



BY ANA NELSON SHAW
(Based on a true story)

Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse (Malachi 3:10).

Even though Father was deaf, he understood his daughter Alice. She pronounced her words carefully and looked right at him so he could read her lips easily. So Father kept her with him whenever he could. When he was doing business, she helped him understand what other people said. When he was working on the farm, Alice was good company.

Alice and Father tended grapevines and peach orchards, harvested honey from beehives, and cut ice from the pond. Alice gathered eggs from their chickens. Whatever they cut or gathered or harvested, Father and Alice took one-tenth to the tithing office.

They didn't pay their tithing with money, most of the time. If they harvested thirty bushels of peaches, three bushels went to the Church. If ten jars of honey came from the beehives, one jar went for tithing. It was the same with grapes and eggs and whatever else they had. Even chickens and cows sometimes went along to the tithing office in the farm wagon!

One Monday morning early in the summer, Alice and Father were mending a fence where the farm bordered the roadside. Alice heard the thudding sound of horses' hooves on the dirt road and the rumbling of a farm wagon. She looked up and saw Brother Johnson driving with children in the back. Father looked up too.

"Good morning, Brother Ashdown!" Brother Johnson called. "My peas are ready for harvest. I'm paying the

children twenty-five cents a bushel to pick them.

Does Alice want to come?"

Father looked down at Alice.

"He wants me to pick peas for a quarter a bushel," Alice repeated. "May I go?"

Father nodded. Alice climbed into Brother Johnson's wagon. Father waved and smiled as she rode away.

Alice worked hard all day long and picked two full bushels of peas. Before she left at the end of the day, Brother Johnson dropped two shiny quarters into her hand. Fifty cents could easily buy enough candy to last a month, or ribbons in every color of the rainbow for Alice's hair, or maybe even a toy! She ran all the way home and bounded into the kitchen where the family was just sitting down around the table for supper.

"Look!" she said. "Fifty cents of my very own!"

"Those are good earnings for a day, Alice, for a girl your size," Mother said. "Now please wash up before you sit down and eat." Alice obeyed, then settled in for a plate of stew, new potatoes, and sweet green peas from the family's garden.

"I'm pleased you're a hard worker, Alice," Father said from across the table. "Do you want to pay your tithing on that money?"

Alice nodded yes.

"You'll owe five cents tithing then. Should I give you change?"

Alice looked at the two coins next to her plate. Five cents less and she wouldn't have two quarters anymore—only one quarter and two dimes. Five cents suddenly seemed like a lot of money.

"Maybe you'll make some more money in a day or two," Father said. "I believe Doctor Stringham has a field of peas that needs picking."

"Think about it overnight, Alice," Mother suggested. "You need to decide if you want to pay tithing."

Lying in bed that night, Alice tossed and turned. She wanted to do the right thing. But it seemed so hard to let go of five whole cents. She thought about her last trip to the tithing office with Father. On their way

home, Alice and Father had met a man Father knew, Mr. Singer, who wasn't a member of the Church.

"Alice, ask your father for me where he's been today," Mr. Singer instructed. Alice did.

"We've been down to the tithing office," Father said.

"Well, William," Mr. Singer said, "you're surely devoted to that Church. I'm always amazed to see you going by my place on your way to meeting every Sunday. Especially when you can't even hear what's being said."

Alice gulped and repeated Mr. Singer's words slowly to Father. She worried that his feelings would be hurt, but she

It PAYS to LISTEN





knew it was important to let him know exactly what was being said.

Father straightened his back and looked hard at Mr. Singer. “Well, I do sometimes understand what’s said, but even if I don’t, I get the spirit of the meeting by being there. And I teach my children that we’re a Latter-day Saint family that goes to our meetings every Sunday. Same with taking Alice down to the tithing office. You have to teach children by example.”

Mr. Singer nodded. “You’re a good man, William Ashdown,” he said. “You take care now!”

As Alice lay in bed and remembered what Father had told Mr. Singer, she thought about all the other

times she’d gone to the tithing office with Father. She always felt warm inside when she heard him say, “That’s a full tithe.” She knew it was one way he showed how much he believed in the gospel. She remembered Mother telling her that if they paid tithing, the Lord would open the windows of heaven and send down more blessings than they had room to receive. She thought about how the grapes and peaches and eggs all went to help people who needed food. And she knew her own five cents would help someone too.

Alice crept out of bed quietly and made her way downstairs where Father and Mother were sitting.

“Father, I want to pay my tithing. Will you figure the change for me?” Alice asked.

“I certainly will, Alice,” Father said.

Alice traded Father one quarter for two dimes and a nickel. She put the nickel in the pocket of her pinafore that she would wear on Sunday so she could give it to the bishop. But before then, she picked peas for Doctor Stringham. Alice earned forty-five more cents to keep—and another nickel for her tithing! ●



“I plead with youth to establish this habit [of paying tithing] while you are still young and to resolve to continue with it all the days of your lives.”⁴

President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008)