

The Rewards for Obedience

JACK H. GOASLIND, JR.

I am grateful for the opportunity of visiting with you in this fireside. I also sense very deeply my responsibility as I fill this assignment. As one of Christ's agents, I have the obligation of doing his will on this and all occasions. The Lord reasoned with those so ordained concerning their callings: "Wherefore, I the Lord ask you this question—unto what were ye ordained?" And he answered, "To preach my gospel by the Spirit, even the Comforter which was sent forth to teach the truth" (D&C 50:13–14). With all my heart and all the energies of my soul, I desire an interest in your faith and prayers so that we can experience the blessing promised as a result of such preaching. That blessing, as I continue in section 50 of the Doctrine and Covenants, says, "Wherefore, he that preacheth and he that receiveth, understand one another, and both are edified and rejoice together" (D&C 50:22). I pray that we will communicate through the power of the Spirit so that we might all be edified.

Blessing and Law

I would like to build my remarks around an important passage from the Doctrine and Covenants. The Lord 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]

The laws that govern our progression were established, irrevocably, before the foundation of the world by an all-wise and all-powerful Father, whose work and glory it is to "bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man" (Moses 1:39). These laws were based on God's infinite knowledge about what is necessary for his children to progress.

The Prophet Joseph Smith explained why God established laws and gave insight into God's motives and purposes, and I quote from the teachings of the Prophet Joseph when he said:

Jack H. Goaslind, Jr., was a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints when this fireside address was given at Brigham Young University on 26 September 1982.

God himself, finding he was in the midst of spirits and glory, because he was more intelligent, saw proper to institute laws whereby the rest could have a privilege to advance like himself. . . . He has power to institute laws to instruct the weaker intelligences, that they may be exalted with himself, so that they might have one glory upon another, and all that knowledge, power, glory, and intelligence, which is requisite in order to save them in the world of spirits. [Teachings, p. 354]

In the premortal existence, one of the noble and great spirits, who “was like unto God,” described the purpose of our mortal existence in these words:

We will go down, for there is space there, and we will take of these materials, and we will make an earth whereon these may dwell;

And we will prove them here with, 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. [Abraham 3:24–26]

Christ’s Obedience

Satan came out in open rebellion against the Father’s plan and sought to destroy the agency with which God had blessed man. He said, “Behold, here am I, send me, I will be thy son, and I will redeem all mankind, that one soul shall not be lost, and surely I will do it; wherefore give me thine honor” (Moses 4:1). Satan’s disobedience is archetypal?—the perfect bad example. It contrasts with Christ’s perfect obedience and submission to the will of the Father. As you know, God cast Lucifer down, and he became the devil, the father of lies. God chose Christ to come into the world to carry out his plan.

The nature of God’s love is shown in his purpose for sending Christ into the world:

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. [John 3:16–17]

Christ’s love is one with his Father’s, for as Nephi said, “He doeth not anything save it be for the benefit of the world; for he loveth the world, even that he layeth down his own life that he may draw all men unto him” (2 Nephi 26:24). Jesus Christ, of course, has perfectly executed the Father’s plan, making it possible, through his atonement, for all people to experience peace in this life and eternal life in the world to come.

The angel who heralded the Savior’s birth into the world said, “Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people” (Luke 2:10). This birth announcement was most appropriate for One who is the source of all that brings joy, contentment, and peace in this life, with the promise of eternal happiness for the faithful.

That We Might Have Joy

Nephi wrote that “men are, that they might have joy” (2 Nephi 2:25). The Prophet Joseph Smith confirmed this, stating:

Happiness is the object and design of our existence; and will be the end thereof, if we pursue the path that leads to it; and this path is virtue, uprightness, faithfulness, holiness, and keeping all the commandments of God. [Teachings, pp. 255–56]

Personal happiness is a legitimate goal; it should be a central purpose of our lives. It is not a selfish goal as long as we pursue it according to the plan of happiness instituted

by the Father and revealed to us by the Son. The Prophet Joseph Smith continued this theme of happiness by teaching that *in obedience there is joy and peace unspotted, unalloyed; and as God has designed our happiness—and the happiness of all His creatures, He never has—He never will institute an ordinance or give a commandment to His people that is not calculated in its nature to promote that happiness which He has designed, and which will not end in the greatest amount of good and glory to those who become the recipients of his laws and ordinances.* [Teachings, pp. 256–57]

If we are experiencing true joy, it is evidence that our course of action is approved of our Father; and as joy and peace are fruits of the Spirit (see Galatians 5:22), these feelings can be sure guides in helping us learn to discern the Spirit.

