THE LAW OF TITHING.

Remarks made at Fillmore, Utah, Wednesday, May 24, 1899, by

BISHOP WILLIAM B. PRESTON.

Much of the Gospel to be Learned—A "Little Tithing" is Not a Tithing—The Bishop a Judge on Tithe Paying—Time May be Tithed—Promises of Blessings Conditioned upon Obedience—Children Should be Instructed—Object Lessons.

I desire very much, my brethren and sisters, that you give me your faith and prayers that I may be enabled to do that will be for our mutual good and benefit. I am honored and blessed in traveling with the President of the Lord, President Lorenzo Snow, on his journey through this part of the country, from St. George northward. We have had a very pleasant trip so far. I have been very pleased to note the kind attention that has been paid to him, not because, as I have heard him remark, he is lodging there, but because he is the prophet of the Lord, come to give the word of the Lord to us, and to tell us what to do to be saved and nearly brought back into the presence of our Father.

When we come to examine ourselves we find that we have much to learn. I have been made to feel on this journey that I have learned but little of concerning his great plan of salvation and redemption and the revelations of the Lord from time to time. I feel, as I am persuaded from my observations and from the testimony you furnish us from time to time, that the Gospel is commenced to live the principles of the Gospel be revealed unto us through the Prophet Joseph Smith. We are all as we children, and it is not a blessing to us if we do not live up to the light and knowledge with which we are entrusted, and if we do not, we have a terrible reckoning.

The word of the Lord to us is that we are not fulfilling the law of tithes and offerings. We appear to have only just commenced to work at it. We have rather trained ourselves, as a people, not our generations, to observe this law. We have not yet commenced to study the great blessings that are promised through obedience unto that law. We are told in the revelation that God shall not be from unto us, if we fail to keep that law. We are told in the same revelation that our reward shall not be known in the midst of the Latter-day Saints if we observe not the law of tithing. The data we gather from the various wards and Stakes of Zion prove that we have not observed that law. Very nearly twenty-five per cent of those Latter-day Saints who ought to pay tithing do not pay anything. There is perhaps twenty-five per cent more of the people who pay what is termed a little tithing—if such a tithe can be used in that connection. If you made a note at the bank and agreed to pay ten per cent interest for the money borrowed, could you satisfy your banker by paying him a "little bit per cent?" I am afraid it would only satisfy him "a little." I presume if many of us were to reflect as to how we stand before the Lord in the matter of tithing, for the past few years, we should very at least. As has been said, those who observe the law of tithing, the Lord will remember them; He will overlook their weaknesses and failings in many respects, and will more than them by the power of His Spirit to do all other things necessary for their salvation and exaltation. We are of are we not going to pay our tithing? is the most important question now before the Latter-day Saints. If we doubt that we are not going to pay tithing, we are likely find ourselves a little behind. Some of you will remember doubtless that the time was when what we used to tithing was carried forward against the Latter-day Saints, as witnesses against them, in the beginning of President Young's administration, and he said that he had a book containing the amount paid under his first counselor, Heber C. Kimball, and the time each individual have been frequently now paid to other and the only tithing paid in the Church has been that which the Saints have paid in their tithes and offerings. I have often remarked, when brethren have asked me concerning the law of tithing, that I was a standing in the church with them, that I was not only for one paying a full tithing, but I could not say that I paid it myself. I could say that I paid a full tithing. I would not say that I paid a full tithing. I would not say any further according to my conscience, and I feel to be a witness to you, that there was a time in the history of the Church when no Abbreviated tithing was paid but such as was paid in kind. Men expected to pay one tithe from 80 to 40 a year on tithing. Even if owned in all Lake City, in the first day of its, I was not by the orders of the word that I was expected to pay tithing, but I was asked how much I was earning, or how much I could earn. I was asked if I was able to pay tithing. I was asked what I had to pay for tithing. In those days I understood a man to be a Saint in tithing which consisted in the whole of his tithing. That was kept up for many years. When I was bishop of Logan we did it for many years. We would say to Brother John, or Brother Thomas: "You have done well to pay what you have, and in looking over your surroundings, we think you ought to make it a little more" and we would receive the answer we thought about right. "All right, bishop, if you say so I will make it up to what you think I ought to be." I am now telling you a little ancient history. If you please to call it such, yet it is what we used to do, and which in the early days. We have been straying away from the principle of tithing gradually, until now it is the exception to any anybody that he listens the tithing is and what it ought to be. It is left to individuals to report it to the bishop of his business. I have heard such talk as that before now, as I would hardly presume to repeat it. If I had the records with me, I could tell you to a minute how many or how many tithing who could be, and how many there are that fall below $10 per year, which would seem to be the only tithing for a healthy, able bodied man. Of course, wages today are not as high as they used to be. We did not make a fair with the same in early days in those measures, the difference between the wages then and now would make the minimum somewhere between $50 and $75 instead of $10. If we cannot pay our employees, that is not know why we should not pay the truth of our time to the Lord.

