

Sunday, April 9

Third Day

**President David O. McKay:**

He to whom we have just listened is Elder John Longden, Assistant to the

Twelve. Elder Henry D. Taylor, also Assistant to the Twelve, will be our next speaker.

### ELDER HENRY D. TAYLOR

*Assistant to the Council of the Twelve Apostles*

"In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread." (Gen. 3:19.) In these words the Lord gave to Adam and Eve, as they were driven from the Garden of Eden, the economic law by which they and their posterity should live out their lives here upon the earth. All laws given to Adam, we are advised, were spiritual laws. Inasmuch as he was given the edict that in the sweat of his brow he should eat bread, and this to be produced from the earth, which had been condemned to bring forth thorns and thistles, we can logically conclude that work is a spiritual law.

We should understand, however, that Adam and Eve were put under no curse, but rather the ground was cursed for Adam's sake or for his good and benefit, for the Lord further stated: ". . . cursed is the ground for thy sake." (*Ibid.*, 3:17.)

It was just twenty-five years ago at the April 1936 general conference that the divinely inspired welfare plan was announced, giving renewed emphasis to principles as old as the Church itself. At the following conference in October, the First Presidency explained the primary purposes for the establishment of the program. One of the basic principles, they stated, was: "Work is to be re-enthroned as the ruling principle of the lives of our Church membership." (*Conference Report*, October 1936, page 3.)

To carry out the purposes of the program, it was intended that all members of the Church should join together and work and labor to produce and process the commodities necessary to care for the "Lord's poor," that is the worthy needy, and that those needy, who were to receive assistance, should, to the extent of their ability, work for the help received. In this manner there would be no dole, no receiving something and giving nothing in return. It will be

understood that an essential factor of this great movement, the welfare plan, is work.

From early youth, Latter-day Saints have or should have been taught to regard work as honorable and to dignify it by performing an honest day's work for a fair day's pay. The poet Carlyle expressed this sentiment when he penned the lines: "All work, even cotton-spinning is noble; work alone is noble." The Apostle Paul clearly understood and emphasized the principle of work. In his epistle to the Thessalonians, he reminded them: ". . . this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat.

"For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies.

"Now them that are such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread.

"But ye, brethren, be not weary in well doing." (2 Thess. 3:10-13.)

Many have viewed with concern present-day trends continually to shorten working hours. The existing forty-hour week seems destined for revision downward, as agitation mounts to reduce further the working week to thirty-five or even thirty hours, with no decrease in benefits. Then there are those who look forward with anticipation to age sixty-five as the time of retirement from all work and labor. Much to their sorrow, many discover that too much leisure time may create problems not anticipated and brings disillusionment and unhappiness. They learn the important truth that work is a great blessing and can result in joy and happiness to themselves and to mankind. They also discover that doing nothing is one of the hardest of all jobs. When you get tired, you can't rest. You are in bondage when you refuse to work.

Elizabeth Barrett Browning said: "Free men freely work: Whoever fears God, fears to sit at ease."

Idleness is an offense against the gospel and has received the Lord's severe condemnation. He denounced it with vigor and vehemence when he instructed:

"Thou shalt not be idle; for he that is idle shall not eat the bread nor wear the garments of the laborer." (D&C 42:42.)

"For the idler shall be had in remembrance before the Lord." (*Ibid.*, 68:30.)

On another occasion he counseled:

"Let every man be diligent in all things. And the idler shall not have place in the church, except he repent and mend his ways." (*Ibid.*, 75:29.)

Brigham Young admonished the Saints by saying:

"To give to the idler is as wicked as anything else. Never give to the idler." (*Discourses of Brigham Young*, p. 275.)

The First Presidency expressed disapproval of the evil of idleness when in explaining the purposes of the welfare program, they stated, that it is among other things:

"To set up . . . a system under which the curse of idleness would be done away with."

The life span of man is constantly lengthening. More and more elderly citizens are confronted with the problem of properly utilizing leisure time in accordance with their desires, experience, knowledge, and abilities. These sunset years can be rich, rewarding, golden years, filled with work and activity as witnessed by the serene, happy faces of the aging temple workers, and the research people in the Genealogical Library. I was deeply impressed and touched with the look of happiness and contentment on the face of a ninety-two-year-old brother engaged in labeling cans at Welfare Square. Work to him was worthwhile and precious.

How glorious it is that the Church provides ways, means, and opportunities for those growing older to engage in interesting and constructive work; and how proud we should be to belong to such an organization.

President McKay in his eighty-eighth year is an inspiration and a shining example to all of us; in his office from early morning until evening, traveling throughout the world, guiding, stimulating, and inspiring the Saints.

Inactivity or refraining from work can produce a deterioration of both muscle and mind. The body accumulates poison when it ceases to be active. The mind becomes weak and dwindles in effectiveness when not stimulated by vigorous mental exercise. On the other hand, work is conducive to good health, contentment, and cheerfulness. Some of its happy results are peace of mind, a hearty appetite, sound sleep, and undisturbed rest.

" . . . work out your own salvation with fear and trembling." (Phil. 2:12.) To Latter-day Saints, this is not just an empty phrase, it is a profound truth. Working out one's own salvation is the concern of every individual, contemplating and requiring more than mere lip service. Each of us will at some future day stand before the judgment bar of God to answer for our acts in this life. John the Beloved Apostle foresaw in vision this memorable event and described it in these words:

"And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works." (Rev. 20:12.)

So we can say with grateful hearts, "thanks, Heavenly Father," for the privilege and the blessing of work; and as one has so aptly said, "For the might of it, the pride of it, the glory of it, the peace of mind that comes from the strain of it."

I bear you my witness, my brothers and sisters, that the principle of work is a God-given and spiritual law. I humbly pray that each one of us will labor diligently, so that some day we may merit the words of approbation, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant: . . . enter thou into the joy of thy Lord," (Matt. 25:21.) in the name of Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen.