

THE CHURCH
AND
DUTIES OF THE SAINTS IN
TEMPORAL AFFAIRS

by
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To the, Saints, the faithful in Christ and to all everywhere who are devoted to the proclamation of his gospel —

The year just closed must be looked back upon by us all, as having been one which afforded as many opportunities for accomplishing good, preaching the gospel and working righteousness, as perhaps tiny that have come and gone in the history of the Church.

What has actually been done by us, individually and as a body, toward the advancement of such good, carrying on the proclamation of the word, and fulfilling the law — will bear its relationship to these opportunities in the time when we shall render a just and true account of our stewardships unto Him, who is the faithful and true, the Lord of all, and head of the Church.

And the opportunities which have been improved, those neglected, and of the number which shall open up during the year of which we are now at the entrance, will bear a relationship to each other, to each of us, to the rewards to be rendered, and the general work of establishing the gospel of peace, in proportion as we shall now enter and occupy as commanded in his word, with all our energies, ability and strength.

Mindful of these things, and of the strictness with which all must render unto the Lord an account of their work, it is with no ordinary feeling of duty and responsibility, that the Bishopric have determined to appeal directly to you in behalf of that department of church work of which they have the more immediate concern and oversight, and which holds so important a place in the building up and establishment of the gospel cause.

The unanswered calls for spiritual laborers; the large number of ministers confining themselves almost wholly to the work of providing for their families; the absence of that spiritual strength among many of the churches that should specially characterize the work; and the difficulty on the part of the church to care for the necessities of the families of active and for ministers, the care and relief of the poor, and afflicted, are all tokens bearing evidence of a great lack of duty on the part of the body in some regard; and it shall here be sufficient to simply refer to the fact, without attempting to charge the blame upon any definitive part or portion of the same.

Lest, however, it should prove to be in the line of our own work, and by way of caution and duty, and for the purpose of placing that department known as the "temporal," in such condition that it may fairly aid and support the spiritual, in going forward in strength, and vigorously prosecuting the work of preaching the gospel and building the kingdom of heaven; herein the assistance of all, the good will of all, the blessings and prayers of all, and the offerings and sacrifices of all are urged and invoked in behalf of the work, and particularly this branch of it; realizing as we do that the temporal department is not now, nor ever has, since the organization of the church in 1830, been placed in that condition, and made that refuge and support to the work of the ministry and church in its general duties, that is clearly designed for it under the law as contained in the Scriptures and revelations.

As individuals and all members of the same body, with equal rights and liberties thereunder, we should be equally interested in the welfare and building up of that body; and the first thought on the part of every one should be to ask what particular work and duty is required of him in the way of building. And when the answer is had to this inquiry, the next step should be to go forward and perform that work with a firm determination, and eye single to the glory of

God and the good of the body, without stopping to inquire, or without reference to the fact, of whether the brother or sister upon the right, or the left, will perform his or her part or not.

It is the labor thus performed, with full purpose of heart and in wisdom under the law, that truly enters fittingly into the structure of this spiritual house, or as has been most tersely said, "According to the effectual working in the measure of every part;" wrought under the true and fashioning influences of the Holy Spirit, in love working unto him who is; the head, even Christ.

"From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love." Eph. 4: 16.

Equal interests ought to make themselves manifest in equal works. Not that one should do just as much as another; for much more may be required of one than another in amount, whether of it spiritual laborer in teaching, or of a temporal, in acquiring and making of offerings: but equal in the sense of each doing all that he can for the success and growth of this spiritual structure, having consecrated himself and all that he has to the service and glory of God. He who has received of goods to the amount of two talents, must employ the two; and he who has received five, must occupy accordingly; for, "to every man" is distributed, "according to his several ability." And when the final rewards are made up, the equality is still recognized.

It is said alike to him who had wrought according to his two talents, and to him who had wrought with the five; "Well done, then good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

This equality of interest enjoined in the law on the part of every one, is calculated of itself, to dispel and check the jarrings, contentions, envyings, strife, and lustful, and covetous desires, which otherwise creep in and corrupt the body. For a man will not readily do that which he perceives to be against the success of that in which his highest interest centers; hence, the urgent necessity of calling the attention of the church to these things, as set forth in the revelations in its earlier days; (Book of Covenants sections 102 and 98), and the plain and specific declaration then made, that, "Zion can not be built up unless it is by the principles of the law of the celestial kingdom, otherwise I can not receive her to myself." And the fact stated is evident with very little reflection; for if this law is ignored in the prosecution of the work, if the work was finished and not by right rule, it would be so unlike him, if living being fashioned by another law, that it would bear no resemblance or likeness to his will, or heavenly things.

It is not only a question of the building up and growth of the work that we are required to look to, but manner and means as well; and it will be found just as vain, and useless, for us as any other people, to do our work, "teaching the doctrines and commandments of men."

