

THE RESTORED CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST

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Supplement to lectures on
JOSEPH SMITH, AN AMERICAN PROPHET

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The Basic Foundation of the Gospel. --- To the question, "What are the fundamental principles of your religion?" Joseph Smith said:

The fundamental principles of our religion are the testimony of the Apostles and Prophets, concerning Jesus Christ, that He died, was buried, and rose again the third day, and ascended into heaven; and all other things which pertain to our religion are only appendages to it . But in connection with these, we believe in the gift of the Holy Ghost, the power of faith, the enjoyment of the spiritual gifts according to the will of God, the restoration of the house of Israel, and the final triumph of truth. (*Documentary History of the Church*, 3:30; hereafter cited *DHC*.)

This, essentially, is the message that Joseph Smith gave to the world. It consists, first, in attesting the reality of Christ as the God of this earth, who wrought out his perfect atonement for the redemption of men. Second, it consists of the testimony renewed and confirmed through a modern prophet that by accepting Christ in the true exercise of faith, men may be changed from a sinful state to a state of righteousness in which they can enjoy the gift of the Holy Ghost with its several gifts or spiritual endowments, as these are given to men by the will of God.

Gospel Defined. --- The gospel of Jesus Christ is a divine formula designed to give man a remission of sins through the atonement of Christ and endow him with the spiritual truth and per to acquire eternal life. Essentially, it is a plan by which man may attain a true spiritual union with Christ and mature in His divine powers until he receives a fulness of the truth and light of celestial glory. This divine formula has certain constituent principles and ordinances. Explained the Prophet Joseph Smith:

There is no other way beneath the heavens whereby God hath ordained for man to come to Him to be saved, and enter into the Kingdom of God, except faith in Jesus Christ, repentance, and baptism for the remission of sins, and any other course is vain; then you have the promise of the gift of the Holy Ghost. (*DHC*, 4:555.)

Nephi, a great Book of Mormon prophet, whose words were translated for our benefit by Joseph Smith, also said of the way that leads to eternal life:

. . . the gate by which ye should enter is repentance and baptism by water; and then cometh a remission of your sins by fire and by the Holy Ghost.

And then are ye in this straight and narrow path which leads to eternal life; yea, ye have entered in by the gate; ye have done according to the commandments of the Father and the Son; and ye have received the Holy Ghost, which witnesses of the Father and the Son, unto the fulfilling of the promise which he hath made, that if ye enter in by the way ye should receive. (2 Nephi 31:17-18.)

Here, then, is the gospel: that divine formula by which men can come unto the crucified and glorified Christ, and through him receive a remission of sins and those divine powers of truth and light by which they can acquire eternal life. A revelation through the Prophet Joseph Smith therefore declared:

And this is my gospel--repentance and baptism by water, and then cometh the baptism of fire and the Holy Ghost, even the Comforter, which showeth all things, and teacheth the peaceable things of the kingdom. (D&C 39:6.)

The Doctrine of Justification. --- For purposes of discussion, I would like to break this divine formula down into three basic areas of doctrine, each of which is built upon the unit below it.

The first and basic unit of the gospel is the doctrine of justification. To simplify matters that we might better understand this doctrine, may I say that the word "justification" is derived from the word "justify" and is essentially a legal term. To justify man is to indicate or acquit him of all responsibility to sin. To be justified, one must never have sinned or else be in a state where the debt of justice has been paid for his transgressions. This doctrine is founded in the assumption that God is the great ordainer and sustainer of law; and as a God of law, he must require that penalties be attached to his laws in the event of transgression thereof; and that sometime, somewhere, somehow every debt of justice must be paid. Otherwise, God would not be a just God; and in this event, he would not be God.

There are three basic ways, theoretically speaking, by which man can be justified. First, he can live perfectly the law of God. If he could do so, man could then stand at the bar of eternal justice and say, "Lord, I have been to mortality where I have been tempted to do wrong, but I have never transgressed one of your divine laws. Therefore, I am justified. The demands of eternal justice have no hold upon me." If it were possible for man to do this, he would be justified by keeping the law of God

The second way man can be justified is to sin and then pay the debt of justice for his own transgressions. In this event, he might then stand at the bar of eternal justice and say, "Yes, Lord, I did sin while I was in mortality. But I, myself, by my suffering and torment in a state of hell, have paid fully the debt of justice for my transgressions. Hence, justice has been paid and I now stand free of any further obligation to its requirements." This is a rough road to travel, as those who suffer the agonies of hell will find to their sorrow; and in traveling this road, they largely forfeit the opportunities for growth and development that lead to celestial glory.

