

one after the other. We told them how Wilford Woodruff converted 1800 people in eight months. We reviewed the proselyting program of the Church from Samuel Smith in 1831 up to 1970, and we noted that close to one thousand of their New England neighbors would join the Church this year.

The visit ended. We closed with our personal testimony and extended an invitation to this couple to come join with us. What a spiritual thrill to see distinguished, capable, academic giants humble themselves before the Master and accept his simple gospel teachings. Yes, missionary work is a calling in which one may find many rewards, for true joy comes in giving and teaching the gospel of Jesus Christ.

### Truth to go forth

The first prophet of this dispensation, Joseph Smith, who lived and died a missionary, gave us his summary of the importance of this work when he penned the following to John Wentworth: "Our missionaries are going forth to different nations, and in Germany, Palestine, New Holland, Australia, the East Indies, and other places, the Standard of Truth has been erected; no unhallowed hand can stop the work from progressing; persecutions may rage, mobs may combine, armies may assemble, calumny may defame,

but the truth of God will go forth boldly, nobly, and independent, till it has penetrated every continent, visited every clime, swept every country, and sounded in every ear, till the purposes of God shall be accomplished, and the Great Jehovah shall say the work is done." (*Documentary History of the Church*, vol. 4, p. 540.) To this I testify as I bear my solemn witness to the work, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen. ○

### President Harold B. Lee

We invite the congregation to stand and join with the chorus in singing one verse of "We Thank Thee O God For A Prophet." Will you please stand.

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The first verse of the hymn, "We Thank Thee O God for a Prophet" was then sung by the congregation.

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### President Lee

Elder Eldred G. Smith, patriarch to the Church, will now speak to us. He will be followed by Elder Henry D. Taylor, Assistant to the Twelve.

## Elder Eldred G. Smith

*Patriarch to the Church*

● If you want to get the most out of this life—or as a result of this life—you need to know first the purpose for which this earth was created and why we are here.

### Purpose of earth life

The Lord revealed to Abraham, in vision, the council of the Gods contemplating the creation of this earth, and God said:

"We will go down, for there is space there, and we will take of these ma-

terials, and we will make an earth whereon these may dwell;

"And we will prove them herewith, to see if they will do all things whatsoever the Lord their God shall command them;

"And they who keep their first estate shall be added upon; and they who keep not their first estate shall not have glory in the same kingdom with those who keep their first estate; and they who keep their second estate shall have glory added upon their heads for ever and ever." (Abr. 3:24-26.)

This is a concise statement of the primary purpose for this earth.

To "prove them herewith": That means to test us, to see if we will do all things whatsoever the Lord our God shall command us.

### Law of obedience

No wonder the law of obedience is called the first law of heaven. In 1 Samuel 15:22, we read, obedience is better than sacrifice. All the blessings and benefits of sacrifice come as a result of obedience.

The first law taught to Adam and Eve was the law of obedience. After they were driven from the Garden of Eden, Adam built an altar and offered sacrifice. An angel of the Lord appeared to him and asked why he was offering sacrifice, and he answered, "I know not, save the Lord commanded me." (Moses 5:6.)

Then the angel taught him why, saying that "this thing is a similitude of the sacrifice of the Only Begotten of the Father, which is full of grace and truth." (Moses 5:7.)

### Reasons come later

Often commandments are given without our knowing why; then the reasons come later.

We are too often afraid of what is called blind obedience, but obedience to God is always right—blind or otherwise. To Abraham the Lord said:

"And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice." (Gen. 22:18.)

In Deuteronomy the Lord said:

"Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse;

"A blessing, if ye obey the commandments of the Lord your God, . . .

"And a curse, if ye will not obey the commandments. . . ." (Deut. 11:26-28.)

### Necessity of obedience

Paul declared to the Hebrews, speaking of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered." (Heb. 5:8.)

If it was necessary for Jesus, the Son

of God, to learn obedience, then how much more is it necessary for us?

The Prophet Joseph Smith has said: "There is a law, irrevocably decreed in heaven before the foundations of this world, upon which all blessings are predicated—

"And when we obtain any blessing from God, it is by obedience to that law upon which it is predicated." (D&C 130:20-21.)

### Opportunities to express obedience

We have several laws given to us today that are opportunities for us to express in outward evidences that we desire to be obedient to the laws of God. To name a few:

We have tithes and offerings and the Sabbath day. I don't know why we should need legislation to force us to keep the Sabbath day holy.

Also, we are commanded to attend sacrament meetings, and there are other outward evidences.

The Lord has also said:

"And all saints who remember to keep and do these sayings, walking in obedience to the commandments. . . ." (D&C 89:18.)

This means all the commandments, including tithes and offerings, Sabbath day, sacrament meetings, etc. Then he adds the promise of the blessings of health, then adds this promise: "And shall find wisdom and great treasures of knowledge, even hidden treasures." (D&C 89:19.)

### "Hidden treasures"

What is a more "hidden treasure" than a testimony of the divinity of the gospel of Jesus Christ? This comes as a result of obedience to the laws of God, not just because we have good health. I have heard many converts tell how they learned to live the Word of Wisdom to join the Church. Good health is not a requirement to join the Church. Obedience is. Each one has said if that's what the Lord wanted, he would do it.

The next step is natural: If you want to do what the Lord wants, then you must pray to him for help. It is not easy to change these habits; one needs

the help of the Lord. After praying for help, it becomes much easier.

