

a revelation given to him on June 22, 1834, apply to us today:

"But behold, they have not learned to be obedient to the things which I required at their hands. . . .

"And my people must needs be chastened until they learn obedience, if it must needs be, by the things which they suffer." (D&C 105:3, 6; italics added.)

We do not suggest blind obedience, but obedience by *faith in those things which may not be fully understood by man's limited comprehension, but which in the infinite wisdom of God are for man's benefit and blessing.* Adam and Eve learned this lesson shortly after leaving the Garden of Eden. We read:

"And he [the Lord] gave unto them commandments, that they should worship the Lord their God, and should offer the firstlings of their flocks, for an offering unto the Lord. And Adam [having faith in God] was obedient unto the commandments of the Lord.

"And after many days an angel of the Lord appeared unto Adam, saying:

Why dost thou offer sacrifices unto the Lord? And Adam said unto him: I know not, save the Lord commanded me." (Moses 5:5-6.)

May that be sufficient reason for us to keep the commandments. May we increase in faith until we can say, with Adam, "We keep the commandments because the Lord has given them."

Let us always remember, and never forget, that we hold the priesthood of God. We are his spirit children; we have the true and everlasting gospel and a prophet of God—even President Spencer W. Kimball—to guide us in these latter days. *Listen to him and hearken to his words and follow him.* I promise you that as we do this we will be blessed. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Spencer W. Kimball

President N. Eldon Tanner, First Counselor in the First Presidency, has just addressed us.

President Spencer W. Kimball

You have now heard from both of my wonderful counselors. They are great men and carry much of the load of this great Church.

Concern about inactive members

Brethren, I should like to say a few words to you tonight before we close. We are deeply concerned over the need to reduce the inflow from the youth of the Church into the ranks of inactive adults and also to bring substantial numbers out of the adult rank into activity. With this in mind, we have the following to suggest:

1. A greater effort in fellowshiping converts to the Church. It is im-

perative that those who are baptized as converts immediately be assigned home teachers who will fellowship them in a very personal and concerned manner. These home teachers, working with their priesthood officers, should see that each mature convert is given some challenging activity as well as an opportunity and encouragement to increase his knowledge of the gospel. He should be assisted in establishing social relationships with the members of the Church so that he will not feel alone as he begins his life as an active Latter-day Saint.

2. Added emphasis on the approved Aaronic Priesthood Young Men and Young Women programs.

These have been designed to strengthen the teaching process of our youth and to afford them rewarding and challenging opportunities for the kinds of activities which will give expression to their many and varied talents. In saving our youth, we save generations.

3. Infusing ward and stake Relief Society officers with an added sense of responsibility to enroll the women of the Church and bring them into full activity. This will entail an accommodation in scheduling meetings so that it will be possible for more of our women to attend and participate in the program of this great organization. We ask that bishops consult with their Relief Society presidents concerning this.

4. Impressing our home teachers to take upon themselves greater responsibility for members of the Church who move from one area to another. Through contacts with relatives and neighbors, many of those who move can be identified and steps taken to see that they are welcomed immediately upon arrival in the area of their new residency.

5. Working more actively with those whom we classify as *prospective elders*. Under our present program, our elders quorums assume responsibility for these men. It should be remembered, however, that provision is made in the program under which high priests and even seventies may be called to assist with these men. The elders quorum, through the priesthood executive committee, may ask that high priests serve as home teachers to some of these men, particularly to those who would find greater congeniality with high priest home teachers. Likewise, in those families where there are nonmembers of the Church, the seventies might be asked to assist, with the thought that they will go to the homes not only as home teachers, but also as missionaries to the nonmembers of the Church who may reside there. I am satisfied, brethren, that we can do

much more than we are now doing to bring many of these men back into full activity. In so doing, we shall bless their lives and the lives of their families, and in a very substantial manner strengthen the work of the Lord.

