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REMARKS

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I esteem it a very precious favor to be privileged to meet with the Saints in their general Conference; indeed, at all times in their assemblages; and being called upon to speak to you this afternoon, I greatly desire that measure of the Spirit that will enable me to speak to your edification, as I realize that without it our time will be unprofitably spent. We have had, since the opening of this Conference, a great deal of precious instructions, and recalling of past circumstances to refresh our minds with things that are important and profitable unto us.

I was thinking, while listening to the former speakers, how it was with us in the beginning of this work. People that are born into the Church now, enter into the various temporal pursuits, such as have been spoken of by previous speakers, and they seem to think the duty of paying tithing is simply a matter of convenience. Our youngsters born in the Church now, a good many of them, do not enter into the spirit of this work as it was entertained in the beginning.

Now my mind is carried back to the time when the Gospel came to me and to my kindred, in the state of Massachusetts, in the year 1838, when I embraced it. The way we looked upon these things was somewhat on this wise: We were willing to have our names cast out as evil. If we had any earthly substance at all we were willing to lay it upon the altar of sacrifice for the Lord, who gave it to us. We dedicated it unto Him for the establishment of His Church and kingdom. We did not stop there. The law of tithing had not been revealed at that time; but, in addition to the good name that we held among our friends and neighbors, we gave all that we had and then we placed ourselves upon the altar with whatever we had, or should have, to be given to the Lord in consideration of the blessed Gospel that He had revealed to us. We felt that this was our reasonable duty, as well as our acceptable service. It was with that spirit that people joined the Church in those days when the Gospel was presented to them. It was in those times that Presidents Woodruff and Snow and others embraced the Gospel, when it was first preached among the people. We gave everything to the Lord, feeling that it was not our own, but belonged to Him, to do just as He wished with it. We started in to keep the commandments and were baptized for the remission of our sins, and we received the Holy Ghost as a Comforter throughout our future lives; and then, when we came to that, oh! how we felt paid for everything that we had done, and for every sacrifice we had made!

I remember well the first testimony

of the Holy Spirit that was given to me, in the first blessing of healing that was conferred upon me when I had been laid up with sickness for a long time. It was between Grand Prairie and Missouri, during a snow storm, such as we had last Sunday, with from four to six inches of snow on the ground. I was traveling on foot to Missouri. I recollect, on that blessed, snowy day, how glorious all things were to me. Although at this time the Prophet had been put in prison, and about thirty of the brethren were also imprisoned, it was revealed to me that this was the work of the Lord, and that God was going to bring it out triumphantly. I knew the Gospel was true, although I had not yet seen the Prophet Joseph Smith. The Lord revealed it to me, and I knew that Brother Joseph was a Prophet, not by man's testimony, but in the same way that Peter knew that the Lord Jesus Christ was the Savior, when the Lord asked, "But whom say ye that I am?" and Peter answered, "Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God." And Christ said, "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven." I had prayed to God for a knowledge of this Gospel, and when I received this blessing I felt that if I owned the world I would willingly give it to the Lord for the furtherance of His work. When we received the Gospel and the testimony of the Holy Ghost, we realized that we had indeed found the "Pearl of Great Price," and the power of God was upon us and in our hearts. How glorious it was to listen to the inspired men in that day, expounding the Scriptures and explaining the prophecies made by Daniel about the stone being cut out without hands. We entertained no idea of the circumstances that would attend the rolling forth of that stone spoken of by Daniel, which was to roll forth and fill the whole earth. We were but few in number then, but have now lived to see the Church grow from a few hundred to some 250,000 souls.

The law of tithing was not revealed at that time, but we were commanded to carry on the work with our means. The Temple at Kirtland was built in this way. The Saints did all the work they could on the building, and then went out and obtained work here and there, and with the money they earned they purchased those things that were necessary for its completion. It was done by sacrificing all that they had; and when we had done all that we could do, Oh! how joyous it was to know the Lord accepted the work, when He stood upon the breastwork of the Temple, conversed with the Prophet Joseph and Oliver, and revealed to them their duties, and informed them that the Gospel should go from there and be preached throughout the nations of the earth. It had not then been preached throughout the United States even, because the northern men were called abolitionists, and

the southern slaveholders had no use for us and would not tolerate us, but now it can be spread throughout the nation.

What an easy thing it is to pay ten per cent as a tithing unto the Lord! I think this principle should be taken into the Sabbath schools and the Mutual Improvement Associations throughout Zion, and taught to the young at home. They should be taught that this is one of the means of salvation in the Church and Kingdom of God, and if they are thoroughly taught this principle while young they will take to it just as naturally as small ducks take to water, but if you wait until they grow up before teaching them to pay their tithing, they will want to keep it in their pockets. They see father do it, and if father may do it, certainly it is not wrong for the boys to follow the father's example.

Now this great work we are engaged in, my brethren and sisters, is truly wonderful. The Lord's Spirit has gone forth among the children of men, and they are beginning to listen to the Elders. The Lord has shed forth His Spirit upon the nations of the earth, causing mankind to look for the coming of the Lord. The Lord has taught us through revelation to pray for His coming with His Kingdom and power (Doctrine and Covenants, Sec. 65), that we may be prepared for it, and that we may be in a condition to receive further revelation as our circumstances require. What have we had given to us since we began to pray for these blessings? Why, my brethren and sisters, it has been a stream of revelation ever since. When I first heard the Prophet speak, it was a stream of revelation to me. He was placed in prison, and, when he received his liberty again, he went right to work shepherding the Saints at Nauvoo and round about there. In those days we had not heard of baptism for the dead. I remember when the Prophet brought forth that doctrine. To some it was so strong it was like putting new wine into old bottles, some of them broke and the wine split out, losing both bottle and wine. We could not fully comprehend so glorious a principle. We did not receive everything at once, but it was given to us line upon line, and in this way it has been coming to us ever since as our circumstances have required.

Now, are we living up to these things as fast as we get them? And are we living by "every word that proceedeth from the mouth of God?" Are we preparing ourselves for the work that is before us? Are we just in the work of preparation? I look upon it that our children who are just growing up as intimidated by President Snow, are the ones who will be permitted to build the New Jerusalem. You know the world has departed from the Lord and from the principles employed in building up Enoch's city, and we and our fathers have wandered from the Lord in our spiritual affairs. And we are trying to be converted to the will of the Lord in our spiritual things, so that we may