

membership. We are pretty well officered, but we need one hundred per cent good membership in all of these auxiliary organizations of the Church, and each missionary who goes home is qualified, if he will but continue in the spirit with which he has labored out there, to be a splendid member in any organization in the Church or in any society that is uplifting in the world.

May the Lord bless us and help us to understand our duties in the Church and help us to perform them faithfully, is my prayer in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

### ELDER JOHN WELLS

#### *Of the Presiding Bishopric*

There comes to my mind a little couplet that I learned as a child:

"Lord, how delightful 'tis to see,  
An whole assembly worship thee."

We who are here this afternoon have come, I believe, with the desire and purpose to worship our Father in humility. No one could be in a meeting of this kind without being deeply impressed with the spirit and power that is here; without being impressed with the counsel, advice, and testimony that have been given regarding the progress of this great Church of ours.

I want to add a little to what my brother has said concerning those missionaries who return home. I called attention to this matter at one time when I was attending conference in a little town in Southern Utah, because I knew of two cases that had happened there, those of a young man and a girl who had returned home. They had been busy, active, laboring vigorously, doing their best work at the end of their missions, and then came home and almost dropped out of sight. A bishop came to me at the close of the meeting and said: "It has never happened in my ward. I have been a bishop for fifteen years. Yes, we have had missionaries out all the time, more than the average share, and we are proud of that too. No boy or girl has had to go out of this ward to find employment, even in spiritual duties." He further said: "When a young man comes home, if I have time, and I find it mostly, I meet him at the station with his parents and get acquainted with him, and I invite him to see me as soon as the greetings of his family are over. I talk to him about his spiritual viewpoint, and his testimony. I inquire of him what he would like to do in the ward. I try to see that he gets that which he likes to do. I do not give him the chance to take things easy or become lazy in the Church. After that if anything happens that he does not get employment, then we all interest ourselves in him, high councilors and bishopric. We never rest until that young man is employed, for his spiritual growth depends upon his temporal well-being." I was glad to hear this.

Yes, we are here today to be taught, to be reminded, to be encouraged. I have a few thoughts concerning a somewhat old subject.

I labor, as you know, in the office of the Presiding Bishop, and there constantly is the application of the law of tithing, that great revenue law. So much superior to that of the world that the world would like to copy it. They make efforts now and again to do so. In their efforts they fail after a while, I notice, because they have not found the people who could handle their tithes. They lack that glorious revelation and belief in it that was given to the Prophet Joseph Smith in 1838, telling the Latter-day Saints that they should pay one-tenth of their interest annually.

I attended a stake conference a short time ago and listened to an interesting discourse on the application of the law of tithing. The speaker stated that a young couple had called upon a certain bishop and applied for temple recommends. The bishop, in a fatherly manner, asked them how long they had been employed at a salary. They replied from two to three years. Then the bishop reminded them that they had not paid any tithing on their earnings. This brought tears to the eyes of the young woman, but the young man said, somewhat defiantly, to his bishop: "I don't see what difference tithing makes anyhow." It set me thinking all the way home: does not tithing matter much anyhow? The law of tithing was revealed in these latter days to the Prophet Joseph Smith, by which means are provided for the support of the Church. It is a voluntary offering. The obligation to pay tithing is a personal one and should be rigidly observed by every Latter-day Saint who is blessed with an income.

I read some years ago in one of the early Journals of Discourses a sermon given by the late Elder Franklin D. Richards, at Logan, when, in urging a better observance of the law of tithing, he stated that every law of the gospel had its particular blessing, and that he had in his possession a receipt signed by the Prophet Joseph and the tithing clerk, which stated that "Franklin D. Richards, having paid his tithing in full to date, is entitled to the benefits of the baptismal font in the Nauvoo Temple." So it appears that in the early days of the Church it was necessary that those who were privileged to enter the house of the Lord should be full tithepayers. Without this law temples could not be built and maintained; colleges and seminaries would be closed; the large sum provided toward the erection of meeting-houses and other buildings could not be paid; the liberal aid toward the support and maintenance of the stakes and wards could not be provided; the missionary work of the Church would be curtailed or abandoned; hospitals, where hundreds of the poor of the Latter-day Saints are treated annually at the expense of the Church, could not continue this service; the poor, the aged and feeble could not be provided for. So I think the payment of tithing matters a great deal. Without the tithes the Church would be like an automobile without gas, a street car without electricity, a railway engine without fuel.

Some time ago a prominent man in the state of Texas, not a Latter-day Saint, who sincerely believed in the payment of tithes, wrote

to the Presiding Bishopric, asking if there were on record information to show how many men over the age of sixty-five, who had been consistent tithepayers, had become dependent. This information was secured from several stakes. Of 332 over the age of sixty-five, 274 were and had been consistent tithepayers, and were self-supporting. None was drawing assistance from the Church or from charity organizations. This indicates that when a person observes the law of the tithe he accumulates and provides a surplus for old age and does not become dependent. Tithe paying will never impoverish anyone.

There are many other benefits that will come to those who will observe this law. It will train men and women to be generous; it will develop character; it will strengthen our faith, for faith comes only by works. It will teach obedience. It will add to our testimony; and after all isn't it worth something to have a testimony that the gospel has been restored; that Joseph Smith is a prophet of God; that the priesthood has been given to men in these latter days, and that the Church of God has been established to bring about our Father's purposes?

Tithing is a debt, not a gift to the Lord. "The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof." For the use of his property he requires from his people 10% of all their interest annually. That 10% is not ours to use. Let us pay our tithing not with the expectation of an increase in worldly goods, but as a privilege, to help the work of the Lord. Let us do it cheerfully, feeling that we have been blessed with the privilege of helping in his great latter-day work.

It is characteristic of most men and women to harbor good intentions, and we should always encourage good intentions and good ideals and purposes, but it is better to put one of these into operation than accumulate ten of them. The tithing one intends to pay next year, or the resolve to pay tithing in the future, is not nearly as good for character building as a payment actually made. In order to avoid the temptation to use the Lord's money why not pay our tithing at regular intervals during the year, once a month or oftener if necessary.

I appeal to my brethren and sisters to get into that habit and to teach our young people in our homes to observe that law in their childhood and youth, and get the habit of tithe-paying. Go home with a determination that at regular intervals, not at the end of the year alone, we will examine and find out what we owe the Lord, and pay it. I have always admired the statement of the late Bishop George Romney. I used to receipt him for the tithes he paid into the office of the Presiding Bishop. He came in regularly every month with a good-sized check. He was a large tithe-payer. He said to me one day, "I do not know whether I could gather up enough faith to be absolutely honest with the Lord if I left all my tithing until tithing settlement. I might get into the habit of seeing how little I owe the Lord and not how much. So I balance up with him every month, and that is the first check I pay out each month."

Three months from now the bishopric throughout the Church will

announce the time and place for the annual tithing settlement. All Latter-day Saints who have some income are invited to meet in privacy with the bishopric of the ward as common judges in Israel, so that they may examine their tithing record and declare to the bishopric whether it is a full tithing or not. Thousands will accept this invitation and will go gladly because they have observed this law. Many others will go with excuses and regrets and promises to do better in the future.

May we at this season of the year, as officers and members of the Church, observe the payment of our tithes and offerings, teach it in the quorums and classes of the priesthood, so that all the blessings which the Lord has promised his people through the observance of this law may be ours and this goodly land become sanctified and be in very deed a land of Zion to his people.

I want to bear my testimony that Mormonism as it is known, is the work of God, that the Lord has given me a testimony that Joseph Smith is his prophet, that he came in the dispensation of the fulness of times, bringing the gospel with power and authority to establish it. Ministering angels and glorious beings came with authority and power. Oh, his was a wonderful life! As a lad of fourteen years of age he saw the Father and the Son; at seventeen years of age a holy messenger came and told him what was expected of him; and each year thereafter until he was twenty-two the same messenger saw him and admonished and encouraged him. Then he received the plates, and by the gift and power of God they were translated. When he was twenty-four years of age the Book of Mormon was ready for publication. The same year he received the visit of John the Baptist and of Peter, James, and John, and of others, who gave him power and authority to establish the work of God upon the earth. At twenty-four years of age, or a little more, he had by that same power and authority organized the Church of which we are members. At thirty years of age he dedicated the first temple in this last dispensation. At thirty-nine years of age he had paid the penalty that the world had been hungering for for years, paid for his testimony with his blood. As President Brigham Young said at one time, "Forty-six times was he arrested, forty-six times was he acquitted. It cost his brethren thousands of dollars to keep him alive until his work was done." Yes, he died poor. Great leaders of religious movements usually become rich, but he died poor, too busy, as President Young said, in establishing the kingdom of God, to accumulate wealth. He is the man whom I testify was a servant of God, and I do it in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

#### ELDER DAVID O. MCKAY

"But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.

"For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith."

So wrote Paul the Apostle to Timothy, his "son in the faith." Tim-