To establish the third way by which man might be justified required that Christ, as the God of this earth, endowed with the infinite indwelling powers of eternal life from his Father, come to earth and, having lived a sinless life, offer himself as an infinite sacrifice for sin. (See

Alma 34:9-14.) By the withdrawal of the divine elements of life within Christ, commencing at Gethsemane, the agony which he experienced was so great that the tissues of his body broke down and blood came from every pore. Though Christ was born with the divine elements of eternal life within himself (which he received from his Father by his divine conception), he consented to have these elements of life withdrawn from himself, that he might pay the debt of sin for all men and that he might pass downward through the portals of death. But having done this, He was given power from the Father to break the bands of death and come forth in a resurrected state, to stand as a Savior and a Redeemer to all men, offering them a remission of sins and the powers of eternal life through the Holy Ghost.

Because Christ paid the debt of justice, he stands in a position to offer the remission of sins to men, that he might save them from--not in--their sins. But for Christ to pay the debt of justice for man's sins, man must first have faith in him as a personal savior; second, man must repent of his sins by seeking for the strength and power of Christ's spirit; and, finally, man must enter by baptism into a sacred covenant with Christ, promising that he will take upon himself the name of Christ and keep his commandments. Baptism must be performed by one who has authority from Christ; and as an immersion in water, this ordinance is symbolical of Christ's death, burial and resurrection. It is also symbolic of a birth, by which one comes forth into a new element of life--that spiritual element that is the foundation of Christ's kingdom.

Having accepted Christ in the true way that he was ordained, man might then come up before the bar of eternal justice and say, "Yes, I sinned while in mortality, but when I heard Christ's gospel, I had faith in him as my personal Redeemer; I repented of all my sins and was baptized by immersion for the remission of sins. Having been true to my covenant with Christ, I am now justified, for his infinite atonement has paid for my sins."

This is the doctrine of "justification by grace," about which Joseph Smith wrote by way of revelation: "We know that justification through the grace of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ is just and true." (D&C 20:30.)

It should be stressed that to be justified man is required to have faith in Christ, repent and be baptized, but it is the atonement of Christ that paid the debt of justice. Man by his good works does not save himself. Christ is the Savior. Justification by grace is like a common coin: it has two sides. On one side is the program by which Christ reconciled the demands of divine law, by paying the debt of eternal justice. On the other side is the program by which man must be reconciled to Christ. Man's good works do not pay the debt of justice; they merely reconcile man to Christ, and Christ pays the debt of justice. Hence, justification is by grace and not by man's works.

Of the great issue of eternal justice and the fact that Christ paid its legal requirements that he might offer mercy unto man, Amulek said:

. . . Behold, I say unto you, that I do know that Christ shall come among the children of men, to take upon him the transgressions of his people, and that he shall atone for the sins of the world. . .

And thus he shall bring salvation to all those who shall believe on his name; this being the intent of this last sacrifice, to bring about the bowels of mercy, which overpowereth justice, and bringeth about means unto men that they may have faith unto repentance.

And thus mercy can satisfy the demands of justice, and encircles them in the arms of safety, while he that exercises no faith unto repentance is exposed to the whole law of the demands of justice. . . . (Alma 34:8, 15-16.)

The Doctrine of Sanctification. --- The doctrine of justification is sometimes called the preparatory gospel. (See D&C 84:26-27.) That is, it is the way by which man is prepared for the greater blessings and endowments of the gospel. Actually, acquiring a remission of sins merely dissolves the barriers between man and God --- those barriers that never should have been there in the first place. The gospel of Jesus Christ lies largely beyond that program which grants man a remission of sins.

The second unit within the plan of the gospel is the doctrine of sanctification. This doctrine is built upon, but goes beyond, the doctrine of justification. While man is given a forgiveness of sins, in a legal sense through the doctrine of justification, under the program of sanctification he is inwardly cleansed and renovated from the effects of sin. To be sanctified is to be made pure and holy by the cleansing action of divine powers upon the individual, and, as in the case of justification, the doctrine of sanctification is like a two-sided coin, requiring man's dedication to righteousness, followed by a reciprocal cleansing action by divine powers coming from God. Having stated the doctrine of justification by grace, Joseph Smith therefore wrote by revelation:

And we know also, that sanctification through the grace of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ is just and true, to all those who love and serve God with all their mights, minds, and strength. (D&C 20:31.)