6. For years we have urged that seminars be held to which prospective elders and their wives, as well as inactive elders, may be invited to meet together. There, under the tutelage of an inspired and effective teacher, they can increase their knowledge of the gospel with the objective that they may prepare themselves to go to the house of the Lord. We have approved a course of study for such seminars. This has been prepared under the direction of the Priesthood Executive Committee, and we are hopeful that bishops and stake presidents will utilize it in this important undertaking.

Brethren, we cannot relax while many of our brothers and sisters and many of our young men and women are failing to participate in the programs of the Church. I ask that you again reflect on your responsibilities in this matter and take steps to accelerate this work of redemption.

We must forgive

I knew a young mother who lost her husband by death. The family had been in poor circumstances and the insurance policy was only \$2,000, but it was like a gift from heaven. The company promptly delivered the check for that amount as soon as proof of death was furnished. The young widow concluded she should save this for emergencies, and accordingly deposited it in the bank. Others knew of her savings, and one kinsman convinced her that she should lend the \$2,000 to him at a high rate of interest.

Years passed, and she had received neither principal nor interest. She noticed that the borrower avoided her and made evasive promises when she asked him about the money. Now she

needed the money and it could not be had.

"How I hate him!" she told me, and her voice breathed venom and bitterness and her dark eyes flashed. To think that an able-bodied man would defraud a young widow with a family to support! "How I loathe him!" she repeated over and over. Then I told her my Bishop Kempton story, where a man forgave the murderer of his father. She listened intently. I saw she was impressed. At the conclusion there were tears in her eyes, and she whispered: "Thank you. Thank you sincerely. Surely I, too, must forgive my enemy. I will now cleanse my heart of its bitterness. I do not expect ever to receive the money, but I leave my offender in the hands of the Lord."

Weeks later, she saw me again and confessed that those intervening weeks had been the happiest of her life. A new peace had overshadowed her and she was able to pray for the offender and forgive him, even though she never received back a single dollar. (See Spencer W. Kimball, *The Miracle of Forgiveness*, Bookcraft, 1969, pp. 293-94.)

Two contrasting examples

I saw another woman once whose little girl had been violated. "I will never forgive the culprit so long as I live," she repeated every time it came into her mind. Vicious and ugly was the act. Anyone would be shocked and disturbed at such a crime, but to be unwilling to forgive is not Christlike. The foul deed was done and could not be undone. The culprit had been disciplined. In her bitterness the woman shriveled and shrank into a miserable person. (See *The Miracle of Forgiveness*, p. 294.)

Contrast this woman with the Latter-day Saint girl who climbed the heights of self-control as she forgave the man who disfigured her lovely face. Let the United Press newsmen, Neal

Corbett, tell the story as it appeared in the pages of the San Francisco newspapers.

"I would think he must be suffering, anybody who's like that, we ought to feel sorry for him," said April Aaron of the man who had sent her to a hospital for three weeks, following a brutal . . . knife attack. April Aaron is a devout Mormon, 22 years of age. . . . She is a secretary who is as pretty as her name, but her face has just one blemish—the right eye is missing . . . April lost it to the 'wildly slashing knife of a purse snatcher,' near San Francisco's Golden Gate Park while en route to an MIA dance. . . . She also suffered deep slashes on her left arm and right leg during a struggle with her assailant, after she tripped and fell in her efforts to elude him just one block from the Mormon chapel. . . .

"I ran for a block and a half before he caught me. You can't run very fast on high heels," April said with a smile. Slashes on her leg were so severe [that] doctors feared for a time it would need amputation. The sharp edge of the weapon could damage neither April's vivaciousness, nor her compassion. ' . . . I wish that somebody could do something for him, to help him. He should have some treatment. Who knows what leads a person to do a thing like this? If they don't find him, he's likely to do it again.'

" . . . April Aaron has won the hearts of the people in the San Francisco Bay area with her courage and good spirit in face of tragedy. Her room at St. Francis hospital was banked with flowers throughout her stay and attendants said they couldn't recall when anyone received more cards and expressions of good wishes." (Cited in *The Miracle of Forgiveness*, p. 294.)

