

Teachings Concerning...

“To Him Is Given the Greater Portion of the Word”

Introductory Guidelines

Among the important guidelines that have been followed in compiling these teachings regarding the obtaining of greater knowledge through revelation, two should be mentioned. They have been verbalized by Boyd K. Packer:

Boyd K. Packer (Quorum of the Twelve Apostles)

First: instruction vital to our salvation is not hidden in an obscure verse or phrase in the scriptures. To the contrary, essential truths are repeated over and over again.

Second: every verse, whether oft-quoted or obscure, must be measured against other verses. There are complementary and tempering teachings in the scriptures which bring a balanced knowledge of truth. (“The Pattern of Our Parentage,” *Ensign*, November 1984, p.66)

Important Precautionary Teachings

The following quotes give important counsel regarding the seeking and reception of personal revelation:

D&C 63:64

Remember that that which cometh from above is sacred, and must be spoken with care, and by constraint of the Spirit; and in this there is no condemnation, and ye receive the Spirit through prayer; wherefore, without this there remaineth condemnation.

Russell M. Nelson (Quorum of the Twelve Apostles)

Preoccupation With the So-Called “Mysteries” Should Be Avoided – As any good thing can be misused, a word of warning may be appropriate. The scriptures don’t have the answers to every question. Many important truths have yet to be revealed. Preoccupation with the so-called “mysteries” should be avoided. Beware also of private interpretation. Look to the living prophets and official policies for interpretation. Don’t judge others whose circumstances are not yours to judge. We are reassured, however, that they who “diligently seeketh shall find; and the mysteries of God shall be unfolded unto them, by the power of the Holy Ghost” (1 Ne. 10:19). Keep in mind, too, that many revelations have been given in response to prophetic inquiry. (“Living by Scriptural Guidance,” *Ensign*, November 2000, p.16)

Boyd K. Packer (Quorum of the Twelve Apostles)

Frequency and Purpose of Powerful Spiritual Experiences – I have learned that strong, impressive spiritual experiences do not come to us very frequently. And when they do, they are generally for our own edification, instruction, or correction. Unless we are called by proper authority to do so, they do not position us to counsel or to correct others. ...

We are expected to use the light and knowledge we already possess to work out our lives. We should not need a revelation to instruct us to be up and about our duty, for we have been told that already in the scriptures; we should not expect revelation to replace the spiritual or temporal intelligence which we have already received-only to extend it. We must go about our life in an ordinary workaday way, following the routines and rules and regulations that govern life. (Address given at a seminar for new mission presidents June 25, 1982 entitled “The Candle of the Lord,” in *That All May Be Edified* [1982], p.337)

Treat Spiritual Experiences With Care – Dreams and visions and visitations are not uncommon in the Church and are part of all that the Lord has revealed in this dispensation. Thus a worthy Church member may be the recipient of a marvelous spiritual experience. I have come to know that these experiences are personal and are to be kept private. Recipients should ponder them in their heart and not talk about them.

Those personal spiritual experiences do not convey any authority to direct the lives of others unless the recipient is the father or the mother or one who has been properly called and set apart. (“The Great Plan of Happiness and Personal Revelation,” in *The Things of My Soul* [1996], pp. 56-57)

Not Wise to Often Speak of Unusual Spiritual Experiences – I have come to believe also that it is not wise to continually talk of unusual spiritual experiences. They are to be guarded with care and shared only when the Spirit itself prompts us to use them to the blessing of others.

I am ever mindful of Alma’s words:

“It is given unto many to know the mysteries of God; nevertheless they are laid under a strict command that they shall not impart only according to the portion of his word which he doth grant unto the children of men, according to the heed and diligence which they give unto him” (Alma 12:9).

I heard President [Marion G.] Romney [First Presidency] once counsel mission presidents and their wives in Geneva. “I do not tell all I know. I have never told my wife all I know, for I found out that if I talked too lightly

of sacred things, thereafter the Lord would not trust me." ("The Candle of the Lord," in *That All May Be Edified* [1982], p.337)

It will be our purpose to consider the spiritual guidance that attends this work and to reverently explore the past for a few examples of help beyond the veil. Before we do so I wish to say something about spiritual experiences.

I have come to know that deeply spiritual experiences are usually given to us for our individual edification and it is best not to talk of them generally. Alma told Zeezrom: "It is given unto many to know the mysteries of God; nevertheless they are laid under a strict command that they shall not impart only according to the portion of his word which he doth grant unto the children of men, according to the heed and diligence which they give unto him." (Alma 12:9.) We may be prompted on occasion to tell of our spiritual experiences, but generally we should regard them as sacred. It is not out of order, however, to present some experiences from those who have lived in years past.

The fact that sacred spiritual experiences are not discussed widely—for instance, by the General Authorities—should not be taken as an indication that the Saints do not receive them. Such spiritual gifts are with the Church today as they were in years past.

Experiences which involve dreams or visions or visitations might be recorded and put away in family records to serve as a testimony and an inspiration to our descendants in the generations ahead. (*The Holy Temple* [1980], p.243)

Do Not Force Spiritual Things—There is something else to learn. A testimony is not thrust upon you; a testimony grows. We become taller in testimony like we grow taller in physical stature, and hardly know it happens because it comes by growth.

It is not wise to wrestle with the revelations with such insistence as to demand immediate answers or blessings to your liking.

You cannot force spiritual things. Such words as compel, coerce, constrain, pressure, demand do not describe our privileges with the Spirit.

You can no more force the Spirit to respond than you can force a bean to sprout, or an egg to hatch before its time. You can create a climate to foster growth; you can nourish, and protect; but you cannot force or compel: You must await the growth.

Do not be impatient to gain great spiritual knowledge. Let it grow, help it grow; but do not force it, or you will open the way to be misled.

We are expected to use the light and knowledge we already possess to work out our lives. We should not need a revelation to instruct us to be up and about our duty, for we have been told that already in the scriptures; we should not expect revelation to replace the spiritual or temporal intelligence which we have already received—only to extend it. We must go about our life in an ordinary workaday way, following the routines and rules and regulations that govern life.

Rules and regulations and commandments are valuable protection. Should we stand in need of revealed instruction to alter our course, it will be waiting along the way as we arrive at the point of need. The counsel to be busily engaged is wise counsel indeed. (Address given at a seminar for new mission presidents June 25, 1982 entitled "The Candle of the Lord," in *That All May Be Edified* [1982], pp.337-338)

Dallin H. Oaks (Quorum of the Twelve Apostles)

Revelation Comes in the Lord's Time and Way —

First, we should recognize that the Lord will speak to us through the Spirit in his own time and in his own way. Many people do not understand this principle. They believe that when they are ready and when it suits their convenience, they can call upon the Lord and he will immediately respond, even in the precise way they have prescribed. Revelation does not come that way. ...

Indeed, this is the principle the Lord revealed to his children in the great revelation printed in the 88th section of the Doctrine and Covenants. The Lord said: "Draw near unto me and I will draw near unto you; seek me diligently and ye shall find me; ask, and ye shall receive; knock, and it shall be opened unto you" (D&C 88:63).

Next, the Lord declared that if our eye is single to his glory, our whole bodies will be filled with light and we will be able to comprehend all things. Then, his instruction continued with this great promise: "Therefore, sanctify yourselves that your minds become single to God, and the days will come that you shall see him; for he will unveil his face unto you, and *it shall be in his own time, and in his own way, and according to his own will*" (D&C 88:68; emphasis added).

The principle stated in that revelation applies to every communication from our Heavenly Father: "It shall be in his own time, and in his own way, and according to his own will." We cannot force spiritual things.

In most cases, "his own way" is not the thunderous interruption or the blinding light, but what the scriptures call "the still small voice" (1 Kgs. 19:12; 1 Ne. 17:45; D&C 85:6). Some have misunderstood this principle. As a result, some have looked exclusively for the great manifestations that are recorded in the scriptures and have failed to recognize the still, small voice that is given to them. This is like making up our minds that we will learn only from a teacher who shouts and that we will refuse to listen to even the wisest teaching when it comes in a whisper.

We need to know that the Lord rarely speaks loudly. His messages almost always come in a whisper.

Revelation As Enlightenment and Peace—One of the greatest explanations of being taught by the Spirit is in the revelation given to Oliver Cowdery at Harmony, Pennsylvania, in April 1829. In this revelation, printed in section 8 of the Doctrine and Covenants, the Lord told Oliver Cowdery:

"Yea, behold, *I will tell you in your mind and in your heart*, by the Holy Ghost, which shall come upon you and which shall dwell in your heart.

"Now, behold, this is the spirit of revelation" (D&C

8:2–3; emphasis added).

Similarly, the Prophet Joseph Smith referred to the spirit of revelation as “pure intelligence,” which “may give you sudden strokes of ideas” (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith [1976], 151).

In another revelation, Oliver Cowdery was reminded that he had inquired of the Lord and that “as often as thou hast inquired thou hast received instruction of my Spirit” (D&C 6:14). How did that instruction come? The Lord said, “Behold, thou knowest that thou hast inquired of me and I did *enlighten thy mind*” (D&C 6:15; emphasis added). The Lord repeated that same teaching in a revelation given to Hyrum Smith, wherein the Lord said: “Verily, verily, I say unto you, I will impart unto you of my Spirit, which shall *enlighten your mind, which shall fill your soul with joy*” (D&C 11:13; emphasis added). These are great descriptions of the way the Lord communicates with us by his Spirit.

In further instruction to Oliver Cowdery, the Lord reminded him of the time he had prayed that he might know “the truth of these things” (D&C 6:22). And the Lord described how he had answered that prayer and given Oliver a revelation: “Did I not *speak peace to your mind* concerning the matter? What greater witness can you have than from God?” (D&C 6:23; emphasis added.)

From these revelations we learn that God teaches his sons and daughters by the power of his Spirit, *which enlightens their minds and speaks peace* to them concerning the questions they have asked.

Revelation Is Not Passive—We also learn from these revelations that being taught by the Spirit is not a passive thing. Often the Lord’s communication does not come until we have studied matters out in our own minds. Then we receive a confirmation.

The Lord explained that process to Oliver Cowdery in another revelation received at Harmony, Pennsylvania, in April 1829. The Lord was describing why Oliver had not been able to translate the Book of Mormon:

“Behold, you have not understood; you have supposed that I would give it unto you, when you took no thought save it was to ask me.

“But, behold, I say unto you, that *you must study it out in your mind*; then you must ask me if it be right, and if it is right I will cause that your bosom shall burn within you; therefore, *you shall feel that it is right*” (D&C 9:7–8; emphasis added).

Revelation and Feelings—This may be one of the most important and misunderstood teachings in all the Doctrine and Covenants. The teachings of the Spirit often come as feelings. That fact is of the utmost importance, yet some misunderstand what it means. I have met persons who told me they have never had a witness from the Holy Ghost because they have never felt their bosom “burn within” them.

What does a “burning in the bosom” mean? Does it need to be a feeling of caloric heat, like the burning produced by combustion? If that is the meaning, I have never had a burning in the bosom. Surely, the word “burning” in this scripture signifies a feeling of comfort

and serenity. That is the witness many receive. That is the way revelation works.

Truly, the still, small voice is just that, “still” and “small.” ...

Revelation Is Not Constant—The Lord’s way also puts limits on how often he will speak to us by his Spirit. Not understanding this, some have been misled by expecting revelations too frequently.

