

JOSEPH SMITH'S IDEA OF THE GOSPEL

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I. The Historical Background

Mormonism was a unique phenomenon for its day, and to receive this new gospel, peculiar people were raised up in widely scattered areas of America and Europe, most of whom had one thing in common. They placed unquestioned trust in God's Spirit and were seeking diligently for the living manifestations of its power. They were looking for a restoration of ancient Christianity in its purity; and here, they contended, was its most essential characteristic.

The second quarter of the nineteenth century was an intensely religious period, and many conscientious people placed great reliance upon spiritual fact. Early converts to Mormonism, in particular, expected the power of God to attend those who practiced in faith the doctrines of Christian salvation. When they came into the Church, they anticipated receiving the gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit. In many instances, they were seeking for these things before they heard of the restored gospel. William Huntington reported that he was "moved upon by the Spirit of God to look into the situation of the churches," where he "found the ordinances changed," the covenants "broken," and the fear of God "taught by the precepts of men." He concluded that the churches had a "form of godliness," but "denied the power thereof." Huntington also found by studying the scriptures that the ancient Christian Church "should return bringing with her the gifts and graces" of the gospel, as they were formerly given in New Testament times. This doctrine he proclaimed boldly for more than two years, until he read the Book of Mormon and joined the new movement in 1835.¹

Wilford Woodruff was likewise awakened and besought God "to restore the ancient gifts, to restore the ancient power."² Like Woodruff, Parley P. Pratt had "diligently searched the Scriptures," while praying for light. By the power of "the Spirit," his mind was opened so that he understood "the letter of the Gospel, its form and first principles." But, said he, "the power, the gifts, and the authority of the Gospel I knew were lacking, and did earnestly expect that they would be restored."³ As a Methodist minister in Toronto, Canada, John Taylor, with others in that area, sought for a restoration of the gifts of the Spirit, to those who sincerely believed. "Yes," said Pratt, "and if it will not, then I am an imposter."⁴ Zerah Pulsipher, another local minister, made similar inquiries concerning "the principles of the ancient gospel with all its gifts," and after satisfying himself of the answer by personal experience, he joined the new movement and was followed by several members of his congregation.⁵

Before Benjamin Brown was converted to Mormonism, the "Spirit of the Lord" had manifest "such a chain of testimonies" in his life as "none can realize, but those who have received that Spirit and revelations unto themselves." Brown related that while still unacquainted with the Mormon movement he received, through revelation:

... a knowledge ... that the ancient gifts of the Gospel—speaking in tongues, the power to heal the sick, the spirit of prophecy, &., were about to be restored to the believers in Christ. The revelation was a perfect knowledge of the fact, so sure and certain that I felt as though the truth had been stereotyped upon me. I knew it from the crown of my head to the sole of my foot—in the whole of my system, being filled with the Holy Ghost! I can compare it to nothing better than the change made on a clean sheet of paper by a printing press, leaving an indelible impression behind.

As the Spirit did not tell me to whom these things were to be restored, I at first fancied, in my ignorance, that the people with whom I had been meeting were about to be blessed with these things, so I joyfully visited the minister of the meeting, and laid before him the intelligence I had received. But, to my great astonishment, I met with an utter repulse. He told me, "It was all of the Devil, for such things had ceased forever!" Had anyone knocked me down with a beetle, I could not have felt

more sensibly the opposition between the spirits by which all were actuated. I soon found, by the bold and determined way in which he fought against the principle of present revelation, &., that it was not to him or his people that these gifts would be given. So I sought for them elsewhere. A few days after, curiosity led me to visit the Latter-day Saints, amongst whom I witnessed a fulfilment of the prediction, for I beheld a manifestation of the gifts of prophecy and tongues, and received the latter myself.⁶

Here may be seen the thoroughness of the preparation that preceded the introduction of Mormonism into the American scene. John Corrill wrote of the circumstances in the vicinity of Kirtland, Ohio:

The Mormon interlude at Kirtland, Ohio, was by no means the transplantation of an alien tree into an unaccustomed soil. The ground at Kirtland, Ohio, was not only well prepared for the planting, but was already sprouting luxuriant vegetation so closely akin to Mormonism that the simplest cross-pollination and grafting proved a native stand of Mormon Timber.⁷

The preparatory developments that preceded the introduction of Mormonism into the American scene resulted more from enlightening forces working within the hearts and minds of men than from the enunciation of ideas by leading figures of the day. Many were awakened to the desire for pure Christianity in its ancient form, accompanied by all its former powers. It was at this point, in particular, that Mormonism spoke to the spiritual needs of the day. In his First Vision, Joseph Smith had been told that the contemporary professors of religion drew near to God with their lips, but their hearts were far from him, "having a form of godliness, but they deny the power thereof."⁸

