

### 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

that he is "the beginning and the end, the same which looked upon the wide expanse of eternity, and all the seraphic hosts of heaven, before the world was made." (D&C 38:1.) We bear solemn witness that God does live and that the first principle of the gospel is to have faith in the Lord, Jesus Christ, and in God, our Heavenly Father. We further declare to the world and bear witness that we are the spiritual offspring of heavenly parents.

Our true genesis, we declare, is that we did not come here by chance or by a whim of nature, but we came here by divine right, which we earned because of our faithfulness in a previous estate. Our eternal spirits are clothed in mortal bodies made in the image of our Father. We do not remember what happened in that former estate, as a veil has been drawn that obscures our memory. We don't have all the answers here.

### Acceptance on faith

The Lord has made it plain that we must be prepared to grope and see as "through a glass darkly," but we have been given the assurance that one bright day we shall see clearly and our vision will be undimmed.

In the meantime we must be content to accept many things on faith. Some have referred to this as blind faith or blind obedience. But I have never been persuaded that faith or obedience was blind when the request to perform some duty or task came from one in whom I had complete confidence and trust. Rather than term it blind obedience, I prefer to call it trusting or implicit faith.

### Adam's faith

I like the beautiful lesson taught and the impressive example set by our first parent, Father Adam. He was commanded by the Lord to offer the firstlings of his flocks as a sacrifice. He did not know the reason for the request, but without hesitation he was obedient to the commandment: "And after many days an angel of the Lord appeared unto Adam, saying: Why dost thou

offer sacrifices unto the Lord?" Adam responded with this magnificent, trusting reply: "I know not, save the Lord commanded me." (Moses 5:5-6.) To Adam it was not a matter of blind obedience, but rather it displayed his complete and unwavering confidence and faith in the word and instruction from the Lord.

During our lifetime there will undoubtedly come times when we may be asked by our Church leaders to carry out an assignment or perform some duty. We may not be aware of the reason for the request at the time nor after. But I am confident that if we have faith in our leaders and render obedience to them, the Lord will bless and reward us for our faithfulness.

### Faith of Henry A. Dixon

The Lord has endowed some individuals with a gift and capacity for possessing and exercising great powers of faith. Such a man was Henry A. Dixon. Although married and with a family of many children, when called by the First Presidency to fill a mission to Great Britain, he readily accepted the call without hesitation. With three missionary traveling companions, he embarked from St. John Island at Newfoundland on the steamship *Arizona*.

En route a furious storm arose. As the missionaries were preparing to have their evening prayers prior to retiring, they felt a shocking jolt that caused the entire ship to quiver. As they rushed to the deck they discovered that the ship, traveling at full speed, had rammed a gigantic iceberg. A huge, gaping hole had been torn in the prow of the vessel, which extended even below the water line. The captain advised that only in a calm sea could he and the crew bring the ship to the nearest port, which was some 250 miles away.

The wind and the storm continued unabated. Many hours later and unable to sleep, Elder Dixon arose, dressed, and walked to the deck. Standing there alone in the dark, with deep humility and great faith, by the power of the Holy Priesthood, he rebuked the

waves and commanded them to be still.

Thirty-six hours later the ship was able to return and dock at Port St. John. In accordance with Elder Dixon's promise, not a single life had been lost.

When the ship's owner, a Mr. Guion, learned of the accident, and knowing that Mormon missionaries were aboard, he was quoted as saying: "There is nothing to worry about. My line has transported Mormon missionaries for forty years and has never lost a boat with Mormon missionaries aboard!"

Not only was faith a powerful force in this instance, but it is also a strong and motivating factor in the lives of numerous individuals, bringing to them comfort and peace of mind.

### Faith of a little child

During the winter of 1834-1835 a theological school was established in Kirtland. It was the custom at the school to call upon a certain member to speak for the edification of the others. Heber C. Kimball, on one occasion, was invited to address them on the subject of faith. He began by relating an incident that had occurred but recently in his own family. "My wife, one day," commenced Brother Kimball, "when going out on a visit, gave our daughter Helen Mar charge not to touch the dishes," as they were very scarce, expensive, and hard to replace. She advised her that if she broke any during her absence, she would punish her when she returned. "While my wife was absent," continued Brother Kimball, "my daughter broke a number of the dishes by letting the table leaf fall. . . ."

The little girl was greatly frightened and "went out under an apple tree and prayed that her mother's heart might be softened, that when she returned she would not spank her. Her mother was very punctual," said Brother Kimball, "when she made a promise to her children, to fulfill it,

and when she returned, she undertook, as a duty, to carry this promise into effect. She retired with [the little girl] into her room, but found herself powerless to chastise her; her heart was so softened that it was impossible for her to raise her hand against the child. Afterwards, Helen told her mother she had prayed to the Lord that she might not whip her."

Brother Heber paused in his simple narrative. Tears glistened in the eyes of his listeners; the Prophet Joseph, who was a warm and tender-hearted man, was also weeping. He told the brethren that that was the kind of faith they needed: "the faith of a little child, going in humility to its Parents, and asking for the desire of its heart." He complimented Brother Kimball and said "the anecdote was well-timed." (Orson F. Whitney, *Life of Heber C. Kimball* [Bookcraft, 1945], pp. 69-70.)

### Faith to follow leadership

At the general conference held last April, at a solemn assembly here in the Tabernacle, the names of a new First Presidency were presented and sustained. These brethren, whom the Lord has chosen and designated to be the three presiding high priests, did not seek the high and holy callings that came to them; but throughout their lives they lived and worked so that when the positions sought them, they were prepared to humbly accept those callings. I have faith in them and earnestly pray that they may be blessed, magnified, and sustained, and that we as members of the Church may have the faith and good judgment to follow their inspired leadership, as we go forward in this, the Lord's work; for this I pray, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, our Savior. Amen. ○

### President Harold B. Lee

Elder Ezra Taft Benson of the Council of Twelve will be our concluding speaker.