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Tithing; the Poor; Industry

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CHAPTER XIII.

Tithing; the Poor; Industry

WHY THE LAW OF TITHING WAS INSTITUTED. The Lord revealed to his people in the incipency of his work a law which was more perfect than the law of tithing. It comprehended larger things, greater power, and a more speedy accomplishment of the purposes of the Lord. But the people were unprepared to live by it, and the Lord, out of mercy to the people, suspended the more perfect law, and gave the law of tithing, in order that there might be means in the storehouse of the Lord for the carrying out of the purposes he had in view; for the gathering of the poor, for the spreading of the gospel to the nations of the earth, for the maintenance of those who were required to give their constant attention, day in and day out, to the work of the Lord, and for whom it was necessary to make some provision. Without this law these things could not be done, neither could temples be built and maintained, nor the poor fed and clothed. Therefore the law of tithing is necessary for the Church, so much so that the Lord has laid great stress upon it.—*Apr. C. R.*, 1900, p. 47.

ESSENTIAL NATURE OF THE LAW OF TITHING. By this principle (tithing) the loyalty of the people of this Church shall be put to the test. By this principle it shall be known who is for the kingdom of God and who is against it. By this principle it shall be seen whose hearts are set on doing the will of God and keeping his commandments, thereby sanctifying the land of Zion unto God, and who are opposed to this principle and have cut themselves off from the blessings of Zion. There is a great deal of importance connected with this principle, for by it it shall be known whether we are faithful or unfaithful. In this respect it is as essential

as faith in God, as repentance of sin, as baptism for the remission of sin, or as the laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost. For if a man keep all the law save in one point, and he offend in that, he is a transgressor of the law, and he is not entitled to the fulness of the blessings of the gospel of Jesus Christ. But when a man keeps all the law that is revealed, according to his strength, his substance, and his ability, though what he does may be little, it is just as acceptable in the sight of God as if he were able to do a thousand times more.—*Apr. C. R.*, 1900, pp. 47, 48.

THE LAW OF TITHING A TEST. The law of tithing is a test by which the people as individuals shall be proved. Any man who fails to observe this principle shall be known as a man who is indifferent to the welfare of Zion, who neglects his duty as a member of the Church, and who does nothing toward the accomplishment of the temporal advancement of the kingdom of God. He contributes nothing, either, towards spreading the gospel to the nations of the earth, and he neglects to do that which would entitle him to receive the blessings and ordinances of the gospel.—*Apr. C. R.*, 1900, p. 47.

THE LAW OF TITHING, THE LAW OF REVENUE. The purpose of the law of tithing is similar to that of the law of revenue which is enacted by every state, every country, and every municipality in the world, I suppose. There is no such thing as an organization of men for any purpose of importance, without provisions for carrying out its designs. The law of tithing is the law of revenue for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Without it, it would be impossible to carry on the purposes of the Lord.

TITHING. No doubt, a good deal more could be read from the scriptures in relation to this principle of tithing, which God has revealed to us in this dispensation, and which he requires at our hands, that we may sanctify, by obedience to his law, this land that it may become, indeed a land

of Zion unto us; and the promise is, that if we will obey the laws of God, if we will put our trust in him, if we will draw near unto him he will draw near unto us, and he will reward us with his favor and his blessing. He will rebuke the devourer, and he will cause that the earth shall be fruitful, that it shall yield in its strength to the husbandman, the tiller of the soil, and to the herder of flocks. He will increase his kine, and will prosper him upon the right hand and upon the left, and he shall have an abundance, because he puts his trust in God; he draws near unto him, and he is willing to prove him, to see whether he will not open the windows of heaven and pour out blessings upon him that he shall not have room to contain them. Let every man who has received the gospel of Jesus Christ receive this saying, and hearken to these words, for all they are worth. Some men may esteem them lightly, and those who do will, without doubt, fail to draw near, they will neglect to prove the Lord, they will not fulfil the commandments that he has given, and they will never know that God tells the truth, and that he is able to fulfil his word and promise unto his people when they are willing to obey and keep his law. While they who appreciate these promises, who obey these laws that were given anciently, and have been renewed again in the dispensation of the fulness of times, for the blessing of the people, for the building up of Zion, for the feeding of the widow and the orphan, or the spreading of the gospel of Christ to the nations of the earth, and for the gathering of the people from the four quarters of the earth, those who hearken to these words, prize them as the truth, and apply them in their practice throughout their lives, will come to know that God is a rewarder of those who diligently serve him, and that he is able to fulfil his promises unto them.