The assumption that spiritual gifts and graces must be an integral part of the true Christian gospel was thus a basic proposition upon which the restored Church was founded from the beginning. It was reportedly declared by Moroni, in 1823, that "with signs and with wonders, with gifts and with healings, with the manifestations of the power of God, and with the Holy Ghost, shall the hearts of the faithful be comforted."⁹

The Book of Mormon made enjoyment of the spiritual powers of the gospel the most vital criterion by which faith among men could be measured. Therein, Moroni repeatedly declared "that all these gifts of which I have spoken, which are spiritual, never will be done away, even as long as the world shall stand, only according to the unbelief of the children of men."¹⁰ Again, he wrote, "For no man can be saved, according to the words of Christ, save they shall have faith in his name; wherefore, if these things 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."¹¹ In a pamphlet entitled "The Only Way to be Saved," Lorenzo Snow explained the Mormon position:

There are certain principles established by God, which being understood and observed, will put men in possession of spiritual knowledge, gifts, and blessings. In early ages of the world, also in the days of the apostles, people came into possession of spiritual powers and various privileges, by obtaining an understanding of, and faithfully attending to, certain rules which the Lord established.¹²

Mormonism was launched on this spiritual plane, where enlivened powers were manifested in the lives of those with simple but superior faith. Joseph Smith later wrote:

On the 6th of April, 1830, the "Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints" was first organized in the town of Fayette, Seneca County, State of New York. Some few were called and ordained by the spirit of revelation and prophecy, and began to preach as the Spirit gave them utterance, and though weak, yet were they strengthened by the power of God, and many were brought to repentance, were immersed in the water, and were filled with the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands. They saw visions and prophesied, devils were cast out, and the sick healed by the laying on of hands.¹³

As Mormonism spread to Ohio, similar manifestations accompanied the reception of its message. John Murdock, a Campbellite minister, was baptized November 5, 1830, and wrote: "The Spirit of the Lord sensibly attended the ministration, and I came out of the water rejoicing and singing praises to God and the Lamb."¹⁴ When he and about thirty others were confirmed members of the Church, Murdock observed: "I knew for a certainty that the Spirit rested upon me as it had never done before, and others said that they had glorious visions and saw the Lord."¹⁵

John Corrill visited Kirtland, Ohio, about this time and found the new converts enjoying what they claimed to be "the gift and power of the Holy Ghost." Shortly thereafter, still unwilling to believe, Corrill went again to Kirtland and "watched every movement with a jealous eye." He later explained:

I attended several meetings, one of which was the laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost, which, I thought, would give me a good opportunity to detect their hypocrisy. The meeting lasted all night, and such a meeting I never attended before. They administered the sacrament, and laid on hands, after which I heard them prophesy and speak in tongues unknown to me. Persons in the room who took no part with them, declared, from the knowledge they had of the Indian languages, that the tongues spoken were regular Indian dialects, which I was also informed, on inquiry, the persons who spoke had never learned. I watched closely and examined carefully, every movement of the meeting, and after exhausting all my powers to find the deception, I was obliged to acknowledge, in my own mind, that the meeting had been inspired by some supernatural agency.¹⁶

Spiritual gifts were manifest spontaneously in other areas where converts were made. Late in 1831, Alpheus Gifford, Elial Strong and others commenced preaching at Mendon, New York, a small town some fifteen miles southeast of Rochester. Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball, and others who became stalwarts in the Mormon movement resided in this area. From there the missionaries went to Warsaw, then to Lake Erie and other areas. Strong wrote: "Signs followed them that believed: inasmuch that some who were sick were healed, and some spoke with tongues and glorified God."¹⁷

Following his conversion, Brigham Young, with his brother Joseph and Heber C. Kimball, went to see the Prophet in Kirtland, in September, 1832. As they journeyed, they visited the small branches of the Church that had been built up along the way. During some of these meetings, Brigham Young reported that he "spoke in tongues."¹⁸ And on their arrival at Kirtland, Kimball wrote:

We saw Brother Joseph Smith and had a glorious time, during which Brother Brigham spoke in tongues before Joseph, this being the first time that Joseph had heard the gift of tongues. He rose up and testified that the gift was from God, and then the gift fell upon him and he spoke in tongues himself.¹⁹

Thereafter, this gift and others were manifest frequently among the Saints. In November, 1832, Zebedee Coltrin reported hearing Joseph Smith and John P. Greene speak "in tongues by the Holy Ghost."²⁰ Of a conference held the following January, the Prophet wrote:

