

he knelt in their midst and prayed; and the scripture says:

"The eye hath never seen, neither hath the ear heard, before, so great and marvelous things as we saw and heard Jesus speak unto the Father.

". . . neither can the hearts of men conceive so great and marvelous things as we both saw and heard Jesus speak; and no one can conceive of the joy which filled our souls at the time we heard him pray for us unto the Father."

And then you will recall, after he had finished praying, he arose, but so great was the joy of the multitude that they were overcome, and he commanded that they should arise, and he said, "And now behold, my joy is full."

And then Jesus wept. He blessed the little children, one by one, and when he had done this, he wept again, and then he said unto the multitude, "Behold your little ones.

"And as they looked to behold they cast their eyes towards heaven, and they saw the heavens open, and they saw angels descending out of heaven as it were in the midst of fire; and they came down and encircled those little ones about, . . . and the angels did minister unto them.

"And the multitude did see and hear and bear record . . . and they were in number about two thousand and five hundred [and ONE] souls"

who were in that beautiful experience with the Savior. (See 3 Ne. 17.)

Personal testimony

I want you to know I was there. I wouldn't know any more surely if I had been there than I would know having read this book. And I promise you that vicariously every single young man in the Church can read the scriptures and have that same experience with all of the prophets. And you can gain your own testimony, and it need not be pinned on someone else's coat sleeve. You can actually know. You can know that we have a modern prophet. Read his words. Listen to him.

I want you to know that I have had burned into my soul like nothing else in my life the knowledge that President Harold B. Lee is a prophet. I so testify and admonish you to read the scriptures, to go back to the sure word of God. In the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President Harold B. Lee

I think we would find a tremendous wealth of application in the scriptures to the lives of all of us if we would only study the scriptures.

We will now have the privilege of hearing from President Marion G. Romney of the First Presidency.

President Marion G. Romney

Second Counselor in the First Presidency

My beloved brethren of the priesthood:

In these remarks, I have in mind tonight calling attention to and emphasizing the obligation we have as priesthood bearers to care for the "poor and the needy" among us. We haven't been giving as much attention to this

particular phase of the gospel recently as we once did.

Care of poor and needy

Jesus, however, in his teachings, seemed to give it top priority. You will recall that he said—as recorded

in the 25th chapter of Matthew—that when he comes in his glory, he will divide his people “as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats” (vs. 32), placing the sheep on his right hand and the goats on the left.

To those on his right hand he will say, “Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world”; to those on his left he will say, “Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.” (Matt. 25:34, 41.)

In the same statement, the Master declared that the test on which the division would be made on that great day would be the care given to the poor and the needy.

The Lord further emphasized this matter when he said to the rich young man, “. . . go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me.” (Matt. 19:21.)

He stressed it again when he spake the Good Samaritan parable.

Book of Mormon examples

The obligation to care for the poor is as impressively taught in the Book of Mormon as it is in the Bible.

Alma, “having been commanded of God,” directed his people to impart “to one another both temporally and spiritually according to their needs and their wants.” He told them that they should do so “of their own free will and good desires towards God.” (See Mosiah 18:27-29.)

Similar teachings and performances are repeatedly recorded throughout the Book of Mormon.

King Benjamin taught that caring for the poor is essential to the retention of remission of one’s sins:

“And now, . . . for the sake of retaining a remission of your sins from day to day, I would that ye should impart of your substance to the poor, every man according to that which he hath, such

as feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, visiting the sick and administering to their relief, both spiritually and temporally, according to their wants.” (Mosiah 4:26.)

Efficacy of one’s prayers

Amulek explained that the efficacy of one’s prayers depended upon his caring for the needy. After explaining how, by reason of Christ’s atonement, mercy satisfies justice for all those who exercise “faith unto repentance,” he gave this eloquent exhortation:

“Therefore may God grant unto you, my brethren, that ye may begin to exercise your faith unto repentance, that ye begin to call upon his holy name, that he would have mercy upon you;

“. . . cry unto him for mercy; for he is mighty to save.

“Cry unto him when ye are in your fields, yea, over all your flocks.

“Cry unto him in your houses, . . . over all your household, both morning, mid-day, and evening.

