

Saturday, April 9

Second Day

lor, Assistant to the Twelve, will be our next speaker.

Congregational Singing: "Praise to the Man"

Elder Henry D. Taylor, Assistant to the Twelve, will now speak to us. He will be followed by Elder Gordon B. Hinckley of the Council of the Twelve.

ELDER HENRY D. TAYLOR

Assistant to the Council of the Twelve Apostles

As we journey through life, requests may come to us from those who have been appointed to positions of leadership and authority to perform some labor or to accept some responsibility. We may not comprehend nor understand the reason at the time nor even later for such calls, but, with confidence in those making the request, we respond without question.

Prompt and willing obedience

One of the beautiful incidents found in the scriptures relates to our first parents, Adam and Eve. After being driven from the Garden of Eden they began to till the soil and to have dominion over the beasts of the field and to eat their bread by the sweat of their faces. They called upon the name of the Lord and heard his voice speaking to them from the way toward the Garden of Eden, but they did not see him, as they were now shut out from his presence.

The Lord gave them commandments that they should worship him and should offer as a sacrifice unto him the firstlings of their flocks. No explanation was given for making such offerings, and I suppose they wondered as to the reasons, but without hesitation they were obedient unto the directions of the Lord.

Example: Adam

After many days an angel appeared to Adam and inquired: "Why dost thou offer sacrifices unto the Lord?" Then came Adam's sublime, beautiful, trusting response as he answered: "I know not, save the Lord commanded me." (Moses 5:6.) Thus this noble couple gave sufficient reason for their obedience to the Lord's command.

What a glorious example to us, their posterity.

Compliance to counsel without knowledge of the reason therefore is often referred to as blind obedience. But obedience is not blind when it is based on faith—implicit, trusting faith.

Nephi

Marvelous deeds can be accomplished through faith and obedience. While in the wilderness the prophet Nephi was instructed by the Lord to construct a vessel in which to cross the mighty waters. To his doubting brothers this appeared to be an impossible task. But Nephi knew that it could be done and began fashioning tools and accumulating materials for his important assignment. When he advised his brothers of his purpose, they murmured and scoffed, saying: "Our brother is a fool, for he thinketh that he can build a ship; yea, and he also thinketh that he can cross these great waters." (1 Ne. 17:17.)

In spite of their skepticism and ridicule, Nephi was moved by the spirit of obedience and had faith and confidence that the Lord would open the way for him to carry out the commandment he had received. Humbly, yet majestic in his trust, he proclaimed to his brothers: "If God had commanded me to do all things I could do them. If he should command me that I should say unto this water, be thou earth, it should be earth; and if I should say it, it would be done." (1 Ne. 17:50.)

Abraham

Another soul-stirring incident that is recorded in holy writ teaches a forceful lesson from which we may profit.

As a devoted and loving father, Abraham's heart must have been heavy when he was commanded to take his beloved son, Isaac, upon a mountain and offer him as a sacrifice. Yet with unwavering faith and implicit trust in the Lord, he responded to the charge. He was dutifully obedient. Mercifully, however, he was relieved of the severe challenge the Lord had imposed upon him. But he had been tested and tried. For his faithfulness and obedience, the Lord gave Abraham this wonderful promise: ". . . in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice." (Gen. 22:18.)

In those ancient days the offering of burnt sacrifices was a subject that was repeatedly taught and stressed. Evidently there were many discussions as to which was the more important practice, sacrifice or obedience. Samuel, the prophet, asked Saul, whom he was teaching, the question: "Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord?" Then without waiting for a reply, he gave this inspired answer: "Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams." (1 Sam. 15:22.) How powerful to Adam, Abraham, Saul, and to us, also, is this lesson concerning the importance of obedience.

Now what of our own day? As we read the daily newspapers, view television, and listen to the radio, we are acutely aware of the unrest that exists in the world today. Wars, bloodshed, riots, and acts of lawlessness are characteristic of the times. They are evidence of some men's desires for unrighteous power, a lack of consideration for the rights of others, a disregard for established laws, and a tendency to be nonconformists. The jails today are crowded with such individuals. It is necessary, as we all know, for law-making bodies to enact legislation that will protect the rights of the law-abiding majority against the rebellious minority.