I spoke to the conference in another tongue, and was followed in the same gift by Brother Zebedee Coltrin, and he by Brother William Smith, after which the Lord poured out His Spirit in a miraculous manner, until all the Elders spoke in tongues, and several members, both male and female, exercised the same gift. Great and glorious were the divine manifestations of the Holy Spirit. Praises were sung to God and the Lamb; speaking and praying, all in tongues, occupied the conference until a late hour at night, so rejoiced were we at the return of these long absent blessings.²¹

Similar manifestations occurred the following day.²² When the School of the Prophets commenced shortly thereafter, Coltrin summarized some of its activities, stating: "During the time of the school there were many powerful manifestations of the Holy Spirit and much useful instruction given by the same Spirit, and also through the gift of tongues and the interpretation thereof."²³ Meanwhile Evan M. Greene reported such manifestations among certain converts in Erie County, Pennsylvania;²⁴ and Moses C. Nickerson wrote from Perrysburg, Cattaraugus County, New York: "We have gifts as exercised anciently by the Apostles; that is, the gift of tongues, and in many instances the interpretation, and the gift of healing has been exercised in several instances."²⁵

As in the early Christian era, Mormonism challenged the world to believe, and declared that the signs Christ promised would follow those who complied with the formula of faith. Missionaries like Orson Pratt preached continually on the need of the gifts of the Spirit, as manifestations of saving faith.²⁶ While on a short mission in Michigan Territory, Joseph Smith declared, "If you will obey the Gospel with honest hearts, I promise you, in the name of the Lord, that the gifts as promised by our Saviour will follow you, and by this you may prove me to be a true servant of God."²⁷ Here was a conversion tool that was utilized by many early missionaries. While John F. Boynton and Evan M. Greene were preaching in Erie County, Pennsylvania, a woman became afflicted with a painful stomach disorder and

requested them to lay hands upon her and pray in her behalf. Greene wrote:

We commanded the disease in the name of Jesus to depart from her; then I prayed that the cloud of darkness might be broken, and I exhorted and contended for the gifts of the Church. Then, for the first time in this place, the Lord poured out his Spirit in mighty power and gave the gifts of tongues unto the public, and we had a glorious time. Some were convinced of the of the power of God.²⁸

Similar manifestations and results followed the work of other missionaries preaching in that vicinity²⁹. In southern Ohio, where Amasa M. Lyman and his companion had gone to labor, a young woman was suddenly stricken, so that "her entire form was distorted in the most shocking manner, her eyes glaring wildly, but apparently sightless, ... and her limbs were rigid as iron." When medical efforts failed to relieve her, Lyman reported:

... we laid our hands upon her and rebuked the Devil, when she was instantly relieved; but in another moment she was bound as before. We kneeled down by her bed, and prayed, when she was again released, and asked for baptism, stating that she had been acting against her convictions of right in some conversations we had held with her during the day.³⁰

Lorenzo D. Barnes wrote, in 1837 from Ohio, that the Saints and others in that area came together to fast and pray and receive instruction, when, said he:

... the Spirit of the Lord came down in power, and seldom have the Saints in the last days witnessed a more glorious time. It was a little Pentecost indeed: some spake in tongues, and some prophesied, some interpreted, and some cried out as in former times: Brethren what shall we do to be saved. Five went forward immediately and were baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for a remission of sins.³¹

Parley P. Pratt also wrote from New York City reporting the progress of work in that area:

It has been with much exertion that the truth has taken root in this city, but at length the Spirit of the Lord is beginning to manifest itself in mighty power and showing that He is able to do His own work. On last Sunday we, while preaching at the house of a good old Cornelius, who had not yet obeyed the Gospel, but was seeking and

believing, while I yet spake he was carried away in a vision and saw the two sticks, representing the two books [the Stick of Judah, as the Bible, and the Stick of Joseph, as the Book of Mormon, as prophesied in Ezekiel 37:15-20] and the light and glory of God shining around them; to this he arose and testified in the power of the Spirit and immediately spake in tongues and interpreted the same, speaking of the two records and of the remnant of Joseph and how they would soon come to the knowledge of the truth; and nearly all present believed and glorified God, and several are intending to obey the ordinance. The gift of healing is also beginning to be enjoyed here in some degree, and we are now preaching daily.³²

Here is seen the flavor and power of the Mormon movement in its early stages of development. It was a gospel of power and of gifts, and those who lacked these things were said to be devoid of saving faith.

