

Calling & Election Made Sure

The Second Comforter, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, comp. Joseph Fielding Smith [SLC: Deseret Book Co., 1938], 149-151.

There are two Comforters spoken of. One is the Holy Ghost, the same as given on the day of Pentecost, and that all Saints receive after faith, repentance, and baptism. **This first Comforter or Holy Ghost has no other effect than pure intelligence.** It is more powerful in expanding the **mind**, enlightening and **understanding**, and storing the **intellect** with present **knowledge**, of a man who is of the literal seed of Abraham, than one that is a Gentile, though it may not have half as much visible effect upon the body; for as the Holy Ghost falls upon one of the literal seed of Abraham, it is calm and serene; and his whole soul and body are only exercised by the **pure spirit of intelligence**; while the effect of the Holy Ghost upon a Gentile, is to purge out the old blood, and make him actually of the seed of Abraham. That man that has none of the blood of Abraham (naturally) must have a new creation by the Holy Ghost. In such a case, there may be more of a powerful effect upon the body, and visible to the eye, than upon an Israelite, while the Israelite at first might be far before the Gentile in pure intelligence.

The Second Comforter

The other Comforter spoken of is a subject of great interest, and perhaps understood by few of this generation. After a person has faith in Christ, repents of his sins, and is baptized for the remission of his sins and receives the Holy Ghost, (by the laying on of hands), which is the first Comforter, then let him continue to humble himself before God, hungering and thirsting after righteousness, and living by every word of God, and the Lord will soon say unto him, Son, thou shalt be exalted. When the Lord has thoroughly proved him, and finds that the man is determined to serve Him at all hazards, then the man will find his calling and election made sure, then it will be his privilege to receive the other Comforter, which the Lord hath promised the Saints, as is recorded in the testimony of St. John, in the 14th chapter, from the 12th to the 27th verses.

Note the 16, 17, 18, 21, 23 verses: [quoted].

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

The Spirit of Revelation

The Spirit of Revelation is in connection with these blessings. A person may profit by noticing the first intimation of the spirit of revelation; for instance, when you feel pure

intelligence flowing into you, it may give you sudden strokes of ideas, so that by noticing it, you may find it fulfilled the same day or soon; (i.e.) those things that were presented unto your **minds** by the Spirit of God, will come to pass; and thus by **learning** the Spirit of God and **understanding** it, you may grow into the principle of revelation, until you become perfect in Christ Jesus.

The Doctrine of Calling & Election, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 297-298.

Salvation through Knowledge

It is not wisdom that we should have all knowledge at once presented before us; but that we should have a little at a time; then we can comprehend it. President Smith then read the 2nd Epistle of Peter, 1st chapter, 16th to last verses, and dwelt upon the 19th verse with some remarks.

Add to you faith knowledge, etc. The principle of knowledge is the principle of salvation. This principle can be comprehended by the faithful and diligent; and every one that does not obtain knowledge sufficient to be saved will be condemned. The principle of salvation is given us through the knowledge of Jesus Christ.

Salvation is to Triumph over Enemies

Salvation is nothing more nor less than to triumph over all our enemies and put them under our feet. And when we have power to put all enemies under our feet in this world, and a knowledge to triumph over all evil spirits in the world to come, then we are saved, as in the case of Jesus, who was to reign until He had put all enemies under His feet, and the last enemy was death.

No Salvation Without a Tabernacle

Perhaps there are principles here that few men have thought of. No person can have this salvation except through a tabernacle.

Now, in this world, mankind are naturally selfish, ambitious and striving to excel one above another; yet some are willing to build up others as well as themselves. So in the other world there are a variety of spirits. Some seek to excel. And this was the case with Lucifer when he fell. He sought for things which were unlawful. Hence he was sent down, and it is said he drew many away with him; and the greatness of his punishment is that he shall not have a tabernacle. This is his punishment. So the devil, thinking to thwart the decree of God, by going up and down in the earth, seeking whom he may destroy — any person that he can find that will yield to him, he will bind him, and take possession of the body and reign there, glorying in it mightily, not caring that he had got merely a stolen body; and by and by some one having authority will come along and cast him out and restore the tabernacle to its rightful owner. The devil steals a tabernacle because he has not one of his own; but if he steals one, he is always liable to be turned out of doors.

Calling and Election

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 they had heard an audible voice from heaven bearing testimony that Jesus was the Son of God [Mt 17:5], yet he says we have a more sure word of prophecy, whereunto ye 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 calling and election was made sure, that they were sealed in the heavens and had the promise of eternal life in the kingdom of God. Then, having this promised 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. Then knowledge through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ is the grand key that unlocks the glories and mysteries of the kingdom of heaven.

Compare this principle once with Christendom at the present day, and where are they, with all their boasted religion, piety and sacredness while at the same time they are crying out against prophets, apostles, angels, revelations, prophesying and visions, etc. Why, they are just ripening for the damnation of hell. They will be damned, for they reject the most glorious principle of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and treat with disdain and trample under foot the key that unlocks the heavens and puts in our possession the glories of the celestial world. Yes, I say, such will be damned, with all their professed godliness. Then I would exhort you to go on and continue to call upon God until you make your calling and election sure for yourselves, by obtaining this more sure word of prophecy, and wait patiently for the promise until you obtain it.

Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, 305.

Calling & Election To Be Made Sure

Contend earnestly for the like precious faith with the Apostle Peter, “and add to you faith, virtue,” knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, charity [D&C 4]; “for if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Another point, after having all these qualifications, he lays this injunction upon the people “to make your calling and election sure.” He is emphatic upon this subject — after adding all this virtue, knowledge, etc., “Make your calling and election sure.” What is the secret — the starting point? “According as His divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness.” How did he obtain all things? Through the knowledge of Him who hath called him. There could not anything be given, pertaining to life and godliness, without knowledge. Woe! woe! Woe to Christendom!—especially the divines and priests if this be true.

Salvation is for a man to be saved from all his enemies; for

until a man can triumph over death, he is not saved. A knowledge of the priesthood alone will do this.

The Devil’s Punishment

The spirits in the eternal world are like the spirits in this world. When those have come into this world and received tabernacles, then died and again have risen and received glorified bodies, they will have an ascendancy [*sic*] over the spirits who have received no bodies, or kept not their first estate, like the devil. The punishment of the devil was that he should not have a habitation like men. The devil’s retaliation is, he comes into this world, binds up men’s bodies, and occupies them himself. When the authorities come along, they eject him from a stolen habitation.

The design of the great God in sending us into this world, and organizing us to prepare us for the eternal worlds, I shall keep in my own bosom at present.

We have no claim in our eternal compact, in relation to eternal things, unless our actions and contracts and all things tend to this. But after all this, you have got to make your calling and election sure. If this injunction would lie largely on those to whom it was spoken, how much more those of the present generation!

1st key: Knowledge is the power of salvation. 2nd key: Make your calling and election sure. 3rd key: It is one thing to be on the mount and hear the excellent voice, etc., and another to hear to voice declare to you, You have a part and lot in that kingdom. (May 21, 1843; HC 5:401-403.)

Bruce R. McConkie, *Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*, 3:325-353.

Among those who have received the gospel, and who are seeking diligently to live its laws and gain eternal life, there is an instinctive and determined desire to make their calling and election sure. Because they have tasted the good things of God and sipped from the fountain of eternal truth, they now seek the divine presence, where they shall know all things, have all power, all might, and all dominion, and in fact be like Him who is the great Prototype of all saved beings—God our Heavenly and Eternal Father. (D&C 132:20.) This is the end objective, the chief goal of all the faithful, and there is nothing greater in all eternity, “for there is no gift greater than the gift of salvation.” (D&C 6:13.)

It is little wonder then that the Prophet Joseph Smith, particularly during the latter and crowning years of his mortal ministry, repeatedly exhorted the saints to press forward with that steadfastness in Christ which would enable them to make their calling and election sure. “I am going on in my progress for eternal life,” he said of himself; and then in fervent pleading to all the saints, he exclaimed: “Oh! I beseech you to go forward, go forward and make your calling and your election sure.” (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 366.)

As a prelude to analyzing Peter’s words on this subject—and they rank in spiritual grandeur and insight with those in the Vision of the degrees of glory and the sermons of the Lord himself—as a prelude to this analysis, let us define and outline what is involved in having one’s calling and election made sure, taking cautious heed the while to anchor each thought

and concept to the revealed word and the prophetic utterances.

Of necessity we must define some words and phrases in most pointed terms. Unless we know what they mean, in their scriptural contexts, we cannot comprehend what the Holy Spirit was teaching by the mouths of the prophets as he inspired those preachers of righteousness to use them. And since there is no much misunderstanding and misinformation where these glorious concepts are concerned, it will not be amiss to approach the subject in an organized and intelligent manner, building our house of understanding, brick upon brick, precept upon precept. The fact is that the doctrinal concepts in this field are fully set forth in the revelations, and all that is needed is to put the whole subject together in one well built structure, so that it becomes clear how each separate part fits into the one united whole. One brick or one window by itself does not show forth what the whole house is like; but each part fitly framed together with its fellow parts soon becomes a marvelous mansion which is gratifying to behold.

[1] What is meant by calling? And who are the called of God?

To be called is to be a member of the Church and kingdom of God on earth; it is to be numbered with the saints; it is to accept the gospel and receive the everlasting covenant; it is to have part and lot in the earthly Zion; it is to be born again, to be a son or a daughter of the Lord Jesus Christ; to have membership in the household of faith; it is to be on the path leading to eternal life and to have the hope of eternal glory; it is to have a conditional promise of eternal life; it is to be an inheritor of all of the blessings of the gospel, provided there is continued obedience to the laws and ordinances thereof.

Within this over-all framework, there are individual calls to positions of trust and responsibility, but these are simply assignments to labor on the Lord's errand, in particular places, for a time and a season. The call itself is to be gospel cause; it is not reserved for apostles and prophets or for the great and mighty in Israel; it is for all the members of the kingdom.

The call originates with God, is available because of his grace and goodness, and is offered to various peoples and nations according to his will and on his divine timetable. From the day of Jacob to the coming of Christ the house of Israel was the called and chosen people of the Lord. During the day of his mortal ministry our Lord limited the call to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. (Mt 10:5-7.) After his resurrection he commanded his ministers to make the call available to all men. (Mk 16:15-16.) But only those who actually receive the gospel, who make the everlasting covenant, who cleave unto the truth and strive to live in harmony with the revealed word, only these are numbered among those whom the scriptures name as the called of the Lord.

Thus we find hosts of statements in holy writ telling who is called and what they have and may yet receive as a result thereof. For instance: On the day of Pentecost itself, as he began the ministry which would take the gospel from the house of Israel to the ends of the earth, Peter announced that the repentant, baptized converts, "shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For," said he, "the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." (Acts 2:37-39.)

Later the chief apostle told members of the Church that they had been "called ... out of darkness" into the "marvellous light" of the gospel (1 Pet 2:9); that they were "called" to suffer in the cause of righteousness, that thereby they "should inherit a blessing" (1 Pet 2:21; 3:9); that their call came from God, by his grace, through "Christ Jesus," and was a call unto "eternal glory." (1 Pet 5:10.) And accordingly Peter exhorted the saints to be holy "as he which hath called you is holy." (1 Pet 1:15.)

Our friend Paul proclaims the same principles. He speaks of members of the Church as "the called of Jesus Christ," as those who are "called to be saints" (Rom 1:6-7; 1 Cor 1:2); he says they are "called ... into the grace of Christ" (Gal 1:6); "called unto liberty" (Gal 5:13); "called ... to peace" (1 Cor 7:15, 17); "called" to "the fellowship" of "Jesus Christ" (1 Cor 1:9); "called" to "holiness" (1 Thess 4:7; Heb 3:1); "called" to the Lord's "kingdom and glory" (1 Thess 2:12); and that all these calls come by "grace." (Gal 1:15.)

Like Peter he teaches that the saints are called to "eternal life" (1 Tim 6:12), called to "the promise of eternal inheritance" (Heb 9:15), but he explains also that the Lord's calls are the result of foreordination and grow out of faithfulness in pre-existence. (2 Tim 1:8-9.) "God hath from the beginning," that is, from before the foundations of the world, "chose you [his saints] to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ." (2 Thess 2:13-14.) That is, the saints were foreordained in the councils of eternity to believe the truth, to be sanctified, and to save their souls; and then in this life they are called to that gospel whereby these eternal promises can be fulfilled.

In another glorious passage, Paul says: "We know that all things works together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." That is, the Lord's hand governs and controls in the lives of those whom he, in his infinite foreknowledge, hath called to be his people. And then: "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren," which is to say that God in his infinite wisdom foreordained the noble and great spirits in pre-existence to become like Christ, to gain glory, power and might like unto the Son of God, so that the Son becomes the firstborn, as it were, among many exalted sons. And then in glorious conclusion: "Moreover whom he did predestinate [foreordain], them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified." (Rom 8:28-30.) Thus "noble and great ones," who were chosen before they were born (Abr 3:22-23), who were foreordained to have exaltation, are the ones whom God hath called in this life to be glorified through the gospel in due course.

With such a glorious hope before them, surely the saints should be encouraged to gain the promised rewards, and so Paul joins Peter in using the doctrine of calling as an occasion for exhortation. Let all the saints so "work" as to be "worthy of this calling," he says, in that day when the Lord "shall come to be glorified in his saints" (2 Thess 1:10-11), and even of such a great one as himself he says: "I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." (Philip 3:14.)

In modern revelation the Lord confirms the doctrine of his ancient apostles, speaks of our "calling and election in the church" (D&C 53:1; 55:1), of the fact we "are called" to his

“everlasting gospel” (D&C 101:39), and names the elders of his Church as among those “whom he hath called and chosen in these last days.” (D&C 52:1:41:2.)

Since men are foreordained to gain exaltation, and since no man can be exalted without the priesthood, it is almost self-evident that worthy brethren were foreordained to receive the priesthood. And so we find Alma teaching that those who hold the Melchizedek Priesthood in this life were “called and prepared from the foundation of the world according to the foreknowledge of God.” (Alma 13:1-12.) And Joseph Smith said, “Every man who has a calling to minister to the inhabitants of the world,” and this includes all who hold the Melchizedek Priesthood, “was ordained to that very purpose in the Grand Council of heaven before this world was. I suppose that I was ordained to this very office in that Grand Council.” (*Teachings*, 365.)

[2] Now what is meant by making a calling sure?

All blessings promised in connection with the callings of God are conditional; they are offered to men provided they obey the laws upon which their receipt is predicated. (D&C 130:20-21.) “For all who will have a blessing at my hands,” the Lord says, “shall abide the law which was appointed for that blessing, and the conditions thereof, as were instituted from before the foundation of the world.” (D&C 132:5.)

It follows, then, that when the law has been lived to the full, the promised blessing is guaranteed. “I, the Lord, am bound when ye do what I say; but when ye do not what I say, ye have no promise.” (D&C 82:10.) Accordingly, when a man lives the law that qualifies him for eternal life, the Lord is bound by his own law to confer that greatest of all gifts upon him. And if by a long course of trial and obedience, while yet in this life, a man proves to the Lord that he has and will abide in the truth, the Lord accepts the exhibited devotion and issues his decree that the promised blessings shall be received. The calling, which up to that time was provisional, is then made sure. The receipt of the promised blessings are no longer conditional; they are guaranteed. Announcement is made that every gospel blessing shall be inherited.

[3] What is meant by election? Who are the elect of God? To what have they been elected? And why?

Election is akin to and synonymous with calling, and in a general sense the elect comprise the whole house of Israel. (Isa 45:4; 65:9.) Jesus and Paul and Peter speak of the elect as the saints, as the faithful believers, as those who love the Lord and are seeking righteousness. (Mt 24:22; Mk 13:20; Lk 18:7; Col 3:12; 2 Tim 2:10; Titus 1:1.) And the Lord in our day has promised to gather and save his elect. (D&C 29:7; 33:6; 35:20.) Paul speaks of the elect along with the called, setting forth that they are foreordained to be like Christ, that their conduct here is justified, and that they shall be glorified hereafter. (Rom 8:28-30.) Peter specifies that their high status is “according to the foreknowledge of God the Father” (1 Pet 1:2), and Isaiah assures us that great blessings shall flow to them during the Millennial Era. (Isa 65:22.)

But in the most express and proper usage of the terms, “The elect of God comprise a very select group, an inner circle of faithful members of the Church.... They are the portion of church members who are striving with all their hearts to keep the fulness of the gospel law in this life so that they can

become inheritors of the fulness of the gospel rewards in the life to come.

“As far as the male sex is concerned, they are the ones, the Lord says, who have the Melchizedek Priesthood conferred upon them and who thereafter magnify their callings and are sanctified by the Spirit. In this way, ‘They become the sons of Moses and of Aaron and the seed of Abraham, and the church and kingdom, and the elect of God.’” (*Mormon Doctrine*, 2nd ed., 217.) See *Commentary* II, 267-269, 271-278, 283-285.

[4] What is meant by making an election sure?

It is with election as with calling; the chosen of the Lord are offered all of the blessings of the gospel on condition of obedience to the Lord’s laws; and they, having been tried and tested and found worthy in all things, eventually have a seal placed on their election which guarantees the receipt of the promised blessing.

[5] What is meant by having one’s calling and election made sure?

To have one’s calling and election made sure is to be sealed up unto eternal life; it is to have the unconditional guarantee of exaltation in the highest heaven of the celestial world; it is to receive the assurance of godhood; it is, in effect, to have the day of judgment advanced, so that an inheritance of all the glory and honor of the Father’s kingdom is assured prior to the day when the faithful actually enter into the divine presence to sit with Christ in his throne, even as he is “set down” with his “Father in his throne.” (Rev 3:21.)

[6] What is the relationship between baptism and having one’s calling and election made sure?

Baptism is the beginning of personal righteousness; it opens the door to celestial exaltation; it puts us on the path leading to eternal life. As Nephi expressed it, when we enter “the gate” of “repentance and baptism” and receive “a remission” of our sins “by fire and by the Holy Ghost,” we are then on the “straight and narrow path which leads to eternal life.”

Nephi then asks if we have thereby done all that is necessary to gain that glorious reward, and answers with an emphatic , No! “Ye must press forward with a steadfastness in Christ,” he says, “having a perfect brightness of hope, and a love of God and of all men. Wherefore, if ye shall press forward, feasting upon the word of Christ, and endure to the end, behold, thus saith the Father: Ye shall have eternal life.” (2 Ne 31:17-21.)

That is to say, after baptism, after being called out of darkness into the light of the gospel; after having been numbered with the elect of God, we must receive the guarantees to which we have been called, and the assurances that appertain to our election, and which are given on a conditional basis only in baptism. We must have our calling and election made sure, and this high achievement grows out of and is the crowning reward of baptism.

[7] What is the relationship between celestial marriage and having one’s calling and election made sure?

In the same sense that baptism opens the door and starts repentant persons traveling on the path leading to eternal life, so also does celestial marriage. This holy order of matrimony also opens a door leading to celestial exaltation. “In the celestial glory there are three heavens or degrees; And in order

to obtain the highest, a man must enter into this order of the priesthood [meaning the new and everlasting covenant of marriage]; And if he does not, he cannot obtain it. He may enter into the other, but that is the end of his kingdom; he cannot have an increase.” (D&C 131:1-4.)

As everyone who has been married in the temple knows, those so united—by the power and authority of the holy priesthood and by virtue of the sealing power restored by Elijah—are promised an inheritance of glory, honor, power, and dominion in the kingdom of God. But, as with baptism, all the promises are conditional; they are specifically and pointedly stated as being contingent upon the subsequent faithfulness of the participating parties. If they keep the commandments after celestial marriage, their union continues in the life to come; if they do not conform to the standards of personal righteousness involved, their marriage is not of force when they die and they revert to their separate and single status.

Unfortunately some are confused on this point because of a misunderstanding of some of the truths revealed in the revelation on marriage. Because no person can gain exaltation or eternal life alone; because exaltation includes the continuation of the family unit in eternity; because the whole thrust of revealed religion is to perfect and center everything in the family; and because having one’s calling and election made sure is the receipt of a guarantee of eternal life — it was the most natural thing in the world for the Lord to reveal both the doctrine of eternal marriage and the doctrine of being sealed up unto eternal life (meaning having one’s calling and election made sure) in one and the same revelation. In effect one grows out of the other. The one is a conditional promise of eternal life; the other is an unconditional promise.

Thus in Section 132, verse 19 begins by talking of celestial marriage in these words: “If a man marry a wife by my word, which is my law, and by the new and everlasting covenant, and it is sealed unto them by the Holy Spirit of Promise, by him who is anointed, unto whom I have appointed this power and the keys of this priesthood,” but then proceeds to consider the matter of having their callings and elections made sure by saying: “and it shall be said unto them [meaning that in addition to the marriage sealing, it shall be said unto them] — Ye shall come forth in the first resurrection; ... and shall inherit thrones, kingdoms, principalities, and powers, dominions, all heights and depths—then ... they shall pass by the angels, and the gods, which are set there, to their exaltation and glory in all things, as hath been sealed upon their heads, which glory shall be a fulness and a continuation of the seeds forever and ever.”

That is to say, after celestial marriage; after entering into sacred covenants in the house of the Lord; after receiving the conditional promise of the continuation of the family unit in eternity; after receiving power to gain kingdoms and thrones — we must so live as to receive the guarantees to which we have thus been called, and the assurances that appertain to our election, and which are given on a conditional basis only in celestial marriage. As with baptism, so with celestial marriage; after the glorious promise of eternal life that is part of each of these covenants, we must press forward in righteousness until our calling and election is made sure; and this high achievement grows out of and is the crowning reward of celestial marriage.

[8] What is the relationship between holding the holy

Melchizedek Priesthood and having one’s calling and election made sure?

The Melchizedek Priesthood is conferred with an oath and a covenant — a covenant on man’s part that he will receive the priesthood and magnify his calling therein, and an oath on God’s part that man shall, as a consequence, be “made like unto the Son of God, abiding a priest continually.” (*Inspired Version* [JST], Heb 7:3; D&C 84:33-44.) See Heb 7:1-3, 18-22. In other words, those who magnify their callings shall gain eternal life. But one cannot keep a covenant before it is made; a calling in the priesthood cannot be magnified until it is received. The covenant is the contract which sets forth the terms and conditions by obedience to which eternal life may be won; the obedience comes after the call; and when it is whole and complete, the worthy son has his calling and election made sure, and he inherits the promised reward.

[9] Is having one’s calling and election made sure the same as being sealed by the Holy Spirit of Promise?

The Holy Ghost is the Holy Spirit; he is the Holy Spirit promised the saints at baptism, or in other words the Holy Spirit of Promise, this exalted name-title signifying that the promised receipt of the Holy Spirit, as on the day of Pentecost, is the greatest gift man can receive in mortality.

The gift of the Holy Ghost is the right to the constant companionship of that member of the Godhead based on faithfulness; it is bestowed with a promise that we shall receive revelation and be sanctified if we are true and faithful and so live as to qualify for the companionship of that Holy Spirit who will not dwell in an unclean temple. (1 Cor 3:16-17; 6:19; Mosiah 2:37; Hela 4:24.) The receipt of the promise is conditional! If after we receive the promise, we then keep the commandment, we gain the companionship of this member of the Godhead, and not otherwise.

One of the functions assigned and delegated to the Holy Spirit is to seal, and the following expressions are identical in thought content:

To be sealed by the Holy Spirit of Promise;
To be justified by the Spirit;
To be approved by the Lord; and
To be ratified by the Holy Ghost.

Accordingly, any act which is sealed by the Holy Spirit of Promise is one which is justified by the Spirit, one which is approved by the Lord, one which is ratified by the Holy Ghost. One of Paul’s great concerns was that the saints in his day should be justified by faith, through grace, because of the shedding of the blood of Christ. (*Commentary* II, pp. 224-240.) In other words, he sought to perfect the lives of those souls put into his care and custody so that, as a result of good works, all their acts would have divine approval and be sealed by the Holy Spirit of Promise.

As revealed to Joseph Smith, the Lord’s law in this respect is: “All covenants, contracts, bonds, obligations, oaths, vows, performances, connections, associations, or expectations, that are not made and entered into and sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise, of him who is anointed, both as well for time and for all eternity, and that too most holy, by revelation and commandment through the medium of mine anointed, whom I have appointed on the earth to hold this power (and I have appointed unto my servant Joseph to hold this power in the

last days, and there is never but one on the earth at a time on whom this power and the keys of this priesthood are conferred), are of no efficacy, virtue, or force in and after the resurrection from the dead; for all contracts that are not made unto this end have an end when men are dead.” (D&C 132:7.)

By way of illustration, this means that baptism, partaking of the sacrament, administering to the sick, marriage, and every covenant that man ever makes with the Lord — plus all other “contracts, bonds, obligations, oaths, vows, performances, associations, or expectations” — must be performed in righteousness by and for people who are worthy to receive whatever blessing is involved, otherwise whatever is done has no binding and sealing effect in eternity.

Since “the Comforter knoweth all things” (D&C 42:17), it follows that it is not possible “to lie to the Holy Ghost” and thereby gain an unearned or undeserved blessing, as Ananias and Sapphira found out to their sorrow. (Acts 5:1-11.) And so this provision that all things must be sealed by the Holy Spirit of Promise, if they are to have “efficacy, virtue, or force in and after the resurrection from the dead” (D&C 132:7), is the Lord’s system for dealing with absolute impartiality with all men, and for giving all men exactly what they merit, neither adding to nor diminishing from. See *Commentary II*, 493-495.

When the Holy Spirit of Promise places his ratifying seal upon a baptism, or a marriage, or any covenant, except that of having one’s calling and election made sure, the seal is a conditional approval or ratification; it is binding in eternity only in the event of subsequent obedience to the terms and conditions of whatever covenant is involved.

But when the ratifying seal of approval is placed upon someone whose calling and election is thereby made sure—because there are no more conditions to be met by the obedient person—this act of being sealed up unto eternal life is of such transcendent import that of itself it is called being sealed by the Holy Spirit of Promise, which means that in this crowning sense, being so sealed is the same as having one’s calling and election made sure. Thus, to be sealed by the Holy Spirit of Promise is to be sealed up unto eternal life; and to be sealed up unto eternal life is to be sealed by the Holy Spirit of Promise. And of this usage of terms, a usage which is wholly misunderstood unless the whole concept of the sealing power of the Spirit is understood, the scriptures and other prophetic utterances bear repeated witness.

Thus Joseph Smith says that when Peter “exhorts us to make our calling and election sure,” it is the same thing as “the sealing power spoken of by Paul in other places.” (*Teachings*, p. 149.) The illustrative quotation from Paul which the Prophet then quotes is: “In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory,” that we may be sealed up unto the day of redemption. (Eph 1:13-14.) That is, the calling and election of Ephesian Saints had been made sure because they were sealed by the Holy Spirit of Promise.

Those who gain exaltation in the celestial kingdom are described in the Vision of the degrees of glory in these words: “They are they who received the testimony of Jesus, and

believed on his name and were baptized after the manner of his burial, being buried in the water in his name, and this according to the commandment which he has given — That by keeping the commandments they might be washed and cleansed from all their sins, and receive the Holy Spirit by the laying on of the hands of him who is ordained and sealed unto this power; And who overcome by faith, and are sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise, which the Father sheds forth upon all those who are just and true.” (D&C 76:51-53.) That is, they first believed the gospel, received all the conditional promises of eternal life, including the gift of the Holy Ghost, and then having “overcome by faith,” having kept the commandments, having proved themselves worthy, they finally had their calling and election made sure.”

