

over an area of country nearly as large as the United States. Of course these people are congregated in a great measure in the larger cities of Australia, which makes them to some degree more easily reached. But we find that the people living in the country districts are more susceptible to gospel influences and more ready to listen to the elders, and they are harder to reach because of the long distances the elders have to travel.

However, there is a growth among that people numerically as well as spiritually. With the new members and the natural growth of the Church we are able to just keep ahead of the number who die and those who drop out of the faith. Our numbers increase a little each year.

The people there are very faithful in the payment of their tithing. The per capita tithing reaches a very high figure, and we are glad to see the manifestations of the faith of those who have identified themselves with the work of the Lord.

It is a very good mission to work in. It has many advantages of an educational nature that our young men would be pleased to enjoy if they really understood the conditions in that land. The people of Australia are an educated people. Many of the children ten or twelve years old among that people read the Book of Mormon in our classes just as readily as do our elders. They have a splendid school system and all things that tend towards the growth and development of that good people.

I rejoice in the testimonies that the Lord has blessed me with, for his sustaining power and influence while engaged in that missionary work. I testify that the Lord is with the elders, the power of the priesthood is manifested among them, they enjoy the spirit of their calling in rich measure, and they return home blessed and favored of the Lord because of their faithful efforts.

May the Lord add his blessings to us and to the good people in that far-off land, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

ELDER JAMES E. TALMAGE

"How firm a foundation, ye Saints of the Lord,
Is laid for your faith in His excellent word!
What more can He say than to you He hath said,
You who unto Jesus for refuge have fled?"

The grand old hymn loses none of its inspiration with time. It is well to consider what the Lord hath said and to act in accordance therewith. The tenor of the instruction thus far given in the present conference has been this: Keep the commandments of the Lord! A grand summation indeed; and if that admonition were followed in spirit and by effort there would be little need, as has been suggested, of dealing with particular and specific commandments.

AGENCY AND COMMANDMENTS

We boast much of our freedom and agency, and I find some who seem to have difficulty in reconciling the thoughts of freedom and individual agency on the one hand with the fact that we are living under commandment on the other hand.

In the scripture already quoted to you the purpose of placing man upon the earth has been declared: "And we will prove them herewith, to see if they will do whatsoever the Lord their God shall command them." A plainer or more comprehensive statement than that of the Lord's purpose could scarcely be conceived—to see whether we shall do whatsoever the Lord shall command us—because our agency enables us to do or to refrain from so doing, for the Lord will not compel.

This life is oftentimes, and very properly, referred to as a probation. "And we will prove them" the Lord says, putting us upon test, to see whether we will exercise our agency in choosing to do whatsoever the Lord our God requires of us. The Lord wants to know about that. Perhaps His foreknowledge shows the result to Him, but it is necessary that we demonstrate it. There is much work ahead of us, and the Lord desires to know whom He can trust with authority and power beyond the grave, so this probationary period has been provided that we may prove and demonstrate beyond all question as to whether we can be trusted, as to whether we shall be entitled to the welcome: Well done; you have been faithful over what may have seemed to be a few things, and perhaps relatively small things, but you have been proved and you have shown that you can be trusted with many and greater things.

REVELATION ON FUNDAMENTALS

In the early days of the Church, indeed before the Church was organized as a body corporate among men, the Lord gave revelation after revelation, specific and of profound importance. That revelation was the foundation, and how firm a foundation it is! I should be very much surprised if the Lord were revealing today the same fundamental principles, for they have already been revealed, and under His command they have been recorded; they form the constitution of the Church. Revelation is coming from Him day by day through inspiration to His servants, and we should note the trend of that inspiration and the particular principles that are emphasized from time to time. Are we today hearers of that word alone, or doers of it? You Bishops of Wards, Presidents of Stakes, members of the Church, will you simply remember that something was said at this conference, or will you go hence to carry into effect in your several fields what has been presented and what shall yet be presented unto you as requiring especial attention? We are not looking for something new in the sense of that that has never before been given to this people, but we are looking to see the way the Spirit is pointing as to those particular duties that are most especially important to us at this period.

OBEDIENCE A FORM OF ENERGY

There is a profound principle embodied in that admonition to keep the commandments of the Lord. Have you ever thought of the fact that there is a power, an actual force, a definite form of energy, in obedience? That energy is just as real as the force that is giving light to these lamps serving in the hours of darkness to illuminate this great auditorium for us. I think we shall yet come to recognize the force, the power, the energy, that lies in obedience. We have many demonstrations of it.

I have been impressed with the fact that the scientific spirit, as man calls it, is manifest in the organization of this Church and in its operation. It is only through obedience to what we call the forces of nature, the laws of energy, that we are able to make them serve our purposes. We would have none of these lights unless we obeyed strictly, with full purpose of heart, the laws of electricity.

Yesterday morning between nine and ten o'clock Mountain Time, we heard in this city the very voice of the Premier of Great Britain who had just landed at the port of New York. How was that miracle made possible? Through strict obedience to the laws by which the energy was employed and then applied through the radio, and in none other way would the marvel have been wrought. We have to obey the laws of light, the laws of mechanical construction, and the laws of chemistry if we would operate the camera successfully and get good pictures. That time-piece yonder would be worth nothing had not the laws of mechanics been very strictly obeyed in its construction. It is only through obedience to law that we enjoy blessings.