II. Philosophical Foundations of the Gospel.

The Mormon idea of the gospel is founded upon the Latter-day Saint concept of Deity and their view of mortal man, as a fallen creature in need of spiritual regeneration by which he can ultimately come back into the presence of God. To Joseph Smith, God is a personal Being in form and stature as man. He taught further that there are three distinct personages that constitute the Godhead to which man is now responsible. Of these personages, he said: "The Father has a body of flesh and bones as tangible as man's; the Son also; but the Holy Ghost has not a body of flesh and bones, but is a personage of Spirit."³³

But members of the Godhead are more than Beings of tabernacle; they are Beings of magnificent glory. In the Wentworth Letter, the Prophet wrote of his first vision, stating: "While fervently engaged in supplication, my mind was taken away from the objects with which I was surrounded, and I was enwrapped in a heavenly vision, and saw two glorious personages, who exactly resembled each other in features and likeness, surrounded with a brilliant light which eclipsed the sun at noon day."³⁴ The brilliant light associated with Deity is scripturally designated as God's glory, a term that has several synonyms. It is referred to as "eternal fire," as "everlasting burnings," as "circling flames of fire," as "light," and as "light and heat."³⁵ But a revelation to Joseph Smith gave the most basic and fundamental insight into the nature of God's glory when it stated: "The glory of God is intelligence, or, in other words, light and truth."³⁶ Thus, the Prophet held that God is a personal Being in whom the spiritual forces of light and truth—or intelligence—in the universe are centered.

One who is enveloped in and quickened by these great spiritual powers of light and truth is in the presence of God. Moses, for instance, was caught up unto an exceedingly high mountain where he saw God face to face. Explained a revelation to Joseph Smith: "And the glory of God was upon Moses; therefore Moses could endure His presence."³⁷ Glory is here equated with God's presence. Later, the same revelation said: "And the presence of God withdrew from Moses, that His glory was not upon Moses."³⁸

Joseph Smith's view of the gospel is based upon the assumption that, before the fall, Adam resided in the presence of God and, consequently, was enveloped in the life-giving, quickening powers that constitute God's glory or presence. In this condition, his whole being was filled with intelligence and life, and corruption in every form was foreign to his nature. In the words of the Prophet, "All corruption is devoured by the fire."³⁹

This status of glory Joseph Smith called paradisiacal. To it the earth will largely be restored during the millennium. With the initial manifestation of Christ's glory at the opening of that era, "every corruptible thing, both of man, or of the beasts of the field, or of the fowls of the heavens, or of the fish of the sea, that dwells upon all the face of the earth, shall be consumed." Even the "elements shall melt with fervent heat." By the power of this refining fire "all things shall become new," that God's "knowledge and glory may dwell upon all the earth." Since love and peace are major attributes of God's glory, the enmity of all flesh shall then cease, the forces of corruption that now bring disintegration and death will largely be abolished, and life will bloom in perpetual youth.⁴⁰

From this blessed condition Adam fell, and sin entered the world. With sin came corruption and death, so that in mortality man finds himself in the midst of a battlefield where he must struggle against the mighty effects of the fall upon the flesh. As man enters mortality, however, there are certain restrictions placed upon the power of the fall. A revelation to the Prophet stated that because God "redeemed man from the fall, men became again, in their infant state, innocent before God."⁴¹ Here the atonement is said to have a dual effect upon man. First, by its power man's spirit is free and innocent, and thus uninhibited in its inclination to do good. But, more than this, the atonement affects the whole person, as he enters mortality. Men in their "infant state" are thereby said to be innocent, not just that man's spirit is innocent while his body is in its infant state.

But this condition of innocence in which the atonement checks the power of the fall does not abolish the fact that the effects of Adam's transgression and of man's subsequent transgressions are transmitted in the flesh and are thus inherent therein at conception. It is said in a revelation that no less personage than God explained this fact to Adam. After observing that the atonement took care of the legalities of the "original guilt," God said: "Inasmuch as thy children

are conceived in sin, even so when they begin to grow up, sin conceiveth in their hearts, and they taste the bitter, that they may know to prize the good."⁴² Observe that it is when children begin to grow up that sin conceives in their hearts; and this because they are initially conceived in sin. Not that the act of conception, properly regulated, is sin, but the conditions of corruption resulting from the fall are inherent in the embryo at conception. For a time the power of the atonement holds them in abeyance; but, as children grow up and begin to act upon their own initiative, sin conceives in their hearts, "and they taste the bitter, that they may know to prize the good."⁴³

From this statement it is plain that men are not merely born into a world of sin. Instead, the effects of the fall and the corruption that has subsequently become associated with the flesh are transmitted to each new embryo at conception. As the physical body develops, these elements of corruption manifest themselves by diverting the individual's drives and emotional expressions toward vanity, greed, lust, etc. These elements of corruption are in the flesh. For this reason Lehi warned his sons not to "choose eternal death, according to the will of the flesh and the evil which is therein, which giveth the spirit of the devil power to captivate" and bring people "down to hell."⁴⁴ It should be observed in passing that it is through this avenue that Satan approaches the individual and entices him away from the paths of righteousness.

