

SCHOOL OF OBEDIENCE

by Andrew Murray

Murray's devotional work on the theme of obedience to God, addressing the spiritual practice and attitude of obedience as fundamental to the Christian life and essential for deeper communion with God and fruitful service.

4 Chapters

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School of Obedience

Chapter 1

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Chapter 1 Obedience, Its Place in Holy Scripture In undertaking the study of a Bible word or of a truth of the Christian life, it is a great help to take a survey of the place it takes in Scripture. As we see where and how often and in what connections it is found, its relative importance may be apprehended as well as its bearing on the whole of revelation. Let me try, in the first chapter, to prepare the way for the study of what obedience is by showing you where to go in God's word to find the mind of God concerning it.

1. Take Scripture as a Whole We begin with Paradise. In Genesis 2, verse 16, we read, And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Hast thou eaten of the tree whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat? Note how obedience to the command is the one virtue of Paradise, the one condition of man's abiding there, the one thing his Creator asks of him. Nothing is said of faith or humility or love.

Obedience includes all. As supreme as is the claim and authority of God is the demand for obedience as the one thing that is to decide his destiny. In the life of man, to obey is the one thing needful.

Turn now from the beginning to the close of the Bible. In its last chapter, you read, Revelation 22, verse 14, Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have a right to the tree of life. Or, if we accept the revised version, which gives another reading, we have the same throughout in chapters 12 and 14, where we read of the seed of the woman.

Chapter 12, verse 17, which keep the commandments of God and hold the testimony of Jesus, and the patience of the saints. Chapter 14, verse 12, From beginning to end, from Paradise lost to Paradise regained, the law is unchangeable. It is only obedience that gives access to the tree of life and the favor of God.

And if you ask how the change was effected out of the disobedience at the beginning that closed the way to the tree of life, to the obedience at the end that again gained entrance to it, turn to that which stands midway between the beginning and the end, the cross of Christ. Read a passage like Romans chapter 5, verse 19, Through the obedience of the one shall the many be made

righteous. Or Philippians chapter 2, verse 8, He became obedient unto death, therefore God hath highly exalted him.

Or Hebrews chapter 5, verses 8 and 9, He learned obedience and became the author of salvation to them that obey Him. And you see how the whole redemption of Christ consists in restoring obedience to its place. The beauty of His salvation consists in this, that He brings us back to the life of obedience, through which alone the creature can give the Creator the glory due to Him or receive the glory of which His Creator desires to make Him partaker.

Paradise, Calvary, Heaven all proclaim with one voice, Child of God, the first and the last thing thy God asks of thee is simple, universal, unchanging obedience. Two, let us turn to the Old Testament. Here let us specially notice how with any new beginning in the history of God's kingdom, obedience always comes into special prominence.

One, take Noah, the new father of the human race, and you will find four times written, Genesis chapter 6, verse 22, chapter 7, verses 5, 9 and 16, According to all that God commanded Noah, so did he. It is the man who does what God commands, to whom God can entrust His work, whom God can use to be a saviour of men. Two, to think of Abraham, the father of the chosen race.

By faith Abraham obeyed, Hebrews chapter 11, verse 7. When he had been forty years in this school of faith obedience, God came to perfect his faith and to crown it with His fullest blessing. Nothing could fit him for this but a crowning act of obedience. When he had bound his son on the altar, God came and said, By myself have I sworn, in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thee, and in thy seed shall all nations be blessed, because thou hast obeyed my voice.

And to Isaac he spoke, chapter 26, verses 3 and 5, I will perform the oath which I swore to Abraham, because that Abraham obeyed my voice. Oh, when shall we learn how unspeakably pleasing obedience is in God's sight, and how unspeakable is the reward He bestows upon it? The way to be a blessing to the world is to be men of obedience, known by God and all the world by this one mark, a will utterly given up to God's will. Let all who profess to walk in Abraham's footsteps walk this way.

3. Go on to Moses. At Sinai God gave him the message to the people, If you will obey my voice indeed, ye shall be a peculiar treasure to me above all people. In the very nature of things it cannot be otherwise.

God's holy will is His glory and perfection. It is only by an entrance into His will, by obedience, that it is possible to be His people. 4. Take the building of the sanctuary in which God was to dwell.

In the last three chapters of Exodus you have the expression nineteen times, according to all the Lord commanded Moses, so did He. And then, the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. Just so again in Leviticus 8 and 9 you have, with reference to the consecration of the priests and the tabernacle, the same expression twelve times.

And then, the glory of the Lord appeared before all the people, and fire came out from before the Lord and consumed the burnt offering. Words cannot make it plainer that it is amid what the obedience of His people has wrought that God delights to dwell, that it is the obedient He crowns with His favor and presence. 5. After the forty years' wandering in the wilderness and its terrible revelation of the fruit of disobedience, there was again a new beginning when the people were

about to enter Canaan.