A short time ago I met with a brother—I need not call his name, for he is but one among thousands who can bear the same testimony, not only by the word of mouth but by

the evidences of thrift, of prosperity, of progress and of improvement which surround him in the midst of the deserts. This season he has gathered in rich harvests, his farms having produced in abundance, while the farms of many of his neighbors are clogged with weeds, and their harvests have been only one-half or one-third what his has been. How do you account for it? I account for it in the fact that God has blessed him, and so does he, for he is an intelligent man, a man that not only labors wisely and prudently, but in the fear of God, and in the desire of his heart to obey his laws. He said to me and my companion with whom we were traveling: "God has blessed me because I have striven to keep his laws, and because I have been true to my family." He went out there upon the desert seven or eight years ago, impoverished by persecution and exile, being driven from his home and from his affairs, compelled to wander in exile for years, part of the time preaching the gospel. He returned seven or eight years ago, and settled down upon the desert. Today, out of the earth, the burning sands, he has produced beautiful homes, he has fruitful fields, which are spread out before the eyes of any man who wishes to go and look upon them. He pays his tithing, he remembers his offerings, he is obedient to the laws of God, and he is not afraid to bear testimony to his friends and neighbors that it is through his obedience that God has blessed and prospered him, and made him what he is today. He is not the only one; there are others that are prospered in like manner. And I testify it is because God has blessed him, and his soil, and his labors, and has given him the increase, securing to him the blessings for which he sought and labored. He has acted in good faith with the Lord, the Lord has known his heart, and has blessed him accordingly, and he is prosperous today in that desert, while as to many of his neighbors—go and look for yourselves at their broad acres. They tell the story for themselves. His lands are clear from noxious weeds,

because he has labored, and taken care of his lands, and that by industry and intelligent application of labor, showing that God has inspired him, and enlightened his mind. The Lord has blessed him in his basket and in his store, in his labors and in the thoughts of his mind, he has been inspired and enabled to accomplish the work that he has done; I testify that it is because of man's faith in the promises of the Lord, and his desire to obey his laws, that he is blessed and prospered of him.—*Oct. C. R.*, 1897, pp. 35, 36.

THE WIDOW AND HER TITHING. Will you then deny the widow, because she has only a mite to bestow? Because the tenth which she proposes to give in obedience to the commandment of God is but a penny, are you going to deprive her of the privilege of having her name enrolled on the book of the law of the Lord, and of having her genealogy acknowledged and recorded in the archives of the Church? And because her name is not found there, are you going to deny her the privileges of the house of God and of the ordinances of the gospel? I think it is time the bishops understood this principle. The bishop should encourage every man, woman and child who earns and receives a return for his labor, to honor the Lord and to prove his obedience to the law of God by giving the one-tenth of that which he or she receives, as the Lord requires, so that they may have their names enrolled on the book of the law of the Lord, that their genealogies may be had in the archives of the Church, and that they may be entitled to the privileges and blessings of the house of God.