“. . . cry unto him against the devil, who is an enemy to all righteousness.

“But this is not all; ye must pour out your souls in your closets, and your secret places, and in your wilderness.

“Yea, and when you do not cry unto the Lord, let your hearts be full, drawn out in prayer unto him continually for your welfare, and also for the welfare of those who are around you.” (Al. 34:17-18, 20-21, 23, 26-27.)

You would think if one followed that practice, he would be a pretty good man, wouldn’t you; but Amulek didn’t think that would be enough.

“And now behold, my beloved brethren, . . . do not suppose that this is all; for after ye have done all these things, if ye turn away the needy, and the naked, and visit not the sick and afflicted, and impart of your substance, if ye have, to those who stand in need—I say unto you, if ye do not any of these

things, behold, your prayer is vain, and availeth you nothing, and ye are as hypocrites who do deny the faith." (Al. 34:28.)

Modern teachings on charity

These ancient scriptures are impressive and edifying, but it is the modern scripture by which we are bound and will be judged. It is therefore imperative that we know what these modern scriptures teach.

Introducing this subject in January 1831, less than a year after the Church was organized, the Lord said:

"... let every man esteem his brother as himself, and practise virtue and holiness before me.

"And again I say unto you, let every man esteem his brother as himself.

"For what man among you having twelve sons, and is no respecter of them, and they serve him obediently, and he saith unto the one: Be thou clothed in robes and sit thou here; and to the other: Be thou clothed in rags and sit thou there—and looketh upon his sons and saith I am just?

"Behold, this I have given unto you as a parable, and it is even as I am. I say unto you, be one; and if ye are not one ye are not mine." (D&C 38:24-27.)

To make it plain that he was speaking of temporal needs, the Lord continued, in the same revelation:

"And now, I give unto the church in these parts a commandment, that certain men among them shall be appointed, . . .

"And they shall look to the poor and the needy, and administer to their relief that they shall not suffer. . . ." (D&C 38:34-35.)

The law of the Church

A few weeks later, the Lord, in that great revelation recorded in the 42nd section of the Doctrine and Covenants, which he himself refers to as the law of the Church, said:

"If thou lovest me . . . thou wilt remember the poor, and consecrate of thy properties for their support. . . .

"And inasmuch as ye impart of your substance unto the poor, ye will do it unto me. . . ." (D&C 42:29-31.)

The importance of caring for the poor and the needy is dramatically emphasized in the revelation received by the Prophet in Kirtland, June 7, 1831, in which the Lord paired off the brethren he was sending to Missouri. These brethren, all but destitute, were to make their way as best they could across four states. The Prophet himself walked almost the whole distance from St. Louis to Independence, a distance of about 300 miles. Nevertheless, and not withstanding the fact that they were facing these hardships, the Lord thus concluded his instructions to them:

"And remember in all things the poor and the needy, the sick and the afflicted, for he that doeth not these things, the same is not my disciple." (D&C 52:40.)

Since these brethren, in their extremity, could not qualify as his disciples without remembering "the poor and the needy, the sick and the afflicted," what will be our plight, brethren, if in our affluence we fail to remember them?

The Lord's plan

In this modern world plagued with counterfeits for the Lord's plan, we must not be misled into supposing that we can discharge our obligations to the poor and the needy by shifting the responsibility to some governmental or other public agency. Only by voluntarily giving out of an abundant love for our neighbors can we develop that charity characterized by Mormon as "the pure love of Christ." (Moro. 7:47.) This we must develop if we would obtain eternal life.

To implement his instructions to care for the poor and the needy, the Lord has in all dispensations given spe-

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cific programs. To ancient Israel, he gave this very simple procedure:

“. . . when ye reap the harvest of your land, thou shalt not wholly reap the corners of thy field, neither shalt thou gather the gleanings of thy harvest.

“And thou shalt not glean thy vineyard, neither shalt thou gather every grape of thy vineyard; thou shalt leave them for the poor and stranger. . . .” (Lev. 19:9-10.)

Two basic principles

Simple as was this program, it was nevertheless founded upon the two basic principles of action operative in all inspired welfare programs, namely: (1) those who have are to give, and (2) those who receive are to work.