Commenting on the workings of the Spirit, Elder Boyd K. Packer of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles said: “I have learned that strong, impressive spiritual experiences do not come to us very frequently” (*That All May Be Edified* [1982], 337).

Revelations from God—the teachings and directions of the Spirit—are not constant. We believe in continuing revelation, not continuous revelation. We are often left to work out problems without the dictation or specific direction of the Spirit. That is part of the experience we must have in mortality. Fortunately, we are never out of our Savior’s sight, and if our judgment leads us to actions beyond the limits of what is permissible and if we are listening to the still, small voice, the Lord will restrain us by the promptings of his Spirit. ...

William E. Berrett, one of our finest gospel teachers, said this about the matter of continuous revelation:

“Those who pray that the Spirit might give them immediate guidance in every little thing throw themselves open to false spirits that seem ever ready to answer our pleas and confuse us. ... The people I have found most confused in this Church are those who seek personal revelations on everything. They want the personal assurance from the Spirit from daylight to dark on everything they do. I say they are the most confused people I know because it appears sometimes that the answer comes from the wrong source.”

I also agree with the following comment: “There are great dangers associated with those who profess a constant outpouring of the spirit of revelation. Frequently, those so professing place themselves above the need to listen to the counsel and direction of their priesthood leaders. Often they are above correction. It is natural for those who suppose they are having regular conversations with angels and diverse exalted beings to be a little bemused at the counsel of bishops and stake presidents. With but a bit of polish, such an attitude ripens into the cultist’s mentality in which one is above the laws of both church and state.”

Visions do happen. Voices are heard from beyond the veil. I know this. But these experiences are exceptional. And those who have these great and exceptional experiences rarely speak of them publicly because we are instructed not to do so (see D&C 63:64) and because we understand that the channels of revelation will be closed if we show these things before the world.

Most of the revelation that comes to leaders and members of the Church comes by the still, small voice or by a feeling rather than by a vision or a voice that speaks specific words we can hear. I testify to the reality of that kind of revelation, which I have come to know as a familiar, even daily, experience to guide me in the work of

the Lord. ("Teaching and Learning by the Spirit," *Ensign*, Mar. 1997, pp. 12–14; underlining is not original)

Line-Upon-Line Revelation

Articles of Faith 9

We believe all that God has revealed, all that He does now reveal, and we believe that He will yet reveal many great and important things pertaining to the Kingdom of God.

2 Nephi 28

24 Therefore, wo be unto him that is at ease in Zion!

25 Wo be unto him that crieth: All is well!

26 Yea, wo be unto him that hearkeneth unto the precepts of men, and denieth the power of God, and the gift of the Holy Ghost!

27 Yea, wo be unto him that saith: We have received, and we need no more!

28 And in fine, wo unto all those who tremble, and are angry because of the truth of God! For behold, he that is built upon the rock receiveth it with gladness; and he that is built upon a sandy foundation trembleth lest he shall fall. [cf [Ether 4:8](#)]

29 Wo be unto him that shall say: We have received the word of God, and we need no more of the word of God, for we have enough!

30 For behold, thus saith the Lord God: I will give unto the children of men line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little; and blessed are those who hearken unto my precepts, and lend an ear unto my counsel, for they shall learn wisdom; for unto him that receiveth I will give more; and from them that shall say, We have enough, from them shall be taken away even that which they have. [cf [D&C 50:24](#)]

31 Cursed is he that putteth his trust in man, or maketh flesh his arm, or shall hearken unto the precepts of men, save their precepts shall be given by the power of the Holy Ghost.

D&C 1:28

And inasmuch as they were humble they might be made strong, and blessed from on high, and receive knowledge from time to time.

D&C 42:61

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 50

24 That which is of God is light; and he that receiveth light, and continueth in God, receiveth more light; and that light groweth brighter and brighter until the perfect day. [cf [2 Ne. 28:30](#)]

D&C 98

11 And I give unto you a commandment, that ye shall forsake all evil and cleave unto all good, that ye shall live by every word which proceedeth forth out of the mouth of God.

12 For he will give unto the faithful line upon line, precept upon precept; and I will try you and prove you herewith.

Spencer W. Kimball (President)

We are happy in our knowledge that the God of this universe is a God of revelation. Our Lord communicates his mind and will to his children on earth. If we seek it, he will reveal himself more and more and in greater and greater fulness, and we shall comprehend him as well as it is possible for mortal man to comprehend God. We cannot worship a being of our own creation or of the imaginations of our minds. We worship a being who lives, who has created, who communicates to us his character and his attributes and the greatness of his being. (*The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball* [1982], p.7)

Revelation Necessary to Know God

Jacob 4:8

Behold, great and marvelous are the works of the Lord. How unsearchable are the depths of the mysteries of him; and it is impossible that man should find out all his ways. And no man knoweth of his ways save it be revealed unto him; wherefore, brethren, despise not the revelations of God. [cf [D&C 76:2](#)]

Joseph Smith (President)

Could we read and comprehend all that has been written from the days of Adam, on the relation of man to God and angels in a future state, we should know very little about it. Reading the experience of others, or the revelation given to them, can never give us a comprehensive view of our condition and true relation to God. Knowledge of these things can only be obtained by experience through the ordinances of God set forth for that purpose. Could you gaze into heaven five minutes, you would know more than you would by reading all that ever was written on the subject. (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith* [1938], p.324) [cf [D&C 76:117](#)]

Bruce R. McConkie (Quorum of the Twelve Apostles)

But what I desire to point attention to is the fact that revelation is not restricted to the prophet of God on earth. The visions of eternity are not reserved for Apostles—they are not reserved for the General Authorities. Revelation is something that should be received by every individual. God is no respecter of persons, and every soul, in the ultimate sense, is just as precious in his sight as the souls of those who are called to positions of leadership. Because he operates on principles of eternal, universal, and never-deviating law, any individual who abides the law that entitles him to get

revelation can know exactly and precisely what President Kimball knows, can entertain angels just as well as Joseph Smith entertained them, and can be in tune in full measure with all of the things of the Spirit.

Now for a text I present to you these words of the Prophet Joseph Smith. He said:

"Reading the experience of others, or the revelation given to them, can never give us a comprehensive view of our condition and true relation to God. Knowledge of these things can only be obtained by experience through the ordinances of God set forth for that purpose. Could you gaze into heaven five minutes, you would know more than you would by reading all that ever was written on the subject." (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, p. 324.)

Now note this statement: "Could you gaze into heaven five minutes, you would know more than you would by reading all that ever was written on the subject." I think our concern is to get personal revelation, to know for ourselves, independent of any other individual or set of individuals, what the mind and the will of the Lord is as pertaining to us in our individual concerns and to receive confirmation of his mind and will as pertaining to his church.

I suppose that we can divide the realm of inquiry into an intellectual field and a spiritual field. While we are in school we are seeking knowledge primarily in the intellectual field, which knowledge probably comes in most instances by reason and through the senses.

This is a tremendously vital and important thing—we encourage it and we urge it upon all people who desire to progress and have enlightenment and advancement in their lives.

But my suggestion is that we need to devote an increasingly large portion of our time in the actual pursuit of knowledge in the spiritual realm. When we deal with spiritual realities, we are not talking about gaining something by reason alone, we are not talking about conveying in some way knowledge to the mind or the spirit that is within us through the senses alone, but we are talking about revelation. We are talking about learning how to come to a knowledge of the things of God by attuning the spirit that we have to the eternal Spirit of God. Such a course, primarily, is the channel and way that revelation comes to an individual.

It does not concern me very much that somebody writes or evaluates or analyzes either a doctrinal or a Church problem of any sort when he does it from the standpoint of the intellect alone. No one questions that everything in the spiritual realm is in total and complete accord with the intellectual realities that we arrive at through reason, but when the two are compared and evaluated and weighed as to their relative merits, the things that are important are in the spiritual realm and not the intellectual. The things of God are known only by the Spirit of God. ...

Now I say that we are entitled to revelation. I say that every member of the Church, independent and irrespective of any position that he may hold, is entitled

to get revelation from the Holy Ghost; he is entitled to entertain angels; he is entitled to view the visions of eternity; and if we would like to go the full measure, he is entitled to see God the same way that any prophet in literal and actual reality has seen the face of Deity. ("How to Get Personal Revelation," *New Era*, June 1980, 46, pp. 47-48)

The Greater Portion of the Word

Abraham 1:2

And, finding there was greater happiness and peace and rest for me, I sought for the blessings of the fathers, and the right whereunto I should be ordained to administer the same; having been myself a follower of righteousness, desiring also to be one who possessed great knowledge, and to be a greater follower of righteousness, and to possess a greater knowledge, and to be a father of many nations, a prince of peace, and desiring to receive instructions, and to keep the commandments of God, I became a rightful heir, a High Priest, holding the right belonging to the fathers.

1 Nephi 10

17 And it came to pass after I, Nephi, having heard all the words of my father, concerning the things which he saw in a vision, and also the things which he spake by the power of the Holy Ghost, which power he received by faith on the Son of God--and the Son of God was the Messiah who should come -- I, Nephi, was desirous also that I might see, and hear, and know of these things, by the power of the Holy Ghost, which is the gift of God unto all those who diligently seek him, as well in times of old as in the time that he should manifest himself unto the children of men.

18 For he is the same yesterday, today, and forever; and the way is prepared for all men from the foundation of the world, if it so be that they repent and come unto him.

19 For he that diligently seeketh shall find; and the mysteries of God shall be unfolded unto them, by the power of the Holy Ghost, as well in these times as in times of old, and as well in times of old as in times to come; wherefore, the course of the Lord is one eternal round.

1 Nephi 15

8 And I said unto them: Have ye inquired of the Lord?

9 And they said unto me: We have not; for the Lord maketh no such thing known unto us.

10 Behold, I said unto them: How is it that ye do not keep the commandments of the Lord? How is it that ye will perish, because of the hardness of your hearts?

11 Do ye not remember the things which the Lord hath said?-- If ye will not harden your hearts, and ask me in faith, believing that ye shall receive, with diligence in keeping my commandments, surely these things shall be made known unto you.

Alma 12

9 And now Alma began to expound these things unto him, saying: It is given unto many to know the mysteries of God; nevertheless they are laid under a strict command that they shall not impart only according to the portion of his word which he doth grant unto the children of men, according to the heed and diligence which they give unto him.

10 And therefore, he that will harden his heart, the same receiveth the lesser portion of the word; and he that will not harden his heart, to him is given the greater portion of the word, until it is given unto him to know the mysteries of God until he know them in full.

11 And they that will harden their hearts, to them is given the lesser portion of the word until they know nothing concerning his mysteries; and then they are taken captive by the devil, and led by his will down to destruction. Now this is what is meant by the chains of hell.

3 Nephi 26

1 And now it came to pass that when Jesus had told these things he expounded them unto the multitude; and he did expound all things unto them, both great and small.

2 And he saith: These scriptures, which ye had not with you, the Father commanded that I should give unto you; for it was wisdom in him that they should be given unto future generations.

3 And he did expound all things, even from the beginning until the time that he should come in his glory--yea, even all things which should come upon the face of the earth, even until the elements should melt with fervent heat, and the earth should be wrapt together as a scroll, and the heavens and the earth should pass away;

4 And even unto the great and last day, when all people, and all kindreds, and all nations and tongues shall stand before God, to be judged of their works, whether they be good or whether they be evil--

5 If they be good, to the resurrection of everlasting life; and if they be evil, to the resurrection of damnation; being on a parallel, the one on the one hand and the other on the other hand, according to the mercy, and the justice, and the holiness which is in Christ, who was before the world began.

