

AN APPEAL TO THE CHURCH

By Israel L. Rogers
First Presiding Bishop of the Reorganization

The Saints Herald, Vol. 27,
March 1, 1880, pages 78-79

We pray God to direct us in writing this our petition to the Church, that we may write according to his will; and that, in the true Spirit, and in a correct manner, we may present to you at this time the matter upon which we are impressed to publish this appeal to the Saints; namely that of the duty incumbent upon them of paying their tithes and offerings unto the Lord, that the gospel of Christ may be preached according to his commandment. And, first of all, we wish in the name of the Church to thank the many who have heretofore stood nobly by the cause in its times of need and who have aided and who still continue to aid it by their means, that it may accomplish the will of God in the salvation of men.

And, it is for you more than for any other people upon the earth, to be concerned in this matter, and to be zealously engaged, either with your talents or your means, that your fellow men may be saved from error, from skepticism and from sin, preparatory to the appearing of the Lord of the vineyard, who will then give, as he has promised, to every one according to the tithes they have made of the things committed to their trust. At that time we are assured that those who are found to have been valiant as "laborers together with God," in the manner they best could, shall receive crowns of everlasting life, while those who have not put those gifts of ability or of substance to good use in his service, it shall be with them as the Lord may will,

And, ye Saints of God, think how many people in this and in foreign lands are either calling or writing for the messengers of the true gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ to be sent to them. And, to more and more of these calls that come from every quarter, the reply has been made, "We have no means to send any one to you."

Yet, brethren, the Church of Jesus Christ is commanded to do the work, and its ministers are commissioned to bear these tidings unto all men in the prosecution of which work the whole body should be equally diligent, and all be zealously engaged, not one portion of it, or the Elders only.

And, O ye Saints, there are many men, even hundreds, who have received authority from the King of kings, and who stand ready to obey his mandates, and to go forth to labor in his vineyard, in this the hour of God's judgment, in this the last time that he will send his servants to call men to repentance before the Lord of the vineyard shall come to "give reward" to those who have labored therein.

Yes, and scores of able men now stand ready to go, if their families are cared for; and they will go forth, trusting to the mercies of the world and to the kindness of the Saints for their own necessities, if only their loved ones at home can be provided for, even Apostles, Seventies, Elders and Priests.

And, remember brethren, that this gospel of Christ so revealed by the voice of God and restored by the ministration of angels, is not only to be preached in this land of America, and in our own neighborhoods, but that it must also be presented to "every nation, kindred, tongue and people," as said by the Lord himself. Therefore men must be sent unto them, or we will not be guiltless before God at the judgment day. For there we (the Church) will be held accountable for the work we are commanded to do, and for the means, talents and powers given us by the Almighty. But, if our talents shall be used, and our possessions be tithed, then we will be justified at the great day.

And, brethren, see the blessings promised by the Lord unto his people. And are we not his people? Yea; we testify that this is the very work of God, the one spoken of by all the prophets.

And of this promise now reads the prophet Malachi, in the commandment of the Lord that contains such great assurances to his people? You need but to read it to have a witness in your hearts by the Holy Spirit that it is divine, even a covenant promulgated and freely offered to all by the power and mercy of a covenant keeping God and the revelations of the Lord in the latter days are of the same effect.

Now, concerning the law in relation to tithing and consecrations, we believe that the whole Church is now under the law given of God to it, before its gathering. And we believe that all who have property are subject to the commandments of the Lord already given to the Church, in one way or the other; and that each and all who have not yet done so should of right pay one-tenth of their possessions, or else make a consecration of such portion or amount thereof as they may be willing to lay before the Lord, the amount paid in either of these ways, to be considered as a beginning of tithing for them, and they thenceforth to pay one-tenth of their net increase annually.

But, if some can neither pay one-tenth of the value of their possessions nor of said annual increase, without actual wrong to themselves, causing injury and privation, then let them pay such amount, much or little, as they may, in good conscience before God; feel justified in giving as an offering to him; and from time to time thereafter as they may also be justified in giving of their income, even according as they may be prospered, as the Spirit of the Lord may direct their hearts.

For we feel assured that all these things are acceptable unto God, and that he will give great blessings unto all his Saints who pay their tithes and offerings into his storehouse. For those things are necessary that his work may be done and that his people may all be justified, each one being a steward over that they have, and, as free agents for themselves, made capable by God of judging what is right, according to his law.

In the revelations on the subject it is stated that "none are exempt from this law who belong to the Church of the living God," as saith the Lord; and all are commanded to pay their dues unto him. For a portion of his words read the Doctrine and Covenants sections 42:8-10; 51:1; 70:2-3; 83:18.

Therefore, brethren, the work of the Lord must be done; and if we fail to accomplish that which is committed to our trust, where shall be our reward? And of what avail will be our faith in the doctrine, and our sanguine expectation of the coming of Christ to reign on the earth, if we do not perform the allotted work.

Truly the cause of the Redeemer needs sustaining everywhere by such means and such aid as will send into the field all who the authorities having the matter in charge, and the General Conference, may from time to time appoint as worthy and able representatives of the truths of heaven. And the work demands an extra effort from this time forth, from this the fiftieth anniversary-year of the establishing of the Church of Christ; and it is a matter greatly desired by all, that, from the coming April General Conference, or as soon thereafter as possible, those of the ministry who offer themselves, may be fitted out, and their families secured against want while they are in the field.

Some important foreign missions need to be sustained in men and means, and in our own land there is a constant need of men and of means to send them with, to answer the increasing calls that come from the North, the South, the East and the West, where people wish to hear the

word of God preached, even all through this broad land. And in all these lands and countries the work must yet be prosecuted with energy and with power, in order to fulfill the commandments of the Lord.

Hence, in the name of Christ, and of the Church we call upon its members everywhere for the aid that is needed now; and we pray, with one heart and one mind, that the Lord of the vineyard will make you both able and willing to impart of your substance for the benefit of this great and eternal work, (which is likewise for your own salvation) that it may be well and faithfully done. Then will the Lord cut his work short in righteousness and establish his peaceful kingdom upon the earth, according to his promise.

Now concerning the payment of moneys, we wish those who live in districts where there are Bishop's Agents to respect those Agents, by the paying of their tithes and offerings to them to be recorded, and by them to be sent up to the Bishop; and where there are no Agents let it be sent direct to the Bishop by the payer.

In closing this appeal to the Church we remark that we have not desired to transcend the bounds of our authority or privilege, and trust that we have not done so, nor presented anything that is not correct. We realize our imperfectness, yet, believing in this work of God, and in the teaching and practical working of the above principles of his law, and that it is a proper and good time to speak of them, we therefore present this our epistle, and these our views for the consideration of the Church.

And, furthermore, we hope that the action of all, and the response of all, will be in such a hearty manner that God's approbation and great favor may be with his people, more than ever before; and that his work may increase and shine in the earth with great power and brilliancy, even unto the glory of his name and the salvation of all who will obey his commandments.

Thus praying for and seeking that it may be done, we remain your fellow laborers in the gospel of Christ,

The Bishopric,

I. L. Rogers,
H. A. Stebbins,
D. Dancer.