

Monday, April 5, 1965

Second Day

will have a very definite and tremendous impact, reaching as it has, upwards of 100,000 men.

We shall now hear from Elder Alvin R. Dyer, and he will be followed by Elder Sterling W. Sill.

ELDER ALVIN R. DYER

Assistant to the Council of the Twelve Apostles

I am truly grateful, my brethren, to be in the presence of President David O. McKay and his Counselors this night, and these, my brethren of the General Authorities, and you, my brethren of the priesthood; and I pray for an interest in your faith and prayers, prayers which I have earnestly made since receiving this assignment.

The Priesthood Sustains Man

This marvelous testimony of the disparagements and the dissolutions that are being caused by the violations of God's laws as has been stated by President McKay presents the anticipation of a great tragedy among men. But perhaps the destruction of faith and honor in the lives of those who partake of any harmful indulgence will be even greater than the physical disabilities which it incurs. I believe that there is an honor in the priesthood of God which sustains man. As a fundamental reason for the restoration of the gospel of Jesus Christ in this the last dispensation, the Lord gave the following to the Prophet Joseph Smith: ". . . that every man might speak in the name of God the Lord, even the Savior of the world"; (D&C 1:20) and I believe that the highest concept of this is that he who holds the priesthood shall do so and shall speak in this manner for and in behalf of his family. This bears the mark of the most crucial phase of the gospel plan, for the extent of the family priesthood sealing among the children of God the Eternal Father vindicates the purpose of mortality.

Articles of Righteous Dominion

The articles of righteous dominion revealed to Joseph Smith are essential principles of the priesthood as applied to self and are the influence to be exercised over others for the good of all.

(See *ibid.*, 121:37-44.) In their highest sense they are characteristic of honor. Honor is the principle of power that must weigh in the balance all opposing principles of indulgence contrary to the will of God and the spirit of the priesthood. It was the honor or the power of God which Lucifer unrighteously sought in the preexistence. (See *ibid.*, 29:36.) We who hold the priesthood of God have within our grasp the highest aspects of honor. The straightforwardness of living is obtained in magnifying the priesthood principles. Here is the direct channel as proclaimed by the Lord leading to glory, honor, immortality, and eternal life.

Man Must Be Worthy

For a man to obtain the priesthood with God-given rights, to exercise and magnify it in behalf of his family, he must be worthily ordained to it. But the proven stumbling block to this high privilege in our day and time are the dishonorable indulgences of things of a physical and moral nature. And because of the standards implied by abstaining from harmful indulgences, I have known many good men plagued with bad habits who absent themselves from priesthood activity. It affects a man's honor and becomes an obstruction which prevents him from responding to the priesthood which otherwise would be natural to him. The measure of honor we reach in life is dependent upon the caliber of that which we permit to become a part of ourselves, which affects our physical, emotional, and mental ways of life. Seeds sown in honor spring forth to become jewels of eternity, while seeds sown in dishonor for whatever purpose decay and die in the corrupted soil where they are sown.

God does not require of man the achievement of honor and nobility

without having given him the inherent power to obtain it. As revealed to the Prophet Joseph Smith, the Lord has said to accomplish this that ". . . the power is in them, wherein they are agents unto themselves." (*Ibid.*, 58:28.) And as agents unto ourselves a man can therefore accomplish that which he wills to accomplish and needs not indulge in that which he does not will to indulge in. The complete restraining of harmful indulgences, both physical and moral, is a matter of personal honor. "Blessed is the man," says the Apostle James, "that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life. . . ." (James 1:12.)

"He that overcometh," said the Master unto John, "shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son." (Rev. 21:7.)

These are days of challenge to maintain individual honor and inner stability. Men and boys lose their honor for false reasons.

False Principles

Not long ago in one of the large eastern cities of America, a young man in his middle teens was shot by a stray bullet in a gang war. As he fought for his life in a hospital, he told police authorities that he never really felt a part of the gang but that he had hung on because of his loyalty to two members of the gang that he had grown up with in his own neighborhood. He felt that if he were to drop out he would be untrue to them.

This incident tells the story of a false sense of loyalty that caused this young man to surrender the principles of decent living to participate in things against his own nature, even nullifying his chances for a good life and bringing disgrace upon his family and community. Had he with honor courageously faced up to his problem, following the tougher road of dropping out of the gang and revealing to the authorities the escapades of rape and murder and larceny that the gang, of which only a minority were the leaders, had perpetrated, many could have been rehabilitated and saved, and he himself would have lived to accom-

plish his boyhood dream to build ships. Instead, his life, as he died a few days later, was forfeited, and others of the mob have been sent to prison, one to pay for his life.

When we weigh in the balance the difference between honor and loyalty, there comes a time when in order to achieve honor one must determine the value of that to which he will give his loyalty. If it calls for a surrender of honor then it is false. False loyalty will sometimes seem very real, and there is a strange code among young men that induces such a false loyalty, but they must calculate the end result.

Once in ancient Israel King Saul found displeasure with God for failing to obey, although he thought that he had kept the law by offering sacrifice. To him came the denunciation, ". . . to obey is better than sacrifice, . . ." (1 Sam. 15:22.) This did not mean that sacrifice was not a good principle, but when exhibited by disobedience, it is false. Loyalty likewise is a good principle, but never if it means the surrender of honor.

Just how much cheating goes on in colleges and universities—it is estimated to be far more than most educational officials realize—is the subject of a nationwide study by Columbia University. "Of the students questioned in the 99-college survey, more than half have admitted to cheating." The national conscience is shocked by the cheating scandal at the US Air Force Academy in Colorado. But conclusions "Based on the Columbia University survey involving 5,422 students at 99 colleges and universities coast to coast" suggest:

"Some ways to reduce cheating are indicated in the survey, based on questionnaires returned by 5,422 college students, 626 deans and 502 student-body presidents. Conclusions include:

"Colleges with honor systems, the study finds, 'are less apt to have a high level of cheating than those with other arrangements for control.'" (Copyright article by *U. S. News & World Report*, February 8, 1965, p. 10.) Cheating and acts of dishonesty are not confined to the classroom and

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whenever exhibited demonstrate abnormality.

When honor and integrity are sacrificed to gain some cheap and fanciful end, a change takes place within the inner structure of the individual.

Not all narcotics, which change conditions from normal to abnormal, from real to unreal, are found in pellets and powders, liquids, tipparillos, or in filtered white tubes of satisfaction.

Avoid Whatever Deteriorates Human Personality

In a true sense, any dishonorable, superficial, or insincere indulgence reacts upon the nervous system like a narcotic. And when unnatural or unearned pleasures are sought, there is a certain imbalance that takes place. The use of alcohol, heroin, tobacco, cocaine, tea, coffee, or other stimulants—and add to these dishonor, dishonesty, insincerity, the pollution of the mind with evil and immoral thoughts, and you get a wider meaning of what is meant by a narcotic—these are the “kicks” that can kick a young man, or anyone for that matter, right out of the realms of decency, honor, and a character of integrity.

In all of the indulgences, both immoral and physical, the first makes the second easier; to yield to temptation once makes it easier to yield again and again. But to resist and restrain sustains normalcy, making later decisions even more positive. I once stood on a street in Trondheim, Norway, looking up at a statue of a Viking who had been mounted atop a lofty pillar. And at the time there came to my mind a fable of the Norsemen I had heard as a boy which I recall went like this: “The blood of the conquered goes over into the veins of the conqueror.”