To acquire sanctifying power, man must first obey the necessary ordinances of God. Having been baptized for the remission of sins, he must receive the gift of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands, by those commissioned with the Holy Melchizedek Priesthood. This ordinance is the basic channel through which the sanctifying powers of Jesus Christ are given unto men. In addition, there are other channels of divine power open to men, but these higher channels are reserved for those who are worthy to go to the House of the Lord.

Having received the requisite ordinances, man must then apply himself in faith and in dedication to do the will of the Lord. In direct proportion to the degree that man then yields his heart to God, he can expect to receive of those spiritual powers that are necessary to cleanse him from the effects of sin and develop him in that divine pathway that leads to eternal life--to immortal glory. This point is well illustrated by a group of Nephite Saints who were faithful to the gospel under conditions of adversity. In the Book of Mormon it is recorded:

. . . they did fast and pray oft, and did wax stronger and stronger in their humility, and firmer and firmer in the faith of Christ, unto the filling their souls with joy and consolation, yea, even to the purifying and the sanctification of their hearts, *which sanctification cometh because of their yielding their hearts unto God.* (Helaman 3:35; italics added.)

That those who receive the ordinances of the gospel might know how better to apply themselves to develop the divine powers of the gospel in their lives, the Lord gave to his disciples that great statement of principles contained within the Sermon on the Mount. According to the Book of Mormon, the high ideal of Christian life set forth in the Sermon on the Mount is only to be attained by first obeying the ordinances of the gospel and acquiring the divine powers of the Holy Spirit. Within this framework the Sermon on the Mount fits as a statement of the ideals one must achieve by utilizing the spiritual powers made available by the gospel.

To the Nephites the resurrected Christ also delivered this great sermon. But first He told them the formula of His gospel, stating:

And this is my doctrine, [that] . . . whoso believeth in me, and is baptized, the same

shall be saved; and they are they who shall inherit the kingdom of God. . .

Verily, verily, I say unto you, that this is my doctrine, and I bear record of it from the Father; and whoso believeth in me believeth in the Father also; and unto him will the Father bear record of me, for he will visit him with fire and with the Holy Ghost. (3 Nephi 11:32-33, 35.)

Then, having stressed that this is the basic formula of his gospel, Jesus prefaced the Sermon on the Mount with an additional preliminary beatitude, stating to his disciples:

. . . Blessed are they who shall believe in your words, and come down into the depths of humility and be baptized, for they shall be visited with fire and with the Holy Ghost, and shall receive a remission of their sins. (3 Nephi 12:2.)

Here is the-essential context in which the Sermon on the Mount properly fits. To achieve its standard of Christian conduct, one must be assisted by the, enlightening, regenerating and uplifting powers of the Spirit. Having received the channels of this divine power, man must apply himself to develop the Spirit in his life, by complying with the principles of action set forth in the Sermon on the Mount. Under these circumstances, those who hunger and thirst after righteousness "shall be filled with the Holy Ghost." (3 Nephi 12:6.)

By-products of the Holy Spirit. --- There are certain by-products that result from the proper application of the gospel in the lives of men. First, the gospel is a source of revelation to man. "No man can receive the Holy Ghost without receiving revelations," declared the Prophet. "The Holy Ghost is a revelator." (DHC, 6:58.) Said he by way of promise to the Saints: "God shall give unto you knowledge by his Holy Spirit, yea, by the unspeakable gift of the Holy Ghost. . . ." (D&C 121:26.) Said the Book of Mormon of the Nephite Saints:

There are many among us who have many revelations, for they are not all stiffnecked. And as many as are not stiffnecked and have faith, have communion with the Holy Spirit, which maketh manifest unto the children of men, according to their faith. (Jarom 4.)