I recollect most vividly a circumstance that occurred in the days of my childhood. My mother was a widow, with a large family to provide for. One spring when we opened our potato pits, she had her boys get a load of the best potatoes, and she took them to the tithing office; potatoes were scarce that season. I was a little boy at the time, and drove the team. When we drove up to the steps of the tithing

office, ready to unload the potatoes, one of the clerks came out and said to my mother, "Widow Smith, it's a shame that you should have to pay tithing." He said a number of other things that I remember well, but they are not necessary for me to repeat here. The first two letters of the name of that tithing clerk was William Thompson, and he chided my mother for paying her tithing, called her anything but wise or prudent; and said there were others who were strong and able to work that were supported from the tithing office. My mother turned upon him and said: "William, you ought to be ashamed of yourself. Would you deny me a blessing? If I did not pay my tithing, I should expect the Lord to withhold his blessings from me. I pay my tithing, not only because it is a law of God, but because I expect a blessing by doing it. By keeping this and other laws, I expect to prosper, and to be able to provide for my family." Though she was a widow, you may turn to the records of the Church from the beginning unto the day of her death, and you will find that she never received a farthing from the Church to help her support herself and her family; but she paid in thousands of dollars in wheat, potatoes, corn, vegetables, meat, etc. The tithes of her sheep and cattle, the tenth pound of her butter, her tenth chicken, the tenth of her eggs, the tenth pig, the tenth calf, the tenth colt—a tenth of everything she raised was paid. Here sits my brother, who can bear testimony to the truth of what I say, as can others who knew her. She prospered because she obeyed the laws of God. She had abundance to sustain her family. We never lacked so much as many others did; for while we found nettle greens most acceptable when we first came to the valley; and while we enjoyed thistle roots, segoes and all that kind of thing, we were no worse off than thousands of others, and not so bad off as many, for we were never without corn-meal and milk or butter, to my knowledge. Then that widow had her name recorded in the book of the

law of the Lord. That widow was entitled to the privileges of the house of God. No ordinance of the gospel could be denied her, for she was obedient to the laws of God, and she would not fail in her duty, though discouraged from observing a commandment of God by one who was in an official position.

This may be said to be personal. By some it may be considered egotistical. But I do not speak of it in that light. When William Thompson told my mother that she ought not to pay tithing, I thought he was one of the finest fellows in the world. I believed every word he said. I had to work and dig and toil myself. I had to help plow the ground, plant the potatoes, hoe the potatoes, dig the potatoes, and all that sort of thing, and then to load up a big wagon-box full of the very best we had, leaving out the poor ones, and bringing the load to the tithing office, I thought in my childish way that it looked a little hard, especially when I saw certain of my playmates and early associates of childhood, playing around, riding horses and having good times, and who scarcely ever did a lick of work in their lives, and yet were being fed from the public crib. Where are those boys today? Are they known in the Church? Are they prominent among the people of God? Are they or were they ever valiant in the testimony of Jesus Christ? Have they a clear testimony of the truth in their hearts? Are they diligent members of the Church? No, and never have been—as a rule, and most of them are dead or vanished out of sight. Well, after I got a few years of experience, I was converted, I found that my mother was right and that William Thompson was wrong. He denied the faith, apostatized, left the country, and led away as many of his family as would go with him. I do not want you to deny me the privilege of being numbered with those who have the interests of Zion at heart, and who desire to contribute their proportion to the upbuilding of Zion, and for the maintenance

of the work of the Lord in the earth. It is a blessing that I enjoy, and I do not purpose that anybody shall deprive me of that pleasure.—*Apr. C. R.*, 1900, pp. 48, 49.

THE WIDOW AND TITHING. I preach that which I believe and that which I do know to be true; and I do know that if men will obey the laws of God, God will honor and bless them. I have proven it all my life through. I saw it manifested in circumstances which occurred in my childhood, and I know that God has blessed the widow and the fatherless when they have been obedient to his laws and have kept his commandments.