“This principle” — that of having one’s calling and election made sure and of being sealed with that Holy Spirit of Promise — “ought (in its proper place) to be taught,” the Prophet said, “for God hath not revealed anything to Joseph, but what he will make known unto the Twelve, and even the least saint may know all things as fast as he is able to bear them, for the day must come when no man need say to his neighbor, know ye the Lord; for all shall know him (who remain) from the least to the greatest. How is this to be done? It is to be done by this sealing power, and the other Comforter spoken of, which will be manifest by revelation.” (*Teachings*, 149.)

The scriptural passage alluded to by the Prophet in this statement is from Jeremiah and is as follows: “Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the Lord: But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.” (Jere 31:31-34.) Complete realization of the blessings here promised is Millennial, and the knowledge of God spoken of shall be manifest by the receipt of the Second Comforter, as the Prophet then proceeds to state, and as we shall now consider.

[10] Is having one’s calling and election made sure the same as receiving the Second Comforter?

It is the privilege of those who have their calling and election made sure, meaning those who are sealed up unto eternal life, meaning those who are “sealed with that holy Spirit of promise” (Eph 1:13), to receive the Second Comforter.

“There are two Comforters spoken of,” says the Prophet in one of his most profound and enlightening discourses. “One of these is the Holy Ghost, the same as given on the day of Pentecost, and that all saints receive after faith, repentance, and baptism. The first Comforter or Holy Ghost has no other effect than pure intelligence. It is more powerful in expanding the mind, enlightening the understanding, and storing the intellect with present knowledge, of a man who is of the literal seed of Abraham, than one that is a Gentile, though it may not have half as much visible effect upon the body; for as the Holy

Ghost falls upon one of the literal seed of Abraham, it is calm and serene; and his whole soul and body are only exercised by the pure spirit of intelligence; while the effect of the Holy Ghost upon a Gentile, is to purge out the old blood, and make him actually of the seed of Abraham. That man that has none of the blood of Abraham (naturally) must have a new creation by the Holy Ghost. In such a case, there may be more of a powerful effect upon the body, and visible to the eye, than upon an Israelite, while the Israelite at first might be fare before the Gentile in pure intelligence.

“The other Comforter spoken of is a subject of great interest, and perhaps understood by few of this generation. After a person has faith in Christ, repents of his sins, and is baptized for the remission of his sins and receives the Holy Ghost, (by the laying on of hands), which is the first Comforter, then let him continue to humble himself before God, hungering and thirsting after righteousness, and living by every word of God, and the Lord will soon say unto him, Son, thou shalt be exalted. When the Lord has thoroughly proved him, and finds that the man is determined to serve him at all hazards, then the man will find his calling and election made sure, then it will be his privilege to receive the other Comforter, which the Lord hath promised the saints, as if recorded in the testimony of St. John, in the 14th chapter, from the 12th to the 27th verses.” (*Teachings*, 149-150.) The Prophet then quotes verses 16, 17, 18, 21, and 23, and asks that they be noted in particular.

In the revelation to certain selected saints in this dispensation, the Lord said that the alms of their prayers were “recorded in the book of the names of the sanctified, even them of the celestial world” (D&C 88:2), which is to say that they were among those who had “overcome by faith,” and were “sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise, which the Father sheds forth upon all those who are just and true.” (D&C 76:53.)

“Wherefore,” the Lord said to them, “I now send upon you another Comforter, even upon you my friends, that it may abide in your hearts, even the Holy Spirit of promise; which other Comforter is the same that I promised unto my disciples, as is recorded in the testimony of John. This Comforter is the promise which I give unto you of eternal life, even the glory of the celestial kingdom; Which glory is that of the church of the Firstborn, even of God, the holiest of all, through Jesus Christ his Son.” (D&C 88:3-5.)

These saints, like their Ephesian Brethren before them, had been called and chosen “before the foundation of the world” that they “should be holy and without blame” before the Lord, through baptism and obedience (Eph 1:4-7), which is the sole course by which men can sanctify their souls (3 Ne 27:19-20), thereby qualifying to have their names recorded “in the book of the names of the sanctified.” (D&C 88:2.) They had then earned the right by faith and devotion to have the seal of divine acceptance placed on the conditional promises which they had theretofore made. They now had the sure “promise ... of eternal life” (D&C 88:4), which eternal life is the name of the kind of life which God our Heavenly and Eternal Father lives, and they were prepared to receive the Second Comforter.

As set forth by the Lord Jesus himself to the ancient Twelve, in one of his most loving and gracious sermons, the doctrine of the Second Comforter, noting particularly the verses quoted by the Prophet, is this:

[John 14] Verse 16: “And I will pray the Father, and he shall

give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever.” That is, in their case they are going to receive a Comforter in addition to the Holy Ghost already promised, and this Comforter will abide with them forever, for they shall have membership in the Church of the Firstborn in celestial exaltation.

Verse 17: “Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him; but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.” All that is said in this verse, if taken out of context, could apply to the Holy Ghost, whom the world cannot receive, and who figuratively dwells in the hearts of the righteous, for the title, “Spirit of truth,” applies to this Spirit member of the Godhead. (John 16:13.)

But as spoken by Jesus, as recorded by the Beloved John, and as interpreted by the Prophet Joseph Smith, the verse has application to Jesus himself. “I am the Spirit of truth,” is his latter-day declaration (D&C 93:26), which is but another of the many instances in which the same name-title applies to more than one member of the Godhead. Thus the Lord Jesus is telling his ancient apostles that he will dwell in them in the figurative sense stated three sentences later in the same sermon: “I am in the Father, and ye in me, and I in you.” (Verse 20.)

Verse 18: “I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.” I will come! The Lord Jesus Christ himself will do it! He will appear to them and be with them! And what an eternal comfort it will be, in days and years to come, to see the face of their Beloved Lord! And verses 19 and 20 then reaffirm that when the world no longer sees him, yet because he continues to live in glorious immortality, his beloved disciples shall continue to see him—“Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also. At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you.”

Verse 21: “He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.” Again the Master Teacher affirms that because of love and obedience he personally will hereafter manifest himself to his disciples. And then, one of the Twelve, hearing the words but not comprehending the deep spiritual truths they convey, asks Jesus: “Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world? (Verse 22.)

Verse 23: “Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.” Can this be possible that the Father and the Son, as resurrected, glorified persons, will come to and make their abode with those who love and serve God with all their hearts? (D&C 93:1.) Such seems almost beyond comprehension, but so gracious and infinite is God’s grace that such is verily the case, and so we find the Prophet, writing by the spirit of prophecy and revelation: “John 14:23—The appearing of the Father and the Son, in that verse is a personal appearance; and the idea that the Father and the Son dwell in a man’s heart is an old sectarian notion, and is false.” (D&C 130:3.)

Having thus set forth the doctrine that he and his Father will manifest themselves to those who are sealed up unto eternal life — and for that matter, why should they not come to such

persons, since all who gain eternal life shall dwell in their presence and be like them?—having so taught, Jesus says: “These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you. But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost”—the First Comforter, the initial Comforter, the one “that all saints receive after faith, repentance, and baptism,” the one that “has no other effect than pure intelligence” (*Teachings*, p. 149)—this Comforter, “whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.” (Verses 25 and 26.)

After quoting the named verses from the 14th chapter of John, the Prophet continues his own inspired analysis: “Now what is this other Comforter?” he asks. “It is no more nor less than the Lord Jesus Christ himself; and this is the sum and substance of the whole matter; that when any man obtains this last Comforter, he will have the personage of Jesus Christ to attend him, or appear unto him from time to time, and even he will manifest the Father unto him, and they will take up their abode with him, and the visions of the heavens will be opened unto him, and the Lord will teach him face to face, and he may have a perfect knowledge of the mysteries of the Kingdom of God; and this is the state and place the ancient saints arrived at when they had such glorious visions—Isaiah, Ezekiel, John upon the Isle of Patmos, St. Paul in the three heavens, and all the saints who held communion with the general assembly and Church of the Firstborn.” (*Teachings*, 150-151.) [See D&C 84:54, 67-70.]

Speaking in November, 1831, to those whose calling and election would in due course be made sure, and whose “privilege” it would then be to receive the Second Comforter, the Lord said: “Verily I say unto you that it is your privilege, and a promise I give unto you that have been ordained unto this ministry, that inasmuch as you strip yourselves from jealousies and fears, and humble yourselves before me, for ye are not sufficiently humble, the veil shall be rent and you shall see me.” (D&C 67:10-14.)

[11] What if those whose calling and election has been made sure thereafter commit grievous sins? Suppose they backslide and walk in the ways of wickedness? Or fight the truth and rebel against God — what then?

That all men commit sin, before and after baptism, and for that matter, before and after their calling and election is made sure, is self-evident. There has been only one Sinless One—the Lord Jesus who was God’s own Son.

Thus in the revelation announcing the setting up of the restored church in this day, the Lord says: “There is a possibility that man may fall from grace and depart from the living God; Therefore let the church take heed and pray always, lest they fall into temptation; Yea, and even let those who are sanctified take heed also.” (D&C 20:32-34.)

The prophets and apostles from Adam and Enoch down, and all men, whether cleansed and sanctified from sin or not, are yet subject to and do in fact commit sin. This is the case even after men have seen the visions of eternity and been sealed by that Holy Spirit of Promise which makes their calling and election sure. Since these chosen ones have the sure promise of eternal life, and since “no unclean thing can enter into” the Father’s “kingdom” (3 Ne 27:19), “or dwell in his presence” (Moses 6:57), what of sins committed after being sealed up

into eternal life?

Obviously the laws of repentance still apply, and the more enlightened a person is, the more he seeks the gift of repentance, and the harder he strives to free himself from sin as often as he falls short of the divine will and becomes subject in any degree to the Master of Sin who is Lucifer. It follows that the sins of the godfearing and the righteous are continually remitted because they repent and seek the Lord anew every day and every hour.

And as a matter of fact, the added blessing of having one’s calling and election made sure is itself an encouragement to avoid sin and a hedge against its further commission. By that long course of obedience and trial which enabled them to gain so great a blessing the sanctified saints have charted a course and developed a pattern of living which avoids sin and encourages righteousness. Thus the Lord said: “I give unto you Hyrum Smith to be a patriarch unto you, to hold the sealing blessings of my church, even the Holy Spirit of promise, whereby ye are sealed up unto the day of redemption, that ye may not fall notwithstanding the hour of temptation that may come upon you.” (D&C 124:124.)

But suppose such persons become disaffected and the spirit of repentance leaves them — which is a seldom and almost unheard of eventuality — still, what then? The answer is — and the revelations and teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith so recite! — they must then pay the penalty of their own sins, for the blood of Christ will not cleanse them. Or if they commit murder or adultery, they lose their promised inheritance because these sins are exempt from the sealing promises. Or if they commit the unpardonable sin, they become sons of perdition.

As we have already seen, making one’s calling and election sure comes after and grows out of celestial marriage. Eternal life does not and cannot exist for a man or a woman alone, because in its very nature it consists of the continuation of the family unit in eternity. Thus the revelation on marriage speaks both of celestial marriage (in which the conditional promises of eternal life are given) and of making one’s calling and election sure (in which the unconditional promise of eternal life are given) in one and the same sentence — which sentence also says that those who commit sins (except “murder whereby to shed innocent blood”) after being sealed up unto eternal life shall still gain exaltation. This is the language: “Then” — that is, after their calling and election has been made sure — “shall it be written in the Lamb’s Book of Life, that he shall commit no murder whereby to shed innocent blood, and if ye abide in my covenant, and commit no murder whereby to shed innocent blood, it shall be done unto them in all things whatsoever my servant hath put upon them, in time, and through all eternity; and shall be of full force when they are out of the world; and they shall pass by the angels, and the gods, which are set there, to their exaltation and glory in all things, as hath been sealed upon their heads, which glory shall be a fulness and a continuation of the seeds forever and ever. Then shall they be gods,” because they have eternal life. (D&C 132:19-20.)

Then the revelation speaks of that obedience out of which eternal life grows, and still speaking both of celestial marriage and of making one’s calling and election sure says: “Verily, verily, I say unto you, if a man marry a wife according to my word, and they are sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise,

according to mine appointment” — that is, if they are both married and have their calling and election made sure — “and he or she shall commit any sin or transgression of the new and everlasting covenant whatever, and all manner of blasphemies, and if they commit no murder wherein they shed innocent blood, yet they shall come forth in the first resurrection, and enter into their exaltation; but they shall be destroyed in the flesh, and shall be delivered unto the buffetings of Satan unto the day of redemption, saith the Lord God.” (D&C 132:26.)

This matter of being destroyed in the flesh and delivered over to the buffetings of Satan until the day of redemption is the doctrine of blood atonement, whereunder those here involved are not cleansed by the blood of Christ, but must pay the penalty for their own sins. This principle can only operate in a day, as that of Moses, when there is no separation of Church and state and when the Church has power to take life. Of conditions in our day, and as to how this law applies to us, President Joseph Fielding Smith says: “We cannot destroy men in the flesh, because we do not control the lives of men and do not have power to pass sentences upon them which involve capital punishment. In the days when there was a theocracy on the earth, then this decree was enforced. What the Lord will do in lieu of this, because we cannot destroy in the flesh, I am unable to say, but it will have to be made up in some other way.” (*Doctrines of Salvation*, 2:97.)

As to the shedding of innocent blood, within the meaning of this revelation, the Lord says: “The blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, which shall not be forgiven in the world nor out of the world, is in that ye commit murder wherein ye shed innocent blood, and assent unto my death, after ye have received my new and everlasting covenant, saith the Lord God; and he that abideth not this law can in nowise enter into my glory, but shall be damned, saith the Lord.” (D&C 132:27.) That is, the innocent blood is that of Christ; and those who commit blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, which is the unpardonable sin (Matt 12:31-32), thereby “crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.” (Heb 6:6.) They are, in other words, people who would have crucified Christ, having the while a perfect knowledge that he was the Son of God.