If one has received the gospel and is abiding in its law, that person should be partaking of the fruits of the Holy Spirit. The Apostle Paul wrote that "the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, [and] temperance." (Galatians 5:22-23.) Charity, which is the pure love of Christ (See Moroni 7 :4-7.) , is probably the most precious fruit of the Spirit; and without charity, men cannot inherit a place in the celestial kingdom. (See Ether 12:34.) This pure and perfect love does not originate with man, but with God. It is given to man as an endowment of the Holy Spirit--as an anointing from above. General Mormon, therefore, wrote to his son Moroni that the "Holy Ghost filleth with hope and perfect love, which love endureth by diligence unto prayer, until the end shall come, when all the saints shall dwell with God." (Moroni 8:26.) It follows that if one has received the gospel and is abiding in the Holy Spirit, that person should begin to express that great attribute of pure love in his daily life--in his home, in his work, in his association with others.

To develop men in the pathway of the gospel, the Holy Ghost must also bestow upon them its supernatural gifts. These gifts of the Spirit were enumerated by Paul in his letter to the Corinthians. The Book of Mormon contains a similar list, as does a revelation given through Joseph Smith. (See Moroni 10:9-17; D&C 46:13-29.)

The gifts of the Holy Ghost are indispensable by-products of the gospel, without which it is evident that the power of redemption is not manifest in behalf of men. They are given to those who manifest true faith in Christ and who truly desire to do his will . Consequently, if saving faith exists among men, the gifts of the Spirit will be manifest. Mormon therefore

reasoned:

No man can be saved, according to the words of Christ, save they shall have faith in his name; wherefore, if these things [the gifts and endowments of the Spirit] have ceased, then has faith ceased also; and awful is the state of man, for they are as though there had been no redemption made. (Moroni 7:38.)

Moroni also stressed, in his final testimony to men:

And now I speak unto all the ends of the earth--that if the day cometh that the power and gifts of God shall be done away among you, it shall be because of unbelief.

And wo be unto the children of men if this be the case; for there shall be none that doeth good among you, no not one. For if there be one among you that doeth good, he shall work by the power and gifts of God. (Moroni 10:24-25.)

It should be clarified that not all spiritual gifts are immediately or outwardly manifest so that others might see their tangible effects. Joseph Smith explained that "the greatest, the best, and the most useful gifts would be known nothing about by an observer." Among these, he listed the gift of wisdom, of knowledge, of faith, the discernment of spirits, etc. It takes time and circumstances to call these gifts forth and to manifest them among men. (See *DHC*, 5:29-30.)

Let us not assume that if we do not see the gift of tongues or some other phenomenal gift that is outwardly expressed we have not seen the power of the Spirit in action. The gifts of the Spirit are not to be flaunted before the world, but they come to the faithful, often in the still quiet moments of life, or when the Saints are gathered in humility to seek the blessings of God.

But whatever may be the nature of the spiritual gift, its manifestation will be according to the will of God. Nevertheless, each recipient of the gospel should, by the exercise of righteous desires, possess one or more gifts of the Spirit. Their manifestation in the lives of men is necessary to true spiritual growth. When an inquirer asked Joseph Smith, "May I not repent and be baptized, and not pay any attention to dreams, visions, and other gifts and graces of the Spirit?" the Prophet likened these divine endowments to the food required to sustain the physical body and cause it to grow, concluding that likewise spiritual gifts are necessary to develop the divine nature in man. (See *DHC*, 5:218-219.)

Finally, if men exercise saving faith, with a proper desire to do the will of God, these inner qualities that are built into the soul by the Holy Spirit will manifest themselves outwardly in works of righteousness. This is what the Apostle James was speaking about when he said, "Shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will spew thee my faith by my works." (James 2:18.) He was not teaching that works alone would save man, *but that true faith will manifest itself in good works*. In his treatise on works, he was talking about the kind and quality of faith that men should have to be saved. If *man's faith does not manifest itself in good works*, it is not saving faith. Hence, faith without works is dead. Such faith cannot bring the soul to salvation if it cannot motivate the individual to do good works.

Making Your Calling and Election Sure. --- Men must develop in the gospel until eventually they make their calling and election to the celestial kingdom sure and receive the promise unto themselves, personally, that they will be given eternal life. One of Joseph Smith's favorite scriptures was II Peter, chapter 1, wherein Christ's chief apostle stressed this point: That we might be partakers of the divine nature, Peter admonishes us to add to our faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, to knowledge temperance, to temperance patience, to

patience godliness , to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness charity. Continuing, he declared:

Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure; for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall:

For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. (II Peter 1:10-11.)