Read Deuteronomy, with all Moses spoke in sight of the land, and you will find there is no book of the Bible which uses the word obey so frequently, or speaks so much of the blessing obedience will assuredly bring. The whole is summed up in the words, I set before you a blessing if ye obey, a curse if ye will not obey. Yes, a blessing if ye obey.

That is the key note of the blessed life. Canaan, just like paradise and heaven, can be the place of blessing as it is the place of obedience. Would God we might take it in! But do beware only of praying only for a blessing.

Let us care for the obedience, God will care for the blessing. Let my one thought as a Christian be, how I can obey and please my God perfectly. 6 The next new beginning we have is in the appointment of kings in Israel.

In the story of Saul we have the most solemn warning as to the need of exact and entire obedience in a man whom God is to trust as ruler of his people. Samuel had commanded Saul to wait seven days for him to come and sacrifice, and to show him what to do. When Samuel delayed, Saul took it upon himself to sacrifice.

When Samuel came he said, Thou hast not kept the commandment of the Lord thy God, which he commanded thee. Thy kingdom shall not continue, because thou hast not kept that which the Lord commanded thee. God will not honor the man who is not obedient.

Saul has a second opportunity given him of showing what is in his heart. He is sent to execute God's judgment against Amalek. He obeys, he gathers an army of two hundred thousand men, undertakes the journey into the wilderness, and destroys Amalek.

But while God had commanded him utterly to destroy all and not to spare, he spared the best of the cattle and Agag. God speaks to Samuel, It repenteth me that I have set up Saul to be king, for he hath not performed my commandment. When Samuel comes, Saul twice over says, I have performed the commandment of the Lord, I have obeyed the voice of the Lord.

And so he had, as many would think, but his obedience had not been entire. God claims exact, full obedience. God had said, Utterly destroy all, spare not.

This he had not done. He had spared the best sheep for a sacrifice unto the Lord. And Samuel said, To obey is better than any sacrifice, because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, the Lord hath rejected thee.

A sad type of so much obedience which in part performs God's commandment, and yet it is not the obedience God asks. God says of all sin and all disobedience, Utterly destroy all, spare not. May God reveal to us whether we are indeed going all lengths with Him, seeking utterly to destroy all and spare nothing that is not in perfect harmony with His will? It is only a wholehearted obedience down to the minutest details that can satisfy God.

Let nothing less satisfy you, lest while we say, I have obeyed, God says, Thou hast rejected the word of the Lord. 7 Just one word more from the Old Testament. Next to Deuteronomy, Jeremiah is the book most full of the word obey, though, alas, mostly in connection with a complaint that the

people had not obeyed.

God sums up all His dealings with the fathers in the one word, I spoke not with them concerning sacrifices, but this thing I commanded them, Obey my voice, and I will be your God. Would God that we could learn that all that God speaks of sacrifices, even of the sacrifice of His beloved Son, is subordinate to the one thing, to have His creature restored to full obedience into all the inconceivable meaning of the word, I will be your God, there is no gateway but this, Obey my voice. 3 We come to the New Testament.

1 Here we think at once of our blessed Lord and the prominence He gives to obedience as the one thing for which He was come into the world. He who entered it with His, Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God, ever confess to men, I seek not my own will, but the will of Him that sent me. Of all He did, and of all He suffered, even to the death, He said, This commandment have I received of my Father.

If we turn to His teaching, we find everywhere that the obedience He rendered is what He claims from everyone who would be His disciple. During His whole ministry, from beginning to end, obedience is the very essence of salvation. In the Sermon on the Mount He began with it, No one could enter the kingdom, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.

And in the farewell discourse, how wonderfully He reveals the spiritual character of true obedience as it is born of love and inspired by it, and as it also opens the way into the love of God. Do take into your heart the wonderful words, If ye love me, ye will keep my commandments. And the Father will send forth the Spirit.

He hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me. And he shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself unto him. If a man love me, he will keep my words, and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.

No words could express more simply or more powerfully the inconceivably glorious place Christ gives to obedience with its twofold possibility. One, as only possible to a loving heart. Two, as making possible all that God has to give of His Holy Spirit, of His wonderful love, of His indwelling in Christ Jesus.

I know of no passage in Scripture that gives a higher revelation of the spiritual life or the power of loving obedience as its one condition. Let us pray to God very earnestly that by His Holy Spirit its light may transfigure our daily obedience with its heavenly glory. See how all this is confirmed in the next chapter, how well we know the parable of the vine, how often and how earnestly we have asked how to be able to abide continually in Christ.

We have thought of more study of the word, more faith, more prayer, more communion with God, and we have overlooked the simple truth that Jesus teaches so clearly. If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love. With its divine sanction, even as I kept my Father's commandments and abide in His love.