6 And now there cannot be written in this book even a hundredth part of the things which Jesus did truly teach unto the people;

7 But behold the plates of Nephi do contain the more part of the things which he taught the people.

8 And these things have I written, which are a lesser part of the things which he taught the people; and I have written them to the intent that they may be brought again unto this people, from the Gentiles, according to the words which Jesus hath spoken.

9 And when they shall have received this, which is expedient that they should have first, to try their faith, and if it shall so be that they shall believe these things *then*

shall the greater things be made manifest unto them.

10 And if it so be that they will not believe these things, then shall the greater things be withheld from them, unto their condemnation.

11 Behold, I was about to write them, all which were engraven upon the plates of Nephi, but the Lord forbade it, saying: I will try the faith of my people.

12 Therefore I, Mormon, do write the things which have been commanded me of the Lord.

3 Nephi 28

12 And it came to pass that when Jesus had spoken these words, he touched every one of them with his finger save it were the three who were to tarry, and then he departed.

13 And behold, the heavens were opened, and they were caught up into heaven, and saw and heard unspeakable things.

14 And it was forbidden them that they should utter; neither was it given unto them power that they could utter the things which they saw and heard;

15 And whether they were in the body or out of the body, they could not tell; for it did seem unto them like a transfiguration of them, that they were changed from this body of flesh into an immortal state, that they could behold the things of God.

Ether 4

1 And the Lord commanded the brother of Jared to go down out of the mount from the presence of the Lord, and write the things which he had seen; and they were forbidden to come unto the children of men until after that he should be lifted up upon the cross; and for this cause did king Mosiah keep them, that they should not come unto the world until after Christ should show himself unto his people.

2 And after Christ truly had showed himself unto his people he commanded that they should be made manifest.

3 And now, after that, they have all dwindled in unbelief; and there is none save it be the Lamanites, and they have rejected the gospel of Christ; therefore I am commanded that I should hide them up again in the earth.

4 Behold, I have written upon these plates the very things which the brother of Jared saw; and there never were greater things made manifest than those which were made manifest unto the brother of Jared.

5 Wherefore the Lord hath commanded me to write them; and I have written them. And he commanded me that I should seal them up; and he also hath commanded that I should seal up the interpretation thereof; wherefore I have sealed up the interpreters, according to the commandment of the Lord.

6 For the Lord said unto me: They shall not go forth unto the Gentiles until the day that they shall repent of their iniquity, and become clean before the Lord.

7 And in that day that they shall exercise faith in me, saith the Lord, even as the brother of Jared did, that they

may become sanctified in me, then will I manifest unto them the things which the brother of Jared saw, even to the unfolding unto them all my revelations, saith Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Father of the heavens and of the earth, and all things that in them are.

8 And he that will contend against the word of the Lord, let him be accursed; and he that shall deny these things, let him be accursed; for unto them will I show no greater things, saith Jesus Christ; for I am he who speaketh. [cf 2 Ne. 28:28]

9 And at my command the heavens are opened and are shut; and at my word the earth shall shake; and at my command the inhabitants thereof shall pass away, even so as by fire.

10 And he that believeth not my words believeth not my disciples; and if it so be that I do not speak, judge ye; for ye shall know that it is I that speaketh, at the last day.

11 But he that believeth these things which I have spoken, him will I visit with the manifestations of my Spirit, and he shall know and bear record. For because of my Spirit he shall know that these things are true; for it persuadeth men to do good.

12 And whatsoever thing persuadeth men to do good is of me; for good cometh of none save it be of me. I am the same that leadeth men to all good; he that will not believe my words will not believe me--that I am; and he that will not believe me will not believe the Father who sent me. For behold, I am the Father, I am the light, and the life, and the truth of the world.

13 Come unto me, O ye Gentiles, and I will show unto you the greater things, the knowledge which is hid up because of unbelief.

14 Come unto me, O ye house of Israel, and it shall be made manifest unto you how great things the Father hath laid up for you, from the foundation of the world; and it hath not come unto you, because of unbelief.

15 Behold, when ye shall rend that veil of unbelief which doth cause you to remain in your awful state of wickedness, and hardness of heart, and blindness of mind, then shall the great and marvelous things which have been hid up from the foundation of the world from you--yea, when ye shall call upon the Father in my name, with a broken heart and a contrite spirit, then shall ye know that the Father hath remembered the covenant which he made unto your fathers, O house of Israel.

16 And then shall my revelations which I have caused to be written by my servant John be unfolded in the eyes of all the people. Remember, when ye see these things, ye shall know that the time is at hand that they shall be made manifest in very deed.

17 Therefore, when ye shall receive this record ye may know that the work of the Father has commenced upon all the face of the land.

18 Therefore, repent all ye ends of the earth, and come unto me, and believe in my gospel, and be baptized in my name; for he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned; and signs shall follow them that believe in my name.

19 And blessed is he that is found faithful unto my name at the last day, for he shall be lifted up to dwell in

the kingdom prepared for him from the foundation of the world. And behold it is I that hath spoken it. Amen.

2 Corinthians 12

1 IT is not expedient for me doubtless to glory. I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord.

2 I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven.

3 And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;)

4 How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.

D&C 76

2 Great is his wisdom, marvelous are his ways, and the extent of his doings none can find out. [cf Jacob 4:8]

3 His purposes fail not, neither are there any who can stay his hand.

4 From eternity to eternity he is the same, and his years never fail.

5 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.

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

7 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.

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

9 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.

10 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.

113 This is the end of the vision which we saw, which we were commanded to write while we were yet in the Spirit.

114 But great and marvelous are the works of the Lord, and the mysteries of his kingdom which he showed unto us, which surpass all understanding in glory, and in might, and in dominion;

115 Which he commanded us we should not write while we were yet in the Spirit, and are not lawful for man to utter;

116 Neither is man capable to make them known, for they are only to be seen and understood by the power of the Holy Spirit, which God bestows on those who love

him, and purify themselves before him;

117 To whom he grants this privilege of seeing and knowing for themselves;

118 That through the power and manifestation of the Spirit, while in the flesh, they may be able to bear his presence in the world of glory.

It Is Given Unto Many to Know the Mysteries of God

1 Ne 10

19 For he that diligently seeketh shall find; and the mysteries of God shall be unfolded unto them, by the power of the Holy Ghost, as well in these times as in times of old, and as well in times of old as in times to come; wherefore, the course of the Lord is one eternal round.

Jacob 4

8 Behold, great and marvelous are the works of the Lord. How unsearchable are the depths of the mysteries of him; and it is impossible that man should find out all his ways. And no man knoweth of his ways save it be revealed unto him; wherefore, brethren, despise not the revelations of God.

Alma 12

9 And now Alma began to expound these things unto him, saying: It is given unto many to know the mysteries of God; nevertheless they are laid under a strict command that they shall not impart only according to the portion of his word which he doth grant unto the children of men, according to the heed and diligence which they give unto him.

10 And therefore, he that will harden his heart, the same receiveth the lesser portion of the word; and he that will not harden his heart, to him is given the greater portion of the word, until it is given unto him to know the mysteries of God until he know them in full.

Alma 26

22 Yea, he that repenteth and exerciseth faith, and bringeth forth good works, and prayeth continually without ceasing--unto such it is given to know the mysteries of God; yea, unto such it shall be given to reveal things which never have been revealed; yea, and it shall be given unto such to bring thousands of souls to repentance, even as it has been given unto us to bring these our brethren to repentance.

Alma 40

3 Behold, he bringeth to pass the resurrection of the dead. But behold, my son, the resurrection is not yet. Now, I unfold unto you a mystery; nevertheless, there are many mysteries which are kept, that no one knoweth them save God himself. But I show unto you one thing which I have inquired diligently of God that I might know--that is concerning the resurrection.

Matt 13

11 He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given.

D&C 6

7 Seek not for riches but for wisdom, and behold, the mysteries of God shall be unfolded unto you, and then shall you be made rich. Behold, he that hath eternal life is rich.

11 And if thou wilt inquire, thou shalt know mysteries which are great and marvelous; therefore thou shalt exercise thy gift, that thou mayest find out mysteries, that thou mayest bring many to the knowledge of the truth, yea, convince them of the error of their ways. [cf. 8:11; 11:7]

D&C 42

61 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.

65 Behold, thou shalt observe all these things, and great shall be thy reward; for unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom, but unto the world it is not given to know them.

D&C 63

23 But unto him that keepeth my commandments I will give the mysteries of my kingdom, and the same shall be in him a well of living water, springing up unto everlasting life.

D&C 76

5 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.

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

7 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.

Harold B. Lee (President)

These revelations, which are reserved for and taught only to the faithful Church members in sacred temples, constitute what are called the "mysteries of Godliness. The Lord said He had given to Joseph "the keys of the mysteries, and the revelations which are sealed." (D&C 28:7.) As a reward to the faithful, the Lord promised: "And to them will I reveal all mysteries, yea, all the hidden mysteries of my kingdom from days of old. ..." (D&C 76:7.) In this sense, then, a mystery may be defined as a truth which cannot be known except by revelation. (*Ye Are the Light of the World: Selected Sermons and Writings of Harold B. Lee* [1974], p. 211)

David A. Bednar (Quorum of the Twelve Apostles)

Revelation is communication from Heavenly Father to His children on earth. As we ask in faith, we can receive revelation upon revelation and knowledge upon knowledge and come to know the mysteries and peaceable things that bring joy and eternal life (see D&C 42:61). The mysteries are those matters that can only be known and understood by the power of the Holy Ghost. [From "Pray Always," *Ensign* Nov., 2008, p. 41]

Joseph Fielding Smith (President)

MYSTERIES OF GOD KNOWN ONLY THROUGH SPIRIT. There are in the gospel such things as mysteries. A mystery is, of course, some truth which is not understood. All the principles of the gospel and all truth pertaining to the salvation of men are simple when understood. Until it is understood, however, a simple truth may be a great mystery.

Gospel truths appeal more to the spirit, that is, they are spiritually discerned. A man may know a thing to be true by the teaching of the Spirit, but he may not be able to explain it to others. This may not be in keeping with modern worldly teaching, but it is true nevertheless. Revelations through the Spirit of the Lord, many times, cannot be explained.

"And no tongue can speak, neither can there be written by any man, neither can the hearts of men conceive so great and marvelous things as we both saw and heard Jesus speak; and no one can conceive of the joy which filled our souls at the time we heard him pray for us unto the Father." (3 Ne. 17:17)

HIDDEN MYSTERIES KNOWN TO FAITHFUL. The best educated man in the world may not be able to comprehend the simple truths of the gospel because his soul is not in tune; he has not been enlightened by the Spirit of the Lord. He, therefore, fails to see and feel the significance of these principles. They cannot be seen except through the touch of the Holy Ghost. For this reason Alma explained to Zeezrom how gospel light may be known. Said he:

"It is given unto many to know the mysteries of God; nevertheless they are laid under a strict command that they shall not impart only according to the portion of his word which he doth grant unto the children of men, according to the heed and diligence which they give unto him.

