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The voting as far as I can see is unanimous in the affirmative.

President Joseph Fielding Smith

We thank you, good brothers and

sisters, for the sustaining vote.

Elder Delbert L. Stapley of the Council of the Twelve will be our first speaker this afternoon, and he will be followed by Bishop John H. Vandenberg, Presiding Bishop of the Church.

Elder Delbert L. Stapley

Of the Council of the Twelve Apostles

My brothers and sisters and friends, please consider with me the commandment of our Savior, as recorded in the fifty-ninth section of the Doctrine and Covenants:

"... Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy might, mind, and strength; and in the name of Jesus Christ thou shalt serve him." (D&C 59:5.)

This modern revelation is more comprehensive and gives better understanding than the accounts of Matthew and Luke. There are no contradictions, however, in the different scriptural versions of this commandment. I have

attempted to bring together scriptural quotations explaining and supporting this important commandment.

To love God with all one's heart implies the presence of sincere, profound inner feelings of the soul, inspired from a divine source. Love should be the most dominant factor in one's life. This thought is supported by John the Beloved, who said: "He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love." (1 John 4:8.)

Definitions of love

In recent years the tendency has developed to debase the word love. It

seems worthwhile to mention some definitions of this beautiful and expressive word that glorify it and put love in its proper context:

1. "Affectionate concern for the well-being of others."

2. "The benevolent affection of God for his children, and the reverent affection due from them to God."

It is in this concept of love that the word is used in the scripture quoted.

By the proper use and expression of love, it can be purified, sanctified, and become a beautiful, radiating quality of goodness and uprightness in one's behavior. What kind of world would we have if the pure love of God and man were not the dominant and motivating force in the lives of the majority of people?

Today we witness situations in which true love does not activate or impel all the political leaders of the world. In some instances freedoms are taken away: the lives of people are dominated or controlled by force. Evil ruling and imperious influences are contrary to the rights of free men as bequeathed to us by our God.

1. Can one truly say he loves God and then break the commandments which are given for the salvation and glory of his children?

2. Can one say he loves the Lord and fail to pray and give thanks for his bounteous blessings?

3. Can a person who is dishonest in his dealings with his fellowmen love the Lord?

4. Does a person love the Lord when he fails to pay an honest tithe?

5. Can one love the Lord and not observe the Word of Wisdom?

6. Can one love the Lord and be morally unclean?

7. Can one love the Lord and be disloyal and unfaithful to his or her family by committing licentious acts, desertion, or willful neglect of loved ones?

8. Can one truly love the Lord and disregard the teachings and counsel of his anointed prophet, seer, and revelator?

Qualities of love

Love is a synonym for God, for God is love. (See 1 John 4:8.) Therefore,

love is made up of these qualities: moral and ethical honesty, patience, forbearance, kindness, integrity, virtue, purity of soul, free conscience, service to fellowmen, and good works.

Can love be perfect? Yes, if we follow the gospel path which leads to it. In Christ's sermon on the mount, he taught: "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." (Matt. 5:48.)

By accepting this challenge to become perfect, we avoid the idea that attaining perfection is a bar to further progress. Perfection is overcoming, one by one, every facet of character weakness. We understand that perfection is a goal of excellence toward which we strive. With this understanding, one can attain perfection.

It seems clear that perfection cannot be achieved without love.

Jesus said to the rich, young man: "If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me." (Matt. 19:21.)

Earlier he had challenged the young man: ". . . if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments." (Matt. 19:17.)

In striving for the goal of love and perfection, we cannot take opposite positions alternately by mixing evil with good. Throughout our lives we must continually follow a righteous course to secure a full measure of love, which leads to the perfection of the soul.

Heart is the center

The word heart is used in scripture as the core of life and strength; hence it includes mind, spirit, and soul, and one's entire emotional nature and understanding. One of the dictionary definitions states: "Heart is the center of the total personality with reference to intuition, feeling, or emotion: the center of emotion, in contrast to the head as the center of the intellect."

In many statements it is regarded as the central source of one's mental faculties or capacities. We read in Proverbs: "For as he [man] thinketh in his heart, so is he." (Prov. 23:7.)