If happiness is important to us, we should not be surprised to find it as a thread of hope throughout Christ's ministry. The night before his crucifixion, for example, he said:

If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love.

These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full. [John 15:10–11]

And in his great intercessory prayer, he said, "And these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves" (John 17:13).

The pathway to happiness, both in this life and in the next, is encompassed in the gospel of Jesus Christ. This plan of happiness is essential for our well-being, both spiritual and temporal. As the Author of our salvation stated, "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them" (John 13:17).

Now, I hope I have made it clear that obedience to the gospel of Jesus Christ and strict

adherence to his teachings are essential for the simple reason that we cannot progress or be happy without such obedience. We are familiar with the operations of law in our everyday lives, and the laws governing our progression and happiness are just as inexorable.

Agents unto Ourselves

When we speak of obedience to law, we must also speak of companion principle—free agency. Without free agency our mortal probation would not be a test; the Lord could not prove us to see if we would do all things that he has commanded. Therefore, we read of Adam and his children: "And it is given unto them to know good from evil; wherefore they are agents unto themselves" (Moses 6:56). We are free to choose between good and evil, to act for ourselves. We know also that we will be enticed by both good and evil. If we choose good, we will abide "in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free." If we choose evil, we will be entangled in the "yoke of bondage" (Galatians 5:1). God wants us to be free and independent, to act for ourselves and not to be acted upon (see 2 Nephi 2:26). He wants us to "be anxiously engaged in a good cause, and do many things of [our] own free will, and bring to pass much righteousness; for the power is in [us]" (D&C 58:27–28).

Now, the key to our freedom lies in an apparent paradox: we must give up our freedom voluntarily in order to know the freedom that only Christ can give.

The Savior is our perfect prototype and exemplar in this type of celestial obedience. During his mortal ministry, the Lord said, "I can of mine own self do nothing; as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me" (John 5:30). His ultimate demonstration of obedience, incomprehensible to us, was his atonement. Abinadi said of him 150 years before his birth, "Yea,

even so he shall be led, crucified, and slain, the flesh becoming subject even unto death, the will of the Son being swallowed up in the will of the Father” (Mosiah 15:7).

Our sacrifices can never compare to the Savior’s; but our willing obedience, our submission to the will of the Father, should be like unto his. We read in Omni (1:26) that we are to “come unto him, and offer [our] whole souls as an offering unto him.” Elder B. H. Roberts taught that “to submit his mind and his will to God [is] man’s highest act of worship—self-surrender.” (Quoted by Truman G. Madsen, *Defender of the Faith: The B. H. Roberts Story* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1980], p. 378.)

Only Two Choices

This is a difficult doctrine to accept and live. But it becomes easier if we understand and have faith that we really have only two choices: obey the Father or serve the devil. Listen carefully to Lehi’s teachings concerning the choices we can make:

I would that ye should look to the great Mediator, and hearken unto his great commandments; and be faithful unto his words, and choose eternal life, according to the will of his Holy Spirit.

This is option number one, to choose eternal life by following the will of the Holy Spirit. Now the second option is to

Choose eternal death, according to the will of the flesh and the evil which is therein, which giveth the spirit of the devil power to captivate, to bring you down to hell, that he may reign over you in his own kingdom. [2 Nephi 2:28–29]

I have never known anyone who has deliberately chosen to obey the devil. There may be such people, but I have never known one. I have observed, however, many people who choose to follow the “will of the flesh,” to pursue their own self-interests to the exclusion of

God’s will. In “doing their own thing” they assert a false independence, and independence from God rather than freedom in God. And the result will inevitably be captivity, for pursuing our own will leaves us subject to the devil.

Remember the Nephites, who shortly before Christ’s visit were puffed up in pride, seeking for power and riches. We read that they were “carried about by the temptations of the devil whithersoever he desired to carry them, and to do whatsoever iniquity he desire they should” (3 Nephi 6:17).