I can tell you the history of a widow woman, with a large family, who was more particular, if possible, to pay to the Lord what belonged to him than she was to pay to her neighbors to whom she might be indebted, and she never was indebted to her neighbors, thank God, for anything that she did not pay to the last cent, because the Lord blessed her with plenty, and in her latter years she did not have to borrow of her neighbors, nor did she have to call upon the Church for support either, but she paid thousands of dollars in products and money into the storehouse of the Lord, although she was a widow with a large family to support. I know this. I can testify of this, and that the Lord Almighty blessed her, not only in the products of her fields, but in her flocks and herds. They were not devoured. They were not destroyed. They did not lie down and die. They increased. They did not stray away; and thieves did not steal them. One reason for that was, she had a little boy that watched them very carefully under her direction, and prompting. Her eye was upon everything, she had supervision over everything, she directed those whom she employed, and her children; and I am a witness—and here sits another witness (Patriarch John Smith)—that God, the eternal Father, blessed her and prospered her while she

lived, and she was not only enabled to maintain herself and children that were left to her in poverty, in a day of trial, and when she was driven out into the wilderness, but she was able to feed scores of the poor, and to pay her tithes besides. Verily the Lord prospered her, and she was blessed.—*Oct. C. R.*, 1897, pp. 35-37.

WHO RECEIVE CHURCH HELP SHOULD BE TITHE PAYERS. When one comes to a bishop and asks for assistance because of his or her straitened circumstances, the first thing the bishop should do is to inquire if he or she is a tithe-payer. He should know whether the name is on the book of the law of the Lord, and if not on the book, if he or she has been derelict and negligent in relation to this principle of tithing, he or she has no claim upon the bishop, neither have their children; and if, under those circumstances, the bishop assists him, it will simply be out of pure charity and not because such have any claim upon the Church. That is why the widow who receives assistance from the Church should pay her tithing, so that her name may be on the records of the Church. It is not a law that is applicable to one and not to another. If the rich may not receive blessings because their names are not on the record, then neither shall the poor receive blessings in the house of God, if their names are not recorded. So long as a poor person receives his or her support through the tithings of the people, they should be willing to observe the law themselves in order that they may be entitled to what they receive. They should show by their observance of the law that they are law-keepers and not law-breakers. Our children, as soon as they become old enough to earn means, should be taught to pay their tithing, that their names may be written in the book of the law of the Lord, so that if perchance their fathers die and they are left orphans, their names, as well as the names of their parents, will be found upon the records and they will, as God lives, be entitled to

their support and to their education. It is our duty to look after these children and see that they have an equal chance with those who are more favored with parents to look after them.—*Oct. C. R.*, 1899, pp. 44, 45.

USE OF TITHING. I mention this simply to show that these men, whose whole time is occupied in the ministry, are only drawing their necessary support from the Church. They must have that. You would not begrudge them that. Men who are faithful, valiant, instant in season and out of season, and consequently engaged in the work of the ministry, you surely would not say that they should not have food to eat, raiment to wear, and where to lay their heads; and that is all these men get from the Church. The laborer is certainly worthy of his hire. So that your tithing is not enriching your brethren of the ministry.. It is being used to keep up the ordinances of the house of God in these four temples. Thousands and thousands of dollars of it are being used in educating the youth of Zion and in maintaining the Church schools. Thousands of dollars are being expended to feed and clothe the poor, and to take care of those who are dependent upon the Church. They look to their "mother" for succor and support, and it is right and proper that the Church should provide for its own poor and indigent, feeble and helpless, so far as possible.—*Apr. C. R.*, 1901, p. 71.

COMMERCIALISM AND TITHING. The Church is charged with commercialism. There is not the least semblance of it, in truth. The Church is neither buying nor selling goods or chattels. It is not engaged in merchandising of any description, and never has been; and there could not well be a more false and groundless statement made against the Church than to charge it with commercialism. It is true that, unlike other churches or religious organizations, the people of this Church observe the law of tithing, which is the law of revenue of the Church. We do not pass around

