

SECOND DAY

MORNING MEETING

Saturday, April 9

The third session of the conference convened promptly at 10:00 a.m. President McKay was present and presided. President Hugh B. Brown, First Counsellor in the First Presidency, conducted the services.

The music for this session of the conference was furnished by the Salt Lake Tabernacle Choir, under the direction of Richard P. Condie, with Alexander Schreiner, at the organ.

President Hugh B. Brown:

President David O. McKay is present this morning and is presiding at this session. He has asked me to conduct this meeting. He joins in extending a cordial welcome to all present this morning in this historic tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City. Also to the vast television and radio audience throughout the world we bid you welcome to this session of the 136th Annual Conference of the Church.

The Tabernacle Choir under the direction of Richard P. Condie, with Alexander Schreiner at the organ, will open these services by singing "God's Son Hath Set Me Free." Following the singing the invocation will be offered by Elder C. Mark Wright, president of the Mill Creek Stake.

The Choir sang "God's Son Hath Set Me Free."

The opening prayer was offered by Elder C. Mark Wright, president of Mill Creek Stake.

President Hugh B. Brown:

The Tabernacle Choir will now favor us with "Hosanna, Christ Is Risen," Albert Fallows, soloist. Following the singing Elder Robert L. Simpson of the Presiding Bishopric will speak to us.

The Choir sang, "Hosanna Christ is Risen," Albert Fallows, soloist.

BISHOP ROBERT L. SIMPSON

First Counselor in the Presiding Bishopric

Once again in the tradition of the [Easter] season all Christendom pauses with bowed head and contrite heart to contemplate the terrible agony, the pain, the suffering, and the indignities of the Lord and Savior of the world as he gave himself to be crucified for the sins of all mankind.

The assurance of Easter

But with the rising of the sun of another Easter morning, there also wells up within each of us a glorious assurance of hope, a brilliant ray of peace, for he lives! Death is overcome! And life will be eternal.

Let us suppose that by some miraculous arrangement the privilege would

be granted for each to spend one precious minute in private audience with the resurrected Christ this Easter day. What would you do? What would you say? Surely there would be great emotion because of your love for him. Then I am certain that many would ask the simple question: "What would thou have me do?" and he might conceivably answer, "If ye love me, keep my commandments." (John 14:15.)

"... Feed my sheep." (John 21:16.)
Or might it be, "... love thy neighbour as thyself." (Matt. 19:19.)

There is no reason to believe that his counsel and advice today would be any different than it was 2,000

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years ago. For his house is a house of order. His gospel is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

"Where treasure is . . ."

And because he would be most anxious for us to overcome selfishness and lack of faith, which I believe are the two major sources of man's problems today, don't you think he might have some advice to give with respect to the mastery over worldly possessions, for surely "where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." (Matt. 6:21.) Yes, this great principle of faith and the willingness to share our temporal increase go hand in hand.

In fact, someone has properly observed that it doesn't take money to pay tithing—it takes faith.

In this respect, I shall always remember the faith of an old Maori brother in New Zealand. As the missionaries came to his humble little fishing shack located well off the beaten track, he hurried to find an envelope that contained a letter addressed to him and in which he had also stuffed a sizable sum of hard-earned money. He promptly handed the envelope containing the money and letter to the missionaries. This fine brother didn't have the ability to read the letter when it arrived, for it was written in English and his tongue was Maori, but he could read the financial figures contained in it, and he recognized the letterhead as being from the mission office. He thought the mission needed the cash amount mentioned for some special purpose, and he had it all ready for the missionaries. After translating the letter for him, it was now clear that the letter merely confirmed his annual tithing settlement and stated the total amount paid for the previous year. His faith was such that he stood ready to pay the same amount all over again if the Lord's servants needed it for the work.

Now while I have you down in New Zealand, let me tell you about a beautiful little white chapel located in Maromaku Valley. About twenty-five years ago Brother Matthew Cowley, who was then the New Zealand Mis-

sion president, wrote to President [Heber J.] Grant and his counselors, telling them of this faithful branch of English members. He expressed a recommendation that because of their devotion and outstanding tithing record over many years, a modest chapel be built for them without local participation, entirely from the general tithing funds of the Church. Soon the answer came back that the recommendation was approved. Immediately a special meeting was called in the community schoolhouse, and for the first time these wonderful people heard what had transpired in their behalf.

The law of giving

At first they just sat. No one seemed particularly elated by the news, and then, one by one, each family head stood to explain how he would be disappointed if he were not allowed to accept financial responsibility for a certain phase of the proposed chapel. Within twenty minutes, the entire amount had been subscribed to. These faithful people were in the habit of going the extra mile in helping to finance the needs of the kingdom, and this is the way they wanted it. You see, people overcome selfish desires as they practice the Lord's law of giving.

Just last week a man said: "Today's cost of living makes it impossible for me to consider ten percent of my income for tithing." By every standard of today's economic and financial teaching as figured by the mind of man, his reasoning seems justified. But the spiritual law is different. Do you remember how perplexed the multitude was when the Savior said this: "He that findeth his life shall lose it; and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it?" (Matt. 10:39.) How much like this law is the law of tithing, wherein we receive by giving away. It just doesn't add up by worldly standards, and most men consider such teachings impractical and even abstract.

Giving opens "the windows of heaven"

But it works! And hundreds of

thousands can bear that witness today because their faith has been such that they were willing to accept God's invitation when he said: "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, 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 it." (Mal. 3:10.) No business proposition in all this wide world can begin to match this offer. Here is the only real answer to today's cost of living. We can't make the family budget stretch far enough on our own, so we had better form a partnership with the Lord by giving ten percent to him. "I, the Lord, am bound when ye do what I say"; and then he concludes, "but when ye do not what I say, ye have no promise." (D&C 82:10.) Now, it is just that simple. And when we decide to accept his terms, we'll be amazed to learn that we can do far better on \$9.00 with the help of the Lord than we can with \$10.00 on our own.

Many of us remember the tremendous enthusiasm of President Stephen L Richards of the First Presidency on the subject of "tithing." He had this to say concerning partnership with God: "I like to think of the Lord as a partner because the essence of partnership is a sharing of profits. It is however indispensable in a partnership that there shall also be a sharing of the burdens of the enterprise. The honor and the satisfaction that come to one in realization that he lives his life in partnership with God is to me a lofty and exalting thought. One cannot hope to realize the profits from that venture without bearing his portion of the expense—the giving which is requisite."

President Richards went on to say that our part of that partnership could only be confirmed through the payment of an honest tithe.

Spiritual power comes

He also made this observation with regard to the spiritual power that comes to one who is willing to give

of his substance to the Lord: "Observance of tithing brings spiritual power and after all, that to me, is the main thing. Religion is more than mere repose or relaxation. It is positive spiritual exercise. It makes for the growth of the soul, it cultivates all of the virtues. So one who is serious about religion will be willing to give to it the things which are vital to himself." (Stephen L Richards, *The Law of Tithing*, Deseret News Press.)

I want to share with you the testimony of a wonderful brother who had been impressed by one of the Church leaders as he explained the law of tithing. Meeting him on the street about three months later, he took some money from his pocket and said: "Do you see this? It is all mine. It does not belong to the butcher, the baker, or the loan agency. For the first time in my life I am free of debt. I can walk down either side of the street with my head held high. I no longer have to cross from side to side, avoiding the shopkeepers holding my delinquent accounts."

Then he went on to tell how all this came about because he took time to sit down with his family, and they decided how they were going to meet their obligation to the Lord.

Peace of mind

This man has peace of mind today. He is now a leader in a branch of the Church and a blessing to scores of other people. While wearing the chains of indebtedness, he was literally in bondage and unavailable to the Lord for service. Tithing had been the answer, and he found financial freedom.

Integrity

The personnel manager in a large Los Angeles plant, who is not a member of the Church, relates this story: "I asked one of your returned missionaries seeking employment with our firm if he paid his tithing, and when he said 'yes,' I hired him on the spot. I knew that he would be a man of integrity, I knew that he loved the

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Lord, and I also knew that he would be true to his wife."

So you see, brothers and sisters, the payment of tithing means many things to many people.

We often hear the comment: "I believe all you say about tithing, but I am so hopelessly in debt right now I will have to wait until next year to start." The only trouble with that is that next year never comes. Meet with your bishop right away and receive his kindly counsel. Then call a special meeting of all the family. Invite them to participate in the possible solutions to the problem. Maybe your son Johnny ends up with a paper route—that's great! And teen-ager Susan finds work on Saturdays—wonderful! I think all of our teen-agers should learn well this wonderful principle of work. Not only that, but the entire family might agree to rough it for a few years by settling on a five-year-old car that uses regular gas and has roll-up windows. This important family meeting on finances could be the turning point toward eternal exaltation and salvation.