By contrast, Christ taught, “If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (John 8:31–32). There may be some truth in C. S. Lewis’s observation that “There are only two kinds of people in the end: those who say to God, ‘Thy will be done,’ and those to whom God says, in the end, ‘Thy will be done’ ” (“The Great Divorce,” *The Best of C. S. Lewis* [Washington, D. C.: Canon Press, 1969], p. 156).

President Marion G. Romney taught:

To seek to know the Father’s will and to comply therewith does not mean abject submission to an arbitrary superior force, but rather bringing ourselves into harmony with the laws and principles prevailing in an orderly universe. It is the only way by which we may be at peace in the earth, and eventually rise to our high destiny as the children of God. [CR, April 1945, pp. 86–87]

Two Examples of Obedience

Let me cite two examples of people who have demonstrated this type obedience. First, Nephi the son of Helaman, of whom we read:

Blessed art thou, Nephi, for those things which thou hast done; for I have beheld how thou hast with unweariness declared the word, which I have given unto thee, unto this people.

And thou hast not feared them, and hast not sought thine own life, but hast sought my will, and to keep my commandments.

And now, because thou hast done this with such unwearyingness, behold, I will bless thee forever; and I will make thee mighty in word and in deed, in faith and in works; yea, even that all things shall be done unto thee according to thy word, for thou shalt not ask that which is contrary to my will. [Helaman 10:4–5]

Second, let me quote from a talk given by Elder Boyd K. Packer at this university in 1971. Elder Packer said:

Perhaps the greatest discovery of my life, without question the greatest commitment, came when finally I had the confidence in God that I would loan or yield my agency to him—without compulsion or pressure, without any duress, as a single individual alone, by myself, no counterfeiting, nothing expected other than the privilege. In a sense, speaking figuratively, to take one’s agency, that precious gift which the scriptures make plain is essential to life itself, and say, “I will do as you direct,” is afterward to learn that in so doing you possess it all the more. . . .

We should put ourselves in a position before our Father in heaven and say, individually, “I do not want to do what I want to do. I want to do what thou wouldst have me do.” [“Obedience,” BYU Speeches of the Year, 7 Dec. 1971, p. 4]

The Principle of Opposition

I testify that such commitment is the pathway to true freedom, and hence progression and happiness. The reason that more people have not made this commitment brings us to another principle associated with obedience and agency—the principle of opposition. Lehi taught, “For it must needs be, that there is an opposition in all things” (2 Nephi 2:11). The source of this opposition, ultimately, is the devil, and the reason for his opposition is given as follows: “And because he had fallen from

heaven, and had become miserable forever, he sought also the misery of all mankind” (2 Nephi 2:18). Christ seeks our happiness, and the devil seeks our misery, and we receive wages of him whom we list to obey (see Alma 3:27).

Opposition to our obedience takes many forms. Let me name just a few general categories. First, ignorance, deception, false doctrine. We are told that “It is impossible for a man to be saved in ignorance” (D&C 131:6). The devil delights in the benighted condition of mankind, “And that wicked one cometh and taketh away light and truth, through disobedience, from the children of men, and because of the tradition of their fathers” (D&C 93:39).

There is no salvation in believing false doctrines. And false doctrines are being promulgated on every front so that even “the humble followers of Christ . . . are led, that in many instances they do err because they are taught by the precepts of men” (2 Nephi 28:14). The doctrines that we believe determine our actions, and there is great danger in entertaining the falsehoods spread by the enemies of righteousness. I am grateful for this university and for wonderful teachers and the administration here, who are promulgating truth. I hope you students realize what a great opportunity and privilege it is to attend this university. What you learn here and how you prepare yourselves may have eternal consequences.

Next, let me warn you against gratification of pleasure, which can impede your progress and rob you of your happiness. The Savior taught the Nephites:

But if it be not built upon my gospel, and is built upon the works of men, or upon the works of the devil, verily I say unto you they have joy in their works for a season, and by and by the end cometh, and they are hewn down and cast into the fire, from whence there is no return. [3 Nephi 27:11]

Indulgence may bring temporary pleasure, but be assured that it will not last. Happiness does not come from indulging an appetite. It is a state of being that results from the possession of that which is true, good, and beautiful. It is more enduring and soul-satisfying, of a higher intellectual and moral nature. Sin, by contrast, brings increased desire and decreased satisfaction; it results in jaded tastes that require ever-increasing variety and intensity to satisfy an appetite that is being slowly desensitized.