Obedience to the Word of God Is the Way to Perfection

Thus, my brethren, 132 years ago the Lord revealed unto the Prophet Joseph Smith words of wisdom concerning harmful indulgences which tear down the structure of the human body by the abnormalities which contribute to moral and spiritual delinquencies, call-

ing for a surrender of dignity and honor. The Lord, in concluding this revelation, indicates its relationship to the whole gospel plan when he said to keep and do these things, that we may then walk in obedience to the commandments of God. (See D&C 89:18.) Herein I believe is the key of this revelation: to “find wisdom and great treasures of knowledge, even hidden treasures.” (*Ibid.*, 89:19.)

To me the most important personal phase of the gospel and one that can realistically lead to the attainment of its many gifts is that part which reaches down into the very fiber of the personal self. Here is where the power is developed. It concerns the actuality of what a person really is and not what he professes to be. The real motivation of gospel law produces a character and nobility of soul that is devoid of any false and superficial veneer.

What I am suggesting here is that basically and inherently a man cannot be both evil and good; he cannot, as the Lord has said, serve two masters. Any attempt at double-mindedness can produce but one thing, and that is instability.

There are some, for vanity or other superficial reasons, who may seemingly offer a good gift, but only to deceive, and often as not this simulation is made to cover something ugly and sinful which lodges beneath the false veneer.

In the balance of the innermost thoughts and feelings lies the real person, to be evil or to be good. God recognizes no sense of good which is but a cloak of how the inner person really feels in opposition thereto.

And unto those who with dishonor surrender their cause to superficial and unearned pursuits that come from these harmful indulgences, the Prophet Moroni gives utterance to the teachings of his father Mormon:

“... a bitter fountain cannot bring forth good water; neither can a good fountain bring forth bitter water; . . .” (Moroni 7:11.)

“... a man being evil cannot do that which is good; for if he offereth a gift, or prayeth unto God, except he shall do it with real intent it profiteth him nothing.” (*Ibid.*, 7:6.)

“... if a man being evil giveth a gift, he doeth it grudgingly; wherefore it is counted unto him the same as if he had retained the gift; wherefore he is counted evil before God.” (*Ibid.*, 7:8.)

“And likewise also is it counted evil unto a man, if he shall pray, and not with real intent of heart; yea, and it profiteth him nothing, for God receiveth none such.” (*Ibid.*, 7:9.)

“Wherefore, all things which are good cometh of God; and that which is evil cometh of the devil. . . .” (*Ibid.*, 7:12.)

“... the devil . . . persuadeth no man to do good, no, not one; neither do his angels; neither do they who subject themselves unto him.” (*Ibid.*, 7:17.)

Influence of Priesthood Executive Committee

It has been said, and wisely so, that the margin of difference between the causes that would confer the priesthood of God upon one but not upon another is only a hair's breadth. Basically men who are attracted to this Church are good men. We need to find that goodness. We must work at our business that every man may speak in the name of the Lord God in behalf of his own family and then that he may work with others. This calls for concerned individual and family analysis and projection within the framework of our priesthood program. It places particular stress upon the enterprise and action of the ward priesthood executive committee as they, under the direction of the bishopric, will give direction and assistance and counsel, working through the priesthood leaders and home teachers, to reach all, but especially at first the fathers, that they may be able to stand at the head of their own families in righteousness.

Disparagement should not exist as we strive with these many good men who are so close to the honor of taking their rightful place.

I remember one man that we had challenged to stop smoking cigarets that he might be prepared to go to the house of the Lord where his wife might be sealed to him and their children to them. But he said to me, his bishop, “I like to smoke, the greatest

enjoyment I get out of life is from smoking,” and then he added, “I even set the alarm clock throughout the night and awaken and sit on the edge of the bed at every alarm and smoke a cigaret.” Now I never heard of a habit any worse than that.

And I asked, “Do you really mean that?”

He said, “Yes, I do.”

Well, I called at his home a few evenings later at 10 pm. This was the time he said he went to bed. He greeted me by saying, “Bishop, what are you doing here at this time of the night?”

“Well,” said I, “I have come to see how you set the alarm clock.”

He said, “I wouldn't want to do this with you here.”