For Him, as for us, the only way under heaven to abide in divine love is to keep the commandments. Do let me ask, have you known it? Have you heard it preached? Have you believed it and proved it true in your experience? Obedience on earth is the key to a place in God's love in heaven. Unless there be some correspondence between God's wholehearted love in

heaven and our wholehearted loving obedience on earth, Christ cannot manifest Himself to us.

God cannot abide in us. We cannot abide in His love. 2. If we go on from our Lord Jesus to His apostles, we find in the Acts two words of Peter's which show how our Lord's teaching had entered into Him.

In the one, God hath given His Holy Spirit to them that obey Him, He proves how He knew what had been the preparation for Pentecost, the surrender to Christ. In the other, we must obey God rather than man. We have the manward side.

Obedience is to be unto death. Nothing on earth dare or can hinder it in the man who has given himself to God. 3. In Paul's epistle to the Romans, we have in the opening and closing verses the expression, the obedience of faith among all nations as that for which he was made an apostle.

He speaks of what God had wrought to make the obedient. He teaches that as the obedience of Christ makes us righteous, we become the servants of obedience unto righteousness. As disobedience in Adam and in us was the one thing that wrought death, so obedience in Christ and in us is the one thing that the gospel makes known as the way of restoration to God and His favor.

4. We all know how James warns us not to be hearers of the word only, but doers, and expounds how Abraham was justified and his faith perfected by his works. 5. In Peter's first epistle, we have only to look at the first chapter to see the place obedience has in his system. In verse 2, he speaks to the elect in sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience and blood-sprinkling of Jesus Christ, and so points us to obedience as the eternal purpose of the Father, as the great object of the work of the Spirit and a chief part of the salvation of Christ.

In verse 13, he writes, as children of obedience, born of it, marked by it, subject to it, be ye holy in all manner of conversation. Obedience is the very starting point of true holiness. In verse 22, we read, seeing ye have purified your souls in your obedience to the truth, the whole acceptance of the truth of God was not merely a matter of intellectual assent or strong emotion, it was the subjection of the life to the dominion of the truth of God.

The Christian life was in the first place obedience. 6. Of John we know how strong his statements are. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar.

Obedience is the one certificate of Christian character. Let us love in deed and truth, hereby we shall assure our hearts before him, and whatsoever we ask we receive of him, because we keep his commandments and do the things that are pleasing in his sight. Obedience is the secret of good conscience and of the confidence that God heareth us.

This is the love of God, that we keep his commandments. The obedience that keeps his commandments, this is the garment in which the hidden invisible love reveals itself, and whereby it is known. Such is the place obedience has in holy scripture, in the mind of God, in the hearts of his servants.

We may well ask, does it take that place in my heart and life? Have we indeed given obedience that supreme place of authority over us that God means it to have, as the inspiration of every action and of every approach to him? If we yield ourselves to the searching of God's spirit, we may find that we never gave it its true proportion in our scheme of life, and that this lack is the cause of

all our failure in prayer and in work. We may see that the deeper blessings of God's grace and the full enjoyment of God's love and nearness have been beyond our reach, simply because obedience was never made what God would have it be, the starting point and the goal of our Christian life. Let this, our first study, waken in us an earnest desire to know God's will fully concerning this truth.

Let us unite in praying that the Holy Spirit may show us how defective the Christian's life is where obedience does not rule all, how that life can be exchanged for one of full surrender to absolute obedience, and how sure it is that God in Christ will enable us to live it out.

Chapter 2

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Please visit hovelaudio.com to offer your impressions of this recording and to explore additional titles. And now, Hovel invites you to listen, enjoy, think, and grow. Chapter 2 The Obedience of Christ Through the obedience of the one shall all the many be made righteous, and know ye not that ye are servants of obedience unto righteousness? Through the obedience of the one shall the many be made righteous.

These words tell us what we owe to Christ. As in Adam we were made sinners, in Christ we are made righteous. The words tell us, too, to what in Christ it is we owe our righteousness.

As Adam's disobedience made us sinners, the obedience of Christ makes us righteous. To the obedience of Christ we owe everything. Among the treasures of our inheritance in Christ, this is one of the richest.

How many have never studied it, so as to love it and delight in it, and get the full blessing of it? May God, by His Holy Spirit, reveal its glory and make us partakers of its power. You are familiar with the blessed truth of justification by faith. In the section of the Epistle to the Romans preceding our passage, Paul had taught what its ever-blessed foundation was, the atonement of the blood of Christ, what its way and condition, faith in the free grace of a God who justifies the ungodly, and what its blessed fruits, the bestowment of the righteousness of Christ, with an immediate access into the favor of God and the hope of glory.

In our passage, he now proceeds to unfold the deeper truth of the union with Christ by faith in which justification has its root and which makes it possible and right for God to accept us for His sake. Paul goes back to Adam and our union with him, with all the consequences that flowed from that union, to prove how reasonable, how perfectly natural, in the higher sense of the word, it is that those who receive Christ by faith and are so united with Him become partakers of His righteousness and His life. It is in this argument that he specially emphasizes the contrast between the disobedience of Adam with the condemnation and death it brought, and the obedience of Christ with the righteousness and life it brings.