Finally, let me name pride and vain ambition as an obstacle to obedience. Isaiah noted an attitude of Babylon as the complete opposite of obedience:

For thou hast trusted in thy wickedness: thou hast said, None seeth me. Thy wisdom and thy knowledge, it hath perverted thee; and thou hast said in thine heart, I am, and none else beside me. [Isaiah 47:10]

Self-sufficiency is the antithesis of humility, and it is repugnant to God. Note the contrast between this attitude and the attitudes of Nephi and Elder Packer.

The Whole Law

Well, we all have our weaknesses. Some commandments are hard for one person to live, while another has no trouble at all living the same commandments. Sometimes we pick and choose the commandments that we want to live. Thus we find a young person who will not drink coffee, yet he will indulge in immoral behavior, or one who will pay tithing but not study the scriptures. This results in a double-minded approach to the gospel. There are unity and harmony in the gospel, with each commandment and law complementing and supporting all others. When we violate or neglect one commandment, we place ourselves in jeopardy with any or all of the other commandments. A person who covets, for example, may be easily tempted to steal or to lie, to disregard

the Sabbath, or to allow worldly goods to become idols that displace his faith in God. I suppose that James had something like this in mind when he wrote, “For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all” (James 2:10).

Our motives and intentions are all-important. We will make mistakes and do things that we know we shouldn’t; but if our attitude is one of humble submission to God, if we are earnestly striving to improve, then we will experience progress and happiness. We will be on the path to eternal life. But if we are knowingly violating commandments, with no sincere desire to repent, we are in great danger.

Let me refer to two men whose lives were touched by the Master. The first is the rich ruler, who asked Christ, “What shall I do to inherit eternal life?” This question shows that the man had a degree of faith and trust in the Savior. The Lord answered, “Thou knowest the commandments,” and quoted several of the ten commandments. The ruler replied:

All these have I kept from my youth up.

Now when Jesus heard these things, he said unto him, Yet lackest thou one thing: sell all that thou hast, and distribute unto the poor and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow me.

And when he heard this, he was very sorrowful: for he was very rich. [Luke 18:18–23]

This ruler, because of opposition in the form of riches, turned his back on the Lord, and what do you suppose the scriptures would have recorded of him had he accepted the Savior’s challenge?

Contrast his reaction with the experience of Zacchaeus, a chief among the despised publicans, who was also very rich. When Jesus came to Jericho, Zacchaeus sought to see Jesus, but, being small of stature, he could not see over the crowd. So

he ran before, and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him: for he was to pass that way.

And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up, and saw him, and said unto him, Zacchaeus, make haste, and come down; for today I must bide at thy house.

And he made haste, and came down, and received him joyfully. [Luke 19:2–6]

We assume that Jesus taught him the gospel, and his life was changed. The scripture continues:

And Zacchaeus stood, and said unto the Lord; Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold.

And Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house, forsomuch as he also is a son of Abraham. [Luke 19:8–9]

Will we turn our backs on the Savior because of some possession or desire that we vainly suppose to be of great worth? Or will we follow the Savior, as did Zacchaeus, committing ourselves to do his will forever? The Lord pleaded:

Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly of heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light. [Matthew 11:28–30]

Obedience Brings Rewards

I testify that the burden of disobedience is oppressive, but we may cast our burdens on the Lord through repentance. Then we can gain the peace and happiness that is promised through obedience to the laws that have been established by God. Perhaps a few specific examples will show how obedience will result in the promised rewards.

When I was serving as a mission president in Arizona, I had the privilege of interviewing a fine woman who had accepted the gospel and desired to be baptized. I asked her if her husband consented to her baptism. She answered that he did and that he also was interested in the gospel. She said, however, that he could not be baptized because he suffered terribly from arthritis. Also, the doctors had told him that if he quit smoking, his ulcers would perforate, probably resulting in his death.