The law was given for the purpose of preparing a people to be the Lord's. That part relating to things spiritual and the spirituality of man, for the purpose of directing the growth and development of his spiritual nature; of so guiding and leading him as to bring him into closer communion and more perfect rapport with those things which relate to heaven and the divine being. That relating to temporal things, to so direct and govern, him in these, as to bring into subjection the evil and grosser nature, such as covetousness, selfishness, strife and the many unjust desires to which we are subject; and to aid in the development of those qualities closely allied to the spiritual, of morality, virtue and beneficence; and thus bring out the higher qualities of the human heart and character. On the principle that "he that loveth not his brother whom he

hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" And this love, as the other, is manifest by the works of the law. "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments; and his commandments are not grievous." He will remember Jesus' cause and its interests; care with a more willing heart for the poor and needy, and go forward with kindness to the suffering, relieving the destitute; "visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and keep himself unspotted from the vices of the world."

Thus, the law of Christ governing in both spiritual and temporal relations, will certainly accomplish the work whereunto it has been established; for God is true and his covenants are certain. But should his law not be permitted to govern, it cannot and will not bring about that peace in which our hope is bound; since it is only under its operations that the building up of the kingdom of righteousness is possible. There is manifestly a higher and more controlling purpose to be seen in the commitment of the law relating to temporal matters, than that of worldly gain, or the bringing of a few coffers into the treasury. If wealth, or means, were all that is lacking in order to the building up and establishing the kingdom of God, he who created the wealth of the world and controls all things, could readily supply the want; but there must be a prepared people as well means; and he who is unchangeable has established the way of this preparation, the regeneration and development of the children, and this preparation must first be made. "Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight," is fairly illustrative of the principle.

This brings us to face fairly the issue of the relationship of the work to, and our respective duties and obligations under, the law. And it will become well the purpose of this article, if we shall succeed in clearly pointing out some of those which are termed duties in temporal things, together with some proper reasons for their performance; treating the subject, if possible, as to the parties and their obligations; the intent and purpose of the giver; the amount required under the law; and the method and manner of giving.

1. OF THE PARTIES AND THEIR OBLIGATIONS

The church in the New Testament is likened to a family; a household; temple; body; and in the body "every one members one of another;" in the temple as "lively stones;" children of the house over which is Christ; a family whose branches extend into heaven: implying clearly in each illustrative symbol, a relationship of duty, of mutual obligations, and dependence on the part of the membership upon each other, and upon Jesus who is the head. Hence, the leading and chief characteristics of this association are and were to be, the unity of the Spirit; of intention; of works; of faith, and of hope; for to be a member indeed, one must "put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness," and labor for the full accomplishment of the one purpose of the body, as he would for the success of all undertaking only in his own interest.

"Endeavoring to keep the unity, of the Spirit in the bond of peace, In one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling." Eph. 4:4 (Inspired Translation.)

By the discharge of these duties and obligations under the law do we work righteousness, "put on robes of righteousness;" and they who fail to labor in accordance with their abilities, are even in a worse condition than they who build of wood, hay, or stubble. These last do not take heed how they build, and their works will not stand in that day, when "the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is." But of the former, it is said, they are "slothful servants;" "have not on the wedding garments;" they had not attempted to do the bidding of the master of the house, and must be expelled therefrom.

"So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God." Luke 12: 21.

The rich and the poor are to abide the principles of the law, and each let their works be manifest in the same according to the ability given to perform. (Book of Covenants, sec. 56, par. 5.)

The apostle urging these common duties upon the church at Corinth says:

"Now concerning the collection for the Saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come." 1 Cor. 16: 1, 2.

The only exceptions possible under this instruction would be to those who have not anything; and of whom it is stated, "ye shall impart of that which you have to give" for their relief.

The revelation of, 1831, is also thus general in its application to parties, for the particular blessings which it promises, are not only for a part, but made to, and desirable on the part of all.

"Behold, now it is called today (until the coming of the Son of Man) and verily it is a day of sacrifice, and a day for the tithing of my people; for he that is tithed shall not be burned (at his coming); for after today cometh the burning; this is speaking after the manner of the Lord; for verily I say, tomorrow all the proud and they that do wickedly shall be as stubble; and I will burn them up, for I am the Lord of hosts; and I will not spare any that remaineth in Babylon. Wherefore, if ye believe me, ye will labor while it is called today" B. of C., see. 64, par. 5.

This again, is in harmony with the general application of the law as it related to Israel under the prophets.

"Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But, ye say, wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. Ye are cursed with a curse, for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation." Mal. 3: 8, 9.

When Jesus refers to these duties on the part of the people he associates them with those matters considered more worthy under the law, and urges the importance of fulfilling this part with all others:

"But I say unto you, woe be unto you, Pharisees. For ye tithe mint, and rue, and all manner of herbs, and pass over judgment and the love of God; these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone." Luke 11:42.

The duty originally, is made as general as the gifts and blessings of God, of life and the means of living, unto the human family; and is one of the agencies that has been ordained by him who is the judge of all, by which to try the human family, as he saith through the prophet:

"Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now 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." Mal. 3:10

The instruction to the Saints in 1873 should encourage them to vie with each other in works that are good and calculated to benefit mankind.