"And therefore, he that will harden his heart, the same receiveth the lesser portion of the word; and he that will not harden his heart, to him is given the greater portion of the word, until it is given unto him to know the mysteries of God until he know them in full.

"And they that will harden their hearts, to them is given the lesser portion of the word until they know nothing concerning his mysteries; and then they are taken captive by the devil, and led by his will down to destruction. Now this is what is meant by the chains of hell." (Alma 12:9-11)

The Lord promised the saints that he would reveal to them the mysteries of his kingdom on certain conditions,

as we read in the Doctrine and Covenants, section 76:1-10. These truths cannot be understood except by obedience to the law of the gospel on which the reception of this knowledge is based. It was for the same reason the Lord told Nicodemus, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. (John 3:3)" (*Doctrines of Salvation*, 3 vols., edited by Bruce R. McConkie [1954-56], 1:296-297)

Dallin H. Oaks (Quorum of the Twelve)

Why is it important to know the mysteries of God? President Spencer W. Kimball explained:

"Of all treasures of knowledge, the most vital is the knowledge of God: his existence, powers, love, and promises. ...

"If we spend our mortal days in accumulating secular knowledge to the exclusion of the spiritual then we are on a dead-end street, for this is the time for man to prepare to meet God; this is the time for faith to be built. ...

"Secular knowledge, important as it may be, can never save a soul nor open the celestial kingdom" (*The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball* [1982], 390).

The knowledge of God and His plan of salvation is the kind of knowledge that saves, and this kind of knowledge can be obtained only in the Lord's way.

God reveals Himself and His eternal truths—the spiritual food that the scriptures call the bread of life and the living water—to those who seek, who serve, who keep His commandments, and who wait and listen in humility for His teaching. Study and reason are appropriate to begin this process, but "the things of God cannot be learned solely by study and reason. Despite their essential and beneficial uses, the methods of study and reason are insufficient as ways of approaching God and understanding the doctrines of his gospel. We cannot come to know the things of God while rejecting or failing to use the indispensable method God has prescribed to learn these things. The things of God must be learned in his own way, through faith in God and revelation from the Holy Ghost" (Dallin H. Oaks, *The Lord's Way* [1991], 56). Only in this way can we obtain the spiritual illumination, nutrition, and power necessary to teach and transmit faith and testimony.

Gospel learning is usually initiated by study and reason, but so far as I can observe, intellectual methods, standing alone, are not effective in transmitting abiding faith and deep spirituality from one person to another or from one generation to another.

The Book of Mormon contains many examples of this. For example, just a few years before the coming of Christ, "the people began to harden their hearts, all save it were the most believing part of them, ... and began to depend upon their own strength and upon their own wisdom. ...

"And they began to reason and to contend among themselves, saying:

"That it is not reasonable that such a being as a Christ shall come" (Hel. 16:15, 17–18).

Then, the scriptures conclude, "Satan did get great hold upon the hearts of the people upon all the face of the

land” (Hel. 16:23).

The Lord’s way of teaching the truths of the gospel is prescribed in the 1831 revelation now published as the 50th section of the Doctrine and Covenants. Here we are taught that it is not enough simply to speak or teach the truth; we must teach gospel truths “by the Spirit, even the Comforter which was sent forth to teach the truth” (D&C 50:14). The Lord reemphasizes this vital truth by warning that if we preach or teach the gospel “by some other way it is not of God” (D&C 50:18). Similarly, the Lord declares, if “the word of truth” (D&C 50:19) is received by “some other way it is not of God” (D&C 50:20). Finally, the Lord states that He has explained these principles “that you may know the truth, that you may chase darkness from among you” (D&C 50:25).

Of course, we may ignore these directions and seek to teach the gospel to our children or to investigators by the world’s way of study and reason, independent of the witness and teaching of the Spirit. But the results are not the same. If we deviate from the Lord’s way, we relinquish the Lord’s promises. Brigham Young explained an important difference between a conversion based on intellectual grounds and a conversion based on a spiritual witness when he said:

“Many receive the Gospel because they know it is true; they are convinced in their judgment that it is true; strong argument overpowers them, and they are rationally compelled to admit the Gospel to be true upon fair reasoning. They yield to it, and obey its first principles, but never seek to be enlightened by the power of the Holy Ghost; such ones frequently step out of the way” (*Discourses of Brigham Young*, sel. John A. Widtsoe [1977], 86).

There are those whose intellectual approach to [page 10] spiritual things has left them spiritually undernourished and vulnerable to doubts and misgivings. President James E. Faust, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, has suggested how such persons can seek greater spirituality: “Their faith can be strengthened by following their intuitive judgment and the purest and noblest feelings of their own souls” (*Reach Up for the Light* [1990], 29). Note President Faust’s use of the word feelings. Spiritual things, like conversion and testimony, come in large part by feelings—the enlightenment of the Spirit. Those who seek or are satisfied to stop with an intellectual conviction live in a spiritual habitation built upon the sand. For them and for their children—if that is all the inheritance their children obtain—that habitation is forever vulnerable. The things of God, including a spiritual conversion and testimony, must be transmitted in the Lord’s way, “by the Spirit.”

In response to a skeptic’s questions about the resurrection, the prophet Alma gave this great insight into the mysteries of God:

“It is given unto many to know the mysteries of God; nevertheless they are laid under a strict command that they shall not impart only according to the portion of his word which he doth grant unto the children of men, according to the heed and diligence which they give unto

him.

“And therefore, he that will harden his heart, the same receiveth the lesser portion of the word; and he that will not harden his heart, to him is given the greater portion of the word, until it is given unto him to know the mysteries of God until he know them in full.

“And they that will harden their hearts, to them is given the lesser portion of the word until they know nothing concerning his mysteries; and then they are taken captive by the devil, and led by his will down to destruction. Now this is what is meant by the chains of hell” (Alma 12:9–11).

We teach and learn the mysteries of God by revelation from His Holy Spirit. If we harden our hearts to revelation and limit our understanding to what we can obtain by study and reason, we are limited to what Alma called “the lesser portion of the word.” (“Nourishing the Spirit,” *Ensign*, Dec. 1998, pp. 7-13)

We May Seek the Face of the Lord

D&C 35

21 For they will hear my voice, and shall see me, and shall not be asleep, and shall abide the day of my coming; for they shall be purified, even as I am pure.

D&C 38

7 But behold, verily, verily, I say unto you that mine eyes are upon you. I am in your midst and ye cannot see me;

8 But the day soon cometh that ye shall see me, and know that I am; for the veil of darkness shall soon be rent, and he that is not purified shall not abide the day.

9 Wherefore, gird up your loins and be prepared. Behold, the kingdom is yours, and the enemy shall not overcome.

D&C 67

10 And again, verily I say unto you that it is your privilege, and a promise I give unto you that have been ordained unto this ministry, that inasmuch as you strip yourselves from jealousies and fears, and humble yourselves before me, for ye are not sufficiently humble, the veil shall be rent and you shall see me and know that I am--not with the carnal neither natural mind, but with the spiritual.

11 For no man has seen God at any time in the flesh, except quickened by the Spirit of God.

12 Neither can any natural man abide the presence of God, neither after the carnal mind.

D&C 88

46 Unto what shall I liken these kingdoms, that ye may understand?

47 Behold, all these are kingdoms, and any man who hath seen any or the least of these hath seen God moving in his majesty and power.

48 I say unto you, he hath seen him; nevertheless, he

who came unto his own was not comprehended.

49 The light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehendeth it not; nevertheless, the day shall come when you shall comprehend even God, being quickened in him and by him.

50 Then shall ye know that ye have seen me, that I am, and that I am the true light that is in you, and that you are in me; otherwise ye could not abound.

51 Behold, I will liken these kingdoms unto a man having a field, and he sent forth his servants into the field to dig in the field.

52 And he said unto the first: Go ye and labor in the field, and in the first hour I will come unto you, and ye shall behold the joy of my countenance.

53 And he said unto the second: Go ye also into the field, and in the second hour I will visit you with the joy of my countenance.

54 And also unto the third, saying: I will visit you;

55 And unto the fourth, and so on unto the twelfth.

56 And the lord of the field went unto the first in the first hour, and tarried with him all that hour, and he was made glad with the light of the countenance of his lord.

57 And then he withdrew from the first that he might visit the second also, and the third, and the fourth, and so on unto the twelfth.

58 And thus they all received the light of the countenance of their lord, every man in his hour, and in his time, and in his season--

59 Beginning at the first, and so on unto the last, and from the last unto the first, and from the first unto the last;

60 Every man in his own order, until his hour was finished, even according as his lord had commanded him, that his lord might be glorified in him, and he in his lord, that they all might be glorified.

61 Therefore, unto this parable I will liken all these kingdoms, and the inhabitants thereof--every kingdom in its hour, and in its time, and in its season, even according to the decree which God hath made.

62 And again, verily I say unto you, my friends, I leave these sayings with you to ponder in your hearts, with this commandment which I give unto you, that ye shall call upon me while I am near--

63 Draw near unto me and I will draw near unto you; seek me diligently and ye shall find me; ask, and ye shall receive; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.

64 Whatsoever ye ask the Father in my name it shall be given unto you, that is expedient for you;

65 And if ye ask anything that is not expedient for you, it shall turn unto your condemnation.

66 Behold, that which you hear is as the voice of one crying in the wilderness--in the wilderness, because you cannot see him--my voice, because my voice is Spirit; my Spirit is truth; truth abideth and hath no end; and if it be in you it shall abound.

67 And if your eye be single to my glory, your whole bodies shall be filled with light, and there shall be no darkness in you; and that body which is filled with light comprehendeth all things.

68 Therefore, sanctify yourselves that your minds

become single to God, and the days will come that you shall see him; for he will unveil his face unto you, and it shall be in his own time, and in his own way, and according to his own will.

Dallin H. Oaks (Quorum of the Twelve Apostles)

The Lord's timing also applies to the important events of our personal lives. A great scripture in the Doctrine and Covenants declares that a particular spiritual experience will come to us "in his own time, and in his own way, and according to his own will" (D&C 88:68). This principle applies to revelation (see Oaks, "Teaching and Learning by the Spirit," Ensign, March 1997, 11) and to all of the most important events in our lives: birth, marriage, death, and even our moves from place to place. ("Timing," Ensign, Oct 2003, pp. 10ff)

Spencer W. Kimball (President)

The ultimate and greatest of all knowledge, then, is to know God and his program for our exaltation. We may know him by sight, by sound, by feeling. While relatively few ever do really know him, everyone may know him, not only prophets-ancient and modern-but, as he said: "Every soul who forsaketh his sins and cometh unto me, and calleth on my name, and obeyeth my voice, and keepeth my commandments, shall see my face and know that I am." (D & C 93:1.)

If men qualify, they have this unalterable promise from their Redeemer. (*The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball* [1982], p.7)

Bruce R. McConkie (Quorum of the Twelve Apostles)

All Christendom knows, or should know, that the ancient apostles were special witnesses of the Lord's name; that they saw him after he rose from the dead; that he spent forty days with them as a resurrected being, teaching them all things that it was expedient for them to know pertaining to his kingdom. Those who believe the Book of Mormon are aware that, as with the Twelve in Jerusalem, so with the Twelve on the American continent: they were all witnesses of the Lord--they all felt the nail marks in his hands and feet; they all thrust their hands into his side. There is general awareness in the Church that the latter-day Twelve hold the same office, possess the same priesthood and keys, and bear the same witness of the divine Sonship of him who redeemed us as did their predecessors in days of old. It is true that the witness of the Holy Ghost is sure and absolute and that a man can know with a perfect knowledge, by the power of the Holy Ghost, that Jesus Christ is the Son of the living God who was crucified for the sins of the world. This unshakeable certainty can rest in his soul even though he has not seen the face of his Lord. But it is also true that those who have this witness of the Spirit are expected, like their counterparts of old, to see and hear and touch and converse with the Heavenly Person, as did those of old.

Oliver Cowdery, the Associate President of the Church, who held the keys of the kingdom jointly with the Prophet Joseph Smith, having received them from holy angels

sent to earth for that very purpose, was appointed to give the apostolic charge to the first quorum of apostles called in this dispensation. Speaking by the spirit of inspiration and by virtue of visions he had received, Elder Cowdery set forth, in the spirit of pure inspiration, the nature of the apostolic office and what is expected of those who hold it. We shall quote those portions of his charge which deal with the obligation that rests upon all members of the Council of the Twelve to see the face of Him whose witnesses they are.

In a special charge to Elder Parley P. Pratt, we find these words: "The ancients . . . had this testimony-that they had seen the Savior after he rose from the dead. You must bear the same testimony; or your mission, your labor, your toil, will be in vain. You must bear the same testimony that there is but one God, one Mediator; he that hath seen him, will know him, and testify of him."

In the general charge to all of the Twelve, Elder Cowdery said: "It is necessary that you receive a testimony from heaven to yourselves; so that you can bear testimony to the truth of the Book of Mormon, and that you have seen the face of God. That is more than the testimony of an angel. When the proper time arrives, you shall be able to bear this testimony to the world. When you bear testimony that you have seen God, this testimony God will never suffer to fall, but will bear you out; although many will not give heed, yet others will. You will therefore see the necessity of getting this testimony from heaven.

"Never cease striving until you have seen God face to face. Strengthen your faith; cast off your doubts, your sins, and all your unbelief; and nothing can prevent you from coming to God. Your ordination is not full and complete till God has laid his hand upon you. We require as much to qualify us as did those who have gone before us; God is the same. If the Savior in former days laid his hands upon his disciples, why not in latter days?...

"The time is coming when you will be perfectly familiar with the things of God. . . . You have our best wishes, you have our most fervent prayers, that you may be able to bear this testimony, that you have seen the face of God. Therefore call upon him in faith in mighty prayer till you prevail, for it is your duty and your privilege to bear such a testimony for yourselves." (*History of the Church*, 2:192-98.)

Few faithful people will stumble or feel disbelief at the doctrine here presented that the Lord's apostolic witnesses are entitled and expected to see his face, and that each one individually is obligated to "call upon him in faith in mighty prayer" until he prevails. But the Twelve are only a dozen in number. There are seldom more than fifteen men on earth at a time who have been ordained to the holy apostleship, which brings us to another statement made by Elder Cowdery in his apostolic charge: "God does not love you better or more than others." That is, apostles and prophets do not gain precedence with the Lord unless they earn it by personal righteousness. The Lord loves people, not office holders. Every elder is entitled to the same blessings and

privileges offered the apostles. Indeed, an apostle is an elder; such is the title by which he is proud to be addressed. The priesthood is greater than any of its offices. No office adds any power, dignity, or authority to the priesthood. All offices derive their rights, virtues, authorities, and prerogatives from the priesthood. It is greater to hold the Melchizedek Priesthood than it is to hold the office of an elder or of an apostle in that priesthood. The Lord loves his priesthood holders, all of whom are given the same opportunity to do good and work righteousness and keep the commandments. All of the elders in the kingdom are expected to live the law as strictly as do the members of the Council of the Twelve, and if they do so live, the same blessings will come to them that flow to apostles and prophets.

Apostles and prophets are named as examples and patterns of what others should be. The Quorum of the Twelve should be a model quorum after which every elders quorum in the Church might pattern its course. For instance, before long there will be a great sacrament meeting at which the Lord Jesus himself will partake of the sacrament. Others who will be in attendance and who will partake of the sacrament also will be Moroni, Elias, John the Baptist, Elijah, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, Joseph the son of Jacob, Peter, James, and John, and Michael the archangel who is Adam. These are the ones who are listed by name in the revelation. They shall all be there. The immediate impression arises what a marvelous meeting this will be, to have the Lord Jesus and all these holy prophets in attendance. Such an impression is of course proper.

But those named are listed merely to illustrate and dramatize what is to be. After naming them as the ones with whom the Lord will partake of the sacrament, the revelation says, "And also with all those whom my Father hath given me out of the world." (D&C 27:5-14.) In other words, every faithful person in the whole history of the world, every person who has so lived as to merit eternal life in the kingdom of the Father will be in attendance and will partake, with the Lord, of the sacrament.

I repeat: apostles and prophets simply serve as patterns and examples to show all men what they may receive if they are true and faithful. There is nothing an apostle can receive that is not available to every elder in the kingdom. As we have heretofore quoted, from the Prophet's sermon on the Second Comforter: "God hath not revealed anything to Joseph, but what he will make known unto the Twelve, and even the least saint may know all things as fast as he is able to bear them." (*Teachings*, p. 149.) It follows that everything stated by Elder Oliver Cowdery in his charge to the apostles could also be given as a charge to all elders. Every elder is entitled and expected to seek and obtain all the spiritual blessings of the gospel, including the crowning blessing of seeing the Lord face to face. (*The Promised Messiah* [1981]: pp. 592-595).

The Pure in Heart Shall See God

Matthew 5

8 Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.

I John 3

1 Bheold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.

2 Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

3 And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.

3 Nephi 12

8 And blessed are all the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

I John 3

1 Bheold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.

2 Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

3 And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.

D&C 97

15 And inasmuch as my people build a house unto me in the name of the Lord, and do not suffer any unclean thing to come into it, that it be not defiled, my glory shall rest upon it;

16 Yea, and my presence shall be there, for I will come into it, and all the pure in heart that shall come into it shall see God.

17 But if it be defiled I will not come into it, and my glory shall not be there; for I will not come into unholy temples.

Spencer W. Kimball (President)

In light of the testimony of Joseph Smith, the ancient scriptures take on new meaning, their literal verity confirmed by the experience of modern man who, quickened and protected by the Spirit, actually saw the Father and the Son. How great a blessing to see God and commune directly with him while yet in mortality! Though few of us will have that blessing, we can, through understanding the scriptures and by humble prayer, come in impressive measure to know God. We have the promise that if we sufficiently purify our hearts we shall surely see God and know him as he is! (*Faith Precedes the Miracle* [1975], p.93)

Bruce R. McConkie (Quorum of the Twelve Apostles)

After the true saints receive and enjoy the gift of the

Holy Ghost; after they know how to attune themselves to the voice of the Spirit; after they mature spiritually so that they see visions, work miracles, and entertain angels; after they make their calling and election sure and prove themselves worthy of every trust-after all this and more-it becomes their right and privilege to see the Lord and commune with him face to face. Revelations, visions, angelic visitations, the rending of the heavens, and appearances among men of the Lord himself-all these things are for all of the faithful. They are not reserved for apostles and prophets only. God is no respecter of persons. They are not reserved for one age only, or for a select lineage or people. We are all our Father's children. All men are welcome. "And he inviteth them all to come unto him and partake of his goodness; and he denieth none that come unto him, black and white, bond and free, male and female; and he remembereth the heathen; and all are alike unto God, both Jew and Gentile." (2 Ne. 26:33.)

Seeing the Lord is not a matter of lineage or rank or position or place of precedence. Joseph Smith said: "God hath not revealed anything to Joseph, but what he will make known unto the Twelve, and even the least saint may know all things as fast as he is able to bear them, for the day must come when no man need say to his neighbor, Know ye the Lord; for all shall know him . . . from the least to the greatest." (*Teachings*, p. 149.) The fact is that the day of personal visitations from the Lord to faithful men on earth has no more ceased than has the day of miracles. God is an unchangeable Being; otherwise he would not be God. The sole issue is finding people who have faith and who work righteousness. "For if there be no faith among the children of men God can do no miracle among them; wherefore, he showeth not himself until after their faith." (Ether 12:12.)

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said: "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God." (Matt. 5:8.) The Book of Mormon rendition is even more express. It says: "And blessed are all the pure in heart, for they shall see God." (3 Ne. 12:8.) Ten days after the laying of the cornerstones for the Kirtland Temple, the Lord said to his little flock: "Inasmuch as my people build a house unto me in the name of the Lord, and do not suffer any unclean thing to come into it, that it be not defiled, my glory shall rest upon it; Yea, and my presence shall be there, for I will come into it, and all the pure in heart that shall come into it shall see God. But if it be defiled I will not come into it, and my glory shall not be there; for I will not come into unholy temples." (D&C 97:15-17.)

When the Lord has a house on earth, it is the natural and normal place for him to use in visiting his earthly friends. In the spring of 1820 the Father and the Son came to a grove of trees in western New York, because there was no temple on earth dedicated to serve as their abode. In May of 1829 John the Baptist came to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery on the banks of the Susquehanna River; shortly thereafter Peter, James, and John came to them in a wilderness area. But once the saints had built a holy house for the Lord to use, he and

his messengers visited that house to give instruction and confer keys. It was to the Kirtland Temple, the first holy temple of this dispensation, that Jehovah came on April 3, 1836, to be followed by Elias, Elijah, and Moses, each of which angelic ministrants conferred keys and powers upon their earthly fellow laborers. And so we turn to the Kirtland Temple to see the literal nature of these promises that the pure in heart shall see God, and what happened in the Kirtland Temple is but illustrative of what can be in any of the Lord's houses whenever his worshiping saints generate the faith to pull down from heaven these same heavenly manifestations.

By January of 1836 the saints were getting ready to dedicate the Kirtland Temple. Because of their faith and as an expression of the divine approval that attended their labors, the Lord poured out upon them great Pentecostal manifestations. On January 21, the Prophet Joseph Smith; his father, Joseph Smith, Sr.; Oliver Cowdery; and the two counselors in the First Presidency, Sidney Rigdon and Frederick G. Williams, were participating in sacred ordinances in an upper room in the Kirtland Temple. "The heavens were opened upon us," the Prophet said, "and I beheld the celestial kingdom of God, and the glory thereof, whether in the body or out I cannot tell. I saw the transcendent beauty of the gate through which the heirs of that kingdom will enter, which was like unto circling flames of fire; Also the blazing throne of God, whereon was seated the Father and the Son." (JS-V 1-3.)

That same day, and on others that followed, the Prophet and many others saw vision upon vision. Included among them were these: "The visions of heaven were open to them also," the Prophet said with reference to the First Presidency and the members of bishoprics and high councils from both Zion and Kirtland. "Some of them saw the face of the Savior, and others were ministered unto by holy angels, and the spirit of prophecy and revelation was poured out in mighty power; and loud hosannas, and glory to God in the highest, saluted the heavens, for we all communed with the heavenly host." (*History of the Church*, 2:382.)

On January 28, 1836, "president Zebedee Coltrin, one of the seven presidents of the Seventy, saw the Savior extended before him, as upon the cross, and a little after, crowned with glory upon his head above the brightness of the sun." (Ibid., p. 387.) Of a meeting attended by about three hundred members, on March 30, 1836, in the Kirtland Temple, the Prophet wrote: "The brethren continued exhorting, prophesying, and speaking in tongues until five o'clock in the morning. The Savior made his appearance to some, while angels ministered to others, and it was a Pentecost and an endowment indeed, long to be remembered." (Ibid., pp. 432-33.) The crowning appearance of the Lord during that special period of grace occurred, of course, on April 3, when the Great Jehovah appeared in his glory and majesty to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery. (D&C 110.) These appearances of the Lord to his saints are but samples taken from a fragmentary account and covering a brief

period of spiritual rejoicing, but they suffice for our purposes. There is no question but that the pure in heart do see God.

Associated with the promise that the pure in heart shall see God is the decree that those who are not pure in heart shall not see their Lord. Even Moses, with whom it was the practice of God to converse on a face-to-face basis, was denied that privilege on one occasion, as these words of scripture attest: "And he said unto Moses, Thou canst not see my face at this time, lest mine anger is kindled against thee also, and I destroy thee and thy people; for there shall no man among them see me at this time, and live, for they are exceeding sinful. And no sinful man hath at any time, neither shall there be any sinful man at any time, that shall see my face and live." (JST Ex. 33:20.) (*Promised Messiah* [1981], pp. 575-578)

How Do We Seek the Face of the Lord?

D&C 67

10 And again, verily I say unto you that it is your privilege, and a promise I give unto you that have been ordained unto this ministry, that inasmuch as you strip yourselves from jealousies and fears, and humble yourselves before me, for ye are not sufficiently humble, the veil shall be rent and you shall see me and know that I am--not with the carnal neither natural mind, but with the spiritual.

11 For no man has seen God at any time in the flesh, except quickened by the Spirit of God.

12 Neither can any natural man abide the presence of God, neither after the carnal mind.

D&C 93

1 Verily, thus saith the Lord: It shall come to pass that every soul who forsaketh his sins and cometh unto me, and calleth on my name, and obeyeth my voice, and keepeth my commandments, shall see my face and know that I am;

2 And that I am the true light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world;

3 And that I am in the Father, and the Father in me, and the Father and I are one--

4 The Father because he gave me of his fulness, and the Son because I was in the world and made flesh my tabernacle, and dwelt among the sons of men.

Bruce R. McConkie (Quorum of the Twelve Apostles)

How to Seek and See the Lord If we keep the commandments and are true and faithful in all things, we shall inherit eternal life in our Father's kingdom. Those who attain this high state of glory and exaltation shall dwell in the presence of God. They shall see his face and converse with him mouth to mouth. They shall know him in the full sense of the word because they have become like him. And all who are now living those laws to the full which will enable them to go where God and Christ are,

and there enjoy eternal association with them-that is, all those who are now living in its entirety the law of the celestial kingdom-are already qualified to see the Lord. The attainment of such a state of righteousness and perfection is the object and end toward which all of the Lord's people are striving. We seek to see the face of the Lord while we yet dwell in mortality, and we seek to dwell with him everlastingly in the eternal kingdoms that are prepared.

Our scriptures contain such counsel as: "Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." (Isa. 55:6-7.) "Seek the Lord, and ye shall live. . . . Seek him that maketh the seven stars and Orion. . . . The Lord is his name." (Amos 5:6, 8.) "Seek ye the Lord, all ye meek of the earth, which have wrought his judgment; seek righteousness, seek meekness." (Zeph. 2:3.) "Seek the face of the Lord always, that in patience ye may possess your souls, and ye shall have eternal life." (D&C 101:38.)

We know that all things are governed by law, and that "when we obtain any blessing from God, it is by obedience to that law upon which it is predicated." (D&C 130:20-21.) "For all who will have a blessing at my hands shall abide the law which was appointed for that blessing," the Lord says, "and the conditions thereof, as were instituted from before the foundation of the world." (D&C 132:5.) This means that if we obey the law that enables us to see the Lord, so shall it be, but if we do not meet the divine standard, our eyes shall not behold him. There is no secret as to what laws are involved. They are everywhere recited in the scriptures. That which must be done is described in various ways in different passages. But the general meaning is the same. It all comes down to one basic conclusion-that of keeping the commandments. Let us now consider some of the specific things the scriptures say we must do if we are to see the face of God while we yet dwell as mortals.

The pure in heart shall see God. This we have already seen, but we restate it again because the process of becoming pure in heart is the process that prepares us to see the face of Deity. In an early revelation, the Lord spoke of the members of his newly set up earthly kingdom as "mine own elect." Of them he said: "They will hear my voice, and shall see me, and shall not be asleep, and shall abide the day of my coming; for they shall be purified, even as I am pure." (D&C 35:21.) John spoke similarly when he described what is now our Lord's imminent appearance: "When he shall appear, we shall be like him," he said, "for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purified himself, even as he is pure." (1 Jn. 3:2-3.) Knowing that Christ is pure, and that if we are to see him now, or be with him hereafter, we must be pure as he is pure, this becomes a great incentive to the purifying of our lives.

A perfectly stated and marvelously comprehensive formula that shows us what we must do to see the Lord is given us in these words: "Verily, thus saith the Lord: It

shall come to pass that every soul who forsaketh his sins and cometh unto me, and calleth on my name, and obeyeth my voice, and keepeth my commandments, shall see my face and know that I am." (D&C 93:1.) Who made the promise? The Lord Jesus Christ. To whom is it given? To every living soul. What must we do to see his face? Five specifics are named: (1) Forsake our sins, for no unclean or impure person, no sinful man, can abide in his presence. (2) Come unto him; accept him as our Savior; receive his gospel, as it has been restored in our day. (3) Call on his name in mighty prayer as did the brother of Jared. (4) Obey his voice; do what he directs; put first in our lives the things of his kingdom; close our ears to the evil voices of the world. (5) Keep the commandments; endure in righteousness; be true to the faith. Those who do these things, being pure in heart, shall see God.

Faith and knowledge unite together to pave the way for the appearance of the Lord to an individual or to a whole people. The brother of Jared saw the Lord because he had a perfect knowledge that the Lord could and would show himself. His faith on the point of seeing within the veil was perfect; it had become knowledge. Because he knew, nothing doubting, he saw. Moroni, who had the plates of Ether and who summarized the account of Moriancumer's great vision, tells us why that prophet saw his God: "Because of the knowledge of this man he could not be kept from beholding within the veil," Moroni says, "and he saw the finger of Jesus, which, when he saw, he fell with fear; for he knew that it was the finger of the Lord; and he had faith no longer, for he knew, nothing doubting. Wherefore, having this perfect knowledge of God, he could not be kept from within the veil; therefore he saw Jesus; and he did minister unto him." (Ether 3:19-20.)

It was on this same basis that Jared's brother saw all the inhabitants of the earth and many other things that he wrote, but that "shall not go forth unto the Gentiles until the day that they shall repent of their iniquity, and become clean before the Lord. And in that day that they shall exercise faith in me, saith the Lord, even as the brother of Jared did, that they may become sanctified in me, then will I manifest unto them the things which the brother of Jared saw, even to the unfolding unto them all my revelations, saith Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Father of the heavens and of the earth, and all things that in them are. And he that will contend against the word of the Lord, let him be accursed; and he that shall deny these things, let him be accursed; for unto them will I show no greater things, saith Jesus Christ; for I am he who speaketh." (Ether 4:6-8.) The message here is so clear that it cannot be clarified by commentary. The brother of Jared saw the Lord because of his faith and knowledge and because he sanctified himself before the Lord. Other men do not receive the same blessings because they have not built the same foundation of righteousness. If and when we obtain the spiritual stature of this man Moriancumer, then we shall see what he saw and know what he knew.

Commenting upon the appearance of Christ to the

thousands of Nephites in the land Bountiful, Moroni says: "Faith is things which are hoped for and not seen; wherefore, dispute not because ye see not, for ye receive no witness until after the trial of your faith. For it was by faith that Christ showed himself unto our fathers, after he had risen from the dead; and he showed not himself unto them until after they had faith in him; wherefore, it must needs be that some had faith in him, for he showed himself not unto the world." (Ether 12:6-8.)

In a revelation addressed to those among the saints whom he considered to be his "friends," the Lord gave this commandment: "Call upon me while I am near-Draw near unto me and I will draw near unto you; seek me diligently and ye shall find me; ask, and ye shall receive; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." Surely, this is what we must do if we ever expect to see his face. He is there waiting our call, anxious to have us seek his face, awaiting our importuning pleas to rend the veil so that we can see the things of the Spirit.

"Whatsoever ye ask the Father in my name," he continues, "it shall be given unto you, that is expedient for you." Would it be expedient for us to see and know what the brother of Jared saw and knew? Are there blessings others have received that should be withheld from us? "And if your eye be single to my glory, your whole bodies shall be filled with light, and there shall be no darkness in you; and that body which is filled with light comprehendeth all things." Clearly this is the state attained by Moriancumer when he saw and understood all things and when the Lord could not withhold anything from him.

"Therefore, sanctify yourselves that your minds become single to God"-and now we come to the crowning promise of the gospel-"and the days will come that you shall see him; for he will unveil his face unto you, and it shall be in his own time, and in his own way, and according to his own will." That is the Lord's promise, his great promise, his crowning promise, his last promise. What is there that can excel in importance the obtaining of that spiritual stature which enables one to see the Lord? And so the next words spoken by the Lord to his friends were: "Remember the great and last promise which I have made unto you."

Then follows some counsel relative to right living, which is climaxed with these words, the full import of which is known only by those who are endowed with power from on high in holy places: "Sanctify yourselves; yea, purify your hearts, and cleanse your hands and your feet before me, that I may make you clean; That I may testify unto your Father, and your God, and my God, that you are clean from the blood of this wicked generation." Why? "That I may fulfil this promise, this great and last promise," this promise that you shall see me and that I will unveil my face, that I may fulfill this promise "which I have made unto you, when I will." (D&C 88:62-75.) To those of understanding we say: The purpose of the endowment in the house of the Lord is to prepare and sanctify his saints so they will be able to see his face, here and now, as well as to bear the glory of his presence in the eternal worlds.

In a poetic passage, which can only be understood, as is the case with most of the book of Isaiah, by those with a background knowledge of the gospel, Isaiah says of the righteous in Israel: "Thine eyes shall see the king in his beauty." That is: You shall see the face of the Lord. Any who so obtain are identified with this language: "He that walketh righteously, and speaketh uprightly; he that despiseth the gain of oppressions, that shaketh his hands from holding of bribes, that stoppeth his ears from hearing of blood, and shutteth his eyes from seeing evil." (Isa. 33:15.) These are the ones who shall see the Lord in this life and dwell with him in the life to come.

"How do men obtain a knowledge of the glory of God, his perfections and attributes?" asked the Prophet Joseph Smith. His answer: "By devoting themselves to his service, through prayer and supplication incessantly strengthening their faith in him, until, like Enoch, the Brother of Jared, and Moses, they obtain a manifestation of God to themselves." (*Lectures on Faith*, p. 32.) [*The Promised Messiah* [1981], pp. 578-583]

Priesthood Prepares Us to See God

D&C 84

19 And this greater priesthood administereth the gospel and holdeth the key of the mysteries of the kingdom, even the key of the knowledge of God.