I told her that she ought to wait until her husband could be baptized with her. I read her the promises in section 89 of the Doctrine and Covenants, which we know to be the Word of Wisdom:

And all saints who remember to keep and do these sayings, walking in obedience to the commandments, shall receive health in their navel and marrow to their bones;

And shall find wisdom and great treasures of knowledge, even hidden treasures;

And shall run and not be weary, and shall walk and not faint.

And I, the Lord, give unto them a promise, that the destroying angel shall pass by them, as the children of Israel, and not slay them. [D&C 89:18–21]

I told her that I do not usually go against the counsel of physicians, but in this case, I promised that if her husband would quit smoking, the Lord would bless him and he would be able to be baptized.

She agreed and went home to talk with her husband. He accepted the promise with great faith, placing his hope in Christ above his trust in the doctors. They went through the house and gathered every cigarette they could find. Then they carefully shredded the cigarettes, burned the paper, and disposed of the tobacco. The next morning, the wife awoke to find that her husband was not in bed. He had been in the shower and was getting

dressed. This was the first time in many years that his wife had not had to help him get out of bed and help him get dressed. They were baptized two weeks later, and he continued to enjoy his independence in spite of his illnesses.

And when we obtain any blessing from God, it is by obedience to that law upon which it is predicated. [D&C 130:21]

During a recent tour to Papeete in the Tahitian Islands, my wife and I attended a conference on a distant island called Makemo. It is several hundred miles from Papeete. There are a few Latter-day Saints that live on that island, and my desire was to visit ever Latter-day Saint in the mission. About sixty people live on a small island about thirty miles away from Makemo. Fifty-six of those sixty are members of the Church. About thirty of those people crowded into a very small boat to come to Makemo to attend the conference with us. They had never seen a General Authority, and their contact with other people was very infrequent. About every three months a boat would come to their little island. In fact, no General Authority had ever visited the island of Makemo since Elder Rufus K. Hardy was there many years ago. (If Elder Rufus K. Hardy doesn't strike your memory, he served as one of the First Council of the Seventy at the time of Heber J. Grant.) After the conference and the feast they gave us (their feasts were a little unusual, raw fish, uncooked lobster, seaweed—Delicious!) I was with the mission president in a room when the branch president from this distant island thirty miles away from Makemo came in. They sat down on a bed in the room, and I observed as that branch president pulled a soiled envelope out of his shirt. I watched as he counted some currency and gave it to our mission president, President Jay Larson. When he excused himself I turned to the mission president and asked, "What was in the envelope?"

With tears in his eyes, he replied, "It was the tithing from that branch. It totaled about \$2100."

I too was touched by the experience and felt the Lord's presence. Surely the Lord would open the windows of heaven for such faithfulness. In fact, I believe such joyful obedience to a commandment of God is in itself a blessing.

And when we obtain any blessing from God, it is by obedience to that law upon which it is predicated. [D&C 130:21]

I am aware of a young man who came to his bishop for help with his family. It seemed that everything was wrong in his home. He argued with his wife, and their goals were so very opposite. His children seemed to bicker all the time, and when he tried to spend time with them, he got out of sorts very quickly. He was spending more time away from home and was using his money unwisely. After much counseling about family relations, the inspired bishop began to sense the young man's low self-esteem and eventually discovered the root of the problem: the young man had been bothered by immoral desires ever since he could remember. He loved his wife, but also he was easily attracted to other women. His thoughts were plagued by lustful desires, and he delighted in the challenge of flirting. Consequently, he suffered severely from guilt, and he felt too weak to ever fully repent. A heart full of lust has little room for the true love that should prevail in a family. For months the young man followed the bishop's plan for overcoming his weakness. The change that occurred was remarkable. His family life improved dramatically. He saw qualities in his wife and children that he had never seen before. He found new joy in spending time with his family and found reservoirs of spiritual strength that he was unaware of. Alma counseled his son Shiblon to "bridle all your passions, that ye may be filled with love"

(Alma 38:12). This young man had learned to bridle his passions, and the lust in his heart was replaced with a love such as he had never imagined.

