

was to sacrifice His well beloved, His first born, Jesus Christ. And what of Isaac? Josephus tells us that Isaac was old enough to carry the wood for the sacrifice; and after his father had told him what the Lord wanted, Isaac, in the spirit of submission that such a son had for such a father, said to him, "If the Lord had not commanded you to do this, father, I would have been willing to have done whatever you required of me." In this Isaac exhibited a spirit akin to that manifested by the Lord Jesus; and Abraham showed a willingness akin to that exhibited by the Father in offering up His Only Begotten Son for the rest of His brethren and sisters.

Now, brethren and sisters, do you see why God requires these things at our hands? Can you comprehend why we are asked to love our neighbor as we do ourselves? Is there any sacrifice that we should not be willing to make? Think of the unselfishness of our Lord and Savior! He came and died for all of us. He loved His neighbor as He did himself. He loved the offspring of His Father as He did himself. We must be like Him, or we cannot sit down with Him in the kingdom of our Father. We must be willing to make every sacrifice necessary for the work of God. But in the first place we must get faith; for without faith it is impossible to please God and to make these sacrifices. Without faith our courage fails and we are filled with doubt; but with unflinching faith in God and in His willingness and power to save us, we can accomplish all the Lord requires at our hands. God bless you, in the name of Jesus. Amen.

PRESIDENT JOSEPH F. SMITH.

The aggregate of individual contributions to the Church accomplishes great good—Tithing a test of obedience—The Lord requires the willing mind.

It is with a feeling of great dependence upon the Spirit that I arise to speak. I feel extremely grateful for the outpouring of the good Spirit which has accompanied all the speaking that we have had throughout this Conference; and I regret that all the congregation did not hear the most excellent

discourse of President Franklin D. Richards this morning; I remarked to him when he sat down that I thought I never heard him speak better, but I was sure that half the congregation had not heard what he had said. It is a difficult thing to make so vast an assembly hear, and especially is this the case when there is a feeling of uneasiness among the people and more or less moving about. Brother C. J. Thomas can be seen here frequently with a company of people up in the other end of the gallery, and he will rub his coat sleeve and ask them at the other end if they can hear the sound, and they say yes. Then he will take a pin and drop it upon a table, and ask if they can hear that, and they say yes. It is the wonderful acoustic properties of this house that actually makes it so difficult, in one respect, to make the people hear when there are so many together as are here today, because every little sound tends to confuse the voice of the speaker.

I thank the Lord for the wonderful attendance on the part of the people during this Conference. It shows they are awake, and interested in the cause of Zion. I am sure that all the people who have heard the instructions which have been given must be well pleased and satisfied.

I do not expect to advance a single thought in relation to the principle of tithing that has not already been covered, but I desire to call your attention to one thing which seems to me to be a prominent feature in tithing. It is not so much the means that we give into the storehouse of the Lord; for the Lord has plenty for Himself. The earth is His, and the fulness thereof. But it is a very important thing that we look at the necessities of the poor and consider the duty of carrying on the work of the Lord in all its branches. Every little that we contribute toward this end helps the cause just that little; and so the little that each does is of great importance to the cause of Zion. When all the people do a little, it aggregates a great deal, and there is abundance in the storehouse for the feeding of the poor, and for helping out in the proclamation of the Gospel to the nations of the earth. For many of

the Elders who are sent out to preach the Gospel have not means wherewith to provide for their families altogether, and the Church is called upon frequently to assist. Then, the Church is called upon for means to pay for the return fare of almost every missionary from his field of labor. Sometimes an Elder dies abroad, and his remains have to be brought home, the family is not able to do it, so the Church has to bear the expense. When you take into consideration the hundreds of Elders that are out in the missionary field all the time, and the fact that brethren are going and returning continuously, the expense connected with this matter amounts to a very large sum during the year. So that every little helps. Every man's mite adds to the good cause.