Following the pattern set by the Lord of speaking both of celestial marriage and of being sealed up unto eternal life in the same context, Joseph Smith said: “Putting my hand on the knee of William Clayton, I said: Your life is hid with Christ in God, and so are many others. Nothing but the unpardonable sin can prevent you from inheriting eternal life for you are sealed up by the power of the priesthood unto eternal life, having taken the step necessary for that purpose. Except a man and his wife enter into an everlasting covenant and be married for eternity, while in this probation, by the power and authority of the Holy Priesthood, they will cease to increase when they die; that is, they will not have any children after the resurrection. But those who are married by the power and authority of the priesthood in this life, and continue without committing the sin against the Holy Ghost, will continue to increase and have children in the celestial glory. The unpardonable sin is to shed innocent blood, or be accessory thereto. All other sins will be visited with judgment in the flesh, and the spirit being delivered to the buffetings of Satan until the day of the Lord Jesus.” (*History of the Church*, 5:391-392.)

Perhaps this matter of being “visited with judgment in the flesh” — whatever it may be in an individual case — is the Lord’s way of handling things when it is not possible for a person to be “destroyed in the flesh.” (D&C 132:26.) In this connection, also—and having in mind that the sealing power was given by Elijah to Peter, James, and John on the Mount of Transfiguration (*Teachings*, p. 158), and again to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery in the Kirtland Temple (D&C 110:13-16) — we should note these words of the Prophet: “This spirit of Elijah was manifest in the days of the Apostles, in delivering certain ones to the buffetings of Satan, that they might be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. They were sealed by the spirit of Elijah unto the damnation of hell until the day of the Lord, or revelation of Jesus Christ.” (*Teachings*, 338.)

As to the fact that the sealing power cannot seal a man up so as to keep him from being a son of perdition, if that is the course he chooses to follow, the Prophet says: “The doctrine that the Presbyterians and Methodists have quarreled so much about — once in grace, always in grace, or falling away from grace, I will say a word about. They are both wrong. Truth takes a road between them both, for while the Presbyterian says: ‘One in grace, you cannot fall;’ the Methodist says: ‘You can have grace today, fall from it tomorrow, next day have grace again; and so follow on, changing continually.’ But the doctrine of the scriptures and the spirit of Elijah would show them both false, and take a road between them both; for, according to the scripture, if men have received the good word of God, and tasted of the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, it is impossible to renew them again, seeing they have crucified the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame; so there is a possibility of falling away; you could not be renewed again, and the power of Elijah cannot seal against this sin, for this is a reserve made in the seals and power of the priesthood.” (*Teachings*, pp. 338-339.) Thus, even though a man’s calling and election has been made sure, if he then commits blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, he becomes a son of perdition, because when he was sealed up unto eternal life it was with a reservation. The sealing was not to apply in the case of the unpardonable sin.

As to the fact that the sealing power cannot seal a man up unto eternal life if he thereafter commits murder and thereby sheds innocent blood (not in this case the blood of Christ, but the blood of any person slain unlawfully and with malice) the Prophet says: “A murderer, for instance, one that sheds innocent blood, cannot have forgiveness. David sought repentance at the hand of God carefully with tears, for the murder of Uriah; but he could only get it through hell; he got a promise that his soul should not be left in hell.

“Although David was a king, he never did obtain the spirit and power of Elijah and the fullness of the priesthood; and the priesthood that he received, and the throne and kingdom of David is to be taken from him and given to another by the name of David in the last days, raised up out of his lineage.” (*Teachings*, 339.) Thus, even though a man’s calling and election has been made sure, if he then commits murder, all of the promises are of no effect, and he goes to a telestial kingdom (Rev 21:8; D&C 76:103), because when he was sealed up unto eternal life, it was with a reservation. The sealing was not to apply in the case of murder.

And as to the fact that the sealing power cannot seal a man up unto eternal life if he thereafter commits adultery, the Prophet

says: "If a man commit adultery, he cannot receive the celestial kingdom of God. Even if he is saved in any kingdom, it cannot be the celestial kingdom." (*History of the Church*, 6:81.) Thus, even though a man's calling and election has been sure, if he then commits adultery, all of the promises are of no effect, and he goes to a telestial kingdom, because when he was sealed up unto eternal life, it was with a reservation. The sealing was not to apply in the case of subsequent adultery. In other cases, through repentance, there is forgiveness for this sin which is second only to murder in the category of personal sins. (1 Cor 6:9-11; 3 Ne 30; D&C 42:24-26.)

[12] Who has had their calling and election made sure and how can they be identified?

In the providences of the Lord, there is no question that many of the saints of all ages and dispensations have attained this high status, a fact which can be known in individual cases by applying the principles above set forth to the individual situation.

In this present discussion we have named Isaiah, Ezekiel, John the Revelator, Paul, William Clayton and "many others" of the Prophet's day, the Ephesian Saints, and "all the saints who held communion with the general assembly and Church of the Firstborn." (*Teachings*, 151.)

For our day, the Prophet Joseph Smith is the classical example of one who was sealed up unto eternal life. Of him the revelation states: "I am the Lord thy God, and will be with thee even unto the end of the world, and through all eternity; for verily I seal upon you your exaltation, and prepare a throne for you in the kingdom of my Father, with Abraham your father." (D&C 132:49.)

Obviously if it applies to Isaiah and Ezekiel, it applies also to Jeremiah, Samuel, Moses, Joshua and all of the prophets; if it applies to Joseph Smith and William Clayton and "many others" in the Prophet's day, certainly a great many of the later worthies of this dispensation are also included; and if a sizeable number of the Ephesian Saints were so classified, then surely the same applies to like groups of the saints in Rome, Corinth, Galatia, Philippi, Colosse, Thessalonica, and in all the places where the Meridian Saints were congregated. If Paul and John are part of the group, so also are Peter, James, Titus, Jude, Matthew, the other apostles, and many of the preachers of righteousness of that ancient day.

And can there be any question that the same was true among the Nephites? And Jaredites? That it included all of the City of Zion and those who were thereafter caught up to heaven to dwell with Enoch and his translated brethren? And if this glorious principle has always operated in days past, is it beyond reason that it is still sealing blessings upon the heads of the Latter-day Saints? Verily, such is the case now — a situation which we anticipate shall be increasingly so as the Millennium approaches, during which period the sealing power and all its attendant blessings will abound on every side.

As with all the blessings of the gospel, the glorious reality of having one's calling and election made sure is within the power of the faithful saints to obtain, including both men and women.

[13] How many of the saints have or shall make their calling and election sure?

There is no more an answer to this question than there was to the query put to Jesus: "Lord, are there few that be saved?" to which he answered: "Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able" (Luke 13:23-24), by which he meant to teach that though the total saved will be many they are few as compared to the masses of men. And so it is among the saints with reference to being sealed up unto eternal life: though many shall so obtain, they will be few compared to the total population of the Church.

It is in this sense that Jesus used the enigmatic expression "Many are called, but few are chosen." (Matt 22:14.) Called to what? Chosen for what? Called into the Church, called to the holy priesthood, called to receive all of the blessings of the gospel, including the crowning blessing of eternal life. Chosen to inherit the blessings offered through the gospel and the priesthood; chosen for eternal life and exaltation. Called to the Church, but chosen to be sealed up unto eternal life and to have one's calling and election made sure.

"How many will be able to abide a celestial law, and go through and receive their exaltation," the Prophet said, "I am unable to say, as many are called, but few are chosen." (*Teachings*, 331.)

And from the Lord himself we have these words: "There are many who have been ordained among you, whom I have called but few of them are chosen. They who are not chosen have sinned a very grievous sin, in that they are walking in darkness at noon-day.... If you keep not my commandments, the love of the Father shall not continue with you, therefore you shall walk in darkness." (D&C 95:5-6, 12.) Also: "There has been a day of calling, but the time has come for a day of choosing; and let those be chosen that are worthy. And it shall be manifest unto my servant, by the voice of the Spirit, those that are chosen; and they shall be sanctified." (D&C 105:35-36.)

And, finally, as to reason why so few of the saints shall be saved, we have this great and inspired utterance of the Prophet: "Behold, there are many called, but few are chosen. And why are they not chosen? Because their hearts are set so much upon the things of this world, and aspire to the honors of men, that they do not learn this one lesson — That the rights of the priesthood are inseparably connected with the powers of heaven, and that the powers of heaven cannot be controlled nor handled only upon the principles of righteousness. That they may be conferred upon us, it is true; but when we undertake to cover our sins, or to gratify our pride, our vain ambition, or to exercise control or dominion or compulsion upon the souls of the children of men, in any degree of unrighteousness, behold, the heavens withdraw themselves; the Spirit of the Lord is grieved; and when it is withdrawn, Amen to the priesthood or authority of that man. Behold, ere he is aware, he is left unto himself, to kick against the pricks, to persecute the saints, and to fight against God. We have learned by sad experience that it is the nature and disposition of almost all men, as soon as they get a little authority, as they suppose, they will immediately begin to exercise unrighteous dominion. Hence many are called, but few are chosen." (D&C 121:34-40.)

And now to return to Peter's pleading that the saints make their calling and election sure.

1-19. "There are three grand secrets lying in this chapter," the

Prophet said, “which no man can dig out, unless by the light of revelation, and which unlock the whole chapter, as the things that are written are only hints of things which existed in the prophet’s mind, which are not written concerning eternal glory. I am going to take up this subject by virtue of the knowledge of God in me, which I have received from heaven.” (*Teachings*, 304). And it is these teachings of Joseph Smith which we have essayed to put forth in the foregoing discussion.

These are the three secrets: “1st key: Knowledge is the power of salvation. 2nd key: Make your calling and election sure. 3rd key: It is one thing to be on the mount and hear the excellent voice, etc., and another to hear the voice declare to you, You have a part and lot in that kingdom.” (*Teachings*, 306.)

1. Like precious faith with us] Peter is writing to those who believe as he and the other apostles believe. The doctrines he is about to present are beyond the comprehension of uninspired men; they can only be understood by the power of that Spirit which the saints receive at baptism.

2-10. The Prophet taught: “It is not wisdom that we should have all knowledge at once presented before us; but that we should have a little at a time; then we can comprehend it.... Add to your faith knowledge, etc. The principle of knowledge is the principle of salvation. This principle can be comprehended by the faithful and diligent; and every one that does not obtain knowledge sufficient to be saved will be condemned. The principle of salvation is given us through the knowledge of Jesus Christ.” (*Teachings*, 297.)

Also: “Contend earnestly for the like precious faith with the Apostle Peter, ‘and add to your faith virtue,’ knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, charity; ‘for if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.’ Another point, after having all these qualifications, he lays this injunction upon the people ‘to make your calling and election sure.’ He is emphatic upon this subject—after adding all this virtue, knowledge, etc., ‘Make your calling and election sure.’ What is the secret—the starting point? ‘According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness.’ How did he obtain all things? Through the knowledge of him who hath called him. There could not anything be given, pertaining to life and godliness, without knowledge. Woe! woe! woe to Christendom!—especially the divines and priests if this be true.

“Salvation is for a man to be saved from all his enemies; for until a man can triumph over death, he is not saved. A knowledge of the priesthood alone will do this.” (*Teachings*, 305.)

3. All things that pertain unto life and godliness] The true saints have every doctrine, law, key, and power needed to gain eternal life and become like God.

Called us to glory and virtue] Called us to that eternal life which none but the clean can inherit, for “no unclean things can enter into his kingdom.” (3 Ne 27:19.)

4. Exceeding great and precious promises] Promises of eternal life, which is “the greatest of all the gifts of God.” (D&C 14:7.)

Partakers of the divine nature] Become as God is, enjoying to the full every characteristic, perfection, and attribute which he

possesses and which dwell in him independently.

5-19. Joseph Smith said: “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 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, whereunto ye 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. Then knowledge through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ is the grand key that unlocks the glories and mysteries of the kingdom heaven.

“Compare this principle once with Christendom at the present day, and where are they, with all their boasted religion, piety and sacredness while at the same time they are crying out against prophets, apostles, angels, revelations, prophesying and visions, etc. Why, they are just ripening for the damnation of hell. They will be damned, for they reject the most glorious principle of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and treat with disdain and trample under foot the key that unlocks the heavens and puts in our possession the glories of the celestial world. Yes, I say, such will be damned, with all their professed godliness. Then I would exhort you to go on and continue to call upon God until you make your calling and election sure for yourselves, by obtaining this more sure word of prophecy, and wait patiently for the promise until you obtain it.” (*Teachings*, 298-299.)

5-7. The attributes of godliness here listed are the ones which qualify the Lord’s ministers for effective service on his errand, and all his saints for eternal life in his kingdom. Salvation must be won, and to go where God is, we must be like him; and to be like him we must possess the character, perfections, and attributes which he possesses. “And faith, hope, charity and love, with an eye single to the glory of God, qualify him for the work. Remember faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, brotherly kindness, godliness, charity, humility, diligence.” (D&C 4:5-6.)

5. Faith] See Commentary I, pp. 523-525; *Mormon Doctrine*, 2nd ed., 261-267.

Virtue] Moral excellence and rectitude in every field, including personal chastity. To his saints the Lord decrees: “Ye must practise virtue and holiness before me continually.” (D&C 46:33.)

Knowledge] An understanding of and familiarity with gospel truth; a clear perception of eternal truth; enlightenment and

learning about God and his laws. Thus, “A man is saved no faster than he gets knowledge” (*Teachings*, p. 217), of God and his laws; and “It is impossible for a man to be saved in ignorance” (D&C 131:6), of Jesus Christ and the saving principles of the gospel. Accordingly, “the word of knowledge” (1 Cor 12:8) is one of the gifts of the Spirit.

