

begin and what its results should be. Every one can see plainly that part of that revelation has been fulfilled and the other part remains to be fulfilled. Take the successors of the Prophet Joseph, and they have been inspired of the Lord to give His word unto the people, and we have known that it has been the word of the Lord.

Today, brethren and sisters, the word of the Lord to us through His Prophet is that we should remember the law of tithing. It has been preached to you in many of your Stakes, and I am very happy to see the response that you have made to the call of the servants of the Lord. I hope that this will not be a temporary effect, but that you will all see and appreciate the importance of continually obeying the word of the Lord. Today we are walking in faith; that mist which Nephi saw lies around us, but we are shown the iron rod. Let us not let go of it and think that we can follow in another direction and that we will get through any way. If you and I shall obtain the privilege of eating of that precious fruit of the tree of life, we must hold to the iron rod. When the servants of God give us His word, let us cling to it; let us obey His will, and we will have no cause for regrets. In the book of Doctrine and Covenants we are taught that no religion has salvation in it that does not ask for sacrifice. It should not be a great sacrifice to us to pay our tithing. Great blessings have been promised those who will obey this law. The experience of the Saints has been that the Lord has fulfilled His promise in this regard. Before I close I wish to say to all: if you want your faith strengthened, if you want your testimony made clearer, pay your tithing and the Lord through His spirit will witness His approbation of your work. God bless you all. Amen.

ELDER MARRINER W. MERRILL.

What the Word of the Lord Means to the Saints—None are Exempt from the Law—The Bondage of Debt should be Avoided—The Burdens of the Church should be Decreased—Prosperity can be Secured.

This is a very solemn assembly, a very important meeting, and one where we may consider our standing and fellowship with each other and with the Lord and sit in judgment upon ourselves. A passage of scripture comes

to my mind. It is a saying of one of the prophets, written in the Bible, and it reads like this:

“Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts; “And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.”

This is a very important saying, and we may find profit in it by making it applicable to ourselves. No doubt many of this congregation have had testimonies of this work. They have seen the power of God made manifest. The gifts and blessings of the Gospel which we have embraced have not passed away from the Church. There is in the Church all the gifts, blessings and graces of the Gospel, and they are made manifest in many instances among the Saints, and would be more so had we more faith and exercised more diligence in serving the Lord. Every speaker doubtless that you will hear during this conference will have something to say different from former speakers. There are a variety of subjects in the Gospel that are of vast interest to us, and we come to Conference from far and near to consider that which may be presented to us for our guidance, for our profit, and for our instruction in the future. Hence the speakers do not confine themselves entirely to the written word, but speak as they are moved upon by the Holy Ghost. While listening to my brethren I have thought what an important position it is for one to occupy to stand before so many people and have their time and attention. Surely we ought to be inspired of the Lord, so that our words may be instructive and interesting to the people. We are here from different parts of the land, agreeable to the appointment of our conference, and we are here to listen, to make notes and to write down what may be said that is applicable to our case.

The brethren who are our leaders, you have known for so many years that no doubt you have implicit confidence in them. We all have implicit confidence in the Presidency. We have known them for a great many years. We knew our beloved President before he was drowned in the Pacific ocean. President Snow was drowned once; at least after he was taken out of the water, he was pronounced dead; but

the Lord brought him to life again and has made him mighty in the earth to declare His word unto the people. This is no vain thing; it is a reality. The Lord has a mouthpiece on the earth in the person of President Lorenzo Snow. Many of the Saints have lately heard his voice on a certain subject, relative to the welfare of the people of God. The Lord spoke to him and he spoke to the people. When President Snow was inaugurated as President of the Church every one present at that time felt a testimony from the Lord that he was the right man in the right place. I want to bear testimony to you that the Lord has spoken to President Snow in relation to the law of tithing. The Lord has looked down upon the people and beheld their condition, and seeing that they were straying to a certain extent from the laws of the Lord, He brought this subject forth unto us, and I bear record that it is from the Lord. It means, too, just exactly what it says—that we must from this time forth pay our tithes and offerings to the Lord. Not half do it; but do it completely.

I have had the experience of being a Bishop about eighteen years in the Church, and the Bishops have to deal with tithing matters. I can truthfully say, in looking over the history of my ministration, as a Bishop, that there were very few people indeed who paid their tithing. I can call to mind a few that in my judgment paid their tithing in full, but they were very few in the Ward where I presided. This is an important matter, my brethren and sisters. It applies to all of us. No man or woman is exempt. I do not know of any members of the Church being exempt from this law, even if he or she has to draw support from the Church. The tithing is due on whatever they draw. I say to you that if we will from this time on renew our diligence in regard to observing this law, the Lord will redeem us, and, as Brother Lund said, our faith will be increased. You mark it, the people who pay their tithing will have an increase of faith and an increase of prosperity. It is the shortest and easiest way to extricate ourselves from debt and to redeem the mortgages on our homes. I heard a man bear record to me two

or three years ago on that point. He said: "I have paid my tithing recently, and I have been prospered. The way is opening up and things are becoming more easy with me."