"Behold, if my servants and my handmaidens, of the different organizations for good among my people, shall continue in righteousness, they shall be blessed, even as they bless others of the household of faith.' B. of C., sec. 117, par. 12.

When David celebrated before the Lord the gifts made by the willing hearts of Israel he unfolded the theory upon which man may justly be called upon to aid the work of the kingdom of heaven. He says:

"Now therefore, our God, we thank thee, and praise thy glorious name. But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort? For all this comes from thee, and of thine own have we given thee." 2 Chron. 29: 13, 14.

Clearly then, if we have part and lot in the kingdom, we are of the parties referred to, as having duties connected therewith; either in being specially engaged in sowing the seed, the good word of the kingdom, or in the position of one who, "ministereth seed to the sower," or possibly both; let us therefore not deceive ourselves as those who have no "oil in their vessels," but labor that our vessels may be found filled, and ready to meet the hour of necessity, when the cry shall go forth, "Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him."

2. OF THE INTENT AND PURPOSE OF THE GIVER.

To perform the duties required under the law, it is necessary, both for the attainment of the objects for which the law was given, and as a complete compliance with the same, that we do so voluntarily; from pure motives; in faith; and with full intention and desire to fulfill all that our Heavenly Father has enjoined. In support of this general principle the following citations are given which are sufficiently explicit without comment.

Jesus says:

"Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven." * * * "But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth: That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly." Matt. 6:1, 3, 4

"He that giveth let him do so with simplicity." — Paul, Rom. 12: 8.

"Behold, the Lord requireth the heart and a willing mind." B. of C. sec. 64, par. 7.

"Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give: not grudgingly, or of necessity: for the Lord loveth a cheerful giver. 1 Cor. 9: 7.

"And again, Alma commanded that the people of the church should impart of their substance, every one according to that which he had; if he have more abundantly, he should impart more abundantly; and he that had but little, but little should he required; and to him that had not should be given. And thus they should impart of their substance, of their own free will and good desires toward God, and to those priests that stood in need, yea, and to every needy, naked soul. And this he said unto them, having been commanded of God." Mosiah 9:60-63

In the scriptures of the Old Testament the same good will is taught as having been required on the part of Israel, and without which there could be no acceptable offering:

"Speak unto the children of Israel, that they bring me an offering; of every man that giveth it willingly with his heart ye shall take my offering." Exo. 25:2.

"Thou shalt not harden thine heart, nor shut thine hand from thy poor brother. But thou shalt open thine hand wide unto him, and shalt surely lend him sufficient for his need, in that which he wanteth." Deut. 15: 7, 8.

It is not by "close fists," nor with doubtful countenances, that the work must be done; but by "opening the hand wide" — "with the heart willingly."

Indeed, this is the only way we can fully comply with any requirement in the kingdom of God. And because men do not reach this plane of action, moving "by the renewing of the mind" and conversion of the heart in their work, they must fail of the reward promised in this life, and be of the number of whom it is said, "they strive to enter in but are not able." Whether we will or not is optional with ourselves; nevertheless the testimony of God standeth sure; and the promises are made to those who obey him from the heart, fervently. Under such a principle of action as this it is not possible to treat man as a mere machine; neither to force or oppress a people.

There is no room for the "do as you are told" policy, or the popular church schemes for "fleecing the flock" to take root: For men and women act under the conviction of an enlightened conscience and move from the principles of force entering into the government of beings in the divine life of conviction of duty and desire for good.

3. OF THE AMOUNT REQUIRED UNDER LAW.

That with which man is blessed here, he is in some sense under obligations for; he can not at will and independently of himself create or make it; neither the sunshine, the dew, nor the rain is at his command, much less life and all of its attendant blessings. These we may consistently and fairly attribute to the Creator and upholder of all that is good; to him, as we are taught by the apostle, who is not "worshipped with men's hands as though he needed anything, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things." Being then so blessed and obligated in our lives, trusted with that which is not our own but another's, it is highly proper that the test of our faithfulness to duty and development of soul herein, be made before the commitment to our trust of "the true riches."

And men are expected here, to show by their works the proper qualities of soul, of honesty, benevolence, and charity: rendering a just and true account as required, in proportion as they have been blessed with the things of life; and this, before admittance to the association of the worthy ones who have obtained "a good report," and "kept the faith," even with the offering of life itself. The apostle says: "Let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him."

"Alma commanded that the people of the church should impart of their substance, every one according to that which he had; if he have more abundantly, he should impart more abundantly; and he that had but little, little should be required."

The revelation of February, 1831, reads:

"If thou lovest me, thou shalt serve me and keep all my commandments. And behold, thou wilt remember the poor, and consecrate of thy properties for their support, that which then hast to impart unto them, with a covenant and deed which call not be broken." B. of C., sec. 42, par. 8.

"And the twelve were with him, (Jesus), and Joanna, the wife of Chuza Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others, which ministered unto him of their substance." Luke 8:1,3.