As we study the place the obedience of Christ takes in His work for our salvation, and see in it the very root of our redemption, we shall know what place to give it in our heart and life. Through the one man's disobedience many were made sinners. How was this? There was a twofold connection between Adam and his descendants, the judicial and the vital.

Judicial and vital connection. Through the judicial, the whole race, though yet unborn, came at once under the sentence of death. Death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them, such as little children who had not sinned after the likeness of Adam's transgression.

This judicial relation was rooted in the vital connection. The sentence could not have come upon them if they had not been in Adam, and the vital again became the manifestation of the judicial. Each child of Adam enters life under the power of sin and death.

Through the disobedience of the one, the many were constituted sinners, both by position subject to the curse of sin and by nature subject to its power. Adam is the figure of Him who was to come, and who is called the second Adam, the second father of the race. Adam's disobedience in its effects is the exact similitude of what the obedience of Christ becomes to us.

When a sinner believes in Christ, he is united to Him, and is at once, by a judicial sentence, pronounced and accepted as righteous in God's sight. The judicial relationship is rooted in the vital. He has Christ's righteousness only by having Christ Himself and being in Him.

Before he knows aught of what it is to be in Christ, he can know himself acquitted and accepted. But he is then led on to know the vital connection, and to understand that as real and complete as was his participation in Adam's disobedience with the death, as well as the sinful nature that followed on it, is his participation in Christ's obedience with both the righteousness and the obedient life and nature that come from it. Let us see and understand this.

Through Adam's disobedience we are made sinners. The one thing God asked of Adam in paradise was obedience. The one thing by which a creature can glorify God or enjoy His favor and blessing is obedience.

The one cause of the power sin has got in the world, and the ruin it has wrought, is disobedience. The whole curse of sin on us is owing to disobedience imputed to us. The whole power of sin working in us is nothing but this, that as we receive Adam's nature we inherit his disobedience.

We are born the children of disobedience. It is evident that the one work a Christ was needed for was to remove this disobedience, its curse, its dominion, its evil nature and workings. Disobedience was the root of all sin and misery.

The first object of His salvation was to cut away the evil root and restore man to his original destiny, a life in obedience to his God. How did Christ do this? First of all, by coming as the second Adam, to undo what the first had done. Sin had made us believe that it was a humiliation always to be seeking to know and do God's will.

Christ came to show us the nobility, the blessedness, the heavenliness of obedience. When God gave us the robe of creaturehood to wear, we knew not that its beauty, its unspotted purity, was obedience to God. Christ came and put on that robe that He might show us how to wear it and how with it we could enter into the presence and glory of God.

Christ came to overcome and so bear away our disobedience and to replace it by His own obedience on us and in us. As universal, as mighty, as all-pervading as was the disobedience of Adam, yea, far more so was to be the power of the obedience of Christ. The object of Christ's life of obedience was threefold.

One, as an example to show us what true obedience was. Two, as our surety by His obedience to fulfill all righteousness for us. And three, as our head to prepare a new and obedient nature to impart to us.

So He died, too, to show us that His obedience means a readiness to obey to the uttermost, to die for God. That it means the vicarious endurance and atonement of the guilt of our disobedience. That it means a death to sin as an entrance to the life of God for Him and for us.

The disobedience of Adam in all its possible bearings was to be put away and replaced by the obedience of Christ. Judicially, by that obedience, we are made righteous. Just as we were made sinners by Adam's disobedience, we are at once and completely justified and delivered from the power of sin and death.

We stand before God as righteous men. Vitally, for the judicial and the vital are as inseparable as in the case of Adam, we are made one plant with Christ in His death and resurrection, so that we are as truly dead to sin and alive to God as He is. And the life we receive in Him is no other than a life of obedience.

Let every one of us who would know what obedience is consider well. It is the obedience of Christ that is the secret of the righteousness and salvation I find in Him. The obedience is the very essence of that righteousness.

Obedience is salvation. His obedience, first of all to be accepted and trusted to and rejoiced in as covering and swallowing up and making an end of my disobedience, is the one unchanging, never-to-be-forsaken ground of my acceptance. And then, His obedience, just as Adam's disobedience was the power that ruled my life, the power of death in me becomes the life power of the new nature in me.

Then I understand why Paul in this passage so closely links the righteousness and the life. If by the trespass of one death reigned through the one, much more shall they who receive the abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness reign in life through one, even here on earth. The gift came unto all men unto justification of life.

The more carefully we trace the parallel between the first and second Adam and see how in the former the death and disobedience reigned in His seed equally with Himself and how both were equally transmitted through union with Him, the more will the conviction be forced upon us that the obedience of Christ is equally to be ours, not only by imputation but by personal possession. It is so inseparable from Him that to receive Him and His life is to receive His obedience. When we receive the righteousness which God offers us so freely, it at once points us to the obedience out of which it was born, with which it is inseparably one, in which alone it can live and flourish.

