

Bosworth Matters

Date: Wednesday, January 9, 2019

Website: ffbosworth.strikingly.com

Prosperity on the Pages of F.F. Bosworth's Magazine

A Look at A.J. Gordon's Message on Giving and
'Abundant Temporal Prosperity'

By Roscoe Barnes III

Author, *F.F. Bosworth: The Man Behind Christ the Healer*

Copyright (c) 2019

#FFBosworth

#BosworthMatters



Adoniram Judson Gordon

In 1929, the year that saw the beginning of the Great Depression, F.F. Bosworth published an article on financial prosperity that was written by Adoniram Judson ("A.J.") Gordon (1836-1895). The article was titled, "God's Tenth," and it appeared on pages 18 and 19 in the November 1929 issue of Exploits of Faith.

The date of publication is especially important when you consider the Great Depression, which started after the October 1929 stock market crash.

Gordon is known for his classic, *The Ministry of Healing: Or, Miracles of Cure in All Ages* (1882). In his article on prosperity, he wrote about the power of tithing and how it can result, when done correctly, in both spiritual blessings and temporal financial prosperity.

Bosworth's publication of Gordon's article sheds light on his own view of financial prosperity. Contrary to what some historians have argued, Bosworth preached on prosperity and he published articles on the topic. His writings indicate he was neither extreme nor extravagant. Yet, he clearly believed, like Gordon, that God rewards the faithful givers and tithers with blessings that may be spiritual and material in nature.

In his article, "God's Tenth," Gordon builds his case with Malachi 3:10, which addresses the issue of tithing. "Here plainly the giving of tithes is made the condition of an abundant outpouring of the Spirit," he writes, adding the tendency of some is to spiritualize the verse "which robs us of so much vital truth by frittering away its meaning in metaphor and simile."

Gordon makes a bold statement about the people who follow God's instructions on giving. In short, he says they will be pleasantly surprised.

If any Christian who has never tried it will make the experiment, conscientiously following it through to the end, in prosperity and adversity, we predict for him two surprises; first, he will be astonished at the increased amount which he is enabled by this method to give to the Lord; and second, he will be astonished at the increased spiritual and temporal prosperity which the Lord will give him.

While referencing the words "Prove me now herewith" from his text, Gordon presents two points for consideration. His first point is "that faithful and proportionate giving will be rewarded with superabundant spiritual blessing." In his second point, Gordon suggests that people who give faithfully and proportionately "will be rewarded with abundant temporal prosperity."

Preaching Prosperity at the Beginning of the Great Depression

Gordon's article was not the only one on prosperity that appeared in *Exploits* in 1929. A few months earlier, in the May 1929 issue (pages 7-13), Bosworth published his own article, "God's Financial Plan Insures the Prosperity of His People." The article was actually a sermon he had preached in the Park Place Tabernacle in Anderson, Ind. At the time of its publication, the United States was starting to feel the early effects of the economic recession that occurred during the summer of 1929.

One can only wonder if Bosworth had a premonition of things to come. Of course, it is also possible that he looked at the news reports and saw the need to prepare his readers, which wouldn't be a surprise given his business background.

Bosworth's focus on financial prosperity might have also been inspired by the success -- and seemingly endless wealth -- of the Roaring Twenties. Like others, he probably thought the success would last longer. Even so, he believed that God would wonderfully bless His faithful tithers with spiritual and financial prosperity.

The full article by Gordon is presented below. It is shared here courtesy of the Flower Pentecostal Heritage Center (iFPHC.org).

God's Tenth

By Rev. A. J. Gordon

In touching the question of giving we touch the most vital point pertaining to the consecration and spiritual power of the churches. In saying this we speak from experience, as we certainly speak according to the Scripture. **"Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, 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."** Mal. 3:10. Here plainly the giving of tithes is made the condition of an abundant outpouring of the Spirit. The spiritualizing method of interpreting Scripture, which robs us of so much vital truth by frittering away its meaning in metaphor and simile, has often robbed us of the real significance of this text. Prayer, testimony, effort, self-denial – how often do we hear these duties mentioned as summing up and fulfilling the requirements of tithes?