the hat to you, nor the collection box, for means to defray the expenses incident to the carrying on of the work of the Church. You give it voluntarily. This reminds me of another falsehood that is spread abroad by our enemies, namely: That the "Mormon" people are compelled to pay tithing, that the authorities of the Church demand it of them, that it is made obligatory upon them, and is tyrannically exacted from them all the time, which is an infamous falsehood, a slander, for there is not a word or syllable of truth in it. The observance of the law of tithing is voluntary. I can pay my tithing or not, as I choose. It is a matter of choice with me, whether I will do it or not do it; but, feeling as I do, loyal to the Church, loyal to its interests, believing that it is right and just to observe the law of tithing, I do observe it—on the same principle that I think it is right for me to observe the law of repentance, and of baptism, for the remission of sins. It is my pleasure to do my duty with reference to the observance of these principles, and to pay my tithing. The Lord has revealed how this means shall be cared for, and managed; namely, by the Presidency of the Church and the High Council of the Church; (that is, the Twelve Apostles), and the Presiding Bishopric of the Church. I think there is wisdom in this. It is not left for one man to dispose of it, or to handle it alone, not by any means. It devolves upon at least eighteen men, men of wisdom, of faith, of ability, as these eighteen men are. I say it devolves upon them to dispose of the tithes of the people, and to use them for whatever purpose in their judgment and wisdom will accomplish the most good for the Church; and because this fund of tithing is disposed of by these men whom the Lord has designated as having authority to do it, for the necessities and benefit of the Church, they call it "commercialism." What absurdity! You may just as well call their practices in passing around their contribution boxes, for collecting means with which to build their

churches, with which to pay their ministers, and with which to carry on the monetary affairs of their churches, "commercialism," as for them to charge us with "commercialism," because we handle the tithing of the Church, and appropriate and use it for the benefit of the Church.—*Apr. C. R.*, 1912, pp. 5, 6.

TITHING USED CAREFULLY AND FULL ACCOUNTS KEPT. I defy any man on earth to point his finger to a dollar that is wilfully wasted or stolen by the servants of God. The tithing books are kept as accurately and as perfectly as any books are kept in any bank. Every man who pays a dollar tithing gets his credit on the books; and if he wants to see that his credit is there he can go and see for himself. But we do not propose to open our books and show your account to every Tom, Dick and Harry in the land who never did pay any tithing. We do not propose to do that, if we can help it. But you Latter-day Saints, who pay your tithes and your offerings, if you want to see for yourselves that you may be eye and ear witnesses, the books are open to you, and you can come and examine your accounts any business day you want.—*Oct. C. R.*, 1905, p. 5.

BOOKS OPEN TO TITHE-PAYERS. The man who complains about not knowing what is done with the tithing, in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, is the man who has no credit on the books of the Church for paying tithing. We do not care to exhibit the books of the Church to such carp-ers, and to that class of people. But there is not a tithe-payer in the Church who cannot go to the Presiding Bishop's office, or to the office of the Trustee-in-Trust, if he desires, and find his account, and see to it that every dollar he has given to the Lord for tithing is credited to him. Then, if he wants to be more searching as a tithe-payer, and find out what is done with the tithing, we will set before him the whole thing, and if he has any good counsel to give us we will take it from him. But we will not—because we do

not have to, and it is not the business of the world to require it—open our books to the world, unless we wish to. We are not ashamed of them. We are not afraid for them to be inspected. They are honest and straight; and there is not a man in the world that will look at them, but will say so, if he is honest himself.—*Apr. C. R.*, 1906, pp. 6, 7.

WE SHOULD SYMPATHIZE WITH THE UNFORTUNATE. We too frequently see a disposition on the part of our children to make fun of the unfortunate. A poor cripple, or a poor, weak-minded person comes along, and the boys will poke fun at him, and make unbecoming remarks about him. This is entirely wrong, and such a spirit as this should never be witnessed among the children of the Latter-day Saints.—*Oct. C. R.*, 1904, pp. 87, 88.