And when we obtain any blessing from God, it is by obedience to that law upon which it is predicated. [D&C 130:21]

Perhaps you read in a recent *Ensign* about an exuberant convert named Maria. On one occasion her branch was gathered at a lake for two baptisms. The author wrote:

One of the converts and a missionary stood in the water about to proceed with the ordinance when a noisy family walked by, laughing and shouting.

None of us had as good a command of the Spanish language as Maria did, so we asked her to tell them to be quiet. "Maria," we urged, "ask them to go somewhere else."

But instead, Maria invited the noisemakers into our group. Quiet now, the family watched both baptisms while she explained the details of our beliefs. Afterward, they invited the missionaries to their home. They accepted the baptismal challenge a few weeks later. [Kathryn Malmfeldt, "The Trouble with Maria," *Ensign*, August 1982, p. 47.]

The Lord promised:

Open your mouths and they shall be filled. . . .

Yea, open your mouths and spare not, and you shall be laden with sheaves upon your backs, for lo, I am with you. [D&C 33:8–9]

Maria took the Lord's promise literally; she opened her mouth to invite some nonmembers into a baptismal service. We can be sure that she experienced joy with the new converts and that her joy prompted further missionary service.

And when we obtain any blessing from God, it is by obedience to that law upon which it is predicated. [D&C 130:21]

Rewards of the Right Kind of Education

Finally, let me speak of the rewards that come from an education. President David O. McKay said that "True education is awakening a love for truth, a just sense of duty, opening the eyes of the soul to the great purpose and end of life" (*CR*, April 1965, p. 8). The time you spend at this university is important for many reasons. You will, of course, learn skills that will increase your capacity to serve, that will make you a more productive citizen, and that will prepare you for your life's occupation so that you can support your family and contribute to our society. But most important, you will become an educated person. You will learn to love the pursuit of knowledge and truth, and this is a characteristic of spirituality. I promise that, as you develop good study habits and a keen interest in knowledge, your continuing education will be a source of joy to you throughout your life. The Lord said:

If thou shalt ask, thou shalt receive revelation upon revelation, knowledge upon knowledge, that thou mayest know the mysteries and peaceable things—that which bringeth joy, that which bringeth life eternal. [D&C 42:61]

Your education is contingent upon your observing the laws of learning.

I have said much about obedience. It is admittedly a challenging principle. Obedience is hard, as well it ought to be. Is it worth it? Let the Lord answer that question:

For thus saith the Lord—I, the Lord, am merciful and gracious unto those who fear me, and delight to honor those who serve me in righteousness and in truth unto the end.

Great shall be their reward and eternal shall be their glory.

And to them will I reveal all mysteries, yea, all the hidden mysteries of my kingdom from days of old, and for ages to come, will I make known unto them the good pleasure of my will concerning all things pertaining to my kingdom.

Yea, even the wonders of eternity shall they know, and things to come will I show them, even the things of many generations.

And their wisdom shall be great, and their understanding reach to heaven; and before them the wisdom of the wise shall perish, and the understanding of the prudent shall come to naught.

For by my Spirit will I enlighten them, and by my power will I make known unto them the secrets of my will—yea, even those things which eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor yet entered into the heart of man. [D&C 76:5–10]

“Thy Word Is a Lamp”

In conclusion, let me bear my testimony that the commandments are for our instruction and edification; they are not a burden to those who love the Lord. They are our road map, an iron rod through the mists of darkness.

The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple.

The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes. [Psalms 19:7–8]

When we truly accept the Lord’s laws as our guideposts to happiness and progression, our defense and refuge in an uncertain world, we can exclaim to the world in the words of the psalmist:

O how I love thy law! It is my meditation all the day.

Thou through thy commandments has made me wiser than mine enemies. . . .

I understand more than the ancients, because I keep thy precepts. . . .

Through thy precepts I get understanding: therefore I hate every false way.

Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path. [Psalm 119:97–98, 100, 104–105]

May this be our attitude toward the gentle commands of our Lord, I pray humbly as I leave you my blessing and witness that the Church is true, that God lives, that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God. He loves us and desires that we keep his commandments. I bear solemn witness unto you, my good friends, that President Spencer Woolley Kimball is a prophet of the living God, and I pray that we’ll ever listen to a prophet’s voice and do the things that the Lord would have us do, in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.