What Tithes Mean

But "tithes" means money or other property of equivalent value; and the effusion of God's Spirit is here made contingent upon bringing in these tithes and paying up these dues to God. A tenth of his income was required of the Jew to be set apart and sacredly devoted to God's treasury. And this was the first tenth and not the last tenth; the first fruits, and not dregs and leavings. In the New Testament, the same principle is carried over: **"Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him."** 1 Cor. 16:2. Here is consecrated giving – laying by in store a certain sum set apart and made sacred to God's use, and which thereafter one should no more think of using for himself than he would of taking the same sum from his neighbor's pocket. And here is proportionate giving – **"as God hath prospered him."**

If any Christian who has never tried it will make the experiment, conscientiously following it through to the end, in prosperity and adversity, we predict for him two surprises; first, he will be astonished at the increased amount which he is enabled by this method to give to the Lord; and second, he will be astonished at the increased spiritual and temporal prosperity which the Lord will give him. For observe that here is an instance where the Lord actually makes a challenge to His people, and sets up a test case, saying, **"Prove me now herewith."**

Taking this Scripture in connection with others, we find that there are two points to be demonstrated.

Right Giving Brings Spiritual Blessing

1. That faithful and proportionate giving will be rewarded with superabundant spiritual blessing. The statement does not require proof, since experiment has stamped it already as an axiom. Other things being equal, that Christian who opens the broadest outlet for charity will find the widest inlet for the Spirit. The health of a human body depends upon its exhalations as well as upon its inhalations. It is reported that a boy who was to impersonate a shining cherub in a play, on being covered over with a coating of gold leaf, which entirely closed the pores of his skin, died in consequence, before relief could be afforded. Woe to the Christian who gets so gold-leafed over with his wealth that the pores of his sympathy are shut, and the outgoings of his charity are restrained. He is thenceforth dead spiritually, though he may have a name to live.

Temporal Prosperity Follows Consecrated Giving

2. That faithful and proportionate giving will be rewarded with abundant temporal prosperity. This is a saying hard to be received, but it has the emphatic support of Scripture. **"Honour the Lord with thy substance, and with the first fruits 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. This is but one specimen of many from the Old Testament. **"Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom."** Luke 6:38. Do we believe these words of our Lord? Can we question that they refer to abundant temporal returns in recompense for abundant giving?

Experience Proves Plan Is Wise

There is a Christian league in this country banded together to promote systematic giving. It brings every member into covenant to keep a strict account with the Lord, and to render Him one tenth of the income. An annual report is made by each member, giving a statement of his business and spiritual prosperity. The secretary recently told us that the results have been surprising, even to the most sanguine advocates of the tithing system; that not only has the income of the missionary societies receiving the funds been greatly increased, but that, out of thousands entering into this league, all but two or three have reported greatly increased business prosperity. Are there not some things to be proved which we have not yet dreamed of, either in our philosophy or our mathematics?

Related articles:

F.F. Bosworth Mentioned in Kate Bowler's Blessed: A History of The American Prosperity Gospel (2013). See [here](#).

12 Mistaken Claims about F.F. Bosworth. See [here](#).

Note: My book, *F.F. Bosworth: The Man Behind Christ the Healer*, can be purchased [here](#) with a **25% discount**. Use the discount code: bosworth25.

*Want to know more
about F.F. Bosworth?*

Follow the Bosworth Matters blog!

*See it here:
ffbosworth.strikingly.com*

For more information:

Visit the **F.F. Bosworth** page [here](#). Questions about the research and commentary on F.F. Bosworth may be directed to Roscoe Barnes III, Ph.D., via email at doctorbarnes3@gmail.com or roscoebarnes3@yahoo.com. For updates on F.F. Bosworth history, simply follow this blog or [@Roscoebarnes3](#) on Twitter.
#ChristTheHealer #BosworthMatters #BosworthMention #AJGordon