See how this connection comes out in the next chapter. After having spoken of our life union to Christ, Paul, for the first time in the Epistle, chapter 6, verse 12, gives an injunction. Let not sin reign.

Present yourselves unto God, and then immediately proceeds to teach how this means nothing but obedience. Know ye not that ye are servants of sin unto death or of obedience unto righteousness? Your relation to obedience is a practical one. You have been delivered from disobedience, Adam's and your own, and now are become servants of obedience, and that unto

righteousness.

Christ's obedience was unto righteousness, the righteousness which is God's gift to you. Your subjection to obedience is the one way in which your relation to God and to righteousness can be maintained. Christ's obedience unto righteousness is the only beginning of life for you.

Your obedience unto righteousness, its only continuance. There is but one law for the head and the members. As surely as it was with Adam and his seed, disobedience and death, it is with Christ and his seed, obedience and life.

The one bond of union, the one mark of likeness between Adam and his seed was disobedience. The one bond of union between Christ and his seed, the one mark of resemblance is obedience. It was obedience made Christ the object of the Father's love and our Redeemer.

It is obedience alone can lead us in the way to dwell in that love and enjoy that redemption. Through the obedience of the one shall the many be made righteous. Everything depends upon our knowledge of and participation in the obedience as the gateway and path to the full enjoyment of the righteousness.

At conversion, the righteousness is given to faith, once for all, completely and forever, with but little or no knowledge of the obedience. But as the righteousness is indeed believed in and submitted to, and its full dominion over us as servants of righteousness sought after, it will open to us its blessed nature as born out of obedience and therefore ever leading us back to its divine origin. The truer our hold of the righteousness of Christ in the power of the Spirit, the more intense will be our desire to share in the obedience out of which it sprang.

In this light, let us study the obedience of Christ, that like Him we may live as servants of obedience unto righteousness. 1. In Christ this obedience was a life principle. Obedience with Him did not mean a single act of obedience now and then, not even a series of acts, but the spirit of His whole life.

I came not to do my own will, lo, I come to do Thy will, O God. He had come into the world for one purpose. He only lived to carry out God's will.

The one supreme, all-controlling power of His life was obedience. He is willing to make it so in us. This was what He promised when He said, Whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother and sister and mother.

The link in a family is a common life shared by all and a family likeness. The bond between Christ and us is that He and we together do the will of God. 2. In Christ this obedience was a joy.

I delight to do Thy will, O God. My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me. Our food is refreshment and invigoration.

The healthy man eats his bread with gladness, but food is more than enjoyment. It is the one necessary of life, and so doing the will of God was the food that Christ hungered after and without which He could not live, the one thing that satisfied His hunger, the one thing that refreshed and strengthened Him and made Him glad. It was something of this David meant when he spoke of God's words being sweeter than honey and the honeycomb.

As this is understood and accepted, obedience will become more natural to us and necessary to us and more refreshing than our daily food. 3. In Christ this obedience led to a waiting on God's will. God did not reveal all His will to Christ at once, but day by day according to the circumstances of the hour.

In His life of obedience there was growth and progress. The most difficult lesson came the last. Each act of obedience fitted Him for the new discovery of the Father's further command.

He spoke, My ears hast thou opened, I delight to do thy will, O God. It is as obedience becomes the passion of our life that the ears will be opened by God's Spirit to wait for His teaching, and we be content with nothing less than a divine guidance into the divine will for us. 4. In Christ this obedience was unto death.

When He spoke, I came not to do My own will, but the will of Him that sent Me. He was ready to go all lengths in denying His own will and doing the Father's. He meant it.

In nothing My will, at all costs God's will. This is the obedience to which He invites and for which He empowers us. This wholehearted surrender to obedience in everything is the only true obedience, is the only power that will avail to carry us through.

Would God that Christians could understand that nothing less than this is what brings the soul gladness and strength. As long as there is a doubt about universal obedience and with that a lurking sense of the possibility of failure, we lose the confidence that secures the victory. But when once we set God before us as really asking full obedience and engaging to work it, and see that we dare offer Him nothing less, we give up ourselves to the working of the divine power, which by the Holy Ghost can master our whole life.

5. In Christ this obedience sprang from the deepest humility. Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, who emptied Himself, who took the form of a servant, who humbled Himself, becoming obedient to death. It is the man who is willing for entire self-emptying, is willing to be and live as the servant, a servant of obedience, is willing to be humbled very low before God and man, to whom the obedience of Jesus will unfold its heavenly beauty and its constraining power.

There may be a strong will that secretly trusts in self that strives for obedience and fails. It is as we sink low before God in humility, meekness, patience, and entire resignation to His will, and are willing to bow in an absolute helplessness and dependence on Him, as we turn away wholly from self, that it will be revealed to us how it is the one only duty and blessing of a creature to obey this glorious God. 6. In Christ this obedience was of faith, in entire dependence upon God's strength.

I can do nothing of myself. The Father that dwelleth in me doeth the works. The Son's unreserved surrender to the Father's will was met by the Father's unceasing and undeserved bestowment of His power working in Him.

Even so will it be with us. If we learn that our giving up our will to God is ever the measure of His giving His power in us, we shall see that a surrender to full obedience is nothing but a full faith that God will work all in us. God's promises of the new covenant all rest on this.

The Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and thou shalt obey the Lord thy God. I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes,

and ye shall keep my judgments. Let us, like the Son, believe that God works all in us, and we shall have the courage to yield ourselves to an unreserved obedience, an obedience unto death.

That yielding ourselves up to God will become the entrance into the blessed experience of conformity to the Son of God in His doing the Father's will, because He counted on the Father's power. Let us give our all to God. He will work His all in us.

Know ye not that ye, made righteous by the obedience of one, are like Him and in Him servants of obedience unto righteousness? It is in the obedience of the one the obedience of the many has its root, its life, its security. Let us turn and gaze upon and study and believe in Christ as the obedient one as never before. Let this be the Christ we receive and love and seek to be made conformable to, as His righteousness is our one hope, that His obedience be our one desire.

Let our faith in Him prove its sincerity and its confidence in God's supernatural power working in us by accepting Christ, the obedient one, as in very deed our life as the Christ who dwells in us.

Chapter 3

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Please visit hovelaudio.com to offer your impressions of this recording and to explore additional titles. And now, Hovel invites you to listen, enjoy, think, and grow. Chapter 3 *The Secret of True Obedience He Learned Obedience Hebrews*, Chapter 5, Verse 8 *The secret of true obedience, let me say at once what I believe it to be, is the clear and close personal relationship to God.*

All our attempts after full obedience will be failures until we get access to His abiding fellowship. It is God's holy presence consciously abiding with us that keeps us from disobeying Him. Defective obedience is always the result of a defective life.

To rouse and spur on that defective life by arguments and motives has its use, but their chief blessing must be that they make us feel the need of a different life, a life so entirely under the power of God that obedience will be its natural outcome. The defective life, the life of broken and irregular fellowship with God, must be healed and make way for a full and healthy life. Then full obedience will become possible.

The secret of a true obedience is the return to close and continual fellowship with God. *He Learned Obedience Hebrews*, Chapter 5, Verse 8 *And why was this needful? And what is the blessing He brings us? Listen, He learned obedience by the things which He suffered, and became the author of eternal salvation to all them that obey Him. The suffering is unnatural to us, and therefore calls for the surrender of our will.*

Christ needed suffering, that in it He might learn to obey and give up His will to the Father at any cost. He needed to learn obedience, that as our great High Priest He might be made perfect. He learned obedience, He became obedient unto death, that He might become the author of our salvation.

He became the author of salvation through obedience, that He might save those who obey Him. As obedience was with Him absolutely necessary to procure, it is with us absolutely necessary to inherit salvation. The very essence of salvation is obedience to God.

Christ as the obedient one saves us as His obedient ones. Whether in His suffering on earth, or in His glory in heaven, whether in Himself or in us, obedience is what the heart of Christ is set upon. On earth, Christ was a learner in the school of obedience.

From heaven He teaches it to His disciples here on earth. In a world where disobedience reigns unto death, the restoration of obedience is in Christ's hands. As in His own life, so in us.

He has undertaken to maintain it. He teaches and works it in us. Let us try and think what and how He teaches.

It may be we shall see how little we have given ourselves to be pupils in this school, where alone obedience is to be learned. When we think of an ordinary school, the principal things we ask often are 1. the teacher 2. the class books 3. the pupils Let us see what each of these is in Christ's school of obedience. 1. the teacher He learned obedience, and now that He teaches it, He does so first and foremost by unfolding the secret of His own obedience to the Father.

I have said that the power of true obedience is to be found in the clear personal relationship to God. It was so with our Lord Jesus. Of all His teachings He said, I have not spoken of myself, but the Father which sent me gave me a commandment, what I should say and what I should speak.

And I know that His commandment is life everlasting. Whatever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak. This does not mean that Christ received God's commandment in eternity as part of the Father's commission to Him on entering the world.

No, day by day, each moment as He taught and worked, He lived as man in continual communication with the Father and received the Father's instructions just as He needed them. Does He not say, The Son can do nothing of Himself but what He seeth the Father do? For the Father showeth the Son all things that Himself doeth, and He will show Him greater things. As I hear, I judge.

I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent me. The words that I speak, I speak not of myself, but the Father that dwelleth in me. It is everywhere a dependence upon a present fellowship and operation of God, a hearing and a seeing of what God speaks and does and shows.