A MASTERLY GENERALIZATION

The Prophet Joseph Smith, as is common with the prophets of God, went beyond the inventors and discoverers and gave to us in a generalization—one that challenged the attention of thinkers who paid attention to it—one that embodied the solemn truth that by law irrevocably decreed, not for this earth alone, but before the foundations of the earth, it is ordained that when we obtain any blessing it is by and through obedience to the law upon which that blessing is predicated. Those who considered this said: Well of course; we knew that before, but we had not thought of it. So always with generalizations of great import. All of them are wonderfully simple, but it has been said, and with propriety, that none but a genius or a prophet can safely generalize.

What of the leper in Syria who through obedience was healed of his leprosy? What of the widow who went to Elisha, that man of God, when she was in great distress, and by compliance with and unquestioning obedience to the commands he gave her, she and her children were provided for? We may live under the blessings associated with law, if we will obey.

MAN'S NATURE TO OBEY

There appear to be many contradictions in human nature. Have you ever thought of the fact that it is really natural to man not only to obey, but to desire to obey? Think of the wealth that is being applied to investigation and research in science, and what is the great purpose of it all? Let us confine ourselves to what we call, artificially, perhaps, physical science. Our great men are at work in laboratories, and we think it nothing now to expend millions upon the equipment and maintenance of such institutions. Summed up, what are they trying to do? To discover new laws. Not to create them; you cannot create laws of nature, but to discover new laws. For what purposes? So that they can put themselves in subjection to those laws, to obey them. What? To be subject to new laws? Yes, because there are blessings predicated upon each of those laws, and men want those blessings. Men of science know very well that blessings cannot be obtained except through obedience to the corresponding laws. And then in strange inconsistency we find some who say that though we have to comply with physical law, natural law as we call it, in order to enjoy the blessings connected therewith, it is not necessary to comply with laws relating to the spiritual activities of man.

LAW OF THE TITHE—AN ILLUSTRATION

The law of tithing has been referred to as an illustration. But, brethren, take this to heart: the inspired servants of the Lord tell you at this conference no new principle connected with tithing, but they tell you it is necessary that you give your attention to the living of that law! Take that home with you, put it into effect in your stakes and wards, and let every member of the Church take it home with him and put it into effect. The Lord knows why he has inspired His servants to say that unto you at this time; that it is necessary that this people shall live up to that law. If there were time I would like to consider with you that sublime principle and law. Do you know that the soil can be sanctified by the tithing of its products? The land can be sanctified. There is a relationship between the elements and forces of nature, and the actions of men. Did not the Lord sanctify the land to Israel of old as long as His covenant people lived up to their covenants? He warned them of what would come if they forfeited that sanctification. He told them of the destruction that would come upon them, and it came because they chose the evil alternative, in large measure.

We should be sanctified, our homes should be sanctified, and we can attain that condition in part by living up to that portion of the law, and in its entirety by living up to the law in its fulness. Are you feeding your children tithed food? Are they wearing tithed clothing? We are to be tithed people. That was characteristic of the covenant people of old. It will be so ever. The law of tithing will abide, though it may be superseded by a yet higher law to which we shall learn to subscribe.

REWARD AND PUNISHMENT—NATURAL EFFECTS

Again, the Lord has said that according to the laws we obey here shall we receive from Him. We speak of rewards just as we speak of punishments. But rewards and punishments will come through the operation of law. The Lord has spoken illustrating that great truth by reference to what He had already revealed respecting the kingdoms or orders of glory, to this effect—If a man cannot or will not obey celestial laws, that is, live in accordance with the celestial requirements, he must not think that he is discriminated against when he is excluded from the celestial kingdom, because he could not abide it, he could not live there. If a man cannot or will not obey the terrestrial law he cannot rationally hope for a place in the terrestrial kingdom. If he cannot live the yet lower law—the telestial law—he cannot abide the glory of a telestial kingdom, and he will have to be assigned therefore to a kingdom without glory. I rejoice in the consistency and order of the Lord's plan and in His revelations to us.

Let us go forth carrying the spirit of this conference into effect, that the word of the Lord may be something more to us than mere sound; and so I pray in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

PRESIDENT HEBER J. GRANT

We rejoice in knowing that our patriarch, whose health is such that he cannot be with us, is resting quietly and hearing by means of the radio the proceedings of this conference. It is a source of a great deal of regret to us that he is not with us.

Brother Smoot, as you all know, is actively engaged in work at Washington, and cannot be with us. He is laboring with all his might and main, and I regret to say that his health is not as vigorous as it has been in the past. The great burdens resting upon him are telling very strongly upon him physically.

Brother Widtsoe is thoroughly enjoying his labors, and is accomplishing a fine work in Great Britain.

I have received a very grateful expression of thanks for the amplifying sets that have been arranged to accommodate those who are hard of hearing. They appreciate them very much.

My attention has been called to the fact that I did not mention Brother John P. Lillywhite as one of the returned mission presidents from whom we have not yet heard. Brother Lillywhite and his good wife are here with us. The reason I did not mention him is that we have not yet had time to neglect him, as he has been home but a few days

The congregation sang "Redeemer of Israel," and the benediction was pronounced by Elder A. Richard Peterson, President of the Emery Stake.

Conference was adjourned until 2.00 p. m.