Marvin W. Merrill

The following is taken from a Los Angeles newspaper account attesting to the strength of people who have risen

Saturday, October 1

First Day

above the sordid revenge and ugly bitterness which so often prevail in such circumstances:

"Three men were apprehended for the kidnap-murder of Marvin W. Merrill of Los Angeles. I knew Marvin personally—this young man grew up in my community—from his childhood. . . . Angelo B. Rollins, a black postal employee, was selected by the mail-carriers at Wagner Station to represent them by reading a eulogy at the funeral services. Elder Merrill had served the postal department for more than 20 years. Scattered throughout the chapel and overflow room were scores of postmen who came directly from their postal routes, still in their uniforms. . . . Rollins said: 'No man can condone the actions of the perpetrators who ended his life. These vicious and vile acts that make us bow our heads in shame, point an accusing finger at innocent millions as a nation of offenders. In my sinful weakness, I would have rent them limb from limb,' said this man, 'but the still small voice of the Master said, 'Vengeance is Mine.' . . . This Mormon Elder, Marvin Merrill, firm in the strength of his faith, and steeped in the teachings of Christ, would probably have said of them, as did our Savior at Calvary, 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.'" (Cited in *The Miracle of Forgiveness*, p. 295.)

Do not judge others

Once I heard a neighbor say, "I hate those people across the border. They are dirty men. They have done so much evil in the world." This man had not stopped to think that among that people were numerous good men, honest and upright. They were not responsible for what the leaders of the country had done. All men were not as vicious or cruel. They should not be judged by the evil deeds of their fellow nationals. Most men were grieved by the kinds of evil committed.

Another neighbor was bitter

against the people across his boundary. He often repeated, "I hate the men over there. They have been cruel, vicious, and unrelenting."

I said to this neighbor, "I personally love that people. Only a limited number were cruel and vicious. There are mighty good people among them, some of them lovable sons of God."

Wartime experience

I knew of two soldiers on a fierce battlefield, when during a temporary armistice in the war, one young man crossed the battle line and asked his antagonist, "Is there a Mormon elder in your lines?"

The other answered, "Yes, I am a Mormon."

He then asked, "Would you come behind our trench lines and help me administer to and bless a wounded buddy?" Across the "no-man's land" they walked together, these two men, former enemies. One anointed and the other sealed the anointing, and the wounded chap was blessed. A great peace entered their souls. The other man returned to his front lines to his duty, and he also had a new feeling of peace.

Of course, we do not hold all men responsible for what individuals do. We learn to forgive.

"Forgive one another"

I had another experience in a very important area in the Church. Unfortunately, two Church leaders had become embroiled in a feud and neither would yield.

I had held a stake conference all day and had gone without my supper and had traveled over a range of mountains to meet these unhappy people.

Hour after hour we served, and begged, and endeavored to convince

them to change their minds and get them together, all to no avail.

Eight, nine, ten, eleven, twelve o'clock, one, and two o'clock and the night was going fast, and I was very, very weary. I flipped open my Doctrine and Covenants again. Automatically it turned to page 105 and I read it to them. They almost gasped for wonder, and this is what we read:

"Nevertheless, he has sinned; but verily I say unto you, I, the Lord, forgive sins unto those who confess their sins before me and ask forgiveness, who have not sinned unto death.

"My disciples, in days of old, sought occasion against one another and forgave not one another in their hearts; and for this evil they were afflicted and sorely chastened.

"Wherefore, I say unto you, that ye ought to forgive one another; for he that forgiveth not his brother his trespasses standeth condemned before the Lord; for there remaineth in him the greater sin.

"I, the Lord, will forgive whom I will forgive, but of you it is required to forgive all men.

"And ye ought to say in your hearts—let God judge between me and thee, and reward thee according to thy deeds.

"And him that repenteth not of his sins, and confesseth them not, ye shall bring before the church, and do with him as the scripture saith unto you, either by commandment or by revelation." (D&C 64:7-12.)

Heavenly Father forgives as we forgive

I could feel the two antagonists were yielding, and I read the Lord's Prayer, wherein He said,

"But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do. . . .