But these selfish, self-appointed nonconformists, whose inspiration is derived from an evil source rather than a source divine, have not learned to

appreciate the peace and joy that come into the soul through obeying the laws of the land and observing the commandments of the Lord.

"He learned obedience"

The Savior, on the other hand, subscribed to the principle of obedience to divine law. In referring to him the Apostle Paul observed: "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered;

"And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him." (Heb. 5:8-9.) Should we not follow the Lord's example?

Programs of the Church

At the present time, through inspiration from the Lord, many worthwhile programs are being given to the Church. These programs have the endorsement, approval, and blessing of the General Authorities. Do we hearken unto the chosen servants of the Lord, who prepare these valuable aids for us? Do we render obedience to the counsel that comes to them through inspiration and revelation from our Father in heaven?

Well might we as individuals and as parents ask ourselves these questions:

"In these good and prosperous times, have I accumulated an adequate reserve of food, clothing, and savings to provide for me and my family in the event of illness, emergency, or unemployment?"

"Am I living in such a way that my life will be an inspiration and an example to others? and am I following the counsel of the prophet when he declares that every member should be a missionary?"

"Am I gathering my family around me each week in a home evening and studying the gospel?"

"Have I carefully analyzed my family records and engaged in prayerful research in order to complete the history of my progenitors?"

Over the centuries the Lord has given many assurances of his desire to pour out blessings upon the people, but he has made it equally clear that

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blessings are predicated upon obedience and a willingness to obey his commandments. Moses in his day promised the children of Israel:

“And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe and to do all his commandments which I command thee this day, that the Lord thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth:

“And all these blessings shall come on thee, and overtake thee, if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God.” (Deut. 28:1-2.)

Blessings for the faithful

And now in the latter days the Lord has again made it crystal clear that he is willing to bless the faithful. That is strongly evident in this assurance: “I, the Lord, am bound when ye do what I say; but when ye do not what I say, ye have no promise.” (D&C 82:10.)

This harmonizes with the statement that the Prophet Joseph declared he had made a rule in his life and followed each day. It was simply this: “When the Lord commands, do it!” (*Documentary History of the Church*, Vol. 2, p. 170.)

Now, may I emphasize one more

thought? In this year of 1966 renewed emphasis is placed on the importance of the home and the cultivating of the spirit of love therein. With listening ears and responsive hearts, we should hearken to the words of our beloved prophet, President McKay, who has counseled: “. . . let us never lose sight of the principle of obedience.

Obedience is heaven's first law, and it is the law of home. There can be no true happiness in the home without obedience—obedience obtained, not through physical force, but through the divine element of love.” (*Treasures of Life*, p. 329.)

That we may be blessed with the rich rewards that come to the faithful through observing the beautiful principle of obedience to all that the Lord commands us is my humble prayer, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

President N. Eldon Tanner:

Elder Henry D. Taylor, Assistant to the Twelve, has just spoken to us.

Elder Gordon B. Hinckley of the Council of the Twelve, will now speak to us. He will be followed by Elder Richard L. Evans.

ELDER GORDON B. HINCKLEY

Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles

My dear brethren and sisters, I approach this responsibility with a prayer in my heart that the Lord will prompt me by his Holy Spirit, as I add my word of testimony.

I have on the desk in my home a small metal box. It is about 12 inches square and half as high. On its face are six knobs and two dials. Now and again, when I have an hour, it becomes my plaything. It is a short-wave radio. Turning the knobs, I listen to London, Washington, Tokyo, Peking, Moscow, Havana, and other great capitals of the world.

Battles for the minds of men

The voices I hear are persuasive, seductive, fascinating, and confusing. Speaking across the earth, they are part of a mighty battle that is being waged for the minds of men. They are aimed at persuasion in political philosophy. There are voices of democracy competing with voices of Communism, and each is winning converts according to the discernment and the judgment of listeners.

The stakes are high, the weapons are sophisticated, the methods are clever.