Bruce R. McConkie, *The Promised Messiah*, 578-595

CALLING & ELECTION MADE SURE—SEEING THE LORD

How to Seek and See the Lord

If we keep the commandments and are true and faithful in all things, we shall inherit eternal life in our Father's kingdom. Those who attain this high state of glory and exaltation shall dwell in the presence of God. They shall see his face and converse with him mouth to mouth. They shall know him in the full sense of the word because they have become like him. And all who are now living those laws to the full which will enable them to go where God and Christ are, and there enjoy eternal association with them — that is, all those who are now living in its entirety the law of the celestial kingdom — are already qualified to see the Lord. The attainment of such a state of righteousness and perfection is the object and end toward which all of the Lord's people are striving. We seek to see the face of the Lord while we yet dwell in mortality, and we seek to dwell with him everlastingly in the eternal kingdoms that are prepared.

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

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

The pure in heart shall see God. This we have already seen, but we restate it again because the process of becoming pure in heart is the process that prepares us to see the face of Deity.

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

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

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

It was on this same basis that Jared's brother saw all the inhabitants of the earth and many other things that he wrote, but that “shall not go forth unto the Gentiles until the day that they shall repent of their iniquity, and become clean before the Lord. And in that day that they shall exercise faith in me, saith the Lord, even as the brother of Jared did, that they may become sanctified in me, then will I manifest unto them the things which the brother of Jared saw even to the unfolding unto them all my revelations, saith Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Father of the heavens and of the earth, and all things that in them are. And he that will contend against the word of the Lord let him be accursed; and he that shall deny these things let him be accursed; for unto them will I show no greater things, saith Jesus Christ; for I am he who speaketh.” (Ether 4:6-8.) The message here is so clear that it cannot be

clarified by commentary. The brother of Jared saw the Lord because of his faith and knowledge and because he sanctified himself before the Lord. Other men do not receive the same blessings because they have not built the same foundation of righteousness. If and when we obtain the spiritual stature of this man Moriancumer, then we shall see what he saw and know what he knew.

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

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

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

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

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

bear the glory of his presence in the eternal worlds.

In a poetic passage, which can only be understood, as is the case with most of the book of Isaiah, by those with a background knowledge of the gospel, Isaiah says of the righteous in Israel: "Thine eyes shall see the king in his beauty." That is: You shall see the face of the Lord. Any who so obtain are identified with this language: "He that walketh righteously, and speaketh uprightly; he that despiseth the gain of oppressions, that shaketh his hands from holding of bribes, that stoppeth his ears from hearing of blood, and shutteth his eyes from seeing evil." (Isa. 33:15.) These are the ones who shall see the Lord in this life and dwell with him in the life to come. "How do men obtain a knowledge of the glory of God, his perfections and attributes?" asked the Prophet Joseph Smith. His answer: "By devoting themselves to his service, through prayer and supplication incessantly strengthening their faith in him, until, like Enoch, the Brother of Jared, and Moses, they obtain a manifestation of God to themselves." (*Lectures on Faith*, 32.)

Those Whose Calling and Election Is Sure May See the Lord

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

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

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

34.)

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

Building on that foundation, he then proceeds to give forth his discourse on the Two Comforters. He tells how converted persons receive the Holy Ghost, are born again, become new creatures, and, if they are of Gentile lineage, how they are adopted into the house of Israel. "The other Comforter spoken of is a subject of great interest, and perhaps understood by few of this generation. After a person has faith in Christ, repents of his sins, and is baptized for the remission of his sins and receives the Holy Ghost, (by the laying on of hands), which is the first Comforter, then let him continue to humble himself before God, hungering and thirsting after righteousness, and living by every word of God, and the Lord will soon say unto him, Son, thou shalt be exalted. When the Lord has thoroughly proved him, and finds that the man is determined to serve Him at all hazards, then the man will find his calling and his election made sure, then it will be his privilege to receive the other Comforter, which the Lord hath promised the saints...."

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

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

Priesthood Prepares Men to See God

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

with the general assembly and Church of the Firstborn." (*Teachings*, 151.)

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

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

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

"The keys of all the spiritual blessings of the church"! Clearly no spiritual blessing is available to mortal man on earth that can compare with personal communion and converse with the Gods of heaven. Such attainments on the part of the prophets of old are the very things that set them apart above all their fellows. Keys open doors; keys are the directing and controlling power where priestly things are concerned. Thus, through the priesthood the door may be opened and the way provided for men to see the Father and the Son. From, all of this it follows, automatically and axiomatically, that if and when the holy priesthood operates to the full in the life of any man, he will receive its great and full blessings, which are that rending of the heavens and that parting of the veil of which we now speak.

Truly, as Paul said of holders of the Melchizedek Priesthood who magnified their callings, thus qualifying to receive all of the blessings held in store for such faithful persons: "Ye are come unto mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels"; that is, the heavens are opened unto you, and as with Enoch and Moses and the brother of Jared, nothing is withheld from your view and understanding. "Ye are come . . . To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are

written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect"; that is, you are in communion with the faithful of all ages past who now mingle together in a state of exaltation, you see God who is the Judge of all, and you commune with the departed spirits of the just. "Ye are come . . . To Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel"; that is, you see Jesus, by the sprinkling of whose blood, as it were, salvation comes. Having so taught, Paul issues this warning: "See that ye refuse not him [the Lord] that speaketh." (Heb. 12:22-25.) Rather, accept the priesthood and let it operate in your life to the full until all these blessings flow to you as they flowed to those of old who magnified their callings.

All of the holy prophets and righteous men of old held the holy Melchizedek Priesthood. This "priesthood continueth in the church of God in all generations, and is without beginning of days or end of years.... And this greater priesthood administereth the gospel and holdeth the key of the mysteries of the kingdom, even the key of the knowledge of God." God is known in and through and because of the priesthood; without it he would remain unknown. Through the priesthood the Holy Ghost is given to men, which Comforter is sent forth to bear record of the Father and the Son; also, through the priesthood men are able to progress in spiritual things until they gain personal communion with Deity. "Therefore, in the ordinances thereof," the revelation continues, "the power of godliness is manifest. And without the ordinances thereof, and the authority of the priesthood, the power of godliness is not manifest unto men in the flesh; For without this no man can see the face of God, even the Father, and live." That is to say, in and through the holy priesthood, including all the laws and rites that go with it, the power of godliness, or in other words the power of righteousness, is brought to pass in the lives of men. Without these priesthood laws and powers, God's power and glory would not be revealed to man on earth. Without them they would not see the face of God, for if they did, his glory would destroy them. Sinful men cannot see the face of God and live. (JST, Ex. 33:20.)

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

However sad it is that Israel (except for isolated groups and occasional instances) failed to use the holy priesthood to sanctify themselves so as to be able to see the face of God and

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

After having recited what others had obtained through righteousness, Alma exhorted his own people in these words: "My brethren, I would that ye should humble yourselves before God, and bring forth fruit meet for repentance, that ye may also enter into that rest." (Alma 13:10-13.) Along this same line, the Prophet Joseph Smith said to his brethren, the elders of latter-day Israel: "It is the privilege of every elder to speak of the things of God; and could we all come together with one heart and one mind in perfect faith the veil might as well be rent today as next week, or any other time, and if we will but cleanse ourselves and covenant before God, to serve him, it is our privilege to have an assurance that God will protect us." (*Teachings*, 9.)

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

Apostles and Elders Should See God

All Christendom knows, or should know, that the ancient apostles were special witnesses of the Lord's name; that they saw him after he rose from the dead; that he spent forty days

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

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

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

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

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

“The time is coming when you will be perfectly familiar with the things of God. . . . You have our best wishes, you have our most fervent prayers, that you may be able to bear this

testimony, that you have seen the face of God. Therefore call upon him in faith in mighty prayer till you prevail, for it is your duty and your privilege to bear such a testimony for yourselves.” (*History of the Church* 2:192-98.)

Few faithful people will stumble or feel disbelief at the doctrine here presented that the Lord's apostolic witnesses are entitled and expected to see his face, and that each one individually is obligated to “call upon him in faith in mighty prayer until he prevails. But the Twelve are only a dozen in number. There are seldom more than fifteen men on earth at a time who have been ordained to the holy apostleship, which brings us to another statement made by Elder Cowdery in his apostolic charge: “God does not love you better or more than others.” That is, apostles and prophets do not gain precedence with the Lord unless they earn it by personal righteousness. The Lord loves people, not office holders. Every elder is entitled to the same blessings and privileges offered the apostles. Indeed, an apostle is an elder; such is the title by which he is proud to be addressed. The priesthood is greater than any of its offices. No office adds any power, dignity, or authority to the priesthood. All offices derive their rights, virtues, authorities, and prerogatives from the priesthood. It is greater to hold the Melchizedek Priesthood than it is to hold the office of an elder or of an apostle in that priesthood. The Lord loves his priesthood holders, all of whom are given the same opportunity to do good and work righteousness and keep the commandments. All of the elders in the kingdom are expected to live the law as strictly as do the members of the Council of the Twelve, and if they do so live, the same blessings will come to them that flow to apostles and prophets.

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

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

I repeat: apostles and prophets simply serve as patterns and examples to show all men what they may receive if they are true and faithful. There is nothing an apostle can receive that is not available to every elder in the kingdom. As we have heretofore quoted, from the Prophet's sermon on the Second Comforter: “God hath not revealed anything to Joseph, but what he will make known unto the Twelve, and even the least saint may know all things as fast as he is able to bear them.” (*Teachings*, 149.) It follows that everything stated by Elder

Oliver Cowdery in his charge to the apostles could also be given as a charge to all elders. Every elder is entitled and expected to seek and obtain all the spiritual blessings of the gospel, including the crowning blessing of seeing the Lord face to face.

“Making Our Calling & Election Sure,” Elder Bruce R. McConkie, First Council of the Seventy, BYU Devotional, 25 March 1969

Making Our Calling and Election Sure

What I shall do if I am properly guided by the Spirit — and I devoutly hope and pray that such may be the case both for me and for all of you — is express some views and summarize some concepts relative to the doctrine of making our calling and election sure. This may sound like a hard and a difficult subject. It is one which is not fully known or understood by everyone, but at least as far as the fundamentals are concerned, it is a very basic and easily understood doctrine. There is nothing complex or mysterious about it. Rather it is a doctrine we should understand, one out of which determinations should grow to do the things that assure us of peace and satisfaction in this life and eternal rewards in the realms ahead.

Peter’s Summation of the Doctrine

And so now, if I may be properly guided by the Spirit and your hearts also may be enlightened, I shall take the first chapter of the second epistle of Peter as a text and try to bring before you some of the basic and fundamental concepts involved in this glorious doctrine. It happens to be a doctrine to which the Prophet Joseph Smith made frequent reference, particularly during the latter years of his ministry. And so I read:

Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us ...

These words are thus addressed to the saints. They are addressed to people who understand and know the doctrines of salvation.

... through the righteousness of God and our Savior Jesus Christ: Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord, ...

So we are starting out on the premise that this doctrine is based on a true and correct concept of God and his laws and of the saving power that is in Christ.

According as his [that is, Christ’s] divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, ...

That is, Christ has given us the way to gain life, meaning eternal life, to gain the attributes of godliness, to gain all things, to be exalted, to be like God.

... through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: ...

We are called to something. We will try and determine what our calling is in order to specify what it means to make that calling absolute and sure.

Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious

promises: ...

These are the promises of glory and exaltation, of having eternal life, of being like God our Father.

... that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, ...

If someone is a partaker of the divine nature, he becomes like God. He receives, inherits, and possesses the characters and perfections and attributes that Deity has. He has the same nature that God has.

... having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust....

We have forsaken the world; we have come into the kingdom of God; we have been called to spiritual things, to forsake carnality, to inherit glory and honor; we now have the aim and the goal to make that calling that is ours sure -- to get the full blessings and benefits which flow from it. And so we get the counsel that follows:

And beside this, giving all diligence [and this is addressed to members of the Church], add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity.

So a number of the attributes of godliness are noted, and we are exhorted to obtain them.

For if these things be in you ...

That is, after you join the Church, if you pursue a course that causes you to acquire the attributes of godliness — those listed and related ones — to acquire them in measurable degree,

... If these things be in you and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ....

And, of course, it is life eternal to know God and Christ.

But he that lacketh these things is blind,...

We may think we have great insight, that we know a very great deal, that our intellectual standing gives us power to comprehend eternal truths. But what Peter is saying here is that people are blind, even in the Church, unless they have acquired the attributes of godliness. And so, the more of these perfected attributes we possess, the more accurate and proper our views will be on spiritual things and the less blindness will exist in our lives.

But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. [Purged, of course, through baptism.] 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 [that is, in doing these things] an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ....

Now an abundant entrance has obvious reference to exaltation in the highest heaven of the celestial world. [D&C 131:1-4.]

The Testimony of Peter

Peter, having thus summarized and outlined the doctrine of making our calling and election sure, now gives his testimony and witness as to what occurred on the Mount of Transfiguration — how Christ was transfigured before them, how the voice of God was heard, and he rejoices in the privilege that had there come to him along with James and John. And having said that God's voice came from heaven and that they heard it when they were with Christ in the holy mount, he says this:

We have also [now this is something in addition to standing on the mount and hearing the voice of God and seeing the Lord Jesus transfigured before them] — we have also a more sure word of prophecy; [and it is this more sure word that is the great thing; it is greater than the great spiritual experience they had with Christ and God on the mount] ... (2 Peter 1:1-11, 19.)

The Prophet's Interpretation

Now, the Prophet, by the spirit of inspiration, gave this interpretation of Peter's statement:

The more sure word of prophecy means a man's knowing that he is sealed up unto eternal life, by revelation and the spirit of prophecy, through the power of the Holy Priesthood. (D&C 131:5.)