"For your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him.

"After this manner . . . pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.

"Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.

"Give us this day our daily bread.

"And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

"And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen." (Matt. 6:7-13.)

As though he needed to refresh their minds, the Lord returned to the theme:

"For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you:

"But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." (Matt. 6:14-15.)

Hard to do? Of course. The Lord never promised an easy road, nor a simple gospel, nor low standards, nor a low norm. The price is high, but the goods attained are worth all they cost. The Lord himself turned the other cheek; he suffered himself to be buffeted and beaten without remonstrance; he suffered every indignity and yet spoke no word of condemnation. And his question to all of us is: "Therefore, what manner of men ought ye to be?" And his answer to us is: "Even as I am." (3 Ne. 27:27.)

The forgiving spirit

In his *The Prince of Peace*, William Jennings Bryan wrote:

"The most difficult of all the virtues to cultivate is the forgiving spirit. Revenge seems to be natural with man; it is human to want to get even with an enemy. It has even been popular to boast of vindictiveness; it was once inscribed on a man's monument that he had repaid both friends and enemies more than he had received. This was not the spirit of Christ." (Independence,

Saturday, October 1

First Day

Zion's Printing and Publishing Company, 1925, p. 35.)

If we have been wronged or injured, forgiveness means to blot it completely from our minds. To forgive and forget is an ageless counsel. "To be wronged or robbed," said the Chinese philosopher Confucius, "is nothing unless you continue to remember it."

The injuries inflicted by neighbors, by relatives, or by spouses are generally of a minor nature, at least at first. We must forgive them. Since the Lord is so merciful, must not we be? "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy" (3 Ne. 12:7) is another version of the Golden Rule. "All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men," said the Lord, "but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men." (Matt. 12:31.) If the Lord is so gracious and kind, we must be also.

"When such people as the widow, Bishop Kempton, April Aaron and others grievously wronged can forgive; when men like Stephen and Paul can forgive vicious attacks against themselves and set the example of forgiveness; then all men should be able to forgive in their reach for perfection.

"Across the barren deserts of hate and greed and grudge is the beautiful valley of paradise. We read in the papers and hear on TV constantly that the world 'is in an awful mess.' Not true! The world is still most beautiful. It is man who is off center. The sun still illumines the day and gives light and life to all things; the moon still brightens the night; oceans still feed the world and provide transportation; rivers still drain the land, and provide irrigation water to nourish crops. Even the ravages of time have not sloughed off the majesty of the mountains. Flowers still bloom and birds still sing, and children still laugh and play. What is wrong with the world is man-made.

"It can be done. Man can conquer self. Man can overcome. Man can for-

give all who have trespassed against him and go on to receive *peace* in this life and eternal life in the world to come." (*The Miracle of Forgiveness*, p. 300.)

A world Church

Now we come to a realization that the kingdom of God and the church of Jesus Christ constitute a world church. It is fast coming to have world dominion. We, its members, must learn to contain ourselves and love all mankind, all our brothers and sisters of every nation and clime. Certainly we shall be wholly without enmity or grudge or ill feeling. We must forgive to be forgiven. Let God be the righteous judge.

We shall love all our neighbors as ourselves and God will bless all of us. Jesus Christ, also our Lord and Savior, is the Lord of this world. God bless us that we may follow closely his dictates, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

President Spencer W. Kimball

Sessions of the conference tomorrow will be broadcast to a large audience in many parts of the United States and Canada over the many television and radio stations cooperating to provide extensive coverage of this conference.

Over 117 radio stations will broadcast conference tomorrow morning (Sunday) in major cities of Mexico and Central America, and by satellite transmission in Australia, the Philippines and countries of South America.

The Nationwide CBS Radio Tabernacle Choir Broadcast will be from 9:30 to 10:00 Sunday morning. Those desiring to attend must be in their seats before 9:15 A.M.

In leaving this great Priesthood Meeting tonight, we again remind you to obey traffic rules, to use caution, and always to be courteous in driving.