Obedience born of love

Few topics have received as much time and attention from this pulpit as has the subject of tithing. There is good reason for such emphasis. Compliance to the great law of tithing develops and trains men in the vital attribute of *obedience*, which has been referred to as the first law of heaven. It trains men in the vital attribute of *faith*, without which there can be little hope for anyone, and also in the vital attribute of *unselfishness*, man's most immediate need for solving the world's dilemmas in this day of hate, greed, and distrust.

Speaking through the Psalmist, the Lord declared: ". . . the world is mine, and the fulness thereof." (Ps. 50:12.) He doesn't really need our ten percent—it is all his in the first place—but we need the experience of giving. Just as the Sabbath was created for man rather than man for the Sabbath, so it is with tithing; the value of the human soul is most

important. ". . . my work and my glory," the Lord declares, is "to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man." (Moses 1:39.) There is no thought more compatible with the spirit of Easter than that.

The God and Creator of heaven and earth could surely lay all the riches of the world at the feet of his leaders here in mortality if this were the important factor. But most important is that we demonstrate our love for God by making our means available to him according to his perfect plan and supreme wisdom.

The Lord's tenth blesses people

Each dollar of tithing expenditure is for the blessing of people, the edification of the soul, the perfection of man; and in this, all who participate can find added comfort in the Savior's observation that "inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." (Matt. 25:40.) We make wonderful things possible for many wonderful people when we return the Lord's tenth to him.

I bear solemn witness to all who can hear that the law of tithing is God-given and that the purpose for which these sacred funds are used is sanctified by divine direction.

Old Testament prophets taught the law of tithing, for they said: "Honour the Lord with thy substance, and with the first-fruits of all thine increase:

"Lay up treasures" by love and obedience

"So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine." (Prov. 3:9-10.) This admonition has never been rescinded.

On one occasion just prior to that first Easter morning two thousand years ago, the Savior admonished his disciples: "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal:

"But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal:

"For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." (Matt. 6:19-21.)

Break the chains of selfishness.

To justify the purpose of the Savior's suffering and to fulfill the opportunity that he has afforded us of life eternal, man must break the restricting chains of selfishness. There is no better way than to do it in the Lord's way. He gave his life that we might truly live, not just exist. He established the pattern, declaring: "I am the way, the truth, and the life. . . ." (John 14:6.) He beckons all to "come . . . follow me." (Matt. 19:21.) He pleads with seemingly indifferent children: "If ye love me, keep my commandments." (John 14:15.) He says that if we are to preserve life, we must be prepared to give it away—our time to the blessings and comfort and edification of others, our means to the building of the kingdom and the blessings of mankind here and now.

"Prove me now . . ."

Yes, in my opinion, God issued the challenge of the ages when he said: ". . . prove me now herewith," and followed it quickly with a resulting promise that he would "open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it." (Mal. 3:10.)

Control of "the windows of heaven" is in your hands

There has never been a more defi-

nite promise than this. Let us not forget that the "windows of heaven" can only be operated by the remote control switch in our hand. We must make the first move. This is the very foundation of the eternal principle of faith. Once that faith has been demonstrated, God stands ready and anxious to fulfill his part of the agreement.

May the spirit of Easter and the sure knowledge that he lives permeate our hearts this day. May his great atoning sacrifice be a constant reminder of the relatively insignificant sacrifices expected of us, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ, the Redeemer of the world. Amen.

President Hugh B. Brown:

Elder Robert L. Simpson of the Presiding Bishopric has just spoken to us. Following a brief organ interlude the Tabernacle Choir will sing "I Know That My Redeemer Lives." Many stations have just tuned in on this conference and we wish to extend a hearty welcome to them.

Organ interlude by Alexander Schreiner, Singing by the Choir, "I Know That My Redeemer Lives."

President Hugh B. Brown:

President David O. McKay, president of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, will now address us.

PRESIDENT DAVID O. McKAY

". . . Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified; he is risen; he is not here: behold the place where they laid him." (Mark 16:6.)

My dear brethren and sisters, I commend to all the excellent sermon just delivered by one of the Presiding Bishopric of the Church, Bishop Simpson. I am grateful and happy to meet

with you and worship with you this morning in this historic building in a general conference of the Church.

I extend greetings and my blessings to you and to our vast audience of members and friends who are tuned in by radio and television. It is a joy and a privilege to be associated with you in this great latter-day work.