It is also the seat of one's affections,

moral life, and character. In addition, heart is defined as having spirit, courage, and enthusiasm. Thus, when we love the Lord with all our heart and soul, we love him in spirit, with courage, enthusiasm, and profound earnestness of purpose.

The pure in heart

Bushnell has wisely said, "The life of man is in his heart." On occasion there may be a need for cleansing and renewal in order to obtain a pure heart; for it is only the pure in heart who have the promise of seeing God.

The apostle Paul, writing to Titus, gave us this interesting and challenging thought: "Unto the pure all things are pure. . . ." (Titus 1:15.)

In the Beatitudes, Christ taught: "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God." (Matt. 5:8.)

God instructed the prophet Samuel to choose a successor to King Saul because God had rejected King Saul from reigning over Israel. Samuel mistakenly looked favorably upon the handsome Eliab, the eldest son of Jesse, to be the king, but he was not the choice of the God of Israel. Therefore, the Lord instructed Samuel to "look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart." (1 Sam. 16:7.)

Jesse's youngest son, David, was the Lord's choice to replace King Saul.

The Lord also gave this counsel to his chosen servant Jeremiah: "I the Lord search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings." (Jer. 17:10.)

Those who have held the reins and driven horses know how a slight touch of the reins can direct the horse as desired by the driver. When we understand this scripture, the principle of guided free agency becomes apparent.

Preparations of the heart

Solomon wisely called attention to "the preparations of the heart in man, and the answer of the tongue, is from the Lord." (Prov. 16:1.)

This harmonizes with the teachings of Jesus as recorded by Luke, when he said, "A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; . . . for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh." (Luke 6:45.)

The apostle Paul, writing to the Ephesians, exhorted them to do "the will of God from the heart." (Eph. 6:6.)

The scriptures are full of choice statements about serving the Lord:

"With all your heart."

"To seek the Lord with all one's heart."

"My heart . . . crieth out for the living God."

"Lift up your hearts and be glad."

"Purify your hearts."

"Asking in faith with an honest heart."

"Pray vocally as well as in thy heart."

"Treasure up in one's heart the truths of eternal gospel teachings."

Nephi, an early American prophet, admonished his people: "Wherefore, my beloved brethren, I know that if ye shall follow the Son, with full purpose of heart, acting no hypocrisy and no deception before God, but with real intent, repenting of your sins, witnessing unto the Father that ye are willing to take upon you the name of Christ, by baptism— . . . then shall ye receive the Holy Ghost; . . . and then can ye speak with the tongue of angels, and shout praises unto the Holy One of Israel." (2 Ne. 31:13.)

And Jacob, the brother of Nephi, forcefully stated: "Behold, my soul abhorreth sin, and my heart delighteth in righteousness; and I will praise the holy name of my God." (2 Ne. 9:49.)

Obedience and love

The great Nephite prophet, King Benjamin, taught his people "to keep the commandments of God, that they might rejoice and be filled with love towards God and all men." (Mosiah 2:4.)

Alma asked his son Helaman, "Will ye keep my commandments?" And Helaman answered, "Yea, I will keep thy commandments with all my heart." (Al. 45:6-7.)

We need always to remember this eternal truth stated by our Savior: "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." (Matt. 6:21.)

Moroni, the last of the Book of Mormon prophets, counseled: "Wherefore, my beloved brethren, pray unto the Father with all the energy of heart, that ye may be filled with this love, which he hath bestowed upon all who are true followers of his Son, Jesus Christ; . . . that we may be purified even as he is pure." (Moro. 7:48.)

The upright and pure in heart are the only persons having the promise of eternal life and endless happiness. We ought to be interested in doing that which would incline our hearts toward our Heavenly Father, trusting, working, and praying for everlasting happiness in his eternal kingdom.

I think of an analogy of the heart to a garden. We can keep the heart perfectly clean from evil or there can be degrees or a fullness of evil, just as one can keep a garden beautiful or allow some weeds to grow that eventually could take over the garden completely. It would be disastrous to our eternal goals to let down in our efforts to cleanse and keep our hearts pure and in all holiness before God.

