

be more thoughtful of others, more kind and loving? A man and wife who will pray together and pray vocally will have more love and contentment in their home. If we would learn to call upon God more often, we should not have to call upon the divorce courts so much. Teach your children the one source of strength that will never fail them. Help them to realize that they have an everlasting friend, one that they can call upon when their hearts are filled with joy as well as when they are filled with doubt or sadness or despair. Then when they have grown up and are on their own, living at home, away at school, or in the far-flung battlefields of war, they have God as their partner; they are not afraid. This would bring peace, happiness, and joy. A sin-sick world could be lifted from its depths if we could only turn to the Lord in prayer. What more could we do for our children? I pronounce the blessings of God upon all who humbly seek him in prayer, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

ELDER MILTON R. HUNTER

Of the First Council of the Seventy

This is indeed a humbling experience—to occupy this position. I do, therefore, ask an interest in your faith and prayers and that the Spirit of God might rest down upon me.

More than two thousand years ago an ancient Hebrew prophet, speaking for the Lord, said,

Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. (Malachi 3:8.)

FAITH EXHIBITED

During the past five and one-half years since I was made a member of the First Council of the Seventy, I have had the wonderful experience and opportunity to travel throughout the stakes of Zion and in the mission fields, I have observed with much joy the great amount of faith expressed and exhibited by the Latter-day Saints. Thousands and thousands of them are paying their full tithes and offerings to the Lord, contributing in the welfare programs, sending their sons and daughters into the mission fields, and in practically all respects living the gospel of Jesus Christ. They are doing all of those things and much more because they know that God lives; they know that Jesus is the Christ and the Savior of the world; they know that Joseph Smith is a prophet of God and that the true gospel has been restored through the Prophet Joseph Smith in our day.

I have ofttimes felt that I am sure God is pleased with the Church in general and with many of the Latter-day Saints in particular.

LAW OF TITHING

On the other hand, however, I have also observed that there are certain members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints—and possibly thousands of them—who are fulfilling Malachi's prophecy or prediction at the present time. They are robbing God in tithes and offerings. I've oftentimes thought and have even expressed the idea that I believe that practically all members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, if they understood the law of tithing, thoroughly; that is, if they knew the will of God in this respect and especially if they could be taught to know of and appreciate the great spiritual blessings which would be received as a result of rendering obedience to this law, they would pay their tithes and offerings to the Lord in full. I have suggested in priesthood leadership meetings as I have traveled throughout the Church that the leaders of the stakes, presidents of quorums, bishops, and stake presidencies endeavor to teach the people the law of tithing.

Yet I also recognize the fact that there are certain ones in the Church who would argue against the law. They might say, "But, Brother Hunter, you quoted Malachi, and he lived four hundred years before the Savior lived. He was a Hebrew prophet and was talking to the Jews. Would his teachings apply to us?"

I would answer, "Yes, I know that he was a Hebrew prophet. He was talking to the Jews, and yet his teachings would apply definitely to us. Why? Because he was giving us the will of God—the absolute mind and words of God the Eternal Father which he had been commanded to teach.

LAW GIVEN TO NEPHITES

Now why can I be so definite on that point? Because of an event that took place after the resurrection of the Savior. The resurrected Lord appeared to the Nephites here on this continent. He taught them the same gospel plan that he had given to the Jews while in mortality. On one occasion he said to them,

After you people left Jerusalem a great prophet of God came among the Jews and my Father commanded him to teach the people certain things, and since you haven't a record of what that prophet taught, I have received instructions from the Father to tell you what Malachi taught. (See III Nephi 24:1.)

So he gave them the teachings of Malachi and he asked them to write those teachings down. After this had been done, he explained to them all that Malachi had taught.

He quoted the exact words of Malachi,

Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say: Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. (*Ibid.*, 24:8.)

Now since Jesus is the Christ, the Savior of the world, the great Judge, the Redeemer, the very One under whom the gospel

came to us, the gospel being named after him; then certainly when he says that these teachings on tithing are the doctrine and will of his Father, those teachings would apply to us.