These citations clearly show that men are required to remember the treasury of the Lord, and in proportion to their several abilities; to give of their properties according to that which they have; even according, as God hath prospered him." This rule is certainly founded in the principles of justice; it deals fairly with man, and in its relation one with another, and, therefore is equitable; it is according to that which is acknowledged to be the divine code; and hence right, because according to the law by which we are to be judged when the rewards for right and wrong doing are to be meted out to every one.

Just what the proportion is, to a certain extent, is also specified, and definitely settled by the law. The amount so fixed comes under the head of, and is denominated "tithes;" this term being used in the Scriptures so far as pertaining to duties of persons under the gospel economy, or observances with regard to temporal things in the church, to denote:

1. A tenth part.
2. Surplus property consecration.

The first, is that which has been applicable to the church in all dispensations and under all conditions. This was the portion Jacob vowed he would give to the Lord while he journeyed to Padan-aram, if he should be blessed with bread to eat and raiment to put on, saying:

"And the place of this stone which I have set for a pillar, shall be the place of God's house; and of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee." Gen. 28: 22.

This tenth was also of the increase as is more definitely ascertained from the history of the observance of the rule by Abraham, and the further fact, that whatever was required for a full compliance with the law, was of the newly acquired, and not of that upon which the tenth had already been paid. It is said that Abram, who complied with this law —

"Gave a tenth part of all." Heb. 7: 2.

"One tenth part of all that he possessed." Alma 10:8

And again —

"Gave a tenth of the spoils." Heb. 7: 4

These Statements particularizing the observance of the law by the "father of the faithful" are guiding illustrations of the duties required of the faithful ones, who, like Abraham, obey the gospel. As was his duty he paid to the High Priest a tenth of all with which the Lord had blessed him, all of which at the time was increase; for when he started out in life he had only that of which he had need, being yet in his father-in-law's house, and hence when he makes the offering, to "the keeper of the storehouse of God," he faithfully consecrated "one-tenth part of all that he

possessed." Afterwards when he returned with all increase from the slaughter of the kings, he also renders the just tribute to the High Priest, "of the spoils." This view is in harmony with the plain history of the transaction as it is set forth in the Inspired Translation of the Scriptures:

"And Abram gave him tithes of all he had taken." Gen. 14: 20

"Wherefore, Abram paid unto him (Melchisedec, the High Priest and keeper of the storehouse,) tithes of all that he had, of all the riches which he possessed, which God had given him more than that which he had need." Gen. 14:36-39.

This was afterwards required of all the children of Abraham, both by promise and the covenant; wherefore it is said:

"Honor the Lord with thy substance, and with the first fruits of all thine increase: so shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine." Prov. 3:9,10

Again —

"Bring ye 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. And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the fields, saith the Lord of Hosts. And all nations shall call you blessed, for ye shall be a delightsome land, saith the Lord of Hosts." Mal. 3:10-12; and 3 Ne. 11:13-15.

After delivering these, with other words of the prophet Malachi, according to the record in the Book of Mormon, the statement is made:

"And now it came to pass that when Jesus had told these things, he expounded them unto the multitude, and he did expound all things unto them, both great and small. And he saith, These Scriptures which ye had not with you, the Father commanded that I shall should give unto you, for it was wisdom in him that they should be given unto future generations." 3 Ne. 11:28-29

In the specific instruction to the church, in our own time, it is written:

"Verily it is a day of sacrifice, and a day for the tithing of my people; for he that is tithed shall not be burned [at his coming]." B. of C, sec. 64, par. 5.

And again, in the year 1861:

"In order to place the church in a position to carry on the promulgation of the gospel, and as a means of fulfilling the law, the Twelve will take measures in connection with the Bishop, to execute the law of tithing." B. of C, sec. 114, par. 1.

Don't overlook the idea — that the law is to be fulfilled. Of all people we should fully appreciate the reason of this. The law then is binding upon the church at the present time, and should be executed; put in force — administered; as any other relating to the body, — the church. The Twelve and Bishop, upon whom is laid the duty of execution, are agreed as to what this law is, and also the manner of execution; and whatever differences in opinion may have been said or thought, hitherto, to have existed between these quorums, it will be, proper for us in this

connection to state, I that upon a comparison of views touching the principles generally governing under the law, during the Kirtland Conference, April, 1883, there was found, at that time, to be entire agreement.

Neither ought it to be supposed that where one of these quorums act touching this law the other is at variance; for since members in each must in the day of final account answer as to their acts with reference to the same, due deference to each other and the judgment of each as brethren, must be recognized in order to conform to the common rules of courtesy between man and man, saying nothing of the audacious presumption it must be for one of these parties to act contrary to the wishes of the other in the execution of this law, when the Lord has laid the responsibility of the same upon all.

"As I live, saith the Lord, in the manner ye execute this matter, so shall ye be judged in the day of judgment." B. of C., sec. 114, par. 2.

We conclude then, that if these quorums are to give an account of their action in this matter in the day of judgment; the members to whom it is to be administered, the church generally, must also give an account in that day in the matter of obedience to the same.