Other scriptural statements coming through the Prophet Joseph Smith bear a similar testimony. While Nephi exulted in the mercy of God, he nevertheless exclaimed: "O wretched man that I am! Yea, my heart sorroweth because of my flesh; my soul grieveth because of mine iniquities." He expressed further the conflict within himself by asking, "And why should I yield to sin, because of my flesh?"⁴⁵ Similarly, the brother of Jared excused himself and his fellow men for their weaknesses, stating that "because of the fall our natures have become evil continually."⁴⁶ And to King Benjamin an angel explained that if men heed the natural impulses of their nature in mortality they "drink damnation to their own souls, ... For the natural man is an enemy to God, and has been from the fall of Adam."⁴⁷

But besides the flesh and the devil, there are other factors that effect man in mortality. By his atonement, Christ paid the total debt of justice for the transgressions of men. And having done so, he thereby, without robbing justice, cushions man's spiritual fall by

extending elements of his light and truth to man, to quicken and sustain his life and to provide the means by which man can overcome the corruption in the flesh and the enticements of the Adversary, and return to God's presence. Furthermore, Christ paid the debt of justice by descending below all things, that in him the fulness of the Father's glory might reside. His experiences in mortality were necessary to this end. To men he then became the perfect expression, manifestation and revelation of this eternal, divine power of intelligence or light and truth. A revelation that speaks of Christ and the manifestation of his glory referred to the fact that he "ascended up on high, as also he descended below all things, in that he comprehended all things, that he might be in all and through all things, the light of truth."⁴⁸ For this reason Christ is the light and the life of the world, and it is said that in him dwells the fulness of the Godhead bodily.

As Christ went from grace to grace until he received the fulness of the Father's glory, so also can men be glorified through Christ, that in them may dwell the Father's intelligence and power. This is the purpose of their existence. It is indispensable that this point be understood, for here is the central theme of Joseph Smith's concept of the gospel. Therein lies the key to true and intelligent worship. A revelation on the subject emphasized:

I give unto you these sayings that you may understand and know how to worship, and know you worship, that you may come unto the Father in my name, and in due time receive of his fulness.

For if you keep my commandments you shall receive of his fulness, and be glorified in me as I am in the Father; therefore, I say unto you, you shall receive grace for grace.⁴⁹

To the Mormon Prophet, the birth process opens the door repeatedly to growth and development, by which ultimately man can become a being of like nature and glory to Christ. Through birth man was organized as a pre-mortal child of God, with a body composed of pure, refined spirit. Through procreation that spirit is tabernacled in a physical body and subjected to the probationary proving grounds of mortality. Finally, by being born again into the kingdom of God, man is given access to those powers of light and truth by which he may ultimately be glorified. In emphasizing that through this channel can man receive and have developed within himself the powers of God's

glory, a revelation in December, 1830, said of those who are born again:

Therefore it is given to abide in you; the record of heaven; the Comforter; the peaceable things of immortal glory; the truth of all things; that which quickeneth all things, which maketh alive all things; that which knoweth all things, and hath all power according to wisdom, mercy, truth, justice, and judgment.⁵⁰

Here many synonyms for God's glory are expressed, and it is pointedly declared that through the channel of birth into the kingdom of God the powers that constitute God's glory are to be developed within man. With emphasis on this point, the revelation concludes: "This is the plan of salvation unto all men, through the blood of mine Only Begotten."⁵¹

III. The Gospel of Jesus Christ.

To Joseph Smith, the gospel was the specifically defined program through which man can come into spiritual union with Christ and thereby be glorified, even as Christ has been glorified in the Father. To achieve this end, Jesus first paid the debt of justice for erring men and established evidence and testimony of his divine mission, that men may ponder the need of redemption and exercise faith in him as their Savior. To those who consider these testimonies and evidences in faith, Christ manifests his spirit, even the Holy Ghost, as a witness of truth. In this way men are born again to see the kingdom of God, and those who see have the responsibility to then be born of water and of the spirit to enter officially therein.

The Prophet emphasized this sequence in the rebirth process, as he explained the teachings of Jesus to Nicodemus, that one must first be born again to see the kingdom of God and thereafter be born of water and of the spirit to enter therein.⁵² On another occasion he said: "Being born again, comes by the Spirit of God through ordinances."⁵³

Joseph Smith also distinguished between being born of water and being born of the spirit. In the first, one is baptized by immersion for the remission of sins and enters thereby into personal covenant with Christ, promising to walk in newness of life by the aid of the Holy Spirit. Under these circumstances, Christ allows his atonement to cover the past transgressions of the newborn creature and extends to him further manifestations of his power.

