

loins of Judah shall write; and that which shall be written by the fruit of thy loins, and also that which shall be written by the fruit of the loins of Judah, shall grow together, unto the confounding of false doctrines and laying down of contentions, and establishing peace among the fruit of thy loins, and bringing them to the knowledge of their fathers in the latter days, and also to the knowledge of my covenants, saith the Lord" (2 Nephi 3:12).

Testaments of the Lord Jesus Christ

One footnote may seem a flimsy thread to tie the two together, but five of the ten footnotes lead us to headings in the Topical Guide where 611 other references broaden our knowledge of this one subject and speak as voices from the dust.

Threads are wound into cords that bind together in our hands the sticks of Judah and of Ephraim—testaments of the Lord Jesus Christ.

I say again, these references constitute the most comprehensive compilation of scripture information on the mission and teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ that has ever been

assembled in the history of the world.

Do not mistake our reverent hesitation to speak glibly or too frequently of Him to mean that we do not know Him.

Our brethren of Judah knew Him in ancient times, our brethren of Ephraim also. He is no stranger to His Saints, to His prophets and Apostles now.

He lives. He is our Savior, our Redeemer, our Lord. Of Him I bear an apostolic witness, in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

The choir sang "Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring" without announcement.

President Hinckley

We have just listened to Elder Boyd K. Packer, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, followed by the Tabernacle Choir singing "Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring."

We shall now hear from Elder Derek A. Cuthbert, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

Elder Derek A. Cuthbert

Signs of maturity

"In Gibeon the Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream by night: and God said, Ask what I shall give thee" (1 Kings 3:5). Before King Solomon replied, he reflected on what was his greatest need. Was it power and influence? Was it wealth and riches? Was it fame and glory?

Let us ponder carefully Solomon's answer:

"And now, O Lord my God, thou hast made thy servant king instead of David my father: and I am but a little child: I know not how to go out or come in. . . .

"Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad." (1 Kings 3:7, 9.)

"And God gave Solomon wisdom and understanding exceeding much, and largeness of heart, even as the sand that is on the sea shore" (1 Kings 4:29).

Wisdom, understanding, largeness of heart are signs of maturity. When Solomon acquired these qualities, he was no longer "but a little child."

However, the process of maturing is not as simple as

acquiring wisdom. Did not the Savior say: "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 18:3). To mature, then, is to retain or regain some childlike qualities we need to have and to develop other qualities which children do not have. I would like to suggest to you ten aspects of maturity, five of which are childlike and five of which are developed later.

Childlike qualities

First, *innocence*. Can anyone deny the innocence of a newborn babe or a very small child? The Savior taught, "Suffer little children . . . to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 19:14). In latter-day revelation the Lord has enlightened us further by proclaiming: "Every spirit of man was innocent in the beginning; and God having redeemed man from the fall, men became again, in their infant state, innocent before God" (D&C 93:38). Yes, the challenge to each one of us in these days of deceit and discord is to be innocent, to be guileless.

Second, *humility*. "Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 18:4). How wonderful to hear the humble prayer or testimony of a child. I think of the young boy I heard relate the Joseph Smith story in great detail and bear his testimony in the Xhosa language in southern Africa as we met in a one-room African home in Cimizile.

We live in a world where men have largely turned away from righteousness and are self-seeking, gratifying their pride and vain ambition. We have the challenge to humble ourselves before God and become, in King Benjamin's words, "as a child, submissive, meek, humble, patient, full of love, willing to submit to all

things which the Lord seeth fit to inflict upon [us], even as a child doth submit to his father" (Mosiah 3:19).

All over the world, people of different races and cultures are overcoming traditions to accept the truth and submit themselves humbly to baptism. How inspiring to see them overcome hardship and affliction. I remember interviewing a fine young Shona man, a Church member in Zimbabwe, to be the first missionary from his nation. Although permanently on crutches because of polio, Elder Peter Chaya submitted happily to the call to serve.