But there is a principle connected with tithepaying which, in my judgment, is above and beyond this, and that is the principle of obedience. I believe the Lord designs in this principle to test the obedience of the people. When we come to stand before the bar of God, to be judged out of the things which are written in the books, we may find a difference between those things which are written in the books here and the things which are written in the books there. We can see this now. Who knows whether or not I pay my tithing? Do not the books show that I am a tithepayer? Certainly, they do; for all that I pay is credited to me on the tithing books of the Church. I think our system of bookkeeping in relation to the tithes of the people is so perfect that every man who has ever paid tithing may go to the books and find there his credit. But the books here do not pretend to keep an account of the tithing you owe to God. We do not keep an account of that which you should pay; we simply keep an account of that which you do pay. But there is One above us who knows; and there may be a system of keeping accounts there wherein it will be known just what every man should pay to be honest with himself and the Lord. If that be so, when we come to be judged out of the things which are written in the books, the difference between that which we have paid and that which we should have paid will appear in the

books, and they will show where we have been deficient in our duty.

Now, if we are not faithful to this law, what evidence have we that we shall be faithful in other things? The Lord instituted it as a substitute, because of our lack of faith, for the higher law of consecration, in which the Lord requires not only all that we have, but our hearts also; and by this substitute He designs to prove us, to see whether we will be obedient or not. I perceive in this principle something that is of greater worth to me than all the substance that I put into the storehouse of the Lord as tithing. That may be used wisely or unwisely, so far as I know. What have I to do with that? It matters not to me what is done with it. It is my duty to obey the law that God has given. This is exemplified in the remarkable instance referred to by President Cannon—that of requiring Abraham to offer his son Isaac. Did God ask him to do this because he delighted in wringing the heart of His servant and causing him anguish? Not at all. The Lord has no delight in that. But He wanted to put His servant to the test, to know whether he was willing to sacrifice himself or not in obedience to the requirement of heaven. That is what God wants in relation to this principle of tithing; He wants to know whether we will do our duty or not, and whether we will be honest or dishonest with Him. Every man is left to be his own judge as to what he calls his tithing, and there is a great variety of opinion as to what a tithing is. A man who works for wages, and devotes his whole time to the service of his employer, and he receives \$1,000 or \$2,000 a year for his salary, it is an easy matter for him to tell how much he owes for tithing. If I earned \$2,000 a year, I should know that my tithing was just one-tenth of that. And I would not take out what it had cost me to feed and clothe myself and to pay all the expenses necessary to the maintenance of my family, before I reckoned with the Lord as to what belonged to Him. Two hundred dollars would be my honest tithing, would it not? That is the way I look at it. Then, if a farmer raises 2,000 bushels of wheat as the result of his year's labor, how many

bushels should he pay for tithing? Well, some people will go straightway to dickering with the Lord. They will say they hired a man so and so, and his wages must be taken out; that they had to pay such and such expenses, and this cost and that cost; and they reckon out all their expenses, and tithe the balance. If a man earns \$1,000, and it has cost him \$600 to live, he pays tithing on the remaining \$400. He considers that his net income, and he reckons with the Lord on that basis. Well, a great many of the Latter-day Saints reckon with God in just that way.

Now, you are at liberty to do as you please in regard to this matter. You can choose which ever course you wish. But let me say to you that as we measure out so will it be measured back unto us again. When we go to dickering with the Lord, probably He will dicker with us; and if He undertakes to do so, we shall get the worst of it. I think we had better be honest with the Lord, and deal justly and liberally with Him; for, as it is said in the scriptures, the liberal man deviseth liberal things, and by his liberality shall he stand. My experience in my childhood was that when the widow paid one-tenth of every bushel of potatoes, of wheat, of oats, of barley; when she paid the tenth chicken, or egg, the tenth calf, the tenth colt, the tenth pound of beef, or pork—when she did this she was blessed, and I know it. God opened up her way, and multiplied blessings upon her; and though a widow, driven into the wilderness with a large family, and without means to take care of them, she never had to ask for or receive help from the Church to feed and clothe her or her children. The Lord provided for her, because she put her trust in Him and she was obedient to His law. I am a witness to that. And the Lord will provide for other widows in the same way. He will provide for all His people according as they put their trust in Him and are faithful and obedient. "Obedience is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams." It is the heart and the willing mind that the Lord requires of His people, and not so much their substance. He does not need our obedience. But we need to be obedient; for

it is through obedience that we will receive the reward.