Well, I stayed deliberately until three o'clock in the morning, and I thought he was going to throw me out a number of times. I exhausted all of my understanding of these situations as I tried to keep him interested, but at three in the morning I said to him, “Now, brother, you have missed five alarms. Why don't you go the rest of the night without a cigaret?”

At that moment he felt a sense of honor and a dignity that he did not need to smoke. He looked at me with a peculiar smile that these men often get when they make a decision of this kind, and he said, “All right, I will.” He never touched another cigaret.

Habits which Weaken Good Men

I remember another man, who was a carpenter, who said that he couldn't quit. He smoked two packages a day, and he said, “My body requires nicotine, I have smoked so long.” And two packages in that day before filters was a lot of nicotine. And he couldn't change, and he wouldn't accept the challenge to get ready to be ordained an elder.

But something very strange happened to him. He got hit on the head with a falling two-by-six as he worked on the roof framework of a house. His wife called me about the accident, and I rushed to the hospital. When he regained consciousness, he had lost his memory. He didn't know his wife; he

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didn't know me. He was that way for nearly six weeks. But the strange thing was that he didn't ask for a cigaret once. He forgot that he used tobacco. And on the day when he began to remember who he was and something of his experience, he asked for a cigaret, and the nurse said, "Well, I didn't know that you smoked."

He said, "Of course I do; please, may I have some cigarets."

"Well," she said, "you haven't had a cigaret for six weeks."

And then he remembered the things we had told him, that it was in his mind, that his body didn't require nicotine, and he said, "Well, if I haven't smoked for six weeks, I am not going to take up the habit now." And he never smoked again.

I remember still another brother, a friend of mine, who had the habit of drinking. In many ways he was a wonderful man. He had the kindest heart, but he had this weakness which manifested itself every time he was under pressure or had some difficulty and couldn't seem to solve his problem. Then he would go off somewhere and drink into drunkenness. I have taken him home a number of times, but upon this occasion the police had got there first and had taken him to the county jail. So I had to go over there at the pleadings of his dear wife, arriving just about the time when they were taking the big coffee pot around to them to sober them and send them home. When they came to him he refused to take the coffee. He said it was against the Word of Wisdom.

Well, I finally got him out in the car, and with the help of his wife we took him home, got him upstairs, undressed and ready for bed. But he sat on the edge of the bed and wouldn't get in. It was nearly three in the

morning. I had to get to work early in the morning, and I kept thinking, "Why doesn't he go to bed?" I said, "Why don't you get in bed now? Here you are; you are in your own home."

And finally after a short while he told me why he wouldn't go to bed. He said, "I haven't said my prayers yet." And I had the privilege of kneeling with this good man. I see the goodness that is in these men that we have to reach. There is not much difference between them and the most active. They are wonderful men, and they can be corrected from these habits.

Now I bear my testimony to you, my brethren, that the abstaining from harmful indulgences is a great commandment from the Lord. There are many who say that it is only by way of counsel, but I would say in response to that that in the early days of the Church a number of the brethren were excommunicated and reasons given in some instances were because they had not kept the Word of Wisdom. The implication that it is just something we can take or leave has never, I believe, been a part of its intent. It is the will of God and therefore a commandment. These indulgences are the things that frequently keep men from receiving the honor and the dignity of the priesthood. I bear my testimony to the effectiveness and reality of things that we can do to help them, and I do it in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President Hugh B. Brown

We have just listened to Alvin R. Dyer of the Assistants to the Twelve. Elder Sterling W. Sill, also an Assistant to the Twelve, will now speak to us. He will be followed by Marion D. Hanks of the First Council of Seventy.

ELDER STERLING W. SILL

Assistant to the Council of the Twelve Apostles

My brethren, I appreciate very much this privilege of having a part with you in this great priesthood brotherhood under which we receive our commission to serve God.

Some time ago a friend of mine who lives on the farm was telling me that as his sons get old enough to share in the responsibility of farm work, he arranges for them to have a little land