20 Therefore, in the ordinances thereof, the power of godliness is manifest.

21 And without the ordinances thereof, and the authority of the priesthood, the power of godliness is not manifest unto men in the flesh;

22 For without this no man can see the face of God, even the Father, and live.

D&C 107

18 The power and authority of the higher, or Melchizedek Priesthood, is to hold the keys of all the spiritual blessings of the church--

19 To have the privilege of receiving the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, to have the heavens opened unto them, to commune with the general assembly and church of the Firstborn, and to enjoy the communion and presence of God the Father, and Jesus the mediator of the new covenant.

Joseph Smith

There are two Priesthoods spoken of in the Scriptures, viz., the Melchizedek and the Aaronic or Levitical. Although there are two Priesthoods, yet the Melchizedek Priesthood comprehends the Aaronic or Levitical Priesthood, and is the grand head, and holds the highest authority which pertains to the priesthood, and the keys of the Kingdom of God in all ages of the world to the latest posterity on the earth; and is the channel through which all knowledge, doctrine, the plan of salvation and every important matter is revealed from heaven. (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith* [1938], p.166)

James E. Faust (First Presidency)

The greater priesthood administers the gospel and holds "the key of the mysteries of the kingdom, even the key of the knowledge of God" (D&C 84:19). What is the key of the knowledge of God, and can anyone obtain it? Without the priesthood there can be no fulness of the knowledge of God. The Prophet Joseph Smith said that the "Melchizedek Priesthood ... is the channel through which all knowledge, doctrine, the plan of salvation and every important matter is revealed from heaven" (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, sel. Joseph Fielding Smith [1976], 166-6). President Joseph F. Smith stated: "One who can truly affirm that Joseph Smith was a prophet of God, and Jesus is the Savior, has in his possession a prize beyond computation. When we know this we know God, and we have a key to all knowledge" (In Brian H. Stuy, comp., *Collected Discourses Delivered by President Wilford Woodruff, His Two Counselors, the Twelve Apostles, and Others*, 5 vols. (1987-92), 2:355-56.).

Father Abraham recognized the value of this grand key as he recounted his experience: "I sought for the blessings of the fathers, and the right whereunto I should be ordained to administer the same; having been myself a follower of righteousness, desiring also to be one who possessed great knowledge, and to be a greater follower of righteousness, and to possess a greater knowledge, ... and desiring to receive instructions, and to keep the commandments of God, I became a rightful heir, a High Priest, holding the right belonging to the fathers" (Abr. 1:2).

Anyone who is righteous and desires to possess greater knowledge and to become "a greater follower of righteousness" can, under the authority of the priesthood, obtain a greater knowledge of God. The Lord tells us one clear way to do so, as given in the Doctrine and Covenants: "If thou shalt ask, thou shalt receive revelation upon revelation, knowledge upon knowledge, ... that which bringeth joy, that which bringeth life eternal" (D&C 42:61).

One might ask, "How do I become a greater follower of righteousness?" A righteous person is one who makes and keeps gospel covenants. These are holy contracts (See Carlos E. Asay, "The Oath and Covenant of the Priesthood," *Ensign*, Nov. 1985, 43-45), usually between individuals and the Lord. Sometimes they include other persons, such as spouses. They involve most sacred promises and commitments, such as baptism, the conferral of the priesthood, temple blessings, marriage, and parenthood. Many of the blessings of Father Abraham come as the Holy Ghost is poured out upon all people (see 3 Ne. 20:25-29). Any worthy man or woman who receives the Holy Ghost can actually become "a new creation" (see *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 149-5).

To obtain the full portion of these supernal blessings and come to a full knowledge of God, a man must enter into and keep the oath and covenant of the priesthood (see D&C 84:33-42). [From "The Key to the Knowledge of God," *Ensign*, Nov 2004, p. 52]

Bruce R. McConkie (Quorum of the Twelve Apostles)

Priesthood Prepares Men to See God When we

speak of seeing the Lord and of talking to him face to face, we have reference to the Lord Jesus Christ, to our Messiah, to the Son of the Father who comes to represent his Father, to minister for and on his behalf and to act in his place and stead. But as we are aware, those who receive the Second Comforter not only have the personage of Jesus Christ to attend them from time to time, but the Son manifests the Father unto them, and the two of them take up their abode, as it were, with mortal men, men who also hold "communion with the general assembly and Church of the Firstborn." (*Teachings*, p. 151.)

It follows that both the Father and the Son may be and often are involved in the appearances of Deity to man. In his own discourse on the Second Comforter, and after having said that he himself would come to his disciples, the Lord Jesus said: "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." (John 14:23.) With reference to this, speaking by the spirit of revelation, the Prophet Joseph Smith said: "John 14:23-The appearing of the Father and the Son, in that verse, is a personal appearance; and the idea that the Father and the Son dwell in a man's heart is an old sectarian notion, and is false." (D&C 130:3.) In point of practical reality, it is fair to say that there have been, as we shall note shortly, "many, exceeding great many" appearances of the Lord, meaning Christ, and a more limited number of appearances of the Lord, meaning the Father. And we shall also hereafter note the limitations that the Father imposes upon himself with reference to his own personal appearances.

Brethren whose calling and election is made sure always hold the holy Melchizedek Priesthood. Without this delegation of power and authority they cannot be sealed up unto eternal life. Our revelation itself says: "The more sure word of prophecy means a man's knowing that he is sealed up unto eternal life, by revelation and the spirit of prophecy, through the power of the Holy Priesthood." (D&C 131:5.)

It follows that the priesthood is the power, authority, and means that prepares men to see their Lord; also, that in the priesthood is found everything that is needed to bring this consummation to pass. Accordingly, it is written: "The power and authority of the higher, or Melchizedek Priesthood, is to hold the keys of all the spiritual blessings of the church-To have the privilege of receiving the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, to have the heavens opened unto them, to commune with the general assembly and church of the Firstborn, and to enjoy the communion and presence of God the Father, and Jesus the mediator of the new covenant." (D&C 107:18-19.)

"The keys of all the spiritual blessings of the church"! Clearly no spiritual blessing is available to mortal man on earth that can compare with personal communion and converse with the Gods of heaven. Such attainments on the part of the prophets of old are the very things that set them apart above all their fellows. Keys open doors; keys

are the directing and controlling power where priestly things are concerned. Thus, through the priesthood the door may be opened and the way provided for men to see the Father and the Son. From all of this it follows, automatically and axiomatically, that if and when the holy priesthood operates to the full in the life of any man, he will receive its great and full blessings, which are that rending of the heavens and that parting of the veil of which we now speak.

Truly, as Paul said of holders of the Melchizedek Priesthood who magnified their callings, thus qualifying to receive all of the blessings held in store for such faithful persons: "Ye are come unto Mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels"; that is, the heavens are opened unto you, and as with Enoch and Moses and the brother of Jared, nothing is withheld from your view and understanding. "Ye are come . . . To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect"; that is, you are in communion with the faithful of all ages past who now mingle together in a state of exaltation, you see God who is the Judge of all, and you commune with the departed spirits of the just. "Ye are come . . . To Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel"; that is, you see Jesus, by the sprinkling of whose blood, as it were, salvation comes. Having so taught, Paul issues this warning: "See that ye refuse not him [the Lord] that speaketh." (Heb. 12:22-25.) Rather, accept the priesthood and let it operate in your life to the full until all these blessings flow to you as they flowed to those of old who magnified their callings.

All of the holy prophets and righteous men of old held the holy Melchizedek Priesthood. This "priesthood continueth in the church of God in all generations, and is without beginning of days or end of years. . . . And this greater priesthood administereth the gospel and holdeth the key of the mysteries of the kingdom, even the key of the knowledge of God." God is known in and through and because of the priesthood; without it he would remain unknown. Through the priesthood the Holy Ghost is given to men, which Comforter is sent forth to bear record of the Father and the Son; also, through the priesthood men are able to progress in spiritual things until they gain personal communion with Deity. "Therefore, in the ordinances thereof," the revelation continues, "the power of godliness is manifest. And without the ordinances thereof, and the authority of the priesthood, the power of godliness is not manifest unto men in the flesh; For without this no man can see the face of God, even the Father, and live." That is to say, in and through the holy priesthood, including all the laws and rites that go with it, the power of godliness, or in other words the power of righteousness, is brought to pass in the lives of men. Without these priesthood laws and powers, God's power and glory would not be revealed to man on earth. Without them they would not see the face of God, for if they did, his glory would

destroy them. Sinful men cannot see the face of God and live. (JST Ex. 33:20.)

"Now this Moses plainly taught to the children of Israel in the wilderness, and sought diligently to sanctify his people that they might behold the face of God; But they hardened their hearts and could not endure his presence; therefore, the Lord in his wrath, for his anger was kindled against them, swore that they should not enter into his rest while in the wilderness, which rest is the fulness of his glory. Therefore, he took Moses out of their midst, and the Holy Priesthood also." (D&C 84:17-26.) What a calamity! Because they did not use the priesthood for the purpose for which it was given-and it was given that they might sanctify themselves so as to "behold the face of God"-the Lord withdrew the very priesthood itself. Israel, as a people, was left with the preparatory gospel only, with the law of Moses. Her people were denied what they might have had because they did not magnify their callings in the priesthood. A little thoughtful reflection will cause us to conclude that there are those in latter-day Israel who are not striving to use the Melchizedek Priesthood for the purpose for which it was given any more than did our ancient ancestors. Again-what a calamity!

However sad it is that Israel (except for isolated groups and occasional instances) failed to use the holy priesthood to sanctify themselves so as to be able to see the face of God and live, it is refreshing to know that there were other peoples in other places who did take advantage of these blessings when they were offered to them. From Alma's great discourse on the higher priesthood we learn: "There were many who were ordained and became high priests of God; and it was on account of their exceeding faith and repentance, and their righteousness before God, they choosing to repent and work righteousness rather than to perish; Therefore they were called after this holy order, and were sanctified, and their garments were washed white through the blood of the Lamb. Now they, after being sanctified by the Holy Ghost, having their garments made white, being pure and spotless before God, could not look upon sin save it were with abhorrence; and there were many, exceeding great many, who were made pure and entered into the rest of the Lord their God." Though Israel failed to sanctify themselves and enter into the rest of the Lord, others did; others by faith and righteousness attained the fulness of the glory of God. And note how many were so involved: "There were many, exceeding great many."

After having recited what others had obtained through righteousness, Alma exhorted his own people in these words: "My brethren, I would that ye should humble yourselves before God, and bring forth fruit meet for repentance, that ye may also enter into that rest." (Alma 13:10-13.) Along this same line, the Prophet Joseph Smith said to his brethren, the elders of latter-day Israel: "It is the privilege of every elder to speak of the things of God; and could we all come together with one heart and one mind in perfect faith the veil might as well be rent today as next week, or any other time, and if we will but cleanse ourselves and covenant before God, to serve

him, it is our privilege to have an assurance that God will protect us." (*Teachings*, p. 9.)