Some Foundation Doctrine

Well, let us now consider some very basic and fundamental things; let us lay the cornerstones and build the foundation on which this great doctrine rests. To begin with, there is a God in heaven who is infinite and eternal, an everlasting, glorified, exalted Being. He has a tabernacle of flesh and bones. He is a resurrected and holy and perfected man, and we are his offspring. We are his spirit children. He lives in the family unit. We are members of his family. We lived in this premortal life with him for an infinite period of time. We were on probation; we were being schooled and tested and examined; we were given the laws and the circumstances so that we could progress and advance. What he then did for us was to ordain a plan of salvation. The plan originated with the Father; it is God's gospel — Christ became its chief advocate and supporter, but God ordained the plan.

The Plan of Salvation

Now, this plan was to enable his spirit children to grow from their primeval spirit state to a state of glory and dignity and exaltation so that they would be like him — like the Father. The name of the kind of life that God the Father lives is eternal life. This name describes wholly and completely the nature and kind of life he possesses; his life includes having power and dominion, might and glory and omnipotence, and also it includes living in the family relationship. In God's instance, we were among his spirit offspring.

Well, this plan was ordained. This system was given to us, and for an infinite period of time, we advanced and progressed and did things that enabled us to go along the course leading to exaltation and dominion and godhood. The whole system and philosophy of true and revealed religion consists in progressing toward exaltation.

In this prior life, this premortal existence, this preexistence,

we developed various capacities and talents. Some developed them in one field and some in another. The most important of all fields was the field of spirituality — the ability, the talent, the capacity to recognize truth. Those segregated out from among the whole hosts of men, the hosts of all the spirit offspring of God, who had the greatest spiritual talents got themselves in a state and a condition where they were foreordained to receive certain blessings when in due course they came down into mortality.

We are quite well aware that Joseph Smith and Jeremiah and the apostles and prophets, the wise, the great, and the good were foreordained to particular ministries. But that is only a part of the doctrine of foreordination. The great and glorious thing about foreordination is that the whole House of Israel was foreordained, that millions upon millions — comparatively few compared to the total preexistent host — but millions of people were foreordained to get certain gospel blessings in this life.

It is our habit and it is our custom to talk about foreordination; it is not a difficult concept for us to understand. But in the day of Peter and Paul and these ancient brethren, they were faced with a little different social circumstance and a little different educational climate, and so, although they did talk about foreordination to some extent, primarily they talked about being called and elected. They talked about callings and elections — about elections and callings that made people members of the House of Israel.

Called to Eternal Life

For instance, without reading the revelations to find them, let us just summarize: Paul taught and said that people in this life were called to be holy, without spot and blameless. He said that people in this life were called and elected to be the sons of God by adoption — to be adopted into the family of God the Father. He said that people were called and elected in this life to be joint-heirs with Christ, receiving, possessing, and inheriting equally with him. He said that people were called to glory and dignity and honor and reward, and, in summation, what he taught was that people were called to eternal life.

From our knowledge, gained from the ancient records and from what has been revealed in our day, we are well aware that if someone has been called to be pure and clean and spotless, to be holy and without blame, of necessity he has been called and elected to be baptized, because baptism is the gate to purity and perfection. If someone is called to be a son of God and a joint-heir with Christ and to have eternal life, he has been called to receive the blessings of the priesthood. He has been called to enter in to the order of celestial marriage. So, people are in effect foreordained, or in other words, they are called and elected to join the Church, to get the blessings of baptism, and the blessings of celestial marriage, and all the blessings that flow from conformity to all of the laws and ordinances of the gospel. This then is what is meant by being called and elected. I suppose everyone in our congregation today has been called and elected, that is, the door has been opened and the blessings of eternal life are available on certain conditions.

Conditional Promises

Now, Peter talks about making our calling and election sure, and all in the world that means is that we pursue the

appointed course to the point that we get a guarantee that we will receive the things to which we have been called — that we will inherit the promised foreordained blessings. And so, what is involved is three things: one is baptism, two is celestial marriage, and three is then so living that in fact our calling and election does become sure.

Baptism

What happens when we are baptized? Baptism is the gate to eternal life. Baptism puts us on a path leading to eternal life, or leading, in other words, to the glory and might and dominion, the exaltation that God our Father possesses. Celestial marriage does in essence the same thing. Celestial marriage also puts us on the path leading to exaltation and glory in the eternal worlds. And so, to have our calling and election made sure means that we get baptized and get on the straight and narrow path that leads to eternal life, and that we then traverse the length of the path and go upward and onward, through righteousness and devotion, through acquiring, as our text passage said, the attributes of godliness.

The thing about baptism is this: In it we get a conditional promise of eternal life. We get the promise:

Son, thou shalt have eternal life, if you will now keep my commandments.

Celestial Marriage

In principle and in essence the same thing applies to celestial marriage. We enter into that order of the priesthood, which is a patriarchal order, and the door is again opened to eternal life — the door to the highest heaven within the celestial world, that being the only place where the family unit continues. And so, we get married in the temple, we become husband and wife for eternity, we are married by the sealing power that Elijah the prophet restored, and again, we have the promise given of eternal life. We are assured again of exaltation, but it is given in terms and in essence as it was with baptism. The Lord says to us in effect:

Son, thou shalt be exalted, if you now keep the terms and conditions of this everlasting covenant of marriage.

We get conditional promises in baptism! We get conditional promises in celestial marriage!

Making Conditional Promises Absolute

Now, what Peter announces is that there is such a thing as making these conditional promises absolute. Obviously any person who gains exaltation, in the ultimate and in the end, has made his calling and election sure. So in one manner of speaking, no one will ever gain exaltation, no one will ever have the family unit continue in eternity unless his calling and election has been made sure, or in other words, unless he has gained the promise that he shall inherit eternal life.

But, on the other hand, when we talk about this, what we ordinarily mean is that for some individuals who pursue a course of righteousness and devotion, the day of judgment is in effect advanced so that sometime along the line, as they are pursuing the course leading to exaltation, the Lord says to them: “Son, thou shalt be exalted.” And at that time, they then have their calling and election made sure; they have for all practical purposes worked out their salvation; they have the assurance of eternal life in the kingdom of God.

Pursue a Steadfast Course

Thus, making one’s calling and election sure grows out of baptism for one thing, and it grows out of celestial marriage for another. There is no such thing as gaining exaltation and eternal life except in and through the continuation of the family unit in eternity. Since making one’s calling and election sure grows out of celestial marriage, the Lord took occasion to reveal the doctrine relative to it in connection with the revelation on marriage. If we enter in at this gate of marriage and then pursue a steadfast course, we gain eternal life. Making our calling and election sure is thus a matter of being married in the temple and of keeping the terms and conditions of this new and everlasting covenant of marriage. After entering in at the gate of celestial marriage, if we keep the commandments, then at some subsequent time, after great devotion and righteousness, after the Lord has proved us at all hazards, then he says:

... Ye shall come forth in the first resurrection;... and shall inherit thrones, kingdoms, principalities, and powers, dominions, all heights and depths — (D&C 132:19.)

In other words God, by revelation, tells us that our calling and election is made sure, that we are sealed up unto eternal life. Of such the revelation says:

... They shall pass by the angels, and the gods, which are set there, to their exaltation and glory in all things, as hath been sealed upon their heads, which glory shall be [and this next now is a definition of what is involved in exaltation, or in other words in eternal life, and it consists of two things:] a fulness [that is one thing — the fulness of the glory of the Father,] and [and this is the second thing,] a continuation of the seeds forever and ever. Then shall they be gods. (D&C 132:19-20.)

That is, they have eternal life; they have exaltation, and exaltation consists in being like God our Father. The whole purpose of our creation is to progress from our first spirit estate to the final glorious dominion and exaltation that God our Father has so that we become like him. This is what life is about. Some of us have patriarchal blessings which say: “You shall fill the full measure of your creation.” If we fill the full measure of our creation, we go on along this course of progression and advancement until we gain eternal life in the kingdom of God.

Now, may I read this statement from the Prophet:

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 unto him, Son, thou shalt be exalted. When the Lord has thoroughly proved him, and finds that the man is determined to serve Him at all hazards, then the man will find his calling and election made sure. (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 150.)

The Pattern of the Prophet

One illustration of this, of a person making his calling and election sure, is the Prophet Joseph Smith. For us in our day and dispensation, he as a follower of Christ has marked the

way and set the pattern for what we ought to do. To him the Lord said:

For I am the Lord thy God, and will be with thee even unto the end of the world, and through all eternity; for verily I seal upon you your exaltation, and prepare a throne for you in the kingdom of my Father, with Abraham your father. (D&C 132:49.)

Thus, Joseph Smith had his calling and election made sure. For him the day of judgment was advanced to a point in this life where he, having been proved and tried at all hazards, was accounted worthy. He had done the things that qualified him to go on to eternal life in the kingdom of God.

Within Our Spiritual Potential

This, then, without amplifying, without saying more, is the doctrine that is involved. It is a true doctrine; it is a sound doctrine. What does it mean to us? It is not something that is beyond us; it is not outside the realm of our capabilities. The Lord would not offer baptism to a people and say, “Be baptized and you can be saved in my kingdom,” unless he knew that the people had it within their power to enter into baptism and to do the things that will result in the promised salvation. And the Lord would not offer to a people celestial marriage and say to them, “Now enter this order of matrimony and keep the covenant and you will have eternal life,” unless he knew that the people had the talent and the spiritual capacity and ability to gain the promised reward. And the same thing applies to making our calling and election sure. The Lord would not say to us, “Make your calling and election sure,” unless he knew it was within our spiritual potential — unless we had the capacity and ability to press forward in steadfastness and devotion until that desired eventuality occurred.

Now, I am suggesting that this is within the realm of possibility and of probability for the members of the Church today. Many in this dispensation have obtained such a status. This ought to cause us to make a firm and unshakable determination to gain the blessings and benefits of baptism; to gain the blessings and benefits of celestial marriage; and in each instance those blessings accrue on condition that we keep the covenants that we make in connection with those holy ordinances. And then we ought to press forward with a steadfastness in Christ, keeping the commandments and living by every word that proceedeth forth from the mouth of God, so that our calling and election shall be made sure. In one manner of speaking, this is the most glorious doctrine that there is in the Church. It is the doctrine that assures people of eternal reward in the kingdom of God. By the grace and glory and goodness of a merciful Father, he has restored in this, our day, the knowledge, the doctrine, the keys, the priesthood, the powers — everything that is needed to seal men up unto eternal life. Our objective, our goal, our aim, our determination in this life is to press forward with that steadfastness and devotion which will give us complete peace and satisfaction and joy in this life and assure us of eternal life in the world to come.

... He who doeth the works of righteousness shall receive his reward, even peace in this world, and eternal life in the world to come. (D&C 59:23.)

In the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

“Fruits of the Gospel” by Marion G. Romney, General Conference, 1 October 1949.

I am very grateful for these conferences. They revive my soul. Every one I have attended for years has lifted me up and induced me to renew my determination to devote myself more fully to works of righteousness. During them, the importance of this world's interests and distractions seem to diminish, and life's true values, as set forth in the gospel of Jesus Christ, come into plainer view.

Does each of you find it so? I hope you do, and I encourage you to take every available opportunity to renew within yourself a determination to obtain the full fruits of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

When earth life is over and things appear in their true perspective, we shall more clearly see and realize what the Lord and his prophets have repeatedly told us, that the fruits of the gospel are the only objectives worthy of life's full efforts. Their possessor obtains true wealth — wealth in the Lord's view of values. We need constantly to design our understandings and sharpen our realization of what the fruits of the gospel are.

The Lord has defined them as: “... peace in this world, and eternal life in the world to come.” (D&C 59:23.)

It is a bit difficult to define the “peace in this world” referred to in the revelation. But we may be assured that it is not the ease, luxury, and freedom from struggle envisioned by the world's utopian dreamers. Jesus told his apostles that it would be found by them even in their days of tribulation.

“Peace I leave with you,” he said, “... my peace I give unto you.”

And then, by way of caution, it seems to me, he added: “... not as the world giveth, give I unto you.” (Jn 14:27.)

Peace Amidst Tribulation

A little later he re-emphasized this statement in these words: “These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation.” (Jn 16:33.)

Convincing evidence of the truth of this saying of the Master — that people suffering tribulation in this world could at the same time find peace in him — has come out of the most severe experiences.

I suppose that the last few days of the Prophet's life were crowded with about as much tribulation as any human being could endure. He was hounded by traitors, impeached by misguided and false-accusing associates, called to account, promised protection, and then abandoned by his government. That all the while he knew he was approaching martyrdom is clear from the record. On the evening of Saturday, June 22, he wrote in his journal:

I told Stephen Markham that if I and Hyrum were ever taken again we should be massacred, or I was not a prophet of God.

On Sunday, the 23rd, he said to his brother Hyrum,

If you go back, I will go with you, but we shall be butchered.

Monday, the 24th, on leaving Nauvoo, he paused when they

got to the temple, and look with admiration first on that, and then on the city, and remarked,

This is the loveliest place and the best people under the heavens; little do they know the trials that await them.

In this setting knowing that his own life would be taken from him by force and violence and viewing the trials and suffering which would be visited upon his beloved followers, he said to the company who were with him,

I am going like a lamb to the slaughter, but I am calm as a summer's morning.

This is a classic example of a person having at the same time tribulation in this world and peace in Christ. Many others, both in ancient and in modern times, have had similar experiences.

Eternal Life

The other fruit of the gospel named in the quotation — “eternal life in the world to come” — must be a glorious thing, for the Lord has said that “he that hath eternal life is rich.” (D&C 6:7) and that the “gift of eternal life is the greatest of all the gifts of God.” (D&C 14:7.) He who obtains it will obtain an exaltation in the celestial kingdom of our Father in heaven. Speaking of such the Lord says, among other things:

They are they who are the church of the Firstborn ... into whose hands the Father has given all things — They are they who are priests and kings, who have received of his fulness, and of his glory; ... they are gods, even the sons of God ... These shall dwell in the presence of God and his Christ forever and ever. These are they whom he shall bring with him, when he shall come in the clouds of heaven to reign on the earth over his people ... who shall have part in the first resurrection ... who shall come forth in the resurrection of the just. These are they whose names are written in heaven ... whose bodies are celestial, whose glory is that of the sun, even the glory of God, the highest of all, whose glory the sun of the firmament is written of as being typical. (D&C 76:54-56, 58, 62-65, 68, 70.)