Third, *simplicity*. A child is uncomplicated and expresses himself without becoming devious. The Apostle Paul counseled the Saints at Corinth: "But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ" (2 Corinthians 11:3). I have always been impressed that, although Paul was a very learned man, after his conversion he declared: "For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified" (1 Corinthians 2:2). These thoughts came to mind when, on a recent visit to Ghana, I heard Dr. Emmanuel Kissi, a prominent surgeon and now the district president, teach the simple truths of the gospel in the district conference meetings.

Yes, we need to strive for the simplicity of a child, and raise our own children to have simple, unshakable testimonies of Jesus Christ. Then they will not fall prey to those temptations which would divert them from the strait and narrow way. As Elder Matthew Cowley used to say, "Life should be beautifully simple. And then it will be simply beautiful." ("Learn to Live," address delivered at Brigham Young University, 19 June 1953.)

Fourth, *faith*. It has always been

a source of happiness to my wife and me when one of our children has shown faith by asking for a blessing of health or of comfort and counsel. The occasions have been numerous, but the one that comes to mind is when one of our children was suffering from a bad earache and was very upset. I remember that after I had given her a blessing she settled down and went to sleep and experienced no further pain. It is a wonderful thing that when the Lord restored the fullness of the gospel, he made it possible for fathers to bless their families in so many ways.

Oh, for the faith of a child, to "dream the impossible dream" and "reach the unreachable star," as our beloved President Kimball has challenged us to do. His mighty faith has removed many mountains; his childlike faith has brought forth many miracles.

The fifth childlike quality is *love*, unquestioning love, freely given. What father can resist the little upturned face saying, "I love you, daddy"? What mother does not feel an inward glow on finding a little note on her pillow: "I love you, mummy"? It has been my privilege in many lands to hear the sweet voices of children echo the words of the Savior: "As I have loved you, . . . love one another" (John 13:34).

Jesus exemplified innocence, humility, simplicity, and faith. He showed his great love for us by taking upon himself our sins, by laying down his precious life, and by raising himself from the grave. "God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him" (1 John 4:16). Throughout the world, our missionaries are going two by two, preaching faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and repentance. There may be few who have retained all of the five qualities mentioned, but all can regain them through repentance and change.

Other qualities leading to maturity

Once we have made the necessary changes in our lives, we must add to these five basic qualities five more in order to achieve maturity in the Lord.

Sixth, then, we need to acquire *wisdom*, that which Solomon desired so that he could make righteous judgments. Many of us are not wise, for we are blinded by the material world around us. Wisdom comes from a realization of true values and priorities. It is a spiritual quality, for it is founded on discernment and an understanding heart. Great is the wisdom of the prophets, and all who heed them are blessed.

The Lord has counseled us to "seek not for riches but for wisdom" (D&C 6:7). In this general conference, pearls of wisdom have come from those who have spoken under the inspiration of the Spirit. We would all do well to study and apply the truths that have been declared.

Knowledge by itself can be dangerous, and he who seeks to acquire knowledge must also be helped to obtain wisdom. Wisdom is a sign of maturity. It is usually related to age and experience, but not necessarily so. When serving as a mission president in Scotland, I saw the Lord quicken the understanding of many young missionaries so that they developed beyond their years. Now, less than five years later, six have been called as bishops and two into stake presidencies in the British Isles, and all are giving fine leadership.

The seventh quality I shall refer to is *leadership*, not only leadership in the Church, but of every honorable kind. A child looks to parents for leadership, both by word and deed. The Lord, speaking to parents in Israel through Moses, declared: "And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart:

"And thou shalt teach them dili-

gently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up" (Deuteronomy 6:6-7).

Yes, above all, parents need the maturity to lead and teach their children in righteousness. The family is the basic unit of society and the foundation of a nation. It is sobering to realize that, as parents, our children have been placed in our care as a sacred trust by the Almighty God himself. Our sons, our daughters, are his spirit children whom he expects us to love and cherish, teach and lead.

How important that both parents and children read and study the word of God regularly. How important that we live these basic principles and fulfill our Heavenly Father's expectations for us.

