p. 373.7}

“Besides those two tithes which I have already said you are to pay every year, the one for the Levites, the other for the festivals, you are to bring every third year eight times to be distributed to those that want; to women also that our widows, and to children and orphans.”-*Josephus’ Ant., Book IV., chap. 8, sec 8 and sec. 22.* {PTUK December 15, 1887, p. 373.8}

These testimonies, and others that might be given, together with the argument previously adduced, show conclusively that the Lord’s tithe was not used for the poor; and since it was not used either for building or repairing houses of worship, it must have been solely for those who labored in connection with sacred things. Indeed, how could it be otherwise. We read, “The tithe is *the Lord’s*.” It was to be deposited in the Lord’s treasury. Now if I owe a friend ten dollars, it will not do for me to give any part of it to a poor man, even though I know that my friend would use the money in the same way, if I were to pay it to him. It belongs to no one but to my friend, and it would be highly dishonest for me to get a reputation for liberality, by giving away that to which I have no right. No one can be charitable on another’s money. {PTUK December 15, 1887, p. 373.9}

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