This doctrine, according to the Apostle Peter, was known generally to the New Testament Church; and therein they were not following cunningly devised fables, for Peter and others were eyewitnesses of Christ's majesty and glory. On the Mount of Transfiguration, they heard the voice of God the Father declare out of the midst of a cloud of glory, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." But in addition to these testimonies, the Apostle declared, "We have also a more sure word of prophecy; where-unto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts." (See II Peter 1:12-19; italics added.)

"The more sure word of prophecy," Joseph Smith wrote by way of revelation, "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.) These sealing ordinances that consummate the program of the gospel on earth are administered today in the temples of God. Declared the Prophet, "The anointing and sealing is to be called, elected and made sure." (DHC, 5:555,) Thus, the Apostle Peter could say that, in addition to the testimonies they had received concerning the divine Sonship of Christ, they had received unto themselves, through the revelations and sealing ordinances of the gospel, the sure knowledge that they would have a part with Christ in his eternal kingdom of glory. They had received the more sure word of prophecy.

While speaking on the first chapter of II Peter, Joseph Smith explained:

Now, there is some grand secret here, and keys to unlock the subject. Notwithstanding the apostle exhorts them to add to their faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, etc., yet he exhorts them to make their calling and election sure. And though [on the Mount of Transfiguration] they had heard an audible voice from heaven bearing testimony that Jesus was the Son of God, *yet he says we have a more sure word of prophecy, where--unto e do well that ye take heed* as unto a light shining in a dark place. Now, wherein could they have a more sure word of prophecy than to hear the voice of God saying , This is my beloved Son.

Now for the secret and grand key. Though they might hear the voice of God and know that Jesus was the Son of God, *this would be no evidence that their election and calling was made sure, that they had part with Christ, and were joint heirs with Him. They then would want that more sure word of prophecy, that they were sealed in the heavens and had the promise of eternal life in the kingdom of God.* Then, having this promise sealed unto them, it was an anchor to the soul, sure and steadfast. Though the thunders might roll and lightnings flash, and earthquakes bellow, and war gather thick around, yet this hope and knowledge would support the soul in every hour of trial, trouble and tribulation. (DHC, 5:388-389; italics added.)

The Prophet stressed, however, that "until the Saints had perfect love they were liable to fall." Said he, "Wien they had a testimony that their names were sealed in the Lamb's Book of Life, they had perfect love, and then it was impossible for false Christs to deceive them," (Journal History, October 25, 1831; hereafter cited JH.)

Having made their calling and election sure, those who are sanctified by the powers of the gospel may then receive the second Comforter. Essentially the second Comforter is "The promise . . . of eternal life, even the glory of the celestial kingdom." (D&C 88:3-4.) But having received this promise, there are certain privileges associated therewith, even the right (governed by the will of God) to enter into glory and commune directly with those who reside in the presence of God. Of the second Comforter, Joseph Smith said:

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. . .

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 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 to 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. (*DHC*, 3:380; italics added.)

In the Lord's promise to his ancient Saints, he stated: "I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you." Again: "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 14:18, 23.) "The appearing of the Father and the Son, in that verse," said the Prophet, referring to the last verse quoted above, "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.) Explained the latter-day Seer:

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 First Born. (*DHC*, 3:381.)

It is evident from this statement that the blessings of the second Comforter include, in addition to the manifestation of the Father and the Son, communion with the General Assembly and Church of the First Born, which has reference here to the sanctified and sealed Church beyond the veil. One who has the second Comforter might also commune with the spirits of just men made perfect--faithful men who have obeyed the gospel and overcome the world, and are perfected by the power of God's glory when they depart this life.

Here is the end purpose of the gospel, to sanctify and mature man to where he can come back into the presence of God and enjoy the manifestation of celestial power. Again, Joseph Smith expressed this great objective when he wrote:

We consider that God has created man with a mind capable of instruction, and a faculty which may be enlarged in proportion to the heed and diligence given to the light

communicated from heaven to the intellect; and that the nearer man approaches perfection, the clearer are his views, and the greater his enjoyments, till he has overcome the evils of his life [that is, become sanctified] and lost every desire for sin; and like the ancients, arrives at the point of faith where he is wrapped in the power and glory of his Maker and is caught up to dwell with Him. (*DHC*, 2:8.)