Our Lord ever spoke of His relation to the Father as the type and the promise of our relation to Him and to the Father through Him. With us, as with Him, the life of continual obedience is impossible without continual fellowship and continual teaching. It is only when God comes into our lives in a degree and power which many never consider possible, when His presence as the Eternal and Ever-Present One is believed and received, even as the Son believed and received it, that there can be any hope of a life in which every thought is brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.

The imperative need of the continual receiving our orders and instructions from God Himself is what is implied in the words, Obey my voice, and I will be your God. The expression obeying the commandments is very seldom used in Scripture. It is almost always obeying me, or obeying or hearkening to my voice.

We're the commander of an army, the teacher of a school, the father of a family. It is not the code of laws, however clear and good, with its rewards or threats, that secures true obedience. It is the personal living influence, wakening love and enthusiasm.

It is the joy of ever hearing the Father's voice that will give the joy and strength of true obedience. It is the voice gives power to obey the word. The word without the living voice does not avail.

How clearly this is illustrated by the contrast of what we see in Israel. The people had heard the voice of God on Sinai and were afraid. They asked Moses that God might no more speak to them, that Moses receive the word of God and bring it to them.

They only thought of the commands. They knew not that the only power to obey is in the presence of God and His voice speaking to us. And so with only Moses to speak to them and the tables of stone, their whole history is one of disobedience because they were afraid of direct contact with God.

It is even so still. Many, many Christians find it so much easier to take their teaching from godly men than to wait upon God to receive it from Himself. Their faith stands in the wisdom of men and not in the power of God.

Do let us learn the great lesson our Lord, who learned obedience by every moment waiting to see and hear the Father, has to teach us. It is only when, like Him, with Him, in and through Him, we ever walk with God and hear His voice that we can possibly attempt to offer God the obedience He asks and promises to work. Out of the depths of His own life and experience, Christ can give and teach us this.

Pray earnestly that God may show you the folly of attempting to obey without the same strength Christ needed, may make you willing to give up everything for the Christlike joy of the Father's presence all the day. 2. The Textbook Christ's direct communication with the Father did not render Him independent of Holy Scripture. In the divine school of obedience, there is but one textbook, whether for the elder brother or the younger children.

In His learning obedience, He used the same textbook as we have. Not only when He had to teach or to convince others did He appeal to the Word, He needed it and He used it for His own spiritual life and guidance. From the commencement of His public life to its close, He lived by the Word of God.

It is written with the sword of the Spirit with which He conquered Satan, The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me. This Word of Scripture was the consciousness with which He opened His preaching of the Gospel. That the Scripture might be fulfilled was the light in which He accepted all suffering and even gave Himself to the death.

After the resurrection, He expounded to the disciples in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself. That the Scripture might be fulfilled was the light in which He accepted all suffering and even gave Himself to the death. After the resurrection, He expounded to the disciples in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.

In Scripture, He had found God's plan and path for Him marked out. He gave Himself to fulfill it. It was in and with the use of God's Word that He received the Father's continual direct teaching.

In God's school of obedience, the Bible is the only textbook. That shows us the disposition in which we are to come to the Bible with the simple desire in it to find what is written concerning us as to God's will and to do it. Scripture was not written to increase our knowledge but to guide our conduct.

That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. If any man will do, he shall know. Learn from Christ to consider all there is in Scripture of the revelation of God and His love and His counsel as simply auxiliary to God's great end.

That the man of God may be fitted to do His will as it is done in heaven. That man may be restored to that perfect obedience on which God's heart is set and which alone is blessedness. In God's school of obedience, God's Word is the only textbook.

To apply that Word in His own life and conduct to know when each different portion was to be taken up and carried out Christ needed and received a divine teaching. It is He who speaks in Isaiah, The Lord God wakeneth morning by morning He wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learned The Lord God hath opened my ear. Even so does He who thus learned obedience teach it us by giving us the Holy Spirit in our heart as the divine interpreter of the Word.

This is the great work of the indwelling Holy Spirit to draw the Word we read and think upon into our heart and make it quick and powerful there so that God's living Word may work effectually in our will, our love, our whole being. It is because this is not understood that the Word has no power to work obedience. Let me try and speak very plainly about this.

We rejoice in increased attention given to Bible study and in testimonies as to the interest awakened and benefit received. But let us not deceive ourselves. We may delight in studying the Bible.

We may admire and be charmed with the views we get of God's truth. The thought suggested may make a deep impression and waken the most pleasing religious emotions. And yet the practical influence in making us holy or humble, loving, patient, ready either for service or suffering be very small.

The one reason for this is that we do not receive the Word as it is in very deed as the Word of a living God who must himself speak to us and into us if it is to exert its divine power. The letter of the Word, however we study and delight in it, has no saving or sanctifying power. Human wisdom and human will, however strenuous their effort, cannot give, cannot command that power.