The inquiry is made direct then, since the law is in force and equally binding upon the body as any other, what does it require of each and every member? The answer must of necessity be: — Entire, full and complete obedience as any other.

And it may not be amiss, to here remind the brethren of the fact, that when they teach faith, repentance, baptism, a godly walk and conversation, &c., they make no halfway work of it; and the Saints would feel horrified generally, should they find any of their number teaching and practicing half repentance, half baptism, or half of the Christian graces only. But it would be just about as consistent to immerse a man's feet or hands, or sprinkle a little water on his head and call it a full and hearty compliance with the ordinance of baptism, as for one to undertake to comply with the law of tithing, by giving the fiftieth, seventy-fifth, or one hundredth part of the increase.

But, it is persisted, what is the increase? The answer is: Whatever a man has been blest with in the way of means over and above the living: — Of all the riches which he possesses, which God has given him more than that which he has need.

It may be thought that this would call for a large sum in many instances. Doubtless it will in a few. But it must be remembered that it will be no more of a burden to the giver, if the heart is right, than the poor man's dollar, or the widow's mite. And when the wealthiest shall have done their whole duty, the amount of the consecration, will not it is likely equal an hundredth part of the offering of Abraham, the father of the faithful, which he paid after he had returned from a sojourn of a few years in Egypt; for, he "was very rich in cattle, in silver, and in gold." And he "paid tithes of all that he had, of all the riches which he possessed, which God had given him more than that which he had need." The question also arises: — If a person has been making con- tribulations in the shape of freewill offerings for a number of years, is the law still, applicable and binding as to him?

If he has been faithful and done simply his duty in making freewill offerings, he has thus far certainly done well; for, as will be seen hereafter this is a duty required under the gospel covenant; and it person should take such an interest in the cause of Christ and humanity as to

scatter these special blessings all along life's pathway; had such will have a recompense therefore in the resurrection of the just, if they are just. God so bestows his especial blessings upon us when we ask him and are in need, and whether we are worthy or not. But such act on the part of a person would not be a compliance with the law of tithing as set forth in the Scriptures, unless at the time when it was done the party intended to so comply with that law and distributed the proper amount, and to the proper person as provided therein. There is no doubt but while Abraham sojourned in Egypt and all along his course of life such bestowal of offerings were received from his hand and which proved blessings to the recipients; but notwithstanding this, he complied with the law in all of its requirements and rendered a true account to Melchisedec the keeper of the storehouse for the church.

Specific instruction, secondly is given as to the amount of the offering, under the head of "surplus property;" which, under the state or condition of the society at the time, was made the first duty of the saints, or the "beginning of tithing." Unlike the general law of tithing referred to herein, it does not seem to have been the rule applicable under all conditions of the body but, that relating under certain circumstances, as it would only be possible under such to carry out the intention and provisions of the same.

Perhaps the most correct and simple explanation that could in a few words be given of this part of the law, would be that, it is the specific rule governing as to the amount of the gift under the law of consecrations, which provides for an exhibit and inventory, or "the laying of all things before the Bishop;" and contemplating the mutual transfer of properties, for beneficiary rights and inheritances, and the adjustment of inharmonious relations between the rich and the poor.

To execute this, requires:

1. A place and duly organized body; Zion or a stake.
2. Assisting officers in these stations who are not necessary to the enforcement of the law referred to in the revelation of 1861.
3. Ability on the part of the Bishop to carry out the undertakings on the part of the body.
4. A people who are united in faith, spirit, the truth, sentiment, habits, pursuits, rights and interests and who will willingly conform to the law.

It is not claimed by the Bishopric that this law is binding upon any, except possibly, those claiming to act under the direction of the revelation and settling upon the land of Zion; (that specifically so termed in this connection); but as to these, nothing in this article shall be construed as a formal opinion with regard to the obligations of such. Attention is simply called to the fact that it is definitely stated that he who shall go up unto the land of Zion making preparation beforehand, fully realizing the responsibilities and obligations of such a step, "Shall be accounted as a wise steward. This is also an ensample," Sec. 72:5

It may be said that the saints in Zion are no more circumspect, and no more readily conform to the law of the kingdom of Christ, than those of any other place. But it should be remembered that more is required of such, and that if there is nothing of this nature to be gained by the removal, parties can not be considered wise who go.

Notice is called to the matter for the reason that it is not desired that any shall go there under a misapprehension of the attending obligations and duties; and also to prevent perhaps, its great a stampede from the land hereafter, as there is now a feeling in that direction.

In every age of the Church it has been an easy matter to find persons who were willing to go up and inhabit; set down to the feast; but not so easy to find those who were willing to make the sacrifices required and fully abide the law governing.

It will not be questioned, that the instruction to the Church at this time is, "to stay," or "settle in the regions round about," as may consistently be done. (B. of C. sec. 102, par. 6, 7, and B. of C. sec. 117, par. 11).

The statement is also made that:

"It is not expedient in me that there shall be any stakes appointed until I command my people. When it shall be necessary I will command that they be established."
B. of C., sec. 117, par. 11.