Two things naturally follow: One loses the taste or desire for the tobacco, or coffee or other habits. Also, he gets a testimony of the divinity of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

### Example of obedience

A classic and typical example is found in the current September issue of *The Instructor*. Marion Proctor and his wife, as investigators, had just been shocked with the law of the tithe and the Word of Wisdom.

"... I hope you can appreciate what a shock this was, especially to a Scotsman. At first we said, 'No, we can't pay ten percent of our income.' The elders then promised us that we would be blessed by the Lord if we would do so. I thought this over for a couple of minutes, and told them we would pay tithing.

"My wife slept well that night, but I couldn't sleep. I tossed and turned, thinking about my telling the missionaries I couldn't stop smoking right there and then, but would have to wait until the next night. I got up and went into the living room and knelt in prayer, and I talked to my Father in heaven. I asked him to give me help, to give me strength, to take away my craving for cigarettes, so that I could be baptized and enter His kingdom. I had tried to give up smoking on several previous occasions—even to the point of sending away for a smoker's cure—but had not been successful. As I knelt in prayer that night, however, I felt with all my heart that my Father in heaven would help me. I heard a voice say to me, 'Do not wait until tomorrow, but give up the smoking habit now. I will help you in every way, and you will be successful in giving up tobacco.' I felt joy and peace in my heart as I arose from my knees.

"The next morning before I went to work, I looked at my tobacco and told myself I would leave it there and not smoke. When I came home I threw it in the fire. And since that time I have not had any desire to use tobacco." ("Halfway Around the World," *In-*

*structor*, September 1970, pp. 331-32.)

Then his wife tells a similar story of her experiences. I have heard hundreds of similar stories.

### Obedience brings blessings

I'll never forget the two elderly sisters from down in the southern states—both widows. The older sister told me that when the missionaries told them of the Word of Wisdom, they gave it some serious thought. She asked some of her friends what they thought about her quitting. She had used tobacco all her life. They told her it was foolish at her age—in the mid-80s. She then asked her doctor. He warned her that she couldn't stand the shock—it might even be the end of her.

Then she said she started to reason: "I am over 80—I don't know how much longer I can live anyway. I need to prepare to meet my Maker. If I try, and I die in the attempt, I can say to my Maker, 'I was trying to do what I thought you wanted me to do.'"

Any way she looked at it she was doing what she thought "He" would want her to do, literally putting her life in the balance.

She quit and waited for something to happen—which didn't. Instead of its hurting her, she noticed that she was feeling better all the time.

She told her sister what had happened to her, and her sister said, "If you can do it, I can. You wait for me and we'll both join this church."

A year later they came to my office and told me their story. Each had been to the temple and been sealed to her husband.

Though they were in their upper 80s, they had not only gained the blessings of health promised, but had gained the blessings of eternal sealings for ever and ever.

Do you think the blessings for living the Word of Wisdom are just health blessings? If you keep the Word of Wisdom you will be obedient to all the laws, including tithing, keeping the Sabbath day holy, and loving your fellowmen. The Savior has said: "You shall have glory added upon your head for ever and ever."

### The great commandments

When Jesus was asked by the lawyer, "Master, which is the great commandment in the law?"

"Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

"This is the first and great commandment.

"And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

"On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." (Matt. 22:36-40.)

What a different world this would be, if we all heeded this counsel.

### Counsel of a loving parent

I like this statement by President George Albert Smith. He said:

" . . . When I was a child I recognized, or thought I did, that the commandments of the Lord were His laws and regulations for my guidance. I thought I recognized in the disobedience to those laws that punishment would follow, and as a child, I presume I may have felt that the Lord had so arranged affairs and so ordained matters in this life that I must obey certain laws or swift retribution would follow.

But as I grew older I have learned the lesson from another viewpoint, and now to me the laws of the Lord, so called, the counsels contained in the Holy Scriptures, the revelations of the Lord to us in this day and age of the world, are but the sweet music of the voice of our Father in heaven, in His mercy to us. They are but the advice and counsel of a loving parent, who is more concerned in our welfare than earthly parents can be, and consequently that which at one time seemed to bear the harsh name of law to me is now the loving and tender advice of an all-wise heavenly Father." (*Conference Report*, October 1911, pp. 43-44.)

The Savior said, on another occasion, "If ye love me, keep my commandments." (John 14:15.) May we all, with all our efforts, be obedient to his commandments, I pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen. ○

### President Harold B. Lee

Elder Eldred G. Smith, patriarch to the Church, has just spoken to us.

Elder Henry D. Taylor, Assistant to the Twelve, will now address us. He will be followed by Elder Ezra Taft Benson of the Council of the Twelve.

## Elder Henry D. Taylor

*Assistant to the Council of the Twelve*

● We are privileged to live in a beautiful world. As we admire its majesties and beauties, with man as its final and crowning creation, we are filled with wonderment and awe. Surely these developments did not come about by mere chance, but must be the result of the handiwork of a divine and inspired architect and creator.

An illustrious biologist, after many years of study and meditation, concluded that "the probability of life originating from accident is comparable to the probability of the Unabridged Dictionary resulting from an explosion in a printing office." (Professor Edwin

Conklin, as quoted in *Reader's Digest*, April 1956.)

We are torn on every hand by man-made intellectual theories and doctrines. And among us we have "doubting Thomases," who lack faith and who do not recognize a Heavenly Being as the creator of all these wonders. They cry out, "There is no God," or "God is dead."

### God is not dead

Faithful Latter-day Saints heartily disagree with these extreme, false, untrue statements. We declare to the world that God is not dead, but rather