Baptism is largely founded in the requirements of eternal law. By sincere compliance with this ordinance the penitent sinner is vindicated or acquitted of all sin. In other words, he thereby stands justified before the bar of God. Since the atonement pays the demands of broken law, man is justified in the legal sense by the mercy or grace of Christ and not by his own works.

Joseph Smith stated: "We know that justification through the grace of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ is just and true."⁵⁴ The individual's faith and godly works are important, however, if he is to comply with the set conditions by which the atonement will pay the debt of justice in his behalf. As an unearned gift, Christ's grace must be merited by the kind of faith that expresses itself in godly works and

brings the individual into spiritual union with Christ. In this sense, men are justified by faith. But in the sense that the Spirit brings men into union with Christ so that he thereby pays their debt of transgression, justification comes by the Spirit. Justification by grace, by faith, and by the Spirit are all either pointedly taught by the Prophet or are inherent within his views of the gospel.

The principles and ordinances associated with the doctrine of justification are referred to in Joseph Smith's thought as the preparatory gospel,⁵⁵ which largely clears the way for the greater and more meaningful manifestation of Christ's power to the individual. In the more complete sense, Joseph Smith's concept of the gospel can be explained in the meaning and context of three terms: justification, sanctification, and sealing. Having briefly discussed the first of these terms, attention will now be centered upon the second and third.

To be sanctified is to be made pure and holy. There is more than the legal satisfaction of divine law involved in achieving this end. While in justification one is freed from the demands of broken law, in sanctification the effects of sin upon the soul are removed and the individual is filled with the light and truth of God's Spirit. Sanctification is thus achieved by coordinating the power of the atonement to forgive sins with the power of the Spirit to purge the effects of sin from one's soul. In the sense that the atonement is involved, sanctification is achieved by the blood of Christ; but, in the sense that the Spirit is the active agent therein, men are sanctified by its powers. Revelations through Joseph Smith make use of both expressions.

Man of himself does not have the power to cleanse his soul of the effects of sin. Nor can he fill himself with the divine intelligence by which his life can be stabilized in virtue and brought into full spiritual union with Christ. The renovating, regenerating and enlightening powers by which these things are made possible must come from God. And here the grace of Christ is again involved as a basic part of the gospel. The Mormon Prophet wrote: "We know ... 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."⁵⁶

Here again Christ's grace is made contingent upon man's faith and dedication to righteousness. In this sense, a revelation declared to Joseph Smith that those who receive the priesthood and magnify "their calling, are sanctified by the Spirit unto the renewing of their

bodies."⁵⁷ Another revelation referred to the endowments of light and truth that were given to Christ, were positively moved upon by the spirit of revelation, as the keys to center the initiating action in man had not yet been restored to earth.

With the restoration of the full sealing powers by Elijah, in the Kirtland Temple, the doctrine and practices of this phase of the gospel were expanded. The Prophet explained that men were not only to be sealed up individually, but that the power of the priesthood was to be used to perpetuate in righteousness the family unit into eternity. Joseph Smith then cited II Peter, chapter 1, as an admonition for the Saints to add to their faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, to knowledge temperance, patience, godliness and brotherly kindness, and strive in this way to receive the more sure word of prophecy and thereby make their calling and election sure. In an official statement, the Prophet said: "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."⁵⁸ From this statement it is apparent that the spirit of revelation and the ordinances of the Holy Priesthood are essential to the end of sealing up a person to eternal life. Of the need for the latter, the Prophet said: "The anointing and sealing is to be called, elected and made sure."⁵⁹

Those who are sealed unto eternal life enter into the Lord's rest and thereby enjoy the living manifestations of his glory. The term "rest," as the Prophet understood it, seems to have at least two connotations. First, it implies victory over the flesh and the corruption that is inherent therein, by the sanctifying powers of the gospel. Rest here means the secession of conflict, in victory by the Spirit. The manifestation of God's glory to the individual is also associated with the idea of rest. In this sense, it no doubt has reference to the fact that one who has received the Second Comforter of Promise, even the promise of eternal life, is then entitled by faith to the Second Comforter of Presence, or the right to come into the presence of the Lord. The Prophet makes use of both ideas in reference to the Second Comforter. Herein lie the powers of the Melchizedek Priesthood, he explained in a revelation:

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.⁶⁰

On another occasion, Joseph Smith spoke of the means by which these blessings are attained as "the established order of the kingdom of God." In short, here is the way by which fallen man can develop spiritually and where he can come back into the presence of God and enjoy the power and communion of the celestial world. until step by step he received the fulness of the Father's glory. Therein John bore record that Jesus "received not of the fulness at first, but continued from grace to grace, until he received a fulness." In the same way men are to receive of the Father's fulness through Christ.⁶¹ To receive grace for grace implies that as one gives grace he in turn receives the grace of God.