Together, these avoid the conditions named for the successful carrying out of the law set out in section 106, or "surplus property;" a fixed place (and this included certain officers) being requisite in that, to the successful working of the rule. 1. The land of Zion. 2. All the stakes. Perhaps at the time the revelation was given the only places strictly apply so the terms could be properly executed were Far West, (where it was given) Kirtland and in what was strictly termed Zion.

Where the rule of surplus properties is carried into effect there is necessarily associated in the execution certain officers with fixed duties, (and consequently attaching responsibilities), viz: the First Presidency and High Priests, which are not in terms or by implication, except in so far as the Twelve are under the direction of the Presidency, made parties to the execution of the law spoken of in the revelation of 1861.

The Twelve, whose duties are "to build up the church and regulate all the affairs of the same, in all nations," whatever its condition, are named with the Bishop, (whose duties also are general and resulting, whatever the state or condition of the body), as the responsible officers in the execution of the law of tithing then referred to; and thus by the terms of the regulation we have a proof that the law therein referred to of "tithing" was that binding upon the church in all conditions and circumstances, and is in agreement with all that is written upon this law as coining through the head, and the fact that the Lord in his instructions is ever in harmony with his own word, and that his ways are not crooked, whatever men may think in regard to the same.

When we take up the revelation of September, 1882, and read: "Nor is it expedient that the elders of the first quorums be sent out of the land of America until the work of the reorganization of my church be more fully established, and a greater unity of understanding between them be obtained," we are again reminded of the unalterable decrees of the "just one", and the fact that if man would attain to the excellency of the things promised, he must observe the directions pointing the way to the same.

There is no specific instruction with regard to the amount required under the law of consecrations so far as it relates to "freewill offerings;" neither is there with regard to just how long a man shall pray or preach; yet, as these other duties, this also is closely enjoined as a proper observance for all of the faithful, not only for an especial work or gift to the Lord through the Bishop, but such offerings or donations should be made for the especial objects also of defraying incidental expenses of meetings, the repairing and building of churches and in aid of such enterprises as a majority of the members of the branch may decide to engage in for the good of the work.

Circumstances and ability to perform will govern as to the amount with the wise; and a person should be very careful in his work in this, that he fail not to enter into the measure working heartily for the success, although the decision of the majority may have been contrary to his own judgment and wishes as to the wisdom of the undertaking itself.

It should be remembered that seldom any step is undertaken for the real good of the work without having a minority party in opposition; for all have not alike examined, and perhaps been unprejudiced alike in their examinations, of the step, but after a decision has been reached it is in harmony with the highest principle of government in the kingdom of God, as the Republic, that the minority shall then submit and enter into active support of the measure which is now made the act of the body. A man can not be true to the body, true to the interests of Christ who is over the body, and be, do, or act rebellious in such cases. True he is not bound to change his mind as to the feasibility of the measure; but he is bound to respect the principle, "that the will of the majority is the highest law," and this, in whatever government in which the people have had given to them the privilege and right to decide upon a matter. And the minority must show that respect by conforming to the order until such time as through the instruction and education of the body it may determine otherwise. The true theory and underlying principle touching this is incorporated in the instruction of the wise king Mosiah to his people upon the question of what is the best kind of government:

"Now it is not common that the voice of the people desireth anything contrary to that which is right; but it is common for the lesser part of the people to desire that which is not right; therefore this shall ye observe, and make it your law to do your business by the voice of the people. And if the time comes that the voice of the people doth choose iniquity, then is the time that the judgments of God will come upon you, Yea, then is the time he will visit you with great destruction even as he his hitherto visited this land." Mos. 13:35-38

Whatever may be said of the dealings of God with the human family, he has always honored his own laws respecting them, and among which is that of man's agency; coupled with the rights and privileges which he has recognized as belonging to the church, is found that of action by its members in branch, conference and general assembly capacity upon certain matters belonging respectively to these bodies; and when due action is taken by these upon such matter, good order, good government, and good membership, all demand due respect and good will toward the same until it is rescinded by this same body or reversed on appeal — Don't fail to get the true position. Must conform until such change is made, not refuse to conform till the change; and he who will not so respectfully conduct himself toward the decision and act of the majority, must cut the ridiculous figure of occupying the self-important and conceited position of not only knowing more than the entire majority that adopted the course, but of also being able to see further into the undeveloped future than he who gave the law permitting the act of the majority to stand as the act of the body; and thus he becomes it law unto himself. The fact of so many complaints being brought to the attention of the Bishop of persons refusing absolutely to do anything toward the help of branch, district and other work of the body because forsooth their policy was not adopted, calls forth specifically an allusion to this matter, and it is hoped that the saints will readily see that if they can not always have their plans adopted, they can accept of the next best, or the best that can be put in operative force; waiting patiently till the majority can move higher. No doubt all plans and theories which are formulated by man are to a great extent imperfect; — having been instituted by imperfect beings, or as they looked through a darkened glass and saw the light; — nevertheless, it is right and proper that we should go forward and do

the best possible, without waiting for what we know to be a perfect rule, or to receive a revelation to do in all things.