CHARITY TO BE ACCEPTED ONLY WHEN NECESSARY.— There is such a thing as encouraging idleness and fostering pauperism among men. Men and women ought not to be willing to receive charity unless they are compelled to do so to keep them from suffering. Every man and woman ought to possess the spirit of independence, a self-sustaining spirit, that would prompt him or her to say, when they are in need, "I am willing to give my labor in exchange for that which you give me." No man ought to be satisfied to receive, and to do nothing for it. After a man is brought down to poverty and is under the necessity of receiving aid, and his friends give it to him, he should feel that it is an obligation under which he is placed, and when the Lord should open his way he would return the gift. That is the feeling we should cultivate in our hearts, to make us a free and independent people. The cultivation of any other feeling or spirit than this is calculated to make paupers, to degrade and bring mankind down to beggary, which is a most wretched condition for men to be in. It is a bad thing for men to think the world owes them a living, and all they have to do is to beg or steal to get it. * * * I don't refer to the

cripple, or to those who are enfeebled by age, because I look at them in an entirely different light; there is a necessity for them to live, and there is a necessity for us to assist such, but there is no great need in this world for men and women who are able to work and will not work.—*Apr. C. R.*, 1898, pp 46-48.

CEASE TO WASTE TIME; CEASE TO BE IDLE. I desire to say to this congregation at this time that I have felt very strongly of late a desire, a responsibility, I may say, resting upon me, to admonish the Latter-day Saints everywhere to cease loitering away their precious time, to cease from all idleness. It is said in the revelations that the idler in Zion shall not eat the bread of the laborer, and there is vastly too much, in some parts—not universally, but there is far too much precious time wasted by the youth of Zion, and perhaps by some that are older and more experienced and who ought to know better, in the foolish, vain and unprofitable practice of card-playing. We hear of card parties here and card parties there, and entertainments where the playing of cards is the principal amusement; and the whole evening is thus wasted. The whole precious time of those who are gathered together on occasions of this kind, aggregating many hours, absolutely wasted. If there was nothing else to be said against this practice, that alone should be sufficient to induce Latter-day Saints not to indulge in this foolish and unprofitable pastime.

Read good books. Learn to sing and to recite, and to converse upon subjects that will be of interest to your associates, and at your social gatherings, instead of wasting the time in senseless practices that lead only to mischief and sometimes to serious evil and wrong-doing; instead of doing this, seek out of the best books knowledge and understanding. Read history. Read philosophy, if you wish. Read anything that is good, that will elevate the mind and will add to your stock of knowledge, that those who associate

with you may feel an interest in your pursuit of knowledge and of wisdom.—*Oct. C. R.*, 1903, p. 98.

GOSPEL BLESSINGS OBTAINED BY LABOR. We can never attain to the blessings of the gospel by merely becoming acquainted with it and then sitting down and doing nothing ourselves to stem the current of evil that is preying upon us and upon the world.—*Apr. C. R.*, 1900, p. 40.

IDLERS HAVE NO PLACE IN ZION. There should be no idlers in Zion. Even the poor who have to be assisted should be willing to do all in their power to earn their own living. Not one man or woman should be content to sit down and be fed, clothed or housed without any exertion on his or her part to compensate for these privileges. All men and women should feel a degree of independence of character that would stimulate them to do something for a living, and not be idle; for it is written that the idler shall not eat the bread of the laborer in Zion, and he shall not have place among us. Therefore, it is necessary that we should be industrious, that we should intelligently apply our labor to something that is productive and conducive to the welfare of the human family. God help us to do this, is my prayer. Amen.—*Apr. C. R.*, 1899, p. 42; *Doc. and Cov.* 42:42; 68:30; 75:29.

A MESSAGE OF THE LATTER-DAY SAINTS ON BEHALF OF THE POOR. The position of the Latter-day Saints in regard to the poor is perhaps well understood by most readers of the *Era*. But there are some points which are not quite clear to a number of our friends.

God has commanded this people to remember the poor, and to give means for their support. No other community, perhaps, has proved more willing than the Latter-day Saints to obey this command. They have demonstrated this in the past and have been very willing to impart of their properties to aid the poor and unfortunate, not only in their own midst, but also those who live in other nations and other

places in our own country. No call for help has ever been heard in vain by them. And this is true, notwithstanding the fact that they have often suffered from unjust oppression and great poverty, in which they have received little, if any, sympathy and no help. They have always taken care of themselves and besides have helped others.