F. D. Huntington phrased it in these words: "Holiness is religious principles put into action—it is faith gone to work—it is love coined into conduct—devotion helping human suffering, and going up in intercession to the great source of all good."

So far I have only treated two phases of the quotation under discussion; namely, (1) to love God, and (2) with all our hearts. I will now briefly discuss the remaining ingredients of "might, mind, and strength," which all together support and reinforce "love" and "heart" and fully involve the soul of man.

"With all thy might"

"Might" is important because it is the power to do something constructive and employ its entire use to a task or performance.

Moses taught the children of Israel, "And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all

thy soul, and with all thy might." (Deut. 6:5.)

King Lamoni addressed his Lamanite subjects and urged them not to take up arms against their brothers, saying: "And the great God has had mercy on us, . . . because he loveth our souls as well as he loveth our children; therefore, in his mercy he doth visit us by his angels, that the plan of salvation might be made known unto us as well as unto future generations." (Al. 24:14.)

Personally, I do not believe the angels of God could refuse to visit a person who fully keeps the first and great commandment.

Nephi again counseled his people: ". . . I say unto you that the right way is to believe in Christ, and deny him not; . . . and worship him with all your might, mind, and strength, and your whole soul. . . ." (2 Ne. 25:29.)

The Lord in this latter day admonished the elders of his Church: "For behold the field is white already to harvest, and lo, he that thrusteth in his sickle with his might, the same layeth up in store that he perisheth not, but bringeth salvation to his soul." (D&C 4:4.)

Again, referring to the field being white, "already to harvest," he challenged the laborers in his vineyard: ". . . wherefore, thrust in your sickles, and reap with all your might, mind, and strength." (D&C 33:7.)

The Savior exhorted every member of his Church to "go to with his might . . . to prepare and accomplish the things which I have commanded." (D&C 38:40.)

Another interesting quotation given in this dispensation is as follows: "And we know also, that sanctification through the grace of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ is just and true, to all those who love and serve God with all their mights, minds, and strength." (D&C 20:31.)

Serve with willing mind

"Mind" is spirit and intelligence embodied in the soul of man. It comes from God, who is the author of its being. God is the Father of our spirit, and all intelligence comes from that

divine source. It is our duty to keep in tune with the Spirit. Doing so with diligence and application enables us to expand the mind with learning and knowledge to meet the measure of our creation here on earth. Certainly this knowledge should inspire in us a love of God and a desire in our hearts to keep his commandments, to walk uprightly before him, to heed and obey the still, small voice within, which also comes from God.

We are cautioned to serve God with a perfect heart, in humility, and with a willingness of mind.

The apostle Paul, arriving in Berea from Thessalonica, contrasted the acceptance of his gospel teachings by each of the two groups in these words: "These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so." (Acts 17:11.)

In his epistle to the Philippians, he advised, "Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: . . . stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel." (Phil. 1:27.)

"A sound mind"

Writing to "my dearly beloved Timothy," Paul said, "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear: but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind." (2 Tim. 1:7.)

Jacob, an early Nephite prophet, appealed to his people, saying, "But behold, I, Jacob, would speak unto you that are pure in heart. Look unto God with firmness of mind, and pray unto him with exceeding faith, and he will console you in your afflictions, and he will plead your cause. . . ." (Jac. 3:1.)

Ammon, a great missionary among the Lamanite people, was asked by the queen to look upon her husband, King Lamoni, who had lain as though dead for two days and two nights. "Now, this was what Ammon desired, for he knew that King Lamoni was under the power of God; he knew that the dark veil of unbelief was being cast away from his mind, and the light which did light up his mind, which was the light of the glory of God. . . ." (Al. 19:6.)

We can understand from this statement that the mind can be enlightened by the Spirit of God and thus can be expanded and enlarged upon by that power.

Strength in the Lord

"Strength" embraces moral courage and force and intense energy in resisting all evil, living righteously before God, and a willing heart and mind to do good in spiritual and all life's pursuits.