The sanctifying powers of the Holy Spirit are given to men through the gift of the Holy Ghost, bestowed upon baptized believers by the imposition of hands of those acting in the authority of the Melchizedek Priesthood. By utilizing the spiritual powers made available through this channel, the individual can become sanctified, in direct proportion to the degree that he yields his heart to God.

The most distinct attribute of the pure intelligence that constitutes Christ's glory is love, spoken of in Mormon scriptures as charity—the pure and perfect love of Christ. By union with the Spirit this love is developed in man. In a sense, the genuine believer in Christ receives it as an endowment. For instance, Mormon wrote to Moroni that "the visitation of the Holy Ghost" fills men "with hope and perfect love."⁶² Without this love that is born of the Spirit, man cannot be saved in the presence of God. By the power of the Spirit man's soul must be purified, developed and refined to where he partakes of the divine nature and grows unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.

The gifts of the Holy Ghost also come as the natural by-products of the spirit in the lives of regenerated men. The Prophet likened these gifts unto the food one must partake of to grow and mature physically. So also must one partake of the gifts of the Spirit if he is to grow up spiritually in Christ. The manifestation of spiritual gifts thus serves as a barometer measuring the degree of saving faith possessed by the individual. The Book of Mormon position on the importance of spiritual gifts has already been cited, that if these

things have ceased then faith has ceased and men are as though there had been no atonement made.

The doctrine of sealing is the final stage of the gospel, as it applies to men in mortality. In a general conference, held October 25, 1831, Joseph Smith "said that the order of the High Priesthood was, that they have power given them to seal up the Saints unto eternal life." But, said he: "Until the Saints had perfect love they were liable to fall. When 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."⁶³

As early as November, 1831, a revelation said of the sealing functions of the gospel: "And as many as the Father shall bear record, to you shall be given power to seal them up unto eternal life."⁶⁴ From these instructions and from the historical evidence at hand, it seems that this function of the gospel was only carried out in the early days of the Church when the elders [the text ends here]

Endnotes

1. "Diaries of William Huntington," typewritten copy in the Brigham Young University Library, in "Mormon Diaries," XVI, pp. 1-2.
2. Journal of Discourses, XXI, 171-172. Woodruff wrote:
At an early age my mind was exercised upon religious subjects, although I never made a profession until 1830. I did not then join any church, for the reason that I could not find any denomination whose doctrines, faith or practice, agreed with the Gospel of Jesus Christ, or the ordinances and gifts which the apostles taught. Although the ministers of the day taught that the faith, gifts, graces, miracles and ordinances, which the ancient Saints enjoyed, were done away and no longer needed, I did not believe it to be true, only as they were done away through the unbelief of the children of men. ("History of Wilford Woodruff," [from his own pen], Millennial Star, XXVII, 182.)
3. Ibid., V, 193.
4. Ibid., XXII, 240-241; XXIII, 31-32; XXV, 171-172.
5. "History of Zerah Pulsipher, 1789-1872," as written by himself, typewritten copy in the Brigham Young University Library, pp. 5-7.
6. Testimonies for the Truth: A Record of the Power of God, Miraculous and Providential, Witnessed in the Travels and

Experiences of Benjamin Brown, published by S. W. Richards, 15 Wilton Street, Liverpool, England, 1853, pp. 5-7.

7. John Corrill, *A Brief History of the Church of the Latter-day Saints* (Jefferson City, Missouri, 1839), p. 6.
8. Smith 2:19.
9. *Messenger and Advocate*, October, 1835.
10. Moroni 10:19; see also Mormon 9:20-26.
11. Moroni 7:38.
12. Published in London, in 1841.
13. *Documentary History of the Church*, IV, 538; hereafter cited DHC. For instance, Newel Knight gave the following account of a visit to Harmony, Pennsylvania, in August, 1830:
 In the beginning of August, I, in company with my wife, went to make a visit to Brother Joseph Smith, Jun., who then resided at Harmony, Penn. We found him and his wife well, and in good spirits. We had a happy meeting. It truly gave me joy to again behold his face. As neither Emma, the wife of Joseph Smith, nor my wife had been confirmed [members of the Church], we concluded to attend to that holy ordinance at this time, and also to partake of the sacrament. ...
 We prepared some wine of our own make, and held our meeting, consisting of only five persons, namely, Joseph Smith and wife, John Whitmer, and myself and wife. We partook of the sacrament, after which we confirmed the two sisters into the Church, and spent the evening in a glorious manner. The Spirit of the Lord was poured out upon us. We praised the God of Israel and rejoiced exceedingly.-(*Journal History*, August, 1830.)
14. *Journal History*, November 5, 1830.
15. *Ibid.*, November 7, 1830.
16. Corrill, *op. cit.*, pp. 8-9.
17. *Journal History*, March 19, 1833.
18. *Millennial Star*, XXV, 439.
19. Taken from Kimball's *Journal*, cited by his daughter Helen mar Whitney, in "Early Reminiscences," *Woman's Exponent*, Salt Lake City, IX (August 1, 1880), p. 39. This incident occurred in the evening when the Prophet called upon Brigham Young to pray. (See *Millennial Star*, XXV, 439.) Joseph Smith confirmed the fact that this was the first time he had witnessed that particular "gift among the brethren." B. H. Roberts has written:

The gift of tongues here spoken of was first exercised in one of the Pennsylvania branches; next at Mendon, where the Youngs and Kimbells resided; then in the branches between Mendon and Kirtland; then in Kirtland under the circumstances above related, and shortly afterwards it was a gift quite generally exercised by the Saints in Ohio. "And it came to pass," writes John Whitmer in his history of the Church (chap. X), "that in the fall of 1832, the disciples in Ohio received the gift of tongues, and in June, 1833, we received the gift of tongues in Zion." (DHC, I, 296-297.)

This statement seems to deny the expression of the gift of tongues at Kirtland in the fall of 1830, as reported by John Corrill. It might be noted in Corrill's defense that neither Joseph Smith nor John Whitmer had arrived in Kirtland at the time he mentioned.

20. Journal History, November 18, 1832.

21. DHC, I, 322-323.

22. See Journal History, January 23, 1832.

23. Ibid., January 24, 1833.

24. Ibid., January 15, 1833.

25. Ibid., January 30, 1835.

26. See, for instance, Orson Pratt's Journal, under the following dates: June 22, 30; July 10, 12, 13, 18; August 8; September 1, 4, 1833. Original in Church Historian's Office, Salt Lake City, Utah.

27. Journal History, October 16, 1834. Edward Stevenson heard this promise and reported that it was "literally fulfilled." Said he:

I am, with others, a witness that these gifts did follow many in the branch of the Church which was raised up in Pontiac. Among them was Deacon Samuel Bent of the Presbyterian Church, who was the first one baptized (and who afterwards became President of the High Council in Nauvoo, Illinois). His daughter, Mary, was the first one who spoke in tongues in this branch. Besides Mary Curtis, Joseph Wood, Elijah Fordham and others also enjoyed that gift. We felt that we were blessed above kings, rulers, and potentates of the earth, and truly we were a happy branch of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Our souls were full of joyous thanksgiving, and our songs of gladness rejoiced the heart by day, dispelled the gloom of night and welcomed the coming morn.
(Ibid.)

28. Ibid., January 15, 1833. Shortly thereafter, when another expression of these gifts occurred, two people who were present requested to be baptized.

29. Ibid.
30. Ibid., August 24, 1832.
31. Ibid., October 8, 1837.
32. Ibid., October 3, 1837. Under date of February 19, 1840, Heber C. Kimball wrote from New York City to his wife, Vilate, in Nauvoo, Illinois:
 Brother Orson Pratt and myself were called upon to visit a very sick woman; she could not turn herself in bed. We anointed her with oil in the name of the Lord, and she was healed and made whole. She did not belong to the Church, nor her husband; but in two days after she and her husband were baptized, and fourteen others. (Whitney, op. cit., X, February 1, 1882, 130.)

Footnotes

33. DHC, V, 325.
34. DHC, IV, 536.
35. See DHC, II, 381 and VI, 366; Parley P. Pratt, Key to Theology (Salt Lake City, 1943), p. 47; Letter of Benjamin F. Johnson to George S. Gibbs, "An Interesting Letter," April to October, 1903, p. 8; Isaiah 33:14-15; Hebrews 12:29.
36. D&C 93:36.
37. The Pearl of Great Price: Being a Choice Selection from the Revelations, Translations, and Narrative of Joseph Smith, Published by F. D. Richards, 15 Wilton Street, Liverpool, England, 1851, p. 8.
38. Ibid.
39. DHC, VI, 366.
40. D&C 101:4 ff.
41. D&C 93:38.
42. Moses 6:55.
43. Ibid.
44. 2 Nephi 2:29.
45. 2 Nephi 4:17, 27.
46. Ether 3:2.
47. Mosiah 3:18-19.
48. D&C 88:6.
49. D&C 93:19-20.
50. Moses 6:61.
51. Moses 6:62.
52. See John 3:3-5.
53. Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, pp. 162, 328.

54. D&C 20:30.
55. See D&C 84:26-27.
56. D&C 20:31.
57. D&C 84:33.
58. See D&C 93:12-20.
59. Moroni 8:26.
60. Journal History, under date.
61. D&C 68:12.
62. D&C 131:5.
63. DHC, V, 554-556.
64. D&C 107:19.