The Hebrew Church in New Testament times in large measure achieved this goal. Observed Joseph Smith:

The Hebrew Church " came unto the spirits of just men made perfect, and unto an innumerable company of angels, unto God the Father of all, and to Jesus Christ the Mediator of the new covenant." What did they learn by coming to the spirits of just men made perfect? Is it written? No. What they learned has not been and could not have been written. What object was gained by this communication with the spirits of the just? *It was the established order of the kingdom of God. . . .* (*DHC*, 6:51; italics added.)

It is apparent that the established order of the kingdom of God is for men to develop in the gospel to where they can achieve the goal that the Hebrew Church attained. Thus, the Prophet declared "that the order of the High Priesthood was that they have power given them to seal up the Saints to eternal life." (*JH*, October 31, 1831.) The divine formula by the practice of which this is made possible is the gospel.

The Prophet observed,

A man may be saved, after the judgment, in the terrestrial kingdom, or in the telestial kingdom, but he can never see the celestial kingdom of God without being born of water and the Spirit. He may receive a glory like unto the moon, or a star, but he can never come unto Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels; to the General Assembly and Church of the First Born, which are written in heaven, and to God the judge of all, and of the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, *unless he becomes as a little child, and is taught by the Spirit of God.* (*DHC*, 1:283; italics added.)

Those spiritual giants in former dispensations who followed this divine formula to where they came back into the presence of God were taught by divine means of the mysteries of godliness. Wrote the Prophet:

. . . They saw the flood before it came; they saw angels ascending and descending upon a ladder that reached from earth to heaven; they saw the stone cut out of the mountain, which filled the whole earth; they saw the Son of God come from the regions of bliss and dwell with men on earth; they saw the deliverer come out of Zion, and turn away ungodliness from Jacob; they saw the glory of the Lord when he showed the trans-figuration of the earth on the mount; they saw every mountain laid low and every valley exalted when the Lord was taking vengeance upon the wicked; they saw truth spring out of the earth, and righteousness look down from heaven in the last days, before the Lord came the second time to gather his elect; they saw the end of wickedness on earth, and the Sabbath of creation crowned with peace; they saw the end of the glorious thousand years, when Satan was loosed for a little season; they saw the day of judgment when all men received according to their works, and they saw the heaven and the earth flee away to make room for the city of God, when the righteous receive an inheritance in eternity. (*DHC* 1:283-284.)

The same divine formula applied in our day should lead to the acquisition of like blessings; and the same challenge that was given to the ancients by the gospel is given to

modern man. This the Prophet Joseph Smith stressed when he applied the challenge of the gospel directly to us, stating:

And fellow sojourners upon earth, it is your privilege *to purify yourselves and come up to the same glory*, and see for yourselves, and know for yourselves. Ask, and it shall be given you; seek and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. (DHC 1:284; italics added.)

In achieving this great objective to which the gospel leads, the faithful enter into the rest of the Lord. For a people to enter into the Lord's rest, they must be sanctified "that they might behold the face of God" and enjoy "the fulness of his glory." (See D&C 84:19-24.) Those who achieve this goal overcome the world and partake of that peace and tranquility that only the power and glory of God is capable of bestowing. When certain Nephite Saints successfully applied the gospel in their lives, Alma therefore said of them:

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. (Alma 13:12.)

Here is the message of Christ through a modern prophet. It consists of the testimony reaffirmed in our day that Jesus is divine, that he lives today as a tangible glorified Being, and that he manifests this divine power of truth and light unto those who obey his gospel. Christ's message through a modern prophet is that the gospel can and does change men. Its divine purpose is still, by the grace of Christ, to justify men before the bar of eternal truth and right, and to sanctify them that by their faith they might come back into the presence of God, to enjoy the intelligence and power of his glory.

There is no greater message that could be given to a sin-racked world that is torn with strife and hatred than the message of the gospel that has been re-clarified and confirmed to us through a latter-day prophet. This message is divine; it is real; it can be applied by every conscientious soul; and those who apply the formula are blessed with the blessings of the gospel, so that they know for themselves of its divine origin. This is my testimony to you, that I know that it is true by the enlightening manifestations of the Holy Spirit unto myself, and I bear this testimony in humility and in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.