In November 1831, the Lord said to the little flock of elders so far ordained in his newly established latter-day kingdom: "It is your privilege, and a promise I give unto you that have been ordained unto this ministry, that inasmuch as you strip yourselves from jealousies and fears, and humble yourselves before me, for ye are not sufficiently humble, the veil shall be rent and you shall see me and know that I am-not with the carnal neither natural mind, but with the spiritual. For no man has seen God at any time in the flesh, except quickened by the Spirit of God. Neither can any natural man abide the presence of God, neither after the carnal mind. Ye are not able to abide the presence of God now, neither the ministering of angels; wherefore, continue in patience until ye are perfected. Let not your minds turn back; and when ye are worthy in mine own due time, ye shall see and know that which is conferred upon you by the hands of my servant Joseph Smith, Jun." (D&C 67:10-14.) That which had been conferred upon them by the prophet was the power to see the Lord. The name of that power is the Melchizedek priesthood. Many of these first elders in the kingdom did qualify in due course, while they yet dwelt in the flesh, to see the face of their King. How much spiritual progress we have made in the Church since the day of this revelation may be measured in terms of the number of the elders of Israel for whom the veil has been rent and who have seen the face of Him whose we are. (*Promised Messiah* [1981], pp. 586-591)

Those Whose Calling and Election Made Sure May See the Lord

John 14

18 I will not leave you comfortless [Greek: orphans]: I will come to you.

19 Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also.

20 At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you.

21 He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.

22 Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world?

23 Jesus answered and said 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.

Joseph Smith (President)

There are two Comforters spoken of. One is the Holy Ghost, the same as given on the day of Pentecost, and that all Saints receive after faith, repentance, and baptism. This first Comforter or Holy Ghost has no other effect than pure intelligence. ...

The other Comforter spoken of is a subject of great interest, and perhaps understood by few of this generation. After a person has faith in Christ, repents of his sins, and is baptized for the remission of his sins and receives the Holy Ghost, (by the laying on of hands), which is the first Comforter, then let him continue to humble himself before God, hungering and thirsting after righteousness, and living by every word of God, and the Lord will soon say unto him, Son, thou shalt be exalted.

When the Lord has thoroughly proved him, and finds that the man is determined to serve Him at all hazards, then the man will find his calling and his election made sure, then it will be his privilege to receive the other Comforter, which the Lord hath promised the Saints, as is recorded in the testimony of St. John, in the 14th chapter, from the 12th to the 27th verses.

Note the 16, 17, 18, 21, 23 verses:

"16. And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever;

"17. Even the Spirit of Truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him; but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.

"18. I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.*

*

"21. He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.

"23. . . . If a man love me, he will keep my word: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him."

Now what is this other Comforter? It is no more nor less than the Lord Jesus Christ Himself; and this is the sum and substance of the whole matter; that when any man obtains this last Comforter, he will have the personage of Jesus Christ to attend him, or appear unto him from time to time, and even He will manifest the Father unto him, and they will take up their abode with him, and the visions of the heavens will be opened unto him, and the Lord will teach him face to face, and he may have a perfect knowledge of the mysteries of the Kingdom of God; and this is the state and place the ancient Saints arrived at when they had such glorious visions -- Isaiah, Ezekiel, John upon the Isle of Patmos, St. Paul in the three heavens, and all the Saints who held communion with the general assembly and Church of the Firstborn.

The Spirit of Revelation is in connection with these blessings. A person may profit by noticing the first intimation of the spirit of revelation; for instance, when you feel pure intelligence flowing into you, it may give you sudden strokes of ideas, so that by noticing it, you may find it fulfilled the same day or soon; (i.e.,) those things that were presented unto your minds by the Spirit of God, will come to pass; and thus by learning the Spirit of God and understanding it, you may grow into the principle of revelation, until you become perfect in Christ Jesus. (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith* [1938], pp.149-151)

Bruce R. McConkie (Quorum of the Twelve Apostles)

It is the privilege of all those who have made their calling and election sure to see God; to talk with him face to face; to commune with him on a personal basis from time to time. These are the ones upon whom the Lord sends the Second Comforter. Their inheritance of exaltation and eternal life is assured, and so it becomes with them here and now in this life as it will be with all exalted beings in the life to come. They become the friends of God and converse with him on a friendly basis as one man speaks to another.

It is not our present purpose to discuss what it means to have one's calling and election made sure nor to recite the things that must be done so to obtain. A full discussion of these matters is found in my *Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*, volume 3, pages 323 to 355. For our present needs we shall simply quote this one sentence found on pages 330 and 331: "To have one's calling and election made sure is to be sealed up unto eternal life; it is to have the unconditional guarantee of exaltation in the highest heaven of the celestial world; it is to receive the assurance of godhood; it is, in effect, to have the day of judgment advanced, so that an inheritance of all the glory and honor of the Father's kingdom is assured prior to the day when the faithful actually enter into the divine presence to sit with Christ in his throne, even as he is 'set down' with his 'Father in his throne.' (Rev. 3:21.)"

In one of his greatest doctrinal expositions, the Prophet Joseph Smith equated the making of one's calling and election sure, spoken of by Peter, with "the sealing power spoken of by Paul." He said that those who were sealed up unto eternal life were the ones of whom Jeremiah spoke when he said that the Lord "will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah." In the day of this new covenant the Lord promised: "I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people." Then comes the glorious promise that those who receive the covenant and keep its terms and conditions shall see the Lord. "And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more." (Jer. 31:31-34.)

Having referred to this promise, the Prophet Joseph Smith asked: "How is this to be done?" How will it come to pass that every man shall know the Lord? Why will it not be necessary for men to continue to teach one another the doctrines of the kingdom? The Prophet answers: "It is to be done by this sealing power, and the other Comforter spoken of, which will be manifest by revelation."

Building on that foundation, he then proceeds to give forth his discourse on the Two Comforters. He tells how converted persons receive the Holy Ghost, are born again, become new creatures, and, if they are of Gentile lineage, how they are adopted into the house of Israel.

"The other Comforter spoken of is a subject of great interest, and perhaps understood by few of this generation. After a person has faith in Christ, repents of his sins, and is baptized for the remission of his sins and receives the Holy Ghost, (by the laying on of hands), which is the first Comforter, then let him continue to humble himself before God, hungering and thirsting after righteousness, and living by every word of God, and the Lord will soon say unto him, Son, thou shalt be exalted. When the Lord has thoroughly proved him, and finds that the man is determined to serve Him at all hazards, then the man will find his calling and his election made sure, then it will be his privilege to receive the other Comforter, which the Lord hath promised the saints....

"Now what is this other Comforter? It is no more nor less than the Lord Jesus Christ Himself; and this is the sum and substance of the whole matter; that when any man obtains this last Comforter, he will have the personage of Jesus Christ to attend him, or appear unto him from time to time, and even he will manifest the Father unto him, and they will take up their abode with him, and the visions of the heavens will be opened unto him, and the Lord will teach him face to face, and he may have a perfect knowledge of the mysteries of the Kingdom of God; and this is the state and place the ancient saints arrived at when they had such glorious visions-Isaiah, Ezekiel, John upon the Isle of Patmos, St. Paul in the three heavens, and all the saints who held communion with the general assembly and Church of the Firstborn." (*Teachings*, pp. 149-51.)

There are, of course, those whose callings and election have been made sure who have never exercised the faith nor exhibited the righteousness which would enable them to commune with the Lord on the promised basis. There are even those who neither believe nor know that it is possible to see the Lord in this day, and they therefore are without the personal incentive that would urge them onward in the pursuit of this consummation so devoutly desired by those with spiritual insight. (*The Promised Messiah* [1981, pp.584-586])

The Gift of the Holy Ghost Opens the Door to Ongoing Knowledge of God

David B. Haight (Quorum of the Twelve Apostles)

During those days of unconsciousness I was given, by the gift and power of the Holy Ghost, a more perfect knowledge of His mission. I was also given a more complete understanding of what it means to exercise, in His name, the authority to unlock the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven for the salvation of all who are faithful. My soul was taught over and over again the events of the betrayal, the mock trial, the scourging of the flesh of even one of the Godhead. I witnessed His struggling up the hill in His weakened condition carrying the cross and His being stretched upon it as it lay on the ground, that the crude spikes could be driven with a mallet into His hands and wrists and feet to secure His body as it hung on the

cross for public display.

Crucifixion—the horrible and painful death which He suffered—was chosen from the beginning. By that excruciating death, He descended below all things, as is recorded, that through His resurrection He would ascend above all things. (See D&C 88:6.)

Jesus Christ died in the literal sense in which we will all die. His body lay in the tomb. The immortal spirit of Jesus, chosen as the Savior of mankind, went to those myriads of spirits who had departed mortal life with varying degrees of righteousness to God's laws. He taught them the "glorious tidings of redemption from the bondage of death, and of possible salvation, ... [which was] part of [our] Savior's foreappointed and unique service to the human family." (James E. Talmage, *Jesus the Christ*, Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1977, p. 671.)

I cannot begin to convey to you the deep impact that these scenes have confirmed upon my soul. I sense their eternal meaning and realize that "nothing in the entire plan of salvation compares in any way in importance with that most transcendent of all events, the atoning sacrifice of our Lord. It is the most important single thing that has ever occurred in the entire history of created things; it is the rock foundation upon which the gospel and all other things rest," as has been declared. (Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1966, p. 60.)

Father Lehi taught his son Jacob and us today:

"Wherefore, redemption cometh in and through the Holy Messiah; for he is full of grace and truth.

"Behold, he offereth himself a sacrifice for sin, to answer the ends of the law, unto all those who have a broken heart and a contrite spirit; and unto none else can the ends of the law be answered.

"Wherefore, how great the importance to make these things known unto the inhabitants of the earth, that they may know that there is no flesh that can dwell in the presence of God, save it be through the merits, and mercy, and grace of the Holy Messiah, who layeth down his life according to the flesh, and taketh it again by the power of the Spirit, that he may bring to pass the resurrection of the dead, being the first that should rise.

"Wherefore, he is the firstfruits unto God, inasmuch as he shall make intercession for all the children of men; and they that believe in him shall be saved." (2 Ne. 2:6–9.)

Our most valuable worship experience in the sacrament meeting is the sacred ordinance of the sacrament, for it provides the opportunity to focus our minds and hearts upon the Savior and His sacrifice.

The Apostle Paul warned the early Saints against eating this bread and drinking this cup of the Lord unworthily. (See 1 Cor. 11:27–30.)

Our Savior Himself instructed the Nephites, "Whoso eateth and drinketh my flesh and blood unworthily [brings] damnation to his soul." (3 Ne. 18:29.)

Worthy partakers of the sacrament are in harmony with the Lord and put themselves under covenant with Him to always remember His sacrifice for the sins of the world,

to take upon them the name of Christ and to always remember Him, and to keep His commandments. The Savior covenants that we who do so shall have His spirit to be with us and that, if faithful to the end, we may inherit eternal life.

Our Lord revealed to Joseph Smith that "there is no gift greater than the gift of salvation," which plan includes the ordinance of the sacrament as a continuous reminder of the Savior's atoning sacrifice. He gave instructions that "it is expedient that the church meet together often to partake of bread and wine in the remembrance of the Lord Jesus." (D&C 6:13; D&C 20:75.)

Immortality comes to us all as a free gift by the grace of God alone, without works of righteousness. Eternal life, however, is the reward for obedience to the laws and ordinances of His gospel.

I testify to all of you that our Heavenly Father does answer our righteous pleadings. The added knowledge which has come to me has made a great impact upon my life. The gift of the Holy Ghost is a priceless possession and opens the door to our ongoing knowledge of God and eternal joy. Of this I bear witness, in the holy name of Jesus Christ, amen. ("The Sacrament—and the Sacrifice," *Ensign*, Nov 1989, p. 59)