Assurance of Blessings

This gift of eternal life in the world to come may not, of course, be fully realized during earth life. An assurance that it will be obtained in the world to come may, however, be had in this world. As a matter of fact, the blessings of the celestial kingdom are promised only to those who have such an assurance. According to the Vision, a successful candidate for these blessings must qualify on three counts: First, he must have “... received the testimony of Jesus, and believed on his name” and been “... baptized after the manner of his burial”; second, he must have received “the Holy Spirit by the laying on of hands of him who is ordained and sealed unto this power”; and third, he must be “sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise.” (D&C 76:51-53.)

The Prophet Joseph taught that one so sealed would have within himself an assurance born of the Spirit, that he would obtain eternal life in the world to come. He urgently and repeatedly admonished the Saints of his day to obtain such an assurance by making their calling and election sure. It is this assurance within a person which brings to him the peace in this world which will sustain him in every tribulation.

More Sure Word of Prophecy

So taught the Prophet in explanation of the words of Peter. Although that apostle had heard the voice of God declare, when he was with the Savior on the holy mount, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased,” he nevertheless wrote to the Saints, “We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed.” (2 Pet 1:19.)

Explaining the statement the Prophet said:

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. (HC 5:387-390.)

It was such an assurance which sustained the Prophet himself as he went to martyrdom, for unto him the Lord had said in a direct revelation:

... I am the Lord thy God and will be with thee even unto the end of the world, and through all eternity; for verily I seal upon you your exaltation, and prepare a throne for you in the kingdom of my Father, with Abraham your father. (D&C 132:49.)

I think Apostle Alonzo A. Hinckley had an assurance that he would receive the gift of eternal life in the world to come and that he was sustained by that assurance as he endured the sufferings of a slow death, for in a letter which he wrote to the First Presidency after he had been told by his physician that his illness would be fatal, he said:

I assure you that I am not deeply disturbed over the final results. I am reconciled, and I reach my hands to take what My Father has for me, be it life or death. With a spirit of thanksgiving, and I trust free from vanity or boastfulness, I look over the past with satisfaction. I would not turn the leaf down on any chapter of my life. So far as I know, I have honored my Heavenly Father with my time, my humble talents, and all the means that he has blessed me with, and I have dealt justly with all men. I have fought, but I have fought fairly.

As to the future, I have no misgivings. It is inviting and glorious, and I sense rather clearly what it means to be saved by the redeeming blood of Jesus Christ and to be exalted by his power and be with him ever more. (Church Section, *Deseret News*, 27 March 1949.)

Wholehearted Devotion

These fruits of the gospel — assurance that we shall obtain eternal life, peace in this world sustained by such an assurance, and finally eternal life in the world to come — are within the reach of us all. Sometimes, however, because of our lack of understanding and appreciation of them, I am persuaded that we take too much for granted. We assume that

because we are members of the Church, we shall receive as a matter of course all the blessings of the gospel. I have heard people contend that they have a claim upon them because they have been through the temple, even though they are not careful to keep the covenants they there made. I do not think this will be the case.

We might take a lesson from an account given by the Prophet of a vision of the resurrection, in which he records that one of the saddest things he had ever witnessed was the sorrow of members of the Church who came forth to a resurrection below that which they had taken for granted they would receive.

I conceive the blessings of the gospel to be of such inestimable worth that the price for them must be very exacting, and if I correctly understand what the Lord has said on the subject, it is. The price, however, is within the reach of us all, because it is not to be paid in money nor in any of this world's goods but in righteous living. What is required is wholehearted devotion to the gospel and unreserved allegiance to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Speaking to this point, the Prophet taught, "... that those who keep the commandments of the Lord and walk in his statutes to the end, are the only individuals" who shall receive the blessings.

Referring to Paul's devotion, he said:

Follow the labors of this apostle from the time of his conversion to the time of his death, and you will have a fair sample of industry and patience in promulgating the gospel of Christ. Derided, whipped, and stoned, the moment he escaped the hands of his persecutors he as zealously as ever proclaimed the doctrine of the Savior ... None will say that he did not keep the faith, that he did not fight the good fight, that he did not preach and persuade to the last. And what was he to receive? A crown of righteousness, and what shall others receive who do not labor faithfully, and continue to the end? We leave such to search out their own blessings if any they have. (HC 2:19-20.)

Explaining to the Prophet Joseph Smith the reason why his exaltation was sealed upon him, the Lord said:

Behold, I have seen your sacrifices and will forgive all your sins. I have seen your sacrifices in obedience to that which I have told you. (D&C 132:50.)

Calling and Election Made Sure

A half-hearted performance is not enough. We cannot obtain these blessings and be like the rich young man who protested that he had kept the commandments from his youth up but who went away sorrowful when, in answer to the questions, "What lack I yet?" Jesus said unto him,

If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give it to the poor ... and come and follow me. (Mt 19:21.)

Evidently he could live everything but the welfare program.

There can be no such reservation. We must be willing to sacrifice everything. Through self discipline and devotion we must demonstrate to the Lord that we are willing to serve him under all circumstances. When we have done this, we shall receive an assurance that we shall have eternal life in the world to come. Then we shall have peace in this world.

The Prophet Joseph Smith made this perfectly clear. He said:

After a person has faith in Christ, repents of his sins, and is baptized for the remission of his sins and received the Holy Ghost (by the laying on of hands) ... then let him continue to humble himself before God, hungering and thirsting after righteousness, and living by every word of God, and the Lord will soon say unto him, Son, thou shall 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. (HC 3:380.)

Now may the Lord bless us, my brethren and sisters, with an understanding of his great gospel. And may we press forward with diligence and energy to perfect and qualify ourselves to receive and enjoy the full fruits thereof, for they are of all things the most joyous to the soul. Let us each day in solemn honesty confront ourselves with the rich man's question, "What lack I yet?" And thus, with utter frankness, discovering our own limitations, let us conquer them one by one until we obtain peace in this world through an assurance that we shall have eternal life in the world to come. For these blessings I pray, in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

"Making Our Calling and Election Sure," Marion G. Romney, *Conference Report*, October 1965, 20-23; *Improvement Era*, December 1965, 1115, 1116.

Brethren and sisters: I stand before you today in deep humility. The words I intend to speak will have little meaning unless they are impressed upon our souls by the power of the Holy Spirit. I sincerely invite you to join with me in praying that they will be so impressed.

To Gain Eternal Life

The theme I have in mind to discuss is "Making One's Calling and Election Sure." To do this one must receive a divine witness that he will inherit eternal life. The supreme objective of men who understand God, their relationship to him, and his designs for them is to gain eternal life. This is as it should be, for eternal life "... is the greatest of all the gifts of God." (D&C 14:7.) To bring men to eternal life is God's "work and glory." To this end he conceives, brings into being, directs, and uses all his creations. (Moses 1:38-39.)

Eternal life is the quality of life which God himself enjoys. The gospel plan, authored by the Father and put into operation by the atonement of Jesus Christ, brings eternal life within the reach of every man. The Lord gave this assurance when he said "... if you keep my commandments and endure to the end you shall have eternal life...." (D&C 14:7.)

The fulness of eternal life is not attainable in mortality, but the peace which is its harbinger and which comes as a result of making one's calling and election sure is attainable in this life. The Lord has promised that "... he who doeth the works of righteousness shall receive his reward, even peace in this world, and eternal life in the world to come." (D&C 59:23.)

I think the peace here referred to is implicit in the Prophet's statement: "I am going like a lamb to the slaughter, but I am calm as a summer's morning. I have a conscience void of offense toward God and toward all men." (HC 6:555.)

I also think it is implicit in this statement of the late Apostle Alonzo A. Hinckley which he wrote in a letter to the First Presidency after he had been advised by his physician that his illness would be fatal: "I assure you I am not deeply disturbed over the final results. I am reconciled and I reach my hands to take what my Father has for me, be it life or death..."

"As to the future, I have no misgivings. It is inviting and glorious, and I sense rather clearly what it means to be saved by the redeeming blood of Jesus Christ and to be exalted by his power and be with him ever more." (*The Deseret News Church Section*, March 27, 1949, 24.)

Make Your Calling and Election Sure

Now I come directly to my theme:

I take my text from Second Peter, and as he did, I direct my remarks "... to them that have obtained like precious faith with us..." (2 Pet 1:1.)

Peter, after having put the Saints in remembrance of gospel fundamentals, admonished them to "... give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall:" (2 Pet 1:10.)

By making their calling and election sure, the Saints were to gain entrance "... into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." To this fact Peter bore powerful witness. He reviewed his experience on the Mount of Transfiguration with James and John, where he says, they heard the voice of "... God the Father ..." declare of Jesus, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Then by way of instruction that such an experience did not of itself make one's calling and election sure, he added, "We have also a more sure word of prophecy;..." (2 Pet 1:11, 17, 19.)

The Sure Word of Prophecy

Speaking on Sunday, the 14th of May, 1843, the Prophet Joseph Smith took this statement of Peter for his text. From the Prophet's sermon I quote:

"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 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.... Now wherein could they have a more sure word of prophecy than to hear the voice of God saying, This is my beloved Son, etc." Answering his own question, the Prophet continued, "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."

Then speaking directly to his listeners, the Prophet continued:

"... I would exhort you to go on and continue to call upon God until you make your calling and election sure for yourselves,

by obtaining this more sure word of prophecy,..." (HC 5:388-389.)

A week later, May 21, 1843, the Prophet preached another sermon on the same text, from which I quote:

"We have no claim in our eternal compact, in relation to eternal things, unless our actions and contracts and all things tend to this end. But after all this, you have got to make your calling and election sure. If this injunction would lie largely on those to whom it was spoken," he said, "how much more those of the present generation!" And then in conclusion, "It is one thing to be on the mount and hear the excellent voice, etc., and another to hear the voice declare to you, You have a part and lot in that kingdom." (HC 5:403.)

These two sermons were given by the Prophet just thirteen months before his martyrdom. Four years earlier, however, he had thus instructed the Twelve: "After a person has faith in Christ, repents of his sins, and is baptized for the remission of his sins and receives the Holy Ghost, (by the laying on of hands), which is the first Comforter, then let him continue to humble himself before God, hungering and thirsting after righteousness, and living by every word of God, and the Lord will soon say unto him, Son, thou shalt be exalted. When the Lord has thoroughly proved him, and finds that the man is determined to serve Him at all hazards, then the man will find his calling and election made sure, then it will be his privilege to receive the other Comforter, which the Lord hath promised the Saints, as is re-recorded in the testimony of St. John, in the 14th chapter ..." (HC 3:380.)

In the 88th section of the Doctrine and Covenants is recorded a revelation in which the Lord, addressing some of the early Saints in Ohio, said: "... I now send upon you another Comforter, even upon you my friends, that it may abide in your hearts, even the Holy Spirit of promise; which other Comforter is the same that I promised unto my disciples, as is recorded in the testimony of John.

The Promise of Eternal Life

"This Comforter is the promise which I give unto you of eternal life, even the glory of the celestial kingdom;" (D&C 88:3-4.)

I should think that every faithful Latter-day Saint "... 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." (HC 5:388.)

As I read the sacred records, I find recorded experiences of men in all dispensations who have had this sure anchor to their souls, this peace in their hearts.

Lehi's grandson Enos so hungered after righteousness that he cried unto the Lord until "... there came a voice unto [him from heaven] saying: Enos, thy sins are forgiven thee, and thou shalt be blessed." Years later he revealed the nature of this promised blessing when he wrote:

"... I soon go to the place of my rest, which is with my Redeemer; for I know that in him I shall rest. And I rejoice in the day when my mortal shall put on immortality, and shall stand before him; then shall I see his face with pleasure, and he will say unto me: Come unto me, ye blessed, there is a place prepared for you in the mansions of my Father." (Enos 1:5, 27.)

To Alma the Lord said: "Thou art my servant; and I covenant with thee that thou shalt have eternal life;..." (Mosi 26:20.)

To his twelve Nephite disciples the Master said: "What is it that ye desire of me, after that I am gone to the Father?"

"And they all spake, save it were three, saying: We desire that after we have lived unto the age of man, that our ministry, wherein thou hast called us, may have an end, that we may speedily come unto thee in thy kingdom.

"And he said unto them: Blessed are ye because ye desired this thing of me; therefore, after that ye are seventy and two years old ye shall come unto me in my kingdom; and with me ye shall find rest." (3 Ne 28:1-3.)

As Moroni labored in solitude, abridging the Jaredite record, he received from the Lord this comforting assurance: "... thou hast been faithful; wherefore, thy garments shall be made clean. And because thou hast seen thy weakness thou shalt be made strong, even unto the sitting down in the place which I have prepared in the mansions of my Father." (Eth 12:37.)

Paul in his second epistle to Timothy wrote: "... I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand.

"I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith:

"Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day:..." (2 Tim 4:6-8.)

In this dispensation many have received like assurances. In the spring of 1839, while the Prophet Joseph and his associates were languishing in Liberty Jail, Heber C. Kimball labored against great odds caring for the Saints and striving to free the brethren. On the 6th of April he wrote:

"My family having been gone about two months, during which time I heard nothing from them; our brethren being in prison; death and destruction following us everywhere we went; I felt very sorrowful and lonely. The following words came to my mind, and the spirit said unto me, 'write,' which I did by taking a piece of paper and writing on my knee as follows:..."