TITHING REVEALED ANEW

Furthermore, a hundred years ago and a little more, the Lord revealed the gospel of Jesus Christ to the Prophet Joseph Smith. As part of that great restoration was the restoration of the principle of tithing. In a revelation to the Church the Lord said that this commandment would be an everlasting law unto the priesthood of the Church. (D. & C. 119:4.) It is, therefore, a law that you and I must obey if we expect to receive the blessings that God has in store for those who love him and keep his commandments.

EXPERIENCE AT INTERVIEW

I would like to relate a little experience that I had about a year ago. A young man came into my office to be interviewed to be ordained a seventy. I asked him if he would like to be a seventy. His face lighted up with joy; and he said, "Yes, Brother Hunter, for a long time I have wanted to become a seventy. I have never been recommended before, but I do hope that I am now worthy. I do hope that you ordain me a seventy today."

After I got this gush of enthusiasm from him, I asked him a question rather point-blank. I said, "Would you steal \$150.00 from your neighbor?" A look of indignation came over his face. If I could have read his thoughts, he probably would have been thinking, "Well, you have your nerve, Brother Hunter, to think that I would steal."

Finally he looked at me and said, "No, sir."

I wasn't exactly satisfied, and so I said, "Would you steal a cow from your neighbor?"

He shot back this reply instantly, "I wouldn't steal thirty-five cents from my neighbor."

I remarked, "This is very, very interesting to me, that you wouldn't steal thirty-five cents from your neighbor; and yet, you would rob God."

A questioning look came over his face, and he asked, "What do you mean? I don't understand you."

Thereupon I turned his recommendation card over and read these words, "Part tithepayer."

He looked at me rather flushed, and I might say, turned a little red, twisted around in his chair a little, and finally he said to me, "Well, I guess it's this way, Brother Hunter: the Lord isn't here to check up on me. My neighbor is. If I robbed my neighbor, he would put me in jail."

I replied, "Brother, you are partly right and partly wrong. Certainly your neighbor would put you in jail if you robbed him. He

should put you in jail, but when you got out of jail, your neighbor would have no more influence or claim on you. You would have paid your debt. But God also is checking up on us, and we are working with him for eternal life. He declares that eternal life is the greatest gift he has in store for man, and it is reserved for those that love him and keep his commandments. To receive eternal life in the presence of God would be worth more than all the money in the world." And I continued by saying: "Now it is my opinion and feeling that if you or I or any other Latter-day Saint feels that he must rob somebody, I think probably it would be far better to rob our neighbor than to rob God."

He replied, "Well, I've never thought of it that way before."

And then I asked, "What are you going to do in the future?"

"I am going to be a full tithpayer," came quickly the positive and unqualified answer.

I was delighted that he took that attitude because he now understood more about the law of tithing and had reached a determination to obey it in the future.

COVENANT TO OBEY

We are told by the prophets of God that the earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof; that you and I are merely stewards, merely landlords, so to speak. Our rent is one-tenth of all that we earn. Yesterday, in a very beautiful way, Brother McConkie spoke of a covenant with God. Every one of us has entered into a covenant with God to the effect that we will pay one-tenth of all that we earn to the Lord. When we entered the waters of baptism and became members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, we accepted all of the principles of the gospel, including the principle of tithing.

The Lord has given us the law of tithing in order that he might test our honesty. When we use any portion of God's one-tenth, we are robbing him.

The Lord has given us the law of tithing in order that he might test our love for him. He has declared that if we love him we will keep his commandments; therefore, to the extent that we pay a full tithing, to that extent we have given tangible evidence that we do love the Lord our God.

The Lord has given us the law of tithing to test our obedience. The purpose is to see if we will be faithful in all things that God commandeth us.

Furthermore, the Lord has given us the law of tithing to test our preparedness to enter the kingdom of God, to enter exaltation.