Ruth was gathering in the fields of Boaz pursuant to this welfare program. Of course she had a little advantage because of Boaz's feeling toward her, but that was the program that was in force in those days.

The obligation of the receiver to labor, to the extent of his ability, to sustain himself and dependents, is just as great, in God's economy, as is the obligation to contribute to the care of the needy. When the Lord expelled Adam from Eden, he said: “In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground. . . .” (Gen. 3:19.)

This divine command is still in force. In the revealed “law of the church,” the Lord said in this dispensation: “Thou shalt not be idle; for he that is idle shall not eat the bread nor wear the garments of the laborer.” (D&C 42:42.) Later he added: “. . . the idler shall not have place in the church, except he repent and mend his ways.” (D&C 75:29.)

As positive, however, as is this commandment against idleness, a disregard of it by the receiver does not justify Church members in failing to

impart of their substance “according to the law of [the] gospel, unto the poor and the needy.” (D&C 104:18.)

On this point, King Benjamin said:

“Perhaps thou shalt say: The man has brought upon himself his misery; therefore I will stay my hand, and will not give unto him of my food, nor impart unto him of my substance that he may not suffer, for his punishments are just—

“But I say unto you, O man, who-soever doeth this the same hath great cause to repent; and except he repenteth of that which he hath done he perisheth forever, and hath no interest in the kingdom of God.” (Mosiah 4:17-18.)

The operation of these two principles, philanthropy by the giver and industry by the receiver, was so perfected in the days of Enoch that “the Lord called his people ZION, because they were of one heart and one mind, and dwelt in righteousness; and there was no poor among them.” (Moses 7:18.)

Law of tithing

As part of the restoration of the gospel in this last dispensation, the Lord originally initiated the United Order observed by the people of Enoch. When its practice was terminated because the people of the Church couldn't discipline themselves to obey it, the law of tithing was given. With tithing, fast offerings, Relief Society contributions, and, for a while, contributions to the emigration fund, the Church provided for its poor and needy for a hundred years.

Welfare program

In the middle of the 1930s, to meet the needs of our times, the Lord revealed through the leaders of his church our present Church welfare program.

Through this program, there are made available for the poor and the

needy, in addition to tithing and fast offering funds, vast quantities of many varieties of food, clothing, fuel, and other necessities of life. The program also supplies employment opportunities for all who can and will work.

Thus, through the welfare program, the Lord has given us specific instructions as to how we must provide for the poor in this our day, and he has left no doubt about the dire consequences if we fail to do so. This is what he said in one of the revelations:

"I, the Lord," said he, "stretched out the heavens, and built the earth, my very handiwork; and all things therein are mine.

"And it is my purpose to provide for my saints, for all things are mine.

"But it must needs be done in mine own way; and behold this is the way that I, the Lord, have decreed to provide for my saints, that the poor shall be exalted, in that the rich are made low.

"For the earth is full, and there is enough and to spare; yea, I prepared all things, and have given unto the children of men to be agents unto themselves." (D&C 104:14-17.)

Our responsibility

This puts the responsibility strictly upon us. The Lord has provided all we have. He has told us how to contribute to the care of his people, and he has given us our agency. We can do with it as we please, but he warns:

"Therefore, if any man shall take of the abundance which I have made, and impart not his portion, according

to the law of my gospel, unto the poor and the needy, he shall, with the wicked, lift up his eyes in hell, being in torment." (D&C 104:18.)

As I understand it, "the law of [the] gospel" by which we may today determine the portion of our "abundance" which we should impart "unto the poor and the needy" requires us to, first, pay an honest tithing; second, donate liberally to the fast offering funds; and third, make welfare contributions in labor and money.

Personally, I sincerely want to understand this law and comply with it, because I do not want to "with the wicked, lift up [my] eyes in hell, being in torment."

In the light of these scriptural teachings, it seems to me, brethren, that we should be thankful for our knowledge of the law and that we should faithfully obey it. God help us to do so, I humbly pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President Harold B. Lee

We will now ask the audience to stand, and to join in singing "Do What Is Right, Let the Consequence Follow."

The congregation sang the hymn, "Do What Is Right."

President Lee

President N. Eldon Tanner of the First Presidency will now address us.