I would not advise you, my brethren and sisters, to worry or to lose any sleep over anything, but go along in the even tenor of your way, do your duty before the Lord and before your family, and set an example that is worthy of imitation. A great many of our people are in bondage. In other words, they are in debt. Their homes are mortgaged, their farms are mortgaged. This is all wrong. We should not place ourselves in bondage. Perhaps there are mitigating circumstances in some cases and good reasons why some people are involved; but such cases are few. A great many people have entered into these obligations unwisely. They have spent their means unwisely and have nothing to show for it. We want to begin to redeem ourselves; turn our faces to the Lord and intreat the Lord about our affairs. There is no wrong in going into our secret places and telling the Lord our circumstances, and if you will do this, you will find relief. You will have the suggestions of the Spirit, and ways will be opened up that you will not have thought of. If you will pay your tithing honestly before the Lord, He will hear and answer your prayers and the day will come when this people will be redeemed and their mortgages will be lifted. For the Latter-day Saints are a good people and the Lord loves them. If we were not a good people, we would not have the promise of being forgiven. I think I have heard President Snow say that if we would do better now, the Lord would forgive us for the past. This is an intimation that the Lord loves His people, because there are many pure and devoted Latter-day Saints among them. Of course, we are not all what we ought to be, but we may become what we ought to be by turning our attention to our duty in the callings of the Priesthood.

The idea has been common in the past that the Church could do everything—it could build every meeting house and every tabernacle almost throughout the land. Numerous applications were

made to the Church, and in the goodness and sympathy of the souls of the Presidency and brethren they have conceded to our wishes in many instances, and tens of thousands of dollars have been appropriated to the people that we could have got along without. Now, I know a little about the affairs of the Church; not a great deal; but if you Bishops and Presidents of Stakes will take my counsel, you will not ask the Trustee-in-Trust for anything until his hands are relieved. We do not want him weighed down with obligations. We want to hold up his hands; to lift the Church from under its obligations, and to become a free people. We want to become lenders, and not borrowers, and we can do it, if we will set ourselves to accomplish the work. The Lord does not require, nor never has required, anything of us but what we can accomplish if we set our hearts to the work. We need to be very careful and very economical in our own affairs, and we will prosper in the land.

The people in the north, and perhaps in the south, have met with some reverses this year on account of the frost destroying their crops to a certain extent. I have heard it said that in one of the Stakes of Zion there is at least ten thousand dollars worth of grain injured by the frost. A great many of the brethren perhaps are more or less discouraged because of this. We say to you brethren, be comforted, and be of good cheer. The hand of the Lord is in all these things and prosperity will come to you. Your fields shall be fruitful and the frost shall be stayed, because of your diligence in serving the Lord. He brings things upon us sometimes to try our faith and our devotion to His work; but He will lift us up, and we will be placed on a plane where we will have joy and consolation in the goodness and mercy of the Lord to us. Who that has watched the course of events for the last forty or fifty years has not seen the hand of the Lord over this people in these mountain valleys, where, in early times, it was thought impossible to raise grain or vegetables? These valleys have been made fruitful; the elements have been tempered to the good of the people, the blessings of the Lord have been upon the land and the

people as a whole are becoming wealthier every year, getting better homes, better surroundings, better meeting houses, better school houses and everything better. The blessings of the Lord are upon us, if we can only acknowledge the hand of the Lord in them.

My brethren and sisters, I do not want to weary you at this time, but I want to see the Saints prosper. I know this work is true. I learned this many years ago. I left the grave of my father, the fireside of my mother, a boy alone in the world, without a cent in my pocket, to associate myself with the Latter-day Saints. Why? Because I had a testimony from the Lord that this work was true, that Joseph Smith was a great Prophet of God, and that his brethren of the Twelve were great men of God and Seers and Revelators. The Church will never be left without a Prophet nor without Seers and Revelators. My life has not been all smooth sailing. I have had the hard and the rough times in the early days here, but I have had testimony upon testimony that this work is from God. If you do not know it is true, it is because you have not sought as diligently as you ought to do. Every member of the Church may know that this is the work of God. Every young man may know it, whether he goes on a mission or stays at home, every young woman may have divine evidence from the Lord. You all may know it, if you will seek for it earnestly and devotedly. What greater blessing can we have than to be able to give a reason for the hope that we have. Whether we live or die, it matters not, so long as we are in the line of duty, and so long as we can say: "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me."

May the Lord bless us and fill us with His power and manifest His blessings unto us, that we may go home with the spirit of this conference and disseminate it throughout the land, that there may be an awakening among the people, and that the Lord may approve of us and our labors and bless us accordingly. God bless you. Amen.