So I come to the conclusion that the principal thing about tithe paying is obedience to the law, and that more good will come to us through that obedience than to anybody else. We may be worth our tens of thousands, and pay an honest tithing on our income, making our tithing a large amount; yet the good that will come to ourselves by being obedient to the law of God will be far greater in the end than the good which our substance may do to the poor. He is more blessed who giveth alms than is he who receiveth them. The trouble is, when a man becomes rich he at once begins to feel too poor to be obedient to the laws of God. Riches make men poor when it comes to dealing with the Almighty. The poor man can easily pay his tithing and contribute of his little substance for the benefit of the needy; but if he becomes a millionaire, or anything like it, then his heart begins to narrow up. The result is, he deprives himself of the opportunity of receiving greater manifestations of the kindness and mercy of God unto him, which he could receive through the increased amount of good he could do with his enlarged means. Obedience is what the Almighty requires. It was obedience that He required of Abraham. I am speaking now of obedience to God, and not to man; and I am at the defiance of any man to prove that obedience to God, even in the paying of tithing, is not better than disobedience—better to the man himself, and better to the whole people. If a man is obedient to this law of tithing, he is entitled to the blessing of God himself and, so far as he is concerned, there are means in the storehouse of the Lord for the feeding of the poor, for the sending of the Gospel abroad, for the building of temples, and for the accomplishment of His purposes; but if he is not obedient to this law, then there is nothing there, and he himself is deprived of the blessing that the Lord would otherwise give to him. I do not believe in obeying man, only when my judgment or the inspiration of the Almighty tells me that obedience to that man will be wise

and good. In other words, I am not a believer in blind obedience. I think those who know me can bear record to my testimony that I never yet obeyed any man, nor have I to my knowledge obeyed God, blindly. What I have done I have done with my eyes open. I have done it willingly, because I have believed or have known it to be good. That is why I obey the counsels of the servants of God, and why I obey His law. I know it is pleasing in the sight of the Lord for me to do this, and I receive benefit thereby.

Nowadays, if President Snow or somebody else gives counsel to some of our brethren, if it does not suit them exactly they will begin to whine about it, and shed great crocodile tears, perhaps. I have heard of men shedding tears because they had received counsel from their brethren! And what is more, the men that shed tears and mourn over having received a little counsel, are the kind that do not carry it out; or, if they do, they tell why they did it—making somebody else responsible for their acts. I say, out upon such obedience as that! I do not believe in that kind at all.

I know that obedience to the Lord is a good thing. I know this also, that if Jesus Christ, the Son of God, had not been absolutely obedient to the requirements of His Father, He would have ceased to be the Savior of the world, for He could not have accomplished the mission He came to fulfill. If Abraham had not been obedient, even to the sacrificing of his own son, he would not be today the father of the faithful, and the promise made to him that his seed should have no end would have been revoked. The same with regard to Job, who was tried to the core. It was said, "put forth thy hand now and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face." But the Lord knew he would not, and he said to Satan, "Behold, he is in thy hand; but save his life." Satan laid his hand upon his property, upon his sons and his daughters, and upon his own body, and Job was brought down into the dust because of the afflictions that fell upon him; and yet he was true to God! It was his love of God, his faith

in the promises of the Almighty and his obedience to his Father that made him the example of the world. His name has come down and will go down to the end of time as an example to mankind of faith in God. When upbraided and told to curse God and die, Job turned and said, "Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." Joseph the prophet was tried to the core, and he proved true unto death. So with others of his brethren; they were persecuted, they were hounded, they were maligned, and every species of ignominy heaped upon them, and finally they were put to death in cold blood; and yet they were true unto death. That is what God requires at our hands. He said, "I will try you even unto death, to see if you are worthy of the blessings I have in store for you." If you shrink from obedience to God, by which you become heirs of God and joint heirs with Jesus Christ—as President Cannon said, "partners with Him in all that He possesses"—how can you expect to obtain eternal life and to become a partner with Him? If we are not true to these things, we are not worthy of them. May God bless us, therefore, and help us to be worthy of all that has been promised unto us through the keys and authority of the holy priesthood, that we may come up in the morning of the resurrection entitled to all the blessings that have been sealed upon us. This is my prayer in the name of Jesus. Amen.

The choir and congregation sang:

Our God, we raise to Thee
Thanks for Thy blessings free,
We here enjoy;
In this far distant land,
A true and faithful band
Led hither by Thy hand,
Would sing for joy.

Benediction by President Lorenzo Snow.

Conference adjourned for six months. The stenographic work in taking the account of the proceedings was done by Arthur Winter and E. H. Holt.

JOHN NICHOLSON,
Clerk of Conference.