In the revelations it is stated:

"Verily I say, men should be anxiously engaged in a good cause, and do many things of their own freewill, and bring to pass much righteousness; for the power is in them, wherein they are agents unto themselves." B. of C. sec. 58, par. 6.

In concluding with reference to the amount required under the law in the present condition of the church it may be concisely stated:

1. That it is the duty of each and every one, if they not already, to at once comply with the law enjoined under the system of tithes which has prevailed where the gospel has been preached and accepted in the different ages.
2. Make such other contributions as may be within their power and as necessity demands, in the way of freewill offerings.

Together they are termed consecrations —offerings set apart in a right spirit and devoted to the work of God and the well being and happiness of man. B. of C. sec. 82: 2 and sec. 42: 8, 9.

The first, consisting of a tenth of what a man has, (for which he has not paid) more than he has need. Call it the increase, interest or amount, it makes no difference. This is put into the hands of the Bishop, the head of the treasury, "the keeper of the storehouse."

The second, consisting of such things as a person from the due appreciation of the demands and necessities of the work of God, or wants of his fellow man may from the desires of his heart bring forward and give as a special offering: and hence a freewill offering.

These are also paid into the hands of the Bishop, into the storehouse, but usually kept separate from the tithes: 2 Chron. 31:1 1, 12 and 14 and Neh. 13:13.

Contributions are also properly made to branch treasurers for incidental expenses; means handed the traveling ministers as their immediate necessities may require and a person wish to aid and has ability so to do, after having fully complied with the law to the church; and such also to persons not in the ministry if one desires to so use his means; and all tends to benefit the giver, if done in the right spirit, more than the recipient; and it is thus "more blessed to give than to receive;" but a person can not be his own bishop to distribute the things which is required to be placed in the treasury of the church. This brings up the 4th statement for consideration.

4. THE METHOD AND MANNER OF GIVING.

Upon the question of just how to give, who to, and in what manner there has been so many suggestions and plans by first one and then another in the past, that it would indeed be wonderful if any had been fully complied with. It is much easier to suggest new ways and not carry them out perhaps, than to put in force and full operation that taught in the books. The gifts of the patriarch were to the proper party, the one duly appointed to receive as has been seen already; to the one authorized and set apart to receive these things and to look after the wants of the poor and care for the church. The Lord through Malachi says: "Bring ye all the tithes into my storehouse."

In the time of the Savior's personal oversight and work, it was well understood that whatever was given for these purposes was placed in the hands of the treasurer; the one who "carried the bag;" and the custom was for him to look after the wants of the disciples, together with those of the poor and needy. (John 12:6 and 13:29). The Book of Covenants says: "And they shall be laid before the Bishop of my church and his counselors." And is to be distributed for the preaching of the gospel, the poor and needy, &c., as led by the High Counsel, the Twelve, and the Bishop and his Counsel, (sec. 42:8, 10 and sec. 114), and as a preparatory fund to be used for the general good of the body as the work shall progress.

To carry out this law and as a means to assist in placing the consecrations in the proper place, the revelation of 1873, directs that the Bishop may also "choose and appoint Bishop's Agents, until it shall be wisdom in me," (says the Lord) "to ordain other Bishops, in the districts and large branches of my church." (B. of C., sec. 117, par. 10). The Bishop has endeavored to comply with this instruction and agents have been appointed wherever it has been thought necessary to the interests of the work and the execution of the law.

The question is often raised, whether the districts can appoint these agents; and in some districts the discussion of it has been the order of the conferences. This with a few other inquiries may be answered in this connection:

1. As to the appointment of agents. The very term, "agent," ought to determine whom should appoint. It is not common for one party to appoint an agent for another without a reason therefor. If he is in some way incapable of doing his own business or has specifically delegated the right to another to act for him then it may be done. It has not yet been questioned but that the Bishop was prepared to act, and he has never delegated the right to others to appoint. These facts are quite sufficient to determine the matter. But it is further plainly settled by the law itself: "The Bishop of my church may also choose and appoint Bishop's Agents." He is the one to act in this in all instances. In doing so he often consults with parties both in and outside of the district where the appointment is to be made; the object being to get good and acceptable men; and districts may as in the case of other church officers sustain by vote the appointment; but can not receive the resignation of an agent, appoint an agent, prosecute an agent or in any way interfere with his duties, except through the principal, the Bishop. This rule is essential to the protection of both principal and agent in their work. If the agent is unfaithful, derelict in duty, unjust, or commit extortion, it is proper to quietly report the act wherein, to the Bishop.
2. Agents in their respective districts are required to report to the district conferences all of the receipts and expenditures by them of tithing or offerings of whatever nature, together with the names of the parties so contributing or receiving the same; and the conferences may examine and approve or disapprove of the same and are requested so to do; and should the agent fail or refuse to render such showing the Bishop ought at once to be notified of the fact. This is for the information, satisfaction; and protection of the district, the Bishop and the church.
3. Agents are required to keep separate accounts of all tithing and freewill offerings coming into their hands and make report of the same to the Bishop. This may be done by them sending in the report when made for the district conferences, or as heretofore annually. The names then together with the amount paid into the treasury are entered to the proper accounts upon the Bishop's books and thus due record is kept for future use as provided in the revelation.