Thus we come to the eighth aspect of maturity—namely *accountability*. A small child does not have accountability until the age of eight, for thus the Lord has decreed, and most national laws agree. However, it is not being accountable that brings maturity. It is realizing that we are accountable, acting accordingly, and being prepared to give an accounting to those in authority over us and eventually to the Lord himself.

During the Savior's ministry he taught this principle, even as to the words we speak: "But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment" (Matthew 12:36). The adversary is constantly trying to distract us and deter us from living righteously and being able to render a good accounting of our actions. We need to be consistently strong, never dropping our guard or compromising the principles given by the Lord.

Ninth, we will consider *dependability*. As children, we laugh one minute and cry the next. We

change friends quickly and change our view of the world according to circumstance and surroundings. As we mature, we become more dependable and stable. Paul the Apostle expressed the hope that "we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive" (Ephesians 4:14).

We need to warn and teach, protect and safeguard, so that our little ones are not led away either physically or spiritually. There are so many voices, so many doctrines which are not of the Lord. However, as we "press forward with a steadfastness in Christ, . . . and endure to the end" (2 Nephi 31:20), we shall achieve the maturity of dependability, consistency, and spiritual endurance. I am very grateful for our beloved President Kimball who exemplifies these qualities. He has been a significant help to me, and I am sure to many of us, in the quest for spiritual maturity.

This has been particularly so with regard to the tenth quality, that of *self-mastery*. The Nephite prophet Alma counseled, "See that ye bridle all your passions, that ye may be filled with love" (Alma 38:12). Jesus Christ, the Son of God, became our Savior and Redeemer because he overcame the world. When Satan tempted him, he did not succumb; when he was ridiculed and reviled, he did not compromise. When death faced him, he did not waver. His maturity was full.

May we, like him, be innocent and humble, simple, and full of faith and love. May we become wise and dependable, leading others by first mastering ourselves. May we become mature enough to give an acceptable accounting before the Lord when he comes. He is the living Christ. This is his living Church. He speaks through a living prophet, of which I

bear joyful testimony, in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

Thank you, Elder Cuthbert, for those inspiring words. The Choir and congregation will now join in singing "Shall the Youth of Zion Falter?"

The Choir and congregation sang "Shall the Youth of Zion Falter?"

President Hinckley

To those of the television and radio audience who have just joined

us, we are convened in the historic Tabernacle on Temple Square in Salt Lake City, Utah, in this fourth session of the 152nd Semiannual General Conference of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

The Tabernacle Choir will now sing "God of Our Fathers, Whose Almighty Hand."

The Choir sang "God of Our Fathers, Whose Almighty Hand."

President Hinckley

We shall now be pleased to hear from Elder Howard W. Hunter, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles.

Elder Howard W. Hunter

Commitment to God

Reading and studying the scriptures make us conscious of the many conditional promises made by the Lord to encourage obedience and righteous living. Israelite history is filled with examples of covenants, which constitute one of the central themes of the Old Testament—the promises of God made in exchange for the commitments of the prophets and the people.

The Lord made a covenant with Noah, and the rainbow became the token of that eternal covenant with all mankind. (See Genesis 9:13.) The covenant made with Abraham and his seed was sealed by the ceremony of circumcision as a sacrament. (See Genesis 17:10-11.) And the token or sign of the great covenant with all Israel made at Sinai was the Sabbath. (See Exodus 31:12-17.)

Relationship between blessings and obedience

Several experiences in the life of

Joshua are instructive to us today regarding the importance placed by the Lord on keeping commitments and on being committed to following the commandments and direction he has given.

Joshua is remembered as the one who, on the death of Moses, took command and completed the task of giving leadership to the tribes of Israel. Perhaps to comfort Joshua, who now had the responsibility for the children of Israel, who didn't yet have a homeland, and perhaps to comfort that large body of people who had just lost their leader of more than forty years, the Lord spoke to Joshua and said:

"As I was with Moses, so I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.

"Be strong and of a good courage: for unto this people shalt thou divide for an inheritance the land, which I swear unto their fathers to give them." (Joshua 1:5-6.)

The Lord then continues to speak to Joshua by way of commandment: