

THE BEGINNING OF ZION'S ENDOWMENT WITH GLORY

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Kirtland was a beginning -- a beginning of a practical and realistic program to endow Zion with the glory and power of God in the latter days, and to bring the Saints to commune with Christ and other holy beings who reside above the veil in the midst of glory. In the Kirtland Temple, the Spirit or glory of God was manifested to a miraculous degree. Cloven tongues of fire rested upon the Elders, the supernatural gifts of the Holy Spirit were enjoyed, heavenly messengers appeared, visions were seen, and the building was lighted up by the glory of God for a period of several hours. These divine manifestations were but the beginning of the endowment which was to rest upon the Saints when Zion was established upon the full law of the Lord in the last days. The Lord said of the Kirtland manifestations as He appeared to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery in the temple which they had just dedicated: "This is *the beginning* of the blessings which shall be poured out upon the heads of my people."¹ Joseph Smith therefore exclaimed: "Hosanna. Hosanna, hosanna to Almighty God, *that rays of light begin to burst forth upon us even now.*"² Having reminded the Saints that they were "called to hold the keys of the mysteries," he observed a few months after the Kirtland blessings had been received: "Some the ..[missing text].. earth."³

Since the experiences of the Saints at Kirtland were but a foretaste of greater things to come in the last days, the Prophet admonished them to apply the gospel in their lives that they might become "as little children, without malice, guile or hypocrisy."⁴ Only then, and by establishing their lives upon the full law of Zion, could they receive the endowment of glory which they anticipated.

Modern scriptures speak of a time prior to the Second Coming of Christ when the Saints in Zion will be endowed with the glory of God. To the Nephites, Jesus said of the descendants of Lehi in the latter days:

This people will I establish in this land, unto the fulfilling of the covenant which I made with your Father Jacob; and it shall

be a New Jerusalem. And *the powers of heaven shall be in the midst of this people*; yea, even I will be in the midst of you.⁵

Again:

And they [the converted gentiles] shall assist my people, the remnant of Jacob, and also as many of the house of Israel as shall come [those of Ephraim in the Church and others of Israel yet to come], that they may build a city, which shall be called the New Jerusalem.

And then shall they assist my people that they may be gathered in, who are scattered upon all the face of the land, in unto the New Jerusalem.

And then shall *the power of heaven come down among them*; and I also will be in the midst.⁶

Joseph Smith taught that there is a consistent and practical way by which men can be put into possession of the Holy Ghost and its enlightening spiritual manifestations. That way is to teach them to apply living faith in Jesus Christ, to repent of all sin, to be baptized by immersion for the remission of sins by an authorized administrator, and to receive the laying on of hands of the Elders for the gift of the Holy Ghost. By complying with this simple and consistent program, men can actually be put into possession of the Holy Ghost and its divine spiritual gifts and blessings. These are spiritual laws the results of which are just as demonstrable by their tangible effects as any natural law known to man.

The Prophet also taught that, on a higher spiritual plane, there is a divine program by which men of faith can be endowed measureably with the glory and power of God, even on earth in mortality. Like the first, this program requires that men receive set ordinances and apply faithfully given principles the result of which is that they can be made partakers of the glory and power of God as prophesied by Isaiah when he said of the latter-day Zion: "And the Lord will create upon every dwelling place of mount Zion, and upon her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night: for upon all the glory shall be a defence."⁷

The divine program for endowing the Saints with glory and power required, first, that they receive all the higher covenants and ordinances of the gospel which are administered in the temple and make their calling and election sure to those blessings by being

sealed to eternal life and lives by the power of the Holy Priesthood; second, that they build up the society of Zion as a unique temple-centered system based upon the higher covenants and rites of the house of the Lord. The society of Zion which Joseph Smith began to develop at Kirtland, was to be a patriarchal structure. The righteous men were to become heirs of God (joint heirs through Christ of all that the Father possesses) by embracing the sacred covenant of consecration and implementing the celestial law of consecration and stewardship.⁸ They were also to be made kings (political figures) and priests (patriarchs or fathers spiritually) over their descendants for all ages of time. By organizing this divine temple-centered society in their midst so that all aspects of the social order -- the family, the economic system, and the political program -- were based upon the sacred covenants of the house of God and became extensions of those principles into the practical affairs of life, the spiritual endowments which righteous men could receive in the temple could be extended throughout the society until there was a cloud and smoke by day and a flaming fire by night over every dwelling place and over all the assemblies of the Saints.

This was the great spiritual goal toward which Joseph Smith began to direct the Saints at Kirtland. Repeatedly he mentioned the fact that Zion could be endowed with glory through the sacred ordinances of the temple and by establishing a temple-centered society. By revelation, he wrote that the sacred rites of the house of the Lord were given "for *the beginning* of the revelations and foundation of Zion, and *for the glory, honor, and endowment of all her municipals.*"⁹ He therefore referred to the temple as a house in which God could reveal 'the glories of His kingdom,'"¹⁰ And with this view in mind he prayed as he dedicated the Kirtland Temple:

. . . and now, Holy Father, we ask thee to assist us, thy people, with thy grace, in calling our solemn assembly, that it may be done to thine honor and to thy divine acceptance;

And in a manner that we may be found worthy, in thy sight, *to secure a fulfillment of the promises which thou hast made unto us, thy people, in the revelations given unto us;*

That thy glory may rest down upon thy people, and upon this thy house, which we now dedicate to thee, that it may be sanctified and consecrated to be holy, and that thy holy presence may be continually in this house;

And that all people who shall enter upon the threshold of the Lord's house may *feel thy power*, and feel constrained to acknowledge that thou hast sanctified it, and that it is thy house, a place of thy holiness.

An that this house may be *a house of prayer*, a house of fasting, a house of faith, a house of glory and of God, even thy house. . . .

And we ask thee, Holy Father, that thy servants may go forth from this house *armed with thy power*, and that thy name may be upon them, and *thy glory round about them*.¹¹

Having been taught the sacred purposes of the temple by the Prophet, the Quorum of the Twelve later wrote of the Nauvoo Temple; "God requires of His Saints to build Him a house wherein His servants may be instructed, and *endowed and endowed with power from on high*."¹² Brigham Young explained; "As he [God] established ancient Israel, so he will establish his people in the last days, and hath set them to build him a house *where his glory may be made manifest, and where he can show his power*."¹³

But the Prophet held that to obtain the manifestations of God's glory, the Saints had to do more than receive the rites of the temple. They had also to build up the divine patriarchal order of society which centers in the temple, in its family-oriented social, economic, and political law. Only in this way could the lives of the Saints be brought into full harmony with the sacred covenants of the house of the Lord.

This was the system through which glory was manifest among the people of God anciently. Joseph Smith stated, for example, that the Apostle Paul "perfectly understood the purposes of God in relation to His connection with man, and *that glorious and perfect order which He established in Himself, whereby he sent forth power, revelations, and glory*."¹⁴ This system the Lord endeavored to give Israel at Mt. Sinai. But the Israelites turned away from that high law and order of society which was based upon the Melchizedek Priesthood and its sacred covenants. The Lord therefore said to Moses: "I will take away the priesthood out of their midst; therefore *my holy order* [i. e., system], and the ordinances thereof, shall not go before them; for my presence [i. e., glory] shall not go up in their midst, lest I destroy them."¹⁵ This statement plainly indicates that if the Israelites had had that holy order of society which is based upon the law, ordinances, and covenants of the Holy Priesthood, they

would have had God's presence or glory in their midst. But if God's glory had been manifest to them in their carnal state, they would have been destroyed.

This, in essence, is what a revelation was speaking of in September, 1832, which began by directing the Saints to prepare "to stand upon Mount Zion, which shall be the city of New Jerusalem. " This city, it stated, would be "built by the gathering of the saints, beginning at this place, even the place of the temple." It then promised that when the temple in the Center Place of Zion (which city was to be established upon the full law and program of the society of Zion¹⁶) was built "a cloud shall rest upon it, which cloud shall be even the glory of the Lord, which shall fill the house."¹⁷ In the midst of its explanation concerning the glory which Zion was to receive, the revelation referred to ancient Israel as an example of a people who had such blessings offered to them but who failed to realize them to the extent that they should have done so. It explained:

. . . this greater priesthood [the Melchizedek Priesthood] administereth the gospel and holdeth the key of the mysteries of the kingdom, even the key of the knowledge of God.

Therefore, in the ordinances thereof, 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 [the power of godliness manifest through the priesthood] no man can see the face of God, even the Father, and live.

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*.¹⁸

The Saints at Kirtland were in some ways in a like position to the Israelites as they came to Mt. Sinai. The Israelites had been baptized of water and of the Spirit (in the sea and in the cloud¹⁹) on the shores of the Red Sea. Three months later, as they came to

Sinai, they were challenged to receive the higher program by which they could be made like the people of Enoch in their society and be endowed with the glory of God.²⁰ Brigham Young could therefore say of ancient Israel: If they had been sanctified and holy, the children of Israel would not have travelled one year with Moses before they would have received their endowments and the Melchizedek Priesthood."²¹

The Saints at Kirtland had also been baptized of water and of the Spirit, and as they gathered to Kirtland they did so with the expectation that there they would develop that divine program by which they could be endowed with the glory and power of God. There Joseph Smith began to reveal the sacred order of the house of the Lord and to develop the society of Zion which has its basis in the covenants and ordinances of the temple. Even while the Saints were building the temple, they were endeavoring to establish the law of consecration and stewardship in their midst as one vital part of the new temple and priesthood-centered society. It was the Prophet's desire that the Saints fully establish this new society and build up the New Jerusalem as the Center Place of the new order, and that they receive the full patriarchal program of the temple. Then Zion would become a society in which there would be no poor, where men would be of one mind and one heart, and where the pure in heart would indeed see God and be endowed measurably with His glory. In this context, a revelation given in August, 1833 spoke of the temple to be built in the New Jerusalem and of Zion, if the Saints would fulfil their responsibilities in establishing the divine program:

. . . 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.

And, now, behold if Zion do these things she shall prosper, and spread herself and become very glorious, very great, and very terrible.

And the nations of the earth shall honor her, and shall say: Surely Zion is the city of our God, and surely Zion cannot fall, neither be moved out of her place, for God is there, and

the hand of the Lord is there;
And he hath sworn by the power of his might to be her
salvation and her high tower.²²

Anticipations of Power and Glory

As the Church moved to Ohio early in 1831, the program of bringing the Saints to enjoy these great spiritual endowments got underway. A revelation having instructed them to move to Ohio promised: "There you shall be endowed with power from on high."²³ Three days later another revelation referred to the anticipated endowment as "a blessing such as is not known among the children of men" -- one that would "be poured forth" upon their heads.²⁴ With a similar note of anticipation, the Prophet promised the Twelve in 1835: "If we are faithful, and live by every word that proceeds forth from the mouth of God, I will venture to prophesy that we shall et a blessing that will be worth remembering, if we should live as long as John the Revelator; our blessings will be such as we have not realized before, received in this generation."²⁵

Blessings such as were received on the day of Pentecost, in New Testament times, and by the Saints at Kirtland were not given without cause or preparation. Joseph Smith explained that the ancient apostles tarried in Jerusalem after Christ's ascension in order to prepare for the spiritual endowment which they received on the day of Pentecost. Had they not work to do in Jerusalem?" he asked. "They did work, and prepared a people for the Pentecost."²⁶ The same principles were to be applied in the latter days, and to this end the Saints were instructed to build the Kirtland Temple. "I gave unto you a commandment that you should build a house, in the which house, I design to endow these whom I have chosen with power from on high," the Lord explained in a revelation; "for this is the promise of the Father unto you; therefore I command you to tarry, even as mine apostles in Jerusalem."²⁷ Having stressed the need to build the Kirtland Temple, Oliver Cowdery wrote in behalf of some prominent brethren at Kirtland, nearly two years before the anticipated events occurred: "Within that house, God shall pour out his Spirit in great majesty and glory, and encircle his people with fire more gloriously and marvelously than at Pentecost."²⁸

Like the disciples on the day of Pentecost, the Latter-day Saints were "to be taught from on high." To this end a revelation instructed: "Sanctify yourselves and ye shall be endowed with

power."²⁹ During the spring and summer of 1835, the Elders' School at Kirtland was closed and the members were sent out to preach the gospel "preparatory to the endowment" of power and glory.³⁰ Their work in the ministry would help them acquire faith and humility to obtain the blessing. When the school opened again that fall, Joseph Smith admonished the Elders to prepare for "the glorious endowment" of divine power that God had in store for the faithful.³¹

The Twelve were also encouraged to "prepare their hearts in all humility for an endowment with power from on high." This admonition was followed by a revelation reproving them for their weaknesses and declaring that they would have to humble themselves before God in order "to receive an endowment" of power.³² The Prophet explained: "The endowment you are so anxious about, you cannot comprehend now, nor could Gabriel explain it to the understanding of your dark minds; but strive to be prepared in your hearts, be faithful in all things, that when we meet in the solemn assembly . . . [we may] be clean every whit."³³

Sealing Power Prerequisite To Glory

The work of sanctifying the Saints and sealing them to eternal life was the center of the divine program for endowing them with the glory and power of God. Those who made their calling and election sure to celestial glory were given the second Comforter of promise of which the Lord said in a revelation: "The Comforter is the promise which I give unto you of eternal life, even the glory of the celestial kingdom."³⁴ With the guarantee given that they would receive celestial glory, faithful

Saints could be endowed with a measure of the anticipated power while yet on earth in mortality. Upon this premise Zion was to be endowed with glory. Many Saints received the sealing power of the priesthood in its basic expression of sealing individuals to eternal life before the Kirtland Temple was completed, but when that sacred edifice was built the Prophet administered this blessing in conjunction with the ordinances which were performed therein. Apparently these were some who qualified for this blessing before they moved to Ohio. Speaking at a conference of the Saints about three months before he left New York State for Ohio, Joseph Smith said: "Many of us have gone at the command of the Lord in defiance of everything evil, and obtained blessings unspeakable, in consequence of which *our names*

are sealed in the Lamb's book of life, for the Lord has spoken it."³⁵

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Colesville Branch was a group of Saints to whom the Prophet referred. Upon their removal from New York State to Ohio and then to Jackson County, Missouri, in 1831. Joseph Smith sealed them all to eternal life.³⁶

At Kirtland, many others were given the basic sealing power of the priesthood. A few days after Joseph Smith arrived in Ohio, early in 1831, he held an extemporaneous meeting with a group of early converts in the house where he was living. During the meeting he was endowed with glory to the extent that "his face outshone the candle which was on a shelf just behind him," and he said:

Brothers and Sisters, the Saviour has been in your midst this night, I want you to remember it. He cast a veil over your eyes for you could not endure to look upon Him. You must be fed with milk and not meat. I want you to remember this as if it were the last thing that escaped my lips. *He has given you all to me [in the patriarchal system of celestial society], and commanded me to seal you up to Everlasting Life, that where he is there you may be also.*³⁷

In December the following year, other early brethren at Kirtland were given the guarantee that they would receive "eternal life." That month Joseph Smith also gave blessings to his parents and to members of his father's family in which it appears that he gave some of them the promise of eternal life. To his mother he said: "She shall have eternal life."³⁸ Of his father he declared: "He shall also possess a mansion on high."³⁹ Of Hyrum he promised: "He shall have eternal life."⁴⁰ And concerning William he said: "He shall be saved unto the uttermost."⁴¹

Before some members of Zion's Camp left Kirtland, in May, 1834, to go to the aid of their brethren in Missouri, the Prophet apparently sealed them to eternal life. They were promised that they would "come forth in the day of the Lord Jesus, " but if they sinned "they would be delivered over to the buffeting of Satan for the destruction of the flesh."⁴² This blessing was later given to all members of the camp, for after all branches of that body had been united, a member of the camp reported: "We were called together again and were sealed up unto eternal life the same as in Kirtland."⁴³

Those who made their calling and election sure and were sealed to eternal life were given the privilege of receiving the blessings of the second Comforter.⁴⁴ On this basis, the Saints at Kirtland were invited repeatedly to come up to the spiritual plane where they could receive the blessings of the second Comforter. In a revelation given in November, 1831 the Lord said: "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."⁴⁵ When they finally attained this blessing, the Lord added: "Ye shall see and know that which was conferred upon you by the hands of my servant Joseph Smith, Jun."⁴⁶

Another revelation, given at Kirtland, May 6, 1833, began on this theme, stating: "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."⁴⁷ Having declared that one whose eye is single to the glory of God has his whole body filled with light through the Holy Spirit, still another revelation admonished:

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.

Remember the great and last promise which I have made unto you; cast away your idle thoughts and your excess of laughter far from you.

Tarry ye, tarry ye in this place, and call a solemn assembly, even of those who are the first laborers in this last kingdom. . . .

And I give unto you, who are the first laborers in this last kingdom, a commandment that you assemble yourselves together, and organize yourselves, and prepare yourselves, and 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; that I may fulfil this promise, which I have made unto you, when I will.⁴⁸

The "great and last promise" of which the Lord spoke was that those who sanctified themselves would come into His presence and behold His face, and to this end they were to purify themselves and call a solemn assembly in the Kirtland Temple when it was finished. Joseph Smith expected the Savior to make a major appearance in the temple, and the Saints to behold Him in the solemn assembly. In January, 1833, he wrote to the presiding brethren among the Saints in Missouri of the first mentioned of these appearances: "The Lord commanded us, in Kirtland, to build a house of God, and . . . on conditions of our obedience He has promised us great things; yea, even a visit from the heavens to honor us with His own presence."⁴⁹ Several months before the solemn assembly was held, the Prophet said to the Saints: "All who are prepared, and are sufficiently pure to abide the presence of the Savior, will see Him in the solemn assembly."⁵⁰

This promise was based upon the fact that many of the brethren would be sealed to eternal life and thereby have a right to the blessings of the second Comforter. But these blessings were only to be given to those whom God would "name out of all the official members."⁵¹ These were to be made known "by the voice of the Spirit" to Joseph Smith.⁵²

When the Presidency of the Church and other officials received these sacred sealing rites in January, 1836, Joseph Smith revealed the object he sought to achieve by stating: "As Paul said, so say I, let us come to visions and revelations."⁵³ Having described the rites which the Presidency received, the Prophet then reported some of the blessings of the second Comforter which they received, stating:

The heavens were opened upon us. 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 circling flames of fire; also the blazing throne of God, whereon was seated the Father and the Son. I saw the beautiful streets of that kingdom, which had the appearance of being paved with gold. . . .⁵⁴

Similar manifestations were given to others when they received the sacred rites. The Prophet reported:

Many of my brethren who received the ordinance with me saw glorious visions also. Angels ministered unto them as well as to myself, and the power of the Highest rested upon us, the house was filled with the glory of God, and we shouted Hosanna to God and the lamb. My scribe also received his anointing with us, and saw, in a vision, the armies of heaven protecting the Saints in their return to Zion, and many things which I saw.⁵⁵

When the Bishops of Zion and Kirtland, with their counselors, received the sacred rite, "the glories of heaven were unfolded to them also."⁵⁶ the blessings that were given to the High Councilors of Zion and Kirtland, the latter-day Seer said:

The visions of heaven were opened to them also. 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.⁵⁷

The next day at a regular session of a Hebrew school at Kirtland the brethren "spent the time in rehearsing to each other the glorious scenes that occurred on the preceding evening."⁵⁸ When the Presidency met that night to administer the sacred rites to members of the Twelve and the Seventy, similar manifestations were received by these brethren. Joseph Smith reported: "The heavens were opened and angels ministered unto us."⁵⁹ Again: "The gift of tongues fell upon us in mighty power, angels mingled their voices with ours, while their presence was in our midst."⁶⁰ When the High Priests and Elders were given the above rites, many of them also received glorious blessings of a like nature.⁶¹

Dedication of Kirtland Temple

The dedicatory services for the Kirtland Temple were held March 27, 1836, and mention was made repeatedly of the spiritual blessings and powers which the Saints expected to receive through the temple. President Sidney Rigdon began the meeting by reading the 96th and 24th Psalms concerning the "King of glory," wherein the psalmist said: "Declare his glory among the heathen, his wonders

among all people." The choir then sang a hymn concerning the coming of Christ in glory. After the invocation, the choir again sang a hymn of supplication one line of which said of the Lord: "He will bestow on Jacob's race peculiar grace, and glory to."⁶² So confident was the Prophet that the Saints would receive an endowment of glory and power that he said in the dedicatory prayer which he dictated and prepared beforehand in printed form;

Let the anointings of thy ministers be sealed upon them with power from on high.

Let it be fulfilled upon them, as upon those on the day of Pentecost; let the gift of tongues be poured out upon thy people, even cloven tongues as of fire, and the interpretation thereof.

And let thy house be filled, as with a rushing mighty wind, with thy glory.⁶³

At the conclusion of this prayer, the choir sang a hymn which had been prepared for the occasion by William W. Phelps, entitled, "The Spirit of God Like a Fire is Burning." This hymn expressed the central theme of the dedicatory services, reflecting the aspirations of the Prophet to see Zion glorified and to bring the Saints to the spiritual plane where they could commune with holy beings who reside above the veil. The first three stanzas were particularly appropriate:

The Spirit of God like a fire is burning!
The latter-day glory begins to come forth;
The visions and blessings of old are returning,
And angels are coming to visit the earth.
The Lord is extending the Saints' understanding,
Restoring their judges and all as at first;
The knowledge and power of God are expanding;
The veil o'er the earth is beginning to burst.
We'll call in our solemn assemblies in Spirit,
To spread forth the kingdom of heaven abroad,
That we through our faith may begin to inherit
The visions and blessings and glories of God.⁶⁴

During the services angels were seen⁶⁵ and the gifts of the Holy Ghost were manifested. Joseph Smith wrote: "President Brigham Young gave a short address in tongues, and David W. Patten interpreted, and gave a short exhortation in tongues himself, after

which I blessed the congregation in the name of the Lord, and the assembly dispersed."⁶⁶

After the dedication of the Kirtland Temple, the first solemn assembly to be held in this dispensation was convened in that sacred edifice, March 30, 1836. The solemn assemblies which were held at Kirtland were composed of those who had been sealed to eternal life or who met in the assembly for that purpose,⁶⁷ and to partake of the spiritual blessings which were available to those who attained this spiritual plane within the gospel program. These official priesthood assemblies were designed for the purposes of solemn worship and instruction, so that by the exercise of great faith, by prayer, and by fasting those present could draw near to God and receive the manifestations of His glory with its divine gifts, powers, and blessings. The idea was to generate the Holy Spirit in the lives of the Saints and build their confidence in spiritual truths and powers so that spiritual darkness could be dispersed, the gospel be disseminated with power, and the kingdom of God on earth be brought more closely into union with the kingdom of God in heaven. William W. Phelps thus wrote: "We'll call in our solemn assemblies in Spirit, to spread forth the kingdom of heaven abroad, that we through our faith may begin to inherit the visions and blessings and glories of God."⁶⁸ Joseph Smith wrote by revelation that solemn assemblies, with other sacred functions of the temple, were designed "for the glory, honor, and endowment of all her [Zion's] municipalities."⁶⁹ They were therefore part of the great program by which Zion could be endowed with glory in the last days.

Such assemblies were to be held according to the needs of the Saints and the worthiness of the Elders. Joseph Smith thus prayed to God that all the Elders might receive "an endowment of divine power.] in Thy house, even according to Thine own order from time to time, as Thou seest them worthy to be called into Thy solemn assembly."⁷⁰

Being an official priesthood assembly, the solemn assembly was conducted according to a prescribed order. "We must have all things prepared, and call our solemn assembly as the Lord has commanded us," the Prophet explained to the Twelve, "that we may be able to accomplish His great work, and it must be done in God's own way."⁷¹

During the first solemn assembly, about three hundred official members gathered into the Kirtland Temple, and as sacred ordinances were performed "the brethren began to prophesy upon each other's heads, . . . blessing, and sealing them with hosanna and amen."⁷² This continued throughout the day and until five o'clock the next morning.⁷³ Heber C. Kimball reported that "the beloved disciple John was seen in our midst by the Prophet Joseph, Oliver Cowdery and others."⁷⁴ The Prophet said: "The Savior made His appearance to some, while angels ministered to others, and it was a Pentecost and an endowment [of power] indeed long to be remembered."⁷⁵

The evening of Sunday, March 27, 1836, after the dedicatory services of the Kirtland Temple were over, Joseph Smith met with the several quorums of the priesthood in the temple to instruct them in the procedure of the ordinances which were to be administered in the solemn assembly to be held the following Wednesday. He also "gave instructions in relation to the spirit of prophecy, and called upon the congregation to speak, and not to fear to prophesy." "Do not quench the Spirit," he declared, "for the first one that opens his mouth shall receive the Spirit of prophecy." Whereupon, the Prophet reported:

Brother George A. Smith arose and began to prophesy, when a noise was heard like the sound of a rushing mighty wind, which filled the Temple, and all the congregation simultaneously arose, being moved upon by an invisible power; many began to speak in tongues and prophesy; others saw glorious visions; and I beheld the Temple was filled with angels, which fact I declared to the congregation. The people in the neighborhood came running together (having an unusual sound within, and seeing a bright light like a pillar of fire resting upon the Temple), and were astonished at what was taking place. This continued until the meeting closed at eleven p. m.⁷⁶

George A. Smith later declared that hundreds of brethren had participated in "a greater manifestation of the power of God than that described by Luke on the day of Pentecost." He said: "There came a shock on the house like the sound of a mighty rushing wind, and almost every man in the house arose, and hundreds of them were speaking in tongues, prophesying or declaring visions, almost with one voice."⁷⁷ Levi Jackman, who was present, also wrote: "I believe that as great things were heard and felt and seen as there was on the day of Pentecost with the apostles."⁷⁸

Benjamin Brown also spoke of the endowment with power which the Elders received at Kirtland. Having observed that the Spirit was as profusely poured out" as on the day of Pentecost, he said:

Hundreds of Elders spoke in tongues, but many of them being young in the Church, and never having witnessed the manifestation of this gift before, felt a little alarmed. This caused the Prophet Joseph Smith to pray the Lord to withhold the Spirit. Joseph then instructed them on the nature of the gift of tongues, and the operation of the Spirit generally.

We had a most glorious and never-to-be-forgotten time. Angels were seen by numbers present.⁷⁹

Though Kirtland was a high point in the manifestations of spiritual gifts and powers thus far in this dispensation, in the Prophet's mind it was but a beginning of greater things to come before the purposes of God were all fulfilled in the last days. The latter-day Seer sought to build up Zion as a new temple-centered society founded upon celestial law, and thereby bring the Saints to the point where they could be endowed with glory and acquire the divine manifestations that are available to those who become sanctified and make their calling and election sure to celestial glory. He also expected that when the Saints achieved these blessings, the new order would then be spread throughout the earth with the coming of Christ in His glory, to renew the earth to a state of paradisiacal glory where the Spirit or glory of God would be poured out upon all flesh.

The Kirtland manifestations were a beginning of this great work of endowing the Saints with power and renewing the earth to a paradisiacal state of glory. In a revelation where the Lord spoke of the Saints at Kirtland being endowed with power from on high," He said: "Ye have not considered the great commandment in all things, that I have given unto you concerning the building of mine house; for *the preparation wherewith I design to prepare mine apostles to prune my vineyard for the last time, that I may bring to pass my strange act, that I may pour out my Spirit upon all flesh.*"⁸⁰ Not only did this statement (made in June, 1833) foreshadow the Kirtland manifestations, but also the purpose and program of the solemn assembly. Thereby the Apostles were to be prepared to prune the Lord's vineyard in the last days as a means by which He would

eventually pour out His Spirit upon all flesh. It was with this view of the great latter-day work that Joseph Smith wrote:

Truly this is a day long to be remembered by the Saints of the last days, -- a day in which the God of heaven has begun *to restore the ancient order of His Kingdom* unto His servants and His people, --a day . . . in which those things begin to be made manifest, which have been hid from before the foundation of the world, and which Jehovah has promised should be made known in His own due time unto His servants, *to prepare the earth for the return of His glory, even a celestial glory, and a kingdom of Priests and kings to God and the Lamb, forever, on Mount Zion,* and with him the hundred and forty and four thousand whom John the Revelator saw, all of which is to come to pass in the restitution of all things.⁸¹

The great goal which Joseph Smith sought at Kirtland still looms before the Saints. Many prophets and saints in earlier dispensations sought to achieve this goal, but failed. "Moses sought to bring the children of Israel *into the presence of God*, through the power of the Priesthood, but he could not," the latter-day Seer observed. "In the first ages of the world they tried to establish the same thing; and there were Eliases raised up *who tried to restore these very glories*, but did not obtain them." "But," he continued, "they prophesied of a day when this glory would be revealed." This would be in the dispensation of the fulness of times, when all things are to be gathered together in Christ, by building up Zion and establishing the kingdom of God in its full power and program. Since this kingdom is a patriarchal system in which the righteous of all ages are to be gathered together in Christ, this required the Saints to perform those ordinances in the temple which would redeem their ancestors and organize them within the divine patriarchal order. "When these things are done, " the Prophet concluded, "the Son of Man will descend, the Ancient of Days sit; we may then] come to an innumerable company of angels, have communion with and receive instructions from them."⁸²

Endnotes

¹ Doctrine and Covenants 110:10; hereafter abbreviated D&C. (Italics by the writer.

² Joseph Smith, History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day

Saints (Salt Lake City, 1902), V, p. 362; hereafter abbreviated HC, followed by the appropriate volume and page number. (Italics by the writer.)

³ Ibid., III, p. 296. (Italics by the writer.)

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ 3 Nephi 20:22.

⁶ 3 Nephi 21:23-25.

⁷ Isaiah 4:5.

⁸ See, for example, HC. I. p. 364.

⁹ D&C 124:39. (Italics by the writer.)

¹⁰ HC, V. p. 423.

¹¹ D&C 109:10-13, 16, 22. (Italics by the writer.)

¹² HC, IV, p. 449. (Italics by the writer.)

¹³ Letter of Brigham Young to C. Brown of Pensacola, Florida, written at Nauyoo, Illinois, August 27, 1845; in "Brigham Young Papers, 1843-1845." Church Historians Library, Salt Lake City, Utah. (Italics by the writer.)

¹⁴ HC, IV, p. 208 (Italics by the writer.)

¹⁵ Exodus 34:1 (Italics by the writer.)

¹⁶ See, for example, D&C 105:1-5.

¹⁷ D&C 84:1-5.

¹⁸ D&C 84:19-24. (Italics by the writer.)

¹⁹ See 1 Corinthians 10:1-4; *Times and Seasons*, III (September 1, 1842), p. 904; HC, In, p. 389.

²⁰ For a statement of the glory which came to Enoch's people, see Moses 7:17-18.

²¹ JD, VI. p. 100.

²² D&C 97:15-20, (Italics by the writer.)

²³ D&C 38:32.

²⁴ D&C 39:15.

²⁵ HC, II, p. 309.

²⁶ Ibid., V, p. 259.

²⁷ D&C 95:8-9. This statement implies that the ancient apostles were endowed through the application of temple ordinances, but Joseph Smith does not give the details of when they were performed. He did indicate, however, that such ordinances can at times be administered outside the temple. See HC, IV, p. 608.

²⁸ Letter of Oliver Cowdery to John F. Boynton at Saco, Maine, written May 6, 1834; Cowdery Collection, Huntington Library, San Marino, California; used by permission.

²⁹ D&C 43:16.

³⁰ HC, II, p. 218.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 301.

³² *Ibid.*, pp. 287, 300. See also p. 53.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 309. See also pp. 334, 339, 345, 364, 368, and 373.

³⁴ D&C 88:3-4. For a discussion of this phase of the gospel program, see Hyrum L. Andrus, *Principles of Perfection* (Bookcraft Inc., Salt Lake City, 1970), chapters 13 and 14.

³⁵ Far West Record, October 25, 1831; found also in *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, p. 9. (Italics by the writer.)

³⁶ From an account of early historical events written by Joseph Knight, Sr., Church Historian's Library, Salt Lake City, Utah.

³⁷ "The Journal of Memoirs of Mary Elizabeth Rollins Lightner", pp. 2-3; *Young Woman's Journal*, XVI, pp 556-557. In the above quotation, the writer has combined the statements made by Lightner into one statement containing all the details of her report. (Italics by the writer.)

³⁸ D&C 88:1-4

³⁹ HC, I, p. 466

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ Manuscript report December 18, 1833, Church Historian's Library, Salt Lake City, Utah; found also in *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, p. 41.

⁴² For a discussion of this aspect of the program see Hyrum L. Andrus, *Principles of Perfection* (Bookcraft Inc., Salt Lake City, 1970), chapter 13.

⁴³ The journal of Reuben McBride, Brigham Young University Library. The writer has corrected spelling and punctuation in this quote.

⁴⁴ See the Prophet's explanation in HC, III, pp. 380-381.

⁴⁵ D&C 67:10.

⁴⁶ D&C 67;14.

⁴⁷ D&C 93:1.

⁴⁸ D&C 88;68-70, 74-75.

⁴⁹ HC, I, p. 316.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, LI, p. 310.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 309.

⁵² D&C 105:35-36; HC, II, pp. 112-113.

⁵³ HC, II, p. 380. For the Apostle Paul's statement, see 2 Corinthians 12:1.

⁵⁴ HC, II, p. 380.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 381.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 381-382.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 382.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 382-383.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 383.

⁶¹ See *ibid.*, pp. 386-387.

⁶² *Ibid.*, Pp. 412-413.

⁶³ D&C 109:35-37. For the printing of the prayer beforehand, see JD, XI, p. 9.

⁶⁴ HC, II, p. 426.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 427.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 428.

⁶⁷ See Joseph Smith's report of the announcement of the second solemn assembly, held April 6, 1837, and his statement of the early proceedings of that assembly, in *ibid.*, pp. 475-476. The Prophet's administration of these sacred rites, beginning with the Presidency of the Church in January, 1836, was apparently in preparation for the first solemn assembly.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 426.

⁶⁹ D&C 124:39.

⁷⁰ HC, II, p. 334.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 308-309. See also pp. 364, 367, 385, 388.

⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 431.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, pp. 432-433.

⁷⁴ Orson F. Whitney, *Life of Heber C. Kimball* (Salt lake City, 1945). p. 92.

⁷⁵ HC, II, pp. 432-433.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 428.

⁷⁷ JD, II, p. 215; XI, p. 10.

⁷⁸ "A Short Sketch of the Life of Levi Jackman -- 1797-1876," *Mormon Diaries*, XIV, No. 5, p. 17.

⁷⁹ *Testimonies For The Truth: A Record of Manifestations of the Power of Cod, Miraculous and Providential, Witnessed in The Travels and Experiences of Benjamin Brown* (Liverpool, England, 1853), pp. 10-11.

⁸⁰ D&C 95:3-4, 8. (Italics by the writer.)

⁸¹ HC, IV, pp. 492-493. (Italics by the writer.)

⁸² *Ibid.*, III, pp. 388-389. (Italics by the writer.)