A leading mission of the Church is to teach the gospel of Christ in the world. It has an important message to deliver, which not only includes the spiritual salvation of men, but also their temporal welfare. It not only teaches that faith is necessary, but also that works are required. Belief in Jesus is well and good, but it must be of a living kind which induces the believer to work out his own salvation, and to aid others to do the same. We do not believe in charity as a business; but rather we depend on mutual helpfulness. While the gospel message requires faith and repentance, it requires also that temporal necessities must be met. So the Lord has revealed plans for the temporal salvation of the people. For the benefit of the poor we have the fast instituted, a leading object of which among other things is to provide the poor with food and other necessities until they may help themselves. For it is clear that plans which contemplate only relieving present distress are deficient. The Church has always sought to place its members in a way to help themselves, rather than adopting the method of so many charitable institutions of providing for only present needs. When the help is withdrawn or used up, more must be provided from the same sources, thus making paupers of the poor and teaching them the incorrect principle of relying upon others' help, instead of depending upon their own exertions. This plan has made the Latter-day Saints independent wherever they have settled. It has prevented a constant recurring of calls for help and established permanent conditions by which the people help themselves. Our idea of charity, therefore, is to relieve present wants and then to

put the poor in a way to help themselves so that in turn they may help others. The funds are committed for distribution to wise men, generally to bishops of the Church, whose duty it is to look after the poor.

We submit the equitable fast-day plan of the Lord to the churches of the world as a wise and systematic way of providing for the poor. I say equitable because it gives an opportunity for the contribution of much or little, according to the position and standing of those who contribute; and besides, it helps both the giver and the receiver. If the churches would adopt the universal monthly fast-day, as observed by the Latter-day Saints, and devote the means saved during the day to the alleviation, blessing and benefit of the poor, and with a view to helping them to help themselves, there would soon be no poor in the land.

It would be a simple matter for people to comply with this requirement—to abstain from food and drink one day each month, and to dedicate what would be consumed during that day to the poor, and as much more as they pleased. The Lord has instituted this law; it is simple and perfect, based on reason and intelligence, and would not only prove a solution to the question of providing for the poor, but it would result in good to those who observe the law. It would call attention to the sin of over-eating, place the body in subjection to the spirit, and so promote communion with the Holy Ghost, and insure a spiritual strength and power which the people of the nation so greatly need. As fasting should always be accompanied by prayer, this law would bring the people nearer to God, and divert their minds once a month, at least, from the mad rush of worldly affairs, and cause them to be brought into immediate contact with practical, pure, and undefiled religion—to visit the fatherless and the widow and keep themselves unspotted from the sins of the world. For religion is not in believing the commandments

only, it is in doing them. I would to God that men would not only believe Jesus Christ and his teachings, but would broaden their belief to the extent of doing the things that are taught by him and doing them in spirit.

He certainly taught fasting, prayer and helpfulness. No better start can be made than by fasting, praying to God, and sacrificing means for the poor. This law combines belief and practice, faith and works, without which neither Armenian nor Latter-day Saint, neither Jew nor Gentile, can be saved.

When appeals are made to the Latter-day Saints for aid, they are always willing to comply; but we have also our mission to perform; to preach the gospel, to establish peace, secure plenty, and promote happiness in the land; and our people have learned through the commandments of God how to take care of themselves and are trying to help others to do likewise. They are ever helping each other and it is seldom that poor are found among them who are unprovided for. They are practically independent and may become entirely so by a stricter adherence to the law of the Lord! We believe that if other communities would adopt the plans of consecration, fasting, and tithing which the Lord has revealed to the Latter-day Saints and carry them out in spirit, with faith and works, that poverty and pauperism would be greatly reduced or entirely overcome. Opportunities would be presented so that all might obtain work and thus provide for themselves; and the other command of the Lord would be obeyed: "Thou shalt not be idle; for he that is idle shall not eat the bread nor wear the garments of the laborer."—*Improvement Era*, Vol. 10, pp. 831-833.