TEACHINGS OF JOSEPH F. SMITH

The prophets of God have taught the things I have been mentioning here this morning. I would like to quote from the teachings

of one of the great prophets in our day, the Prophet Joseph F. Smith. He said in regard to tithing, this:

By this principle (tithing) the loyalty of the people of the Church shall be put to the test. By this principle it shall be known who is for the kingdom of God and who is against it. By this principle it shall be seen whose hearts are set on doing the will of God and keeping his commandments; thereby sanctifying the land of Zion unto God, and who are opposed to this principle and have cut themselves off from the blessings of Zion. There is a great deal of importance connected with this principle, for by it ye shall know whether we are faithful or unfaithful. In this respect, it is just as essential as faith in God, as repentance of sin, as baptism for the remission of sin, as the laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost. [As you recall, the Savior said that "except a man have these, he cannot see the kingdom of God."] For if a man keep all the law save it be one point, and he offend in that, he is a transgressor of the law, and he is not entitled to the fulness of the blessings of the gospel of Jesus Christ. But when a man keeps all the law that is revealed, according to his strength, his substance, and his ability though what he does may be little, it is just as acceptable in the sight of God as if he were able to do a thousand times more. (Joseph F. Smith, *Gospel Doctrine*, pp. 282-283.)

President Smith also made this statement:

The law of tithing is a test by which the people as individuals shall be proved. Any man who fails to observe this principle shall be known as a man who is indifferent to the welfare of Zion, who neglects his duty as a member of the Church, and who does nothing towards the accomplishment of the temporal advancement of the kingdom of God. He contributes nothing, either, towards spreading the gospel to the nations, and he neglects to do that which would entitle him to receive the blessings and ordinances of the gospel. (*Ibid.*, p. 283.)

Could the Lord have established or could he now establish another way to take care of the economic needs of the Church? I am positive that he could. He could say, "President George Albert Smith, in yonder hill or mountain there is a great deal of gold. Have the brethren of the Church mine that gold. Use the money to build church houses, to send missionaries out in the mission fields, to take care of all the other needs of the Church. The Latter-day Saints have been faithful in the past in paying many contributions, so from now on they can rest. They don't have to pay any more money to the Church."

BLESSINGS TO FOLLOW

Certainly he could do that if he wanted to, but he won't. He is too wise a God to do that. He recognizes the great spiritual blessings which come from paying tithing. They far outweigh the economic blessings. He recognizes that "where a man's treasure is, there his heart will be also." He recognizes the fact that if we contribute much money to help build a church house, we might come to church to get our money's worth. He recognizes the fact that if we give donation after donation to the Church for various

purposes, our contributions tie us into the Church. As a matter of fact, we own part of it. We belong there. It develops us spiritually to pay on welfare, to pay tithes, to pay fast offerings, to pay and pay into the Church.

Brethren and sisters, it is a blessing, an opportunity in your lives and in my life to have the privilege of paying into the Church. It helps us to get rid of the selfishness in our hearts. It makes us love each other more. It makes us love God more. In fact, it makes us more godly. In other words, tithing is a spiritual law which God has given us for the purpose of preparing us to come back into his presence and receive eternal life. Therefore, his course is a wise course. Every wise Latter-day Saint will accept it. Not one of us can afford to be part tithepayers nor non-tithepayers. We need the blessings of the Lord.

I humbly ask our Father in heaven to let his Spirit rest down upon you and me and upon every member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, whether he be a full tithepayer or not; may the full tithepayers remain full tithepayers; may the part-tithepayers accept this principle of the gospel and repent of their past negligence. By doing so we might all prepare ourselves to come back into the presence of God and receive exaltation. And for this I pray, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

The Deseret Stake Choir and the congregation joined in singing the hymn, "O Say, What Is Truth?" Elder Richard P. Condie conducted the singing.

ELDER SPENCER W. KIMBALL

Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles

My brothers and sisters, I should like to express here my great love and admiration for President George F. Richards who was with us in our last conference but has since passed away. Of all the men I have known in my life, none has risen to greater heights, in my opinion, than Elder George F. Richards in saintliness, in vision, in understanding, and in love, humility, and power.

PRAYERS FOR LAMANITES

I was glad that President Beckstead mentioned in his prayer the Lamanite program. I thought, as he was praying, "Wouldn't it be glorious if two hundred thousand Latter-day Saint families every morn before their breakfast, in their family prayers, were asking that the work of the Lord among the Lamanites might be furthered; and if those same two hundred thousand families might also be on their knees before they retired that night to ask again,