The Holy Spirit is the mighty power of God. It is only as the Holy Spirit teaches you, only as the gospel is preached to you by man or by book with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven that it will really give you with every command the strength to obey and work in you the very thing commanded. With man, knowing and willing, knowing and doing, even willing and performing are, for lack of power, often separate and even at variance.

Never in the Holy Spirit. He is at once the light and the might of God. All he is and does and gives has in it equally the truth and the power of God.

When he shows you God's command, he always shows it you as a possible and a certain thing, a divine life and gift prepared for you which he who shows is able to impart. Beloved Bible students, do learn to believe that it is only when Christ, through the Holy Spirit, teaches you to understand and take the word into your heart that he can really teach you to obey as he did. Do believe every time you open your Bible that just as sure as you listen to the divine spirit-breathed word, so surely will our Father, in answer to the prayer of faith and docile waiting, give the Holy Spirit's living operation in your heart.

Let all your Bible study be a thing of faith. Do not only try and believe the truths or promises you read. This may be in your own power.

Before that, believe in the Holy Spirit, in his being in you, in God's working in you through him. Take the word into your heart, in the quiet faith that he will enable you to love it and yield to it and keep it, and our blessed Lord Jesus will make the book to you what it was to him when he spoke of the things which are written concerning me. All Scripture will become the simple revelation of what God is going to do for you and in you and through you.

Three, the pupil. We have seen how our Lord teaches us obedience by unfolding the secret of his learning it in unceasing dependence on the Father. We have seen how he teaches us to use the sacred book as he used it, as a divine revelation of what God has ordained for us with the Holy Spirit to expound and enforce.

If we now consider the place the believer takes in the school of obedience as a pupil, we shall better understand what Christ the Son requires to do his work in us effectually. In a faithful student, there are several things that go to make up his feelings towards a trusted teacher. He submits himself entirely to his leading.

He reposes perfect trust in him. He gives him just as much time and attention as he asks. When we see and consent that Jesus Christ has a right to all this, we may hope to experience how wonderfully he can teach us an obedience like his own.

One, the true pupil, say of some great musician or painter, yields his master a wholehearted and unhesitating submission. In practicing his scales or mixing the colors, in the slow and patient study of the elements of his art, he knows that it is wisdom simply and fully to obey. It is this wholehearted surrender to his guidance, this implicit submission to his authority, Christ asks.

We come to him asking him to teach us the lost art of obeying God as he did. He asks us if we are ready to pay the price. It is entirely and utterly to deny self.

It is to give up our will and our life to the death. It is to be ready to do whatever he sayeth. The only way of learning to do a thing is to do it.

The only way of learning obedience from Christ is to give up your will to him and to make the doing of his will the one desire and delight of your heart. Unless you take the vow of absolute obedience as you enter this class of Christ's school, it will be impossible for you to make any progress. The true scholar of a great master finds it easy to render him this implicit obedience simply because he trusts him.

He gladly sacrifices his own wisdom and will to be guided by a higher. We need this confidence in our Lord Jesus. He came from heaven to learn obedience that he might be able to teach it well.

His obedience is the treasury out of which not only the depth of our past disobedience is paid, but out of which the grace for our present obedience is supplied. In his divine love and perfect human sympathy, in his divine power over our hearts and minds, he invites, he deserves, he wins our trust. It is by the power of a personal admiration and attachment to himself, it is by the power of his divine love in every deed shed into our heart by the Holy Spirit and wakening within us a responsive love, that he wakens our confidence and communicates to us the true secret of

success in his school.

As absolutely as we have trusted him as a savior to atone for our disobedience, so let us trust him as a teacher to lead us out of it. Christ is our prophet or teacher. A heart that enthusiastically believes in his power and success as a teacher will, in the joy of that faith, find it possible and easy to obey.

It is the presence of Christ with us all the day that will be the secret of true obedience. 3. A scholar gives his master just as much of his attendance and attention as he asks. The master fixes how much time must be devoted to personal intercourse and instruction.

Obedience to God is such a heavenly art, our nature is so utterly strange to it, the path in which the Son himself learned it was so slow and long that we must not wonder if it does not come at once. Nor must we wonder if it needs more time at the master's feet in meditation and prayer and waiting, independence and self-sacrifice than the most are ready to give. But let us give it.

In Christ, Jesus' heavenly obedience has become human again. Obedience has become our birthright and our life breath. Let us cling to him.

Let us believe and claim his abiding presence. With Jesus Christ who learned obedience as our savior, with Jesus Christ who teaches obedience as our master, we can live lives of obedience. His obedience, we cannot study the lesson too earnestly, his obedience is our salvation.

In him, the living Christ, we find it and partake of it moment by moment. Let us beseech God to show us how Christ and his obedience are actually to be our life every moment. That will then make us pupils who give him all our heart and all our time.

And he will teach us to keep his commandments and abide in his love even as he kept his father's commandments and abides in his love.

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