Every member's name in the church should appear upon this record and however numerous have been the complaints of negligence in this regard in the past, it is now confidently expected on the part of the Bishopric, that the entire church membership will from this time forward see to it that this part of the law is carried out as any other.

To this end the agents are instructed to make a complete record of all the members in their respective districts leaving spaces opposite the names in which to enter the consecrations of the Saints, (tithing and freewill offerings), as they shall be handed in, and thus with the number which the Bishop will enter directly upon his books, he will have the name and amount contributed of every member in the church. The record should be as complete as possible to make it, and especially contain the name and the amount paid as the "tithing" of every member not specially engaged in the ministry and as many of these as may in any way have increase of funds.

They are also to receive and enter all freewill offerings made in like manner and thus it is hoped the record may be comparatively complete by the first of April next.

This is the manner of carrying out the law as it is set out in the books and we urge that it be fulfilled.

It will not do either, to suppose that it is best to wait for a more convenient time. It is to be a work of sacrifice; done not without in effort; not by giving something you can as well do without, but by an earnest, appreciable effort in giving.

We ask the brethren, everywhere, are you ready to come forward and do as is required of those who are to be favored by the Just One; occupy as we have prayed for the way to open and let Zion be seen by the light of your works?

Are there any who do not desire to have their names placed thus with the faithful, or who would for all their earthly gains be willing to have it said to them: "For I was I hungered, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked and ye clothed me not: Sick, and in prison and ye visited me not."

But, says one, that language applies to those who were never members, to the goats not the sheep. That argument would not in the least help the matter; for if such strong language as is found in the condemnation was to those who never accepted the gospel of Christ, how much stronger must be that, to those who had become acquainted with the privileges of the brethren and the "good word of God" and then did not these things.

Let its remember that it is not simply the act of coming into the fold that will distinguish the sheep in the day of retribution, but it is also in the work of taking on the clothing of the sheep; performing good works; "In every nation he that worketh righteousness is accepted of him."

And it is plain to be seen that although it person may have been directed into the right fold and mixed all his life long with the sheep, If he has not lived and acted like one during his probation, he is likely to come out a different type in color, disposition, and desires.

The body is in great need; sick, afflicted, hungry, naked, occasionally the members imprisoned, and Jesus in the instruction reminds us of the fact that these conditions would be those of his own people and to them, many would not do what was in their power, and binding

upon them as a duty. "For as much as ye did it not to the least of these, (my brethren), ye did it not to me." Let us then not be found slothful servants neither undutiful children, but arise and in a oneness of works, move forward as the Master has directed.

The work of enrollment and collections will greatly be accelerated by each member taking upon him or herself the task of seeing the agent if he should be too bashful to attend to his duties in this regard. By placing the name and the amount of the offering upon a slip of paper, or in an envelope and handing it to the agent or the person in the branch selected to receive these consecrations for the purpose of forwarding to the agent or the Bishop, you will greatly aid these officers in their work. They will have sufficient to enable them to enter these items upon the record at their convenience. If the Saints do comply with the law the treasury will have plenty to meet all just demands and to spare: to this end was the law given and we believe it equal to all the emergencies. This done, and the incidental expenses of branches are easily met by the little contributions the saints desire to make from time to time, and thus the "passing of the hat" at our services may, as it ought, fairly be dispensed with without any loss to the treasury.

Be sure that the agent is not permitted to miss you. Would you like to be 'forgotten in this grand and glorious work? The time will come when it will be found to the welfare and interest of all to have these names in the right place, and to this end with you we shall strive and labor. With the united, earnest and intelligent efforts of all, as sought by the Church, and as becomes the spiritual house, the kingdom from above, these calls for spiritual laborers from every part of the land may be fully answered. Ministers of the word will no longer be compelled to cease their labors and look after worldly affairs, the mammon of the life, in order "that the gospel may be free," but with love and confidence in their hearts, that their families shall have protection in their absence and to Jesus the mediator and head of the church, they will "forsake all," the comforts, blessings, cares, joys and happiness of home, family and friends for the love of the Master, and the interests of that kingdom that is "righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost." The ebbing life will soon in full return to the branches, and in the reanimation of all through the power of the Holy Spirit, the Church may arise and again stand upon its feet.

The wants of the aged and necessitous will then everywhere be met, and peace, and plenty return to the barns and presses, of the saints; for God will in the richness, of his love bountifully bless them. The gospel of the kingdom will go forth to all the world "for a witness" shall the end come. Are we all ready to so live and enjoy? Praying ever for blessings of the Holy One upon you, we are in bonds of love,

The Presiding Bisphoric

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