There are great blessings promised to consecration with the law of tithing; and I am just selfish enough to want my share of the blessings that are promised through obedience to that principle. I find that there is not a temporal blessing promised except through obedience unto that law. Further than that, if I observe not that law, my name shall not be known in the midst of the Latter-day Saints, and I am very anxious to have my name and the names of my posterity known among the Latter-day Saints, as inheritors. Are we will tell the Bishop to mark out names off the records of his ward because we do not want to be known amongst the people. I do not believe, however, that the Latter-day Saints feel that way.

As parents, we have much to answer for in the training of our children. We are not good. Turn as a child, in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it. How are we training our children? I am afraid we are guilty of neglect in this particular. I have seen, in one of our northern wards, I was the celebrator of a little good training, which greatly delighted me. I was invited to go in the tithing office of that ward when a little boy stepped in, and handed the bishop a dollar. The bishop gave him to take eighty cents out of it for tithing. I asked him his name. He said, "Jim." "Do you know, Jim, I forget now whether he said eleven or twelve years old, "Jim, do you know what you are paying?" "Yes, sir; I know what I am paying." "Jim, do you earn your tithing?" "Yes, sir, I do." "And you always pay your tithing regularly every month do you?" "Yes, sir, my mamma lets me go to school regularly every month, and I pay my tuition and my tithing." I am almost the meaning the boy, and his mother too, if she had been there, for training the boy after that manner. It was exactly in line with the passage of scripture I have quoted. Mother did not take the money to the tithing office herself and put it to the boy's credit, but she taught the boy how to do it himself. This is what all fathers and mothers ought to do. They ought to teach their boys how to pay tithing, to the tithing office, so that their values may be known in the records of the Latter-day Saints from their youth up, then it will not prove a hardship to them when they get older.

A while ago I was looking up the records to see how much tithing was paid by the Saints in Logan, Hyde Park, Wooten Mills, and I was very pleased to note that the girls who are paying tithing, the most of them, are paying their tithing, but we were to find out that not one-half of the men and boys of the Saints who are old enough to pay tithing are paying their tithing. As fathers we will have to come to a stumbling question, and weigh ourselves in the balances and see how we stand before the Lord, for the records are being kept all the time. There are two sets of records, for one of them is kept in this life, and one in the other life. I sometimes hope that our records will compare favorably with those in the other life, but I am afraid they will not. The frequently we pay in for tithing something that is of not much value to us, and that we cannot use neither a cow, or a horse, or anything of that kind, that we cannot convert into money, so we turn it in to the tithing. We should at least pay an average in quality of that which we produce, and pay a tenth, in the season of the year. When we gather tithes, let the tithing shop be at least on an average with the rest. In the book of Deuteronomy you can find how they got at it in those days. They took the tenth of their flocks as they passed under the rod. I asked President Taylor some time ago how they used to do it. "As they ran under the rod, bishop, they touched every tenth animal as the tithing." I asked him, "Do you put into the next corral, lest one might know which had been touched?" "No," said he, "but you sometimes put and dipped in blue black, or red paint, and as they ran under the rod they touched them with the paint, and then picked them out of the fold after words." I thought that was a very good way, and I speak of it because this is somewhat of a sheep-raising country.

I do not know but what many of our faults and failings are chargeable to the Priests, for not visiting the homes of the members of the Church and teaching them the principles of the Gospel, including the principle of tithing. We have had the revelations of the Lord, and it is the business for not acquainting faithfully and diligently to see that our people are observing the law of tithing and offerings, in the season thereof. I would not like to go any further than I could see, and I am afraid that we are responsible, or that my Father or Heavenly Father will hold me responsible for the situation that the President of the Lord finds the Latter-day Saints in today. I would have been neglectful concerning laying before the Latter-day Saints their duty in portant questions. I presume we have a ward down south here, and after talking to the people the Bishop said to me, "Why, brother Preston, from the way you talk, there is nothing saintly you." I said, "Bishop, I have been preaching to the Gentiles except the law of tithing." "Well," said I, "there is a whole lot besides that, but that is a very important one for the consideration of the Latter-day Saints. In that there are so many great and glorious blessings promised through obedience unto that law, and I want to see the Latter-day Saints working for them blessings." I find that is not so well, and I to repent of our shortcomings and mistakes, and commence to turn over a new leaf from this time forward. Today is ours, tomorrow is not, and we may be numbered among those who have neglected to pay tithing, and yet have to pay back short to you, the latter it will be too late. The Lord said to ancient Israel: "Bring to 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." That same promise is to Israel of today gathered in this dispensation. I believe the Lord that He may inspire those who speak and those who hear, that all Israel may be taught to turn unto the Lord, to keep His great and holy principles, and every other principle that we may enjoy all the blessings promised unto the faithful. Amen.