The Psalmist said:

1. ". . . the Lord is the strength of my life. . . ." (Ps. 27:1.)

2. ". . . but God is the strength of my heart and my portion for ever." (Ps. 73:26.)

3. "Blessed is the man whose strength is in thee." (Ps. 84:5.)

Ammon made this observation, "Yea, I know that I am nothing; as to my strength I am weak; therefore, I will not boast of myself, but I will boast of my God, for in his strength I can do all things. . . ." (Al. 26:12.)

The apostle Paul made a similar statement when he said, "I can do all things through Christ which strengthened me." (Phil. 4:13.)

Alma, the great teacher of righteousness, gave this admonition to his people: "But that ye would humble yourselves before the Lord, and call on his holy name, and watch and pray continually, that ye may not be tempted above that which ye can bear, and thus be led by the Holy Spirit, becoming humble, meek, submissive, patient, full of love and all long-suffering." (Al. 13:28.)

The Lord, speaking through Joseph Smith, the latter-day Prophet, admonished the Saints: "But ye are commanded in all things to ask of God, who giveth liberally; and that which the Spirit testifies unto you even so I would that ye should do in all holiness of heart, walking uprightly before me, considering the end of your salvation, doing all things with prayer and thanksgiving, that ye may not be seduced by evil spirits, or doctrines of devils, or the commandments of man; for some are of men, and others of devils." (D&C 46:7.)

Again he said to the Prophet (and these instructions apply to the things of which I have spoken, as well as the teachings of all the brethren who will speak in this conference): "Hearken ye to these words. Behold, I am Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world. Treasure these things up in your hearts, and let the solemnities of eternity rest upon your minds." (D&C 43:34.)

Our first commitment

To love God with all our heart, might, mind, and strength is our first and most important commitment. Without our eternal God, who is the Father of our spirits, we would not exist. With his love for us and our love for him, everything concerning our eternal welfare and happiness will fit into proper perspective to guide us to that eternal kingdom where God and Christ dwell.

The final words of the commandment, the theme of this presentation, should be etched in our souls forever: "and in the name of Jesus Christ thou shalt serve him." (D&C 59:5.) The service we render to God and his children through his Son, Jesus Christ, with love and with all our heart, might, mind, and strength will bring us the exaltation we hopefully are striving to achieve.

May this commandment—"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy might, mind, and strength, and in the name of Jesus Christ thou shalt serve him"—always have primacy in our lives, I pray humbly in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President Joseph Fielding Smith

We will now hear from Bishop John H. Vandenberg, Presiding Bishop of the Church.

Bishop John H. Vandenberg

Presiding Bishop of the Church

The goodness of our Father in heaven is especially evident at this season as we again witness another great harvest. The planting has been done, the growing season is over, and now the harvest is in process.

Recently, I was in Magic Valley, Idaho. While there I visited three welfare farms that are operated by the wards of the Church in that area. I was impressed by the way in which these farms were being managed. The bounteous crops evidenced the fact that the farms were being cared for properly. It appeared that there would be an excellent harvest.

As we drove away from these farms, however, we noticed a beet field that was overgrown with weeds. It seemed to have had little or no care. Because of the evident neglect, it was clear that the harvest would be minimal, if indeed there would be a harvest at all.

Fields reflect life

I thought then how much these fields reflect what can happen to us in our own lives.

When we plant seeds of righteousness and daily rid our lives of weeds, we reap a harvest of satisfaction, happiness, and even eternal joy. But when, because of neglect, we allow weeds to grow and canker our lives, we can reap less abundantly and perhaps even harvest sorrow and discontent. Some years ago, I read a homely verse printed in a seed company publication that builds on this analogy:

"When I put on my worn-out tweeds
And with my hands pull garden weeds,
The likeness always comes to mind,
'Tween weeds and sins of human kind.

"For weeds will grow up anywhere
In ground that's either foul or fair,
And when you pull them, you're not
through;
They'll grow right up again for you.

"Some weeds have roots so great in
length
That pulling them is test of strength,
And they should be removed with care
Or they'll kill good plants anywhere.

"It makes no difference where you go