

and older. Why are offerings necessary as well as tithing? It is because, to use the words of the Savior, "the poor ye have always with you." Every Bishop in this Church knows what that means. Every man of God knows what it signifies. "The poor ye have always with you." And fast days are instituted, upon which the people are required to come together and bestow their offerings for the benefit of the poor. I understand the principle of fasting to be this: That we abstain from food upon the fast day, thereby permitting our spirits to gain the ascendancy over the flesh. We can think better, we can see more clearly, our minds are brighter, and our bodies actually stronger afterwards, as the result of denying them food at such times. And we are told to take the cost of the support of ourselves and our families on that day—just what we would expend to sustain our households for one day in each month—and lay it before the Bishop as an offering, that he may have means wherewith to support the poor, to provide them with coal, flour, meat, or whatever is necessary to keep them from suffering. But what is the situation today? I heard it said in this stand only a short time ago, that so far as fast offerings were concerned, the average sum paid by each member of this Stake of Zion for the past six months was thirteen and one-half cents. Will such an offering be acceptable to Him who has said that if we withhold these things we rob Him? And what is the cause of it? Is it because we are narrow, stingy, and mean? I do not think so. My experience with the Latter-day Saints has taught me that they are a warm-hearted people, that they love to give to the poor, and the more they have to bestow the better they are pleased. But one reason is that many do not think, do not stop to reason, and many are ignorant of these matters. We have our fast meetings once a month. The first Thursday in every month is the appointed fast day. How many attend these meetings? It is better now than it was a few years ago, when perhaps eight or ten aged sisters and two or three brethren would come together and go through the form of holding a fast meeting, and the Bishop would receive about one fifth of what he needed to sustain the poor that were under his watchcare. Today it is better; but it is not good enough yet. The Bishops do not receive half what they require for the poor, and the result is that the Presiding Bishop and the general authorities are called upon for Church funds which have been gathered and are needed for other purposes, to keep the indigent from suffering. During the past six months over twenty thousand dollars were disbursed to the poor in this Stake of Zion, but only four or five thousand dollars of it represented the fast offerings; an average of 13½ cents per capita. And why do not the people come to the fast meetings? Some of them cannot. They are in bondage, as it were. They work for those who will not release them on that day. But there is no employer who will or can prevent an employee who is a Latter-day Saint from sending his offering to the fast meeting, if he cannot take it himself. Many do not come where they can be taught these things. Hundreds of Latter-day Saints who would willingly give these offerings if reminded of them, do not attend their ward meetings.

You never see them there. They may be here at the Tabernacle, but they do not come to their Sunday evening meetings, where their Bishops can talk to them; and not being reminded of these things, they forget them. You meet such a one on the streets and tell him that he has not given anything to the poor for a year and he will say, "That is true; but I will give something; call around and get it." Then that sets the Bishop to thinking as to how much time he has to go around as a collector. He has his own family to look after, his own living to earn, and if he did nothing but "call around" once a month on all these people, to gather up their donations, it would consume all his time and his own family would suffer. He would be one of the poor himself. It is the duty of Latter-day Saints who cannot come to fast meetings, who are bound in some way that prevents them, to remember that on the first Thursday of every month an offering is due to the poor, and they should send it to the Bishop, who is the disbursing agent, and not ask him to call for it. He has about all he can do as it is. But I think that many of the Bishops would be glad to call for it, if they thought they could get it even in that manner.

Brethren and sisters, I learn from the teachings of the Prophet Malachi that there are two things which we have no right to call our own—tithes and offerings. They belong to the Lord, and if we withhold them, either by wilful neglect or by forgetfulness and indifference, we are robbing the Creator, to whom we owe all things. There is a principle—and it will yet be observed by this people—that will require of them not only a poor tenth of their increase, but all that they have, the dearest and most precious things that they have. There is a day coming when this people will consecrate unto the Lord, not merely a tenth, not merely a few dollars each month, but all that they possess. They will lay their very souls upon the altar, and say to the Almighty, "Father, use me and all that I have as seemeth best unto thee." There shall be no poor in Zion then, for all shall be equal from the least unto the greatest. That day will come and it will purify the sons of Levi and purge them as gold and silver, until they offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness. That day will come and it will burn as an oven, and the proud and all that do wickedly, who walk with haughty and outstretched necks, glorying in their wealth, despising the poor and neglecting to feed and clothe them, shall be as stubble, and the day of the Lord will burn them up and leave them neither root nor branch. What right have men to roll in millions, and gaze upon their starving and freezing fellow creatures? None of us can countenance anarchy; but we can begin to see how the prophecies of Joseph Smith in relation to certain things can come to pass. A time will come when men, seeing their wives and little ones in want and misery, while others are amassing millions and leaving it to their children to quarrel over, having no heart, no feeling for the sufferings of those around them—the day will come when these elements will arise, the masses against the classes, and there will be enacted upon this stage of time such scenes as history has never witnessed. Unless these evils are repented of, unless the rich feel for the poor, open their hearts, and do as God has directed, these calamities will come as a judg-

ment, as a retribution, and men will pull them down upon their own heads.

Let us, Latter-day Saints, take time by the forelock. Let us practice the principles that will broaden our souls while we impart to the poor that which they need to keep body and soul together. Let us live the laws which God has instituted for the salvation of His people and of the world, and be prepared against that day when everything that can be shaken will be shaken. Before God what can we call our own? If He has given any man a gift to acquire wealth, is not that as much a gift of God as a gift to write, to preach, or to play upon a musical instrument? Are these not all gifts of God? And what did He bestow them for? That a man might aggrandize himself, and take no interest in any one outside of his own narrow circle? No. A man who has a gift to make money owes the exercise of that gift to the community in which he lives, just as much as the man who writes for a newspaper, or who composes a poem or a piece of music. "The laborer in Zion shall labor for Zion, for if they labor for money they shall perish." It is given to him as a talent, to be used for the benefit of those around him,—the whole community, and not merely for himself and his family. That principle of "God bless me and my wife, my son John and his wife, us four and no more," is false. It is contrary to the spirit of the Gospel and to everything true under the sun. God is interested in the salvation of all men; and the only reason He chose this people, or the descendants of Abraham in any age, was that He might work through them for the salvation of the race. Let us seek to exemplify these noble and saving principles, realizing that we are nothing but stewards and trustees, agents of the Almighty. We do not own anything. Naked came we into the world, naked will we go out of it. The only thing we can carry away with us is the experience we have gained, the intelligence we have acquired; and the surest and best way to acquire wisdom and intelligence is to keep the commandments of God and practice the principles that will lead to our temporal and spiritual salvation. We do not own the tabernacles in which we are clothed. The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof. The very dust that composes our bodies is a portion of God's footstool, and our spirits are but sparks from His eternal flame. Let us so live and labor and make such a use of our time and talents that we may be able to render an acceptable account of our stewardship here below,—be prepared for the great day of the Lord, the glorious rising of the Sun of Righteousness. This is my prayer and desire, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

#### PRESIDENT GEORGE Q. CANNON

We have had a most interesting discourse this afternoon, to the truth of which I can bear testimony. This principle of tithing, that has been alluded to, is one that should be thoroughly understood by the Latter-day Saints. It is a law of God to His Church. We have proved by personal experience the truth of the testimony of Malachi concerning the prosperity which God bestows upon those who obey that law. Our experience in this respect is unique. There are no people that I know of on