Remarks made at the Millard Stake Conference, Deseret, Utah Sunday, June 4, 1899, by

ELDER SEYMOUR B. YOUNG.

Tithing an Antidote to Selfishness—Love Should be the Incentive to Obedience—Only the Obedient Shall be Members of the Kingdom.

I am requested to occupy a few minutes this afternoon, and I do so cheerfully, because I realize that it is a blessed privilege to stand before you to bear my testimony. I can testify that this house has been dedicated to the Lord by one of His chosen servants. You have heard the prayer of dedication which has been offered, and the Lord has heard it also. Henceforth this will be known as a house of the Lord, to which His name will be worshiped and glorified in the gatherings of the Saints here from time to time. Whenever the servants of the Lord shall speak in this house in the future, they will feel that our Father has come with them because of this dedication.

I consider that the law of tithing is one of the best laws that has been given to this people, and that the necessity of obedience to that law becomes more apparent every day of our experience. The Lord said to the children of Israel, through Moses, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me," and to prevent a spirit of idolatry and selfishness from overtaking the hearts of the Latter-day Saints the Lord has revealed this law of tithing. First, He revealed the law of consecration, but inasmuch as there was a failure to live that order, He revealed unto us the law by which we are required to freely give one-tenth of all our possessions, and then pay from year to year one-tenth of all that we earn. My brethren and sisters, that there are many selfish tendencies in us, which cent from the fact, which we have built our preaching officers, that not one-half of a tithing has been paid into the Lord's storehouse. The power that we have not put away all our idols, and that we are still holding something between us and the worship of our Heavenly Father. I realize how prone we are to forgetfulness, and how apt we are to forget the condescension made upon us especially in the time of prosperity and great blessing such as we have been and are experiencing. I once heard President Young say that he did not fear for the faith of the Latter-day Saints while they received commandments from the Lord, but he said, yet, he said, he when they come into a condition of prosperity and comfort, when they have gained a competence, and everything seems lovely, then I begin to fear for them because of the power of selfishness to bring the law of tithing and offerings. So I feel to bear my testimony to you. This commandment of the Lord should cause a re-awakening in the heart of every Latter-day Saint, and we should not receive it because of the blessings that may accrue through observing it, but we should do so because it is right in our hearts that the mere thought of consecration and blessing. In the heart of every Latter-day Saint there must be a Divine acceptance of the law of tithing. We must receive it because it is a law of the Lord, and we should obey it because we love to keep His commandments. There is no satisfying that "money is the best money." It might be said, in the same line of reasoning, that to obey the law and commandments of the Lord is the best policy for the Latter-day Saints. Policy only is a power which will take place in our hearts; it should be love that would actuate every Latter-day Saint in keeping the commandments of God. If we observe the law in this way, the same blessing and feeling will come unto us as we have spoken of in regard to the first principle of the Gospel. When we received baptism for the remission of our sins, it was not the physical act of the water that brought forgiveness, but it was our obedience to the commandments of God. Through our obedience we stood acquitted before the Lord of all our transgressions, and ready to go on unto perfection.

My brethren and sisters, it comes to me in a way to some of this law is in your hearts; it seems to me it is not any reward that may be given unto us for the keeping of the Gospel. To day we have very great blessings and privileges, and I know it, yet I want to tell you the Prophet of the Lord, I am satisfied of a very pretty story that I have heard, and it is said to have taken place in the presence of the Emperor of Russia. He was visiting one of the schools of the land, and he asked a little girl, who was reciting Politics in a class, he said, "Can you tell me to what kingdom this flower belongs?" She said, "Yes, sir, it belongs to the vegetable kingdom." Then he selected a piece of metal from the table, and said, "To what kingdom does this belong?" "Please, sir, it belongs to the mineral kingdom." He said, "Can you tell me to what kingdom I belong?" She looked into his face and smiled. He said, "Please, sir, I would answer according to the sense of the question that he belonged to the animal kingdom." She said, "Yes, I believe you belong to the kingdom of heaven." The great emperor was moved to go in the area, and said, "My little girl, I pray heaven that your may be a prophetic utterance, and that I may be indeed a member of that kingdom." My brethren and sisters, we are members of the kingdom of God, and we have to live up to the laws of that kingdom; but the promises and blessings are only to those who have obeyed the laws pertaining to the kingdom of heaven. We cannot expect to belong to the kingdom of heaven unless we observe the commandments of God. Those teachings, for you know the law, "Nothing shall be polluted in the celestial kingdom of God." The problem only enters who shall be there.

"Then you think—" interrupted the young man.

"Yes, the singer who has had children can teach the lesson better of the women who has none never can." Applause followed.

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