This is what he wrote as dictated by the Lord:

"Verily I say unto my servant Heber, thou art my son, in whom I am well pleased; for thou art careful to hearken to my words, and not transgress my law, nor rebel against my servant Joseph Smith, for thou hast a respect to the words of mine anointed, even from the least to the greatest of them; therefore thy name is written in heaven, no more to be blotted out for ever...." (Orson F. Whitney, *Life of Heber C. Kimball*, 1888 ed., 253.)

To the Prophet Joseph Smith the Lord said: "... I am the Lord thy God and will be with thee even unto the end of the world, and through all eternity; for verily I seal upon you your exaltation, and prepare a throne for you in the kingdom of my Father, with Abraham your father." (D&C 132:49.)

Now in conclusion, I give you my own witness. I know that God our Father lives, that we are, as Paul said, his offspring. I know that we dwelt in his presence in pre-earth life and that we shall continue to live beyond the grave. I know that we may return into his presence, if we meet his terms. I know that while we are here in mortality there is a means of

communication between him and us. I know it is possible for men to so live that they may hear his voice and know his words and that to receive "the Holy Spirit of promise" while here in mortality is possible. And so, in the words of the Prophet Joseph, "... I ... exhort you to go on and continue to call upon God until (by the more sure word of prophecy) you make your calling and election sure for yourselves,..." (HC 5:389.) In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

"The Light of Christ," President Marion G. Romney, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, *Conference Report*, Apr. 1977, 59-63; or *Ensign*, May 1977, 43-45.

My brethren, I pray, and ask you to join in that prayer, that while I speak we will enjoy the Spirit of Christ. If we don't enjoy it, we won't enjoy these remarks, because my topic is "The Light of Christ." There are three phases of the light of Christ that I want to mention.

The first one is the light which enlighteneth every man that cometh into the world; The second phase is the gift of the Holy Ghost; And the third is the more sure word of prophecy.

The Light of Christ

In the eighty-eighth section of the Doctrine and Covenants, the Lord says, "The light of Christ . . . proceedeth forth from the presence of God to fill the immensity of space." (D&C 88:7, 12.) In another revelation, it is written that this light, which is "the Spirit of Jesus Christ . . . giveth light to every man that cometh into the world; and the Spirit enlighteneth every man through the world, that hearkeneth to the voice of the Spirit" (D&C 84:45-46.)

This Spirit is, no doubt, the source of one's conscience, which Webster defines as "a knowledge or feeling of right and wrong with a compulsion to do right."

Mormon was alluding to this Spirit when he wrote to his son Moroni that "every thing which inviteth and enticeth to do good, and to love God, and to serve him, is inspired of God.

"Wherefore, take heed, my beloved brethren, that ye do not judge that which is evil to be of God, or that which is good and of God to be of the devil.

"For behold, my brethren, **it is given unto you to judge**, [and that gift is because the light of Christ enlighteneth every man that cometh into the world], that ye may know good from evil; and the way to judge is as plain, that ye may know with a perfect knowledge, as the daylight is from the dark night.

"For behold, the Spirit of Christ is given to every man, that he may know good from evil." (Moro. 7:13-16.)

President Joseph F. Smith says that this Spirit of Christ "strives with . . . men, and will continue to strive with them [if they will resist the enticings of Satan], until it brings them to a knowledge of the truth and the possession of the greater light and testimony of the Holy Ghost." (*Gospel Doctrine*, Deseret Book Co., 1973, 67-68.)

Gift of the Holy Ghost

Now, this statement of President Smith's brings us to a consideration of the second phase of our subject: the gift of the Holy Ghost.

The Holy Ghost is a person, a spirit, the third member of the Godhead. He is a messenger and a witness of the Father and the Son. He brings to men testimony, witness, and knowledge of God the Father, Jesus Christ His Son, and the truths of the gospel. He vitalizes truth in the hearts and souls of men.

“There is a difference,” said the Prophet Joseph Smith, “between the Holy Ghost and the gift of the Holy Ghost. Cornelius received the Holy Ghost before he was baptized, which was the convincing power of God unto him of the truth of the Gospel, but he could not receive the gift of the Holy Ghost until after he was baptized. Had he not [been baptized], the Holy Ghost which convinced him of the truth of God, would have left him.” (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 199.) That’s not my statement; that’s the statement of the Prophet Joseph Smith. But I know it’s true.

The gift of the Holy Ghost confers upon one, as long as he is worthy, the right to receive light and truth.

Obtaining the gift of the Holy Ghost is preceded by faith, repentance, and baptism. Retaining the spirit, power, and guidance of the Holy Ghost requires a righteous life — a dedicated effort to constantly comply with the laws and ordinances of the gospel.

Member of the Godhead

The Holy Ghost is, as we have said, the third member of the Godhead. Of Him the Prophet Joseph said:

“The Holy Ghost has not a body of flesh and bones [as we know that God and Jesus Christ have], but is a personage of Spirit.” (D&C 130:22.)

The Holy Ghost is the great witness of, the messenger for, and testifier of the Father and the Son. The Savior, speaking of Him as the “Spirit of truth,” said:

“When he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.

“He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you.” (John 16:13-14.)

By the witness and power of the Holy Ghost we receive personal testimonies of the truths of the gospel, including knowledge of God the Father and His beloved Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Redeemer.

Notwithstanding the availability of the gifts of the Holy Ghost, there are many people who live within reach of them who fail to see them. Concerning such tragedy, the Lord said:

“Behold, I am Jesus Christ, the Son of God. I am the same that came unto mine own, and mine own received me not. I am the light which shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehendeth it not.” (D&C 6:21.)

Comprehending the light

All three of the synoptic Gospel writers record the following classic illustration of the difficulty one in darkness has in comprehending the light. Matthew’s version reads:

“When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?”

“And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets.” (Matt. 16: 13-14.)

Now, the people who expressed these opinions were Christ’s contemporaries. Their conclusions evidenced the fact that they knew something about His mighty works. No doubt they were aware of His claim that He was the Son of God. Their minds, however, were opaque to the light of His true identity. Although the light was shining brightly about them, they “comprehended it not.”

Having heard their answer as to who men said He was, Jesus directed to His disciples the question, “But whom say ye that I am?” (Matt. 16:15.)

Then Peter, speaking for himself and presumptively for the others, answered, “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.” (Matt. 16:16.) In this declaration, Peter evidenced the fact that he and his fellow disciples did comprehend the light shining in the world of spiritual darkness around them.

In His response to Peter’s answer, Jesus declared a truth understood only by those who comprehend the light by and through the gift and power of the Holy Ghost, for Jesus’ answer was:

“Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee,” He said, “but my Father which is in heaven, . . . and upon this rock” meaning, upon the rock of revelation, which comes by means of the Holy Ghost, “I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” (Matt. 16:17-18.)

How difficult it is to get one in darkness to comprehend the light or to believe that there is such light is illustrated by John’s account of the interview between Jesus and Nicodemus.

“There was,” says John, ‘a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews:

“[Who] came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.

“Jesus answered and said . . . Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

“Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother’s womb, and be born?”

“Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.” (John 3:1 5; see also 3:6-10.)

One is born again by actually receiving and experiencing the light and power inherent in the gift of the Holy Ghost.

“More sure word of prophecy”

Now, concerning the third phase of our theme, “the more sure word of prophecy” (D&C 131:5), which is obtained by making one’s “calling and election sure” (2 Pet. 1:10), the Prophet Joseph said:

“After a person has faith in Christ, repents of his sins, and is baptized for the remission of his sins and receives the Holy Ghost, (by the laying on of hands) ... then let him continue to

humble himself before God, hungering and thirsting after righteousness, and living by every word of God, and the Lord will soon say unto him, Son, thou shalt be exalted. When the Lord has thoroughly proved him, and finds that the man is determined to serve Him at all hazards, then the man will find his calling and his election made sure, then it will be his privilege to receive the other Comforter, which the Lord hath promised the Saints, as is recorded in the testimony of St. John." (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 150.)

In the eighty-eighth section of the Doctrine and Covenants is recorded a revelation in which the Lord, addressing some of the early Saints in Ohio, said:

"I now send upon you another Comforter, even upon you my friends, that it may abide in your hearts, even the Holy Spirit of promise; which other Comforter is the same that I promised unto my disciples, as is recorded in the testimony of John.

"This Comforter is the promise which I give unto you of eternal life, even the glory of the celestial kingdom." (D&C 88:3-4.)

I should think that all faithful Latter-day Saints "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." (*History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 5:388.)

Anchor to men's souls

As I read the sacred records, I find recorded experiences of men in all dispensations who have had this more sure anchor to their souls, this peace in their hearts.

Lehi's grandson Enos so hungered after righteousness that he cried unto the Lord until "there came a voice unto [him], saying: Enos, thy sins are forgiven thee, and thou shalt be blessed." (Enos 5.) Years later Enos revealed the nature of this promised blessing when he wrote:

"I soon go to the place of my rest, which is with my Redeemer; for I know that in him I shall rest. And I rejoice in the day when my mortal shall put on immortality, and shall stand before him; then shall I see his face with pleasure, and he will say unto me: Come unto me, ye blessed, there is a place prepared for you in the mansions of my Father." (Enos 27.)

To Alma the Lord said, "Thou art my servant; and I covenant with thee that thou shalt have eternal life." (Mosiah 26:20.)

To His twelve Nephite disciples, the Master said:

"What is it that ye desire of me, after that I am gone to the Father?"

"And they all spake, save it were three, saying: We desire that after we have lived unto the age of man, that our ministry, wherein thou hast called us, may have an end, that we may speedily come unto thee in thy kingdom.

"And he said unto them: Blessed are ye because ye desired this thing of me; therefore, after that ye are seventy and two years old ye shall come unto me in my kingdom; and with me ye shall find rest." (3 Ne. 28:1-3.)

As Moroni labored in solitude abridging the Jaredite record, he received from the Lord this comforting assurance:

"Thou hast been faithful; wherefore, thy garments shall be

made clean. And because thou hast seen thy weakness thou shalt be made strong, even unto the sitting down in the place which I have prepared in the mansions of my Father." (Eth. 12:37.)

Paul, in his second epistle to Timothy, wrote:

"I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand.

"I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith:

"Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day." (2 Tim. 4:6-8.)

Assurances in our day

In this dispensation many have received like assurances. In the spring of 1839, while the Prophet Joseph and his associates were languishing in Liberty Jail, Heber C. Kimball, our president's grandfather, labored against great odds caring for the Saints and striving to free the brethren who were in jail. On the sixth of April he wrote:

"My family having been gone about two months, during which time I heard nothing from them; our brethren being in prison; death and destruction following us everywhere we went; I felt very sorrowful and lonely. The following words came to mind, and the Spirit said unto me, 'write,' which I did by taking a piece of paper and writing on my knee as follows: . . .

"Verily I say unto my servant Heber, thou art my son, in whom I am well pleased; for thou art careful to hearken to my words, and not transgress my law, nor rebel against my servant Joseph Smith, for thou hast a respect to the words of mine anointed, even from the least to the greatest of them; therefore' — listen to this — "*thy name is written in heaven, no more to be blotted out for ever.*" (Orson F. Whitney, *Life of Heber C. Kimball*, Bookcraft, 1975, 241; italics added.)

To the Prophet Joseph Smith the Lord said:

"I am the Lord thy God, and will be with thee even unto the end of the world, and through all eternity; *for verily I seal upon you your exaltation, and prepare a throne for you in the kingdom of my Father, with Abraham your father.*" (D&C 132:49; italics added.)

Witness of truths

Now my beloved brethren, by way of summary and conclusion, I bear witness to the verity of these great truths. I know that the Spirit of Christ enlighteneth "every man that cometh into the world; and [that] the Spirit enlighteneth every man through the world, that hearkeneth to the voice of the Spirit." (D&C 84:46.)

I know that everyone who, following the whisperings of the Spirit, develops faith, is baptized, and receives the Holy Ghost through the laying on of hands by those having authority, may, by compliance with the teachings of the gospel, receive the gifts and the power of the Holy Ghost.

And I bear further witness that every such person who, having come this far, will follow the Prophet's admonition to "continue to humble himself before God, hungering and thirsting after righteousness, and living by every word of God"

(*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 150), may obtain the more sure word of prophecy.

That the Lord will bless all of us priesthood bearers that we will so understand these great truths, that in the end we shall, by making our calling and election sure, enjoy the full light of Christ, I humbly pray, in the name of Jesus Christ, our Redeemer. Amen.

Kings & Priests

John Taylor, *The Gospel Kingdom*, 229-230. Have you forgotten who you are, and what your object is? Have you forgotten that you profess to be Saints of the Most High God, clothed upon with the holy priesthood? Have you forgotten that you are aiming to become kings and priests to the Lord, and queens and priestesses to him? Have you forgotten that you are associated with the Saints of God in Zion, where the oracles of truth are revealed, and the truths of God are made manifest, and clearly developed; where you and your posterity after you can learn the ways of life and salvation; where you are placed in a position that you can obtain blessings from the great Elohim, that will rest upon you and your posterity worlds without end? Have you forgotten these things, and begun to turn again to the beggarly elements of the world, and become blind, like others we have spoken of, turning like the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire? We ought to reflect sometimes upon these things, and understand our true position.

Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, 322. What was the power of Melchizedek? 'Twas not the Priesthood of Aaron which administers in outward ordinances, and the offering of sacrifices. Those holding the fulness of the Melchizedek Priesthood are kings and priests of the Most High God, holding the keys of power and blessings. In fact, that Priesthood is a perfect law of theocracy, and stands as God to give laws to the people, administering endless lives to the sons and daughters of Adam.

Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, 346. Here then is eternal life—to know the only wise and true God, and you have got to learn how to be Gods yourselves, and to be kings and priests to God, the same as all Gods have done before you, namely, by going from one small degree to another, and from a small capacity to a great one, from grace to grace, from exaltation to exaltation, until you attain to the resurrection of the dead, and are able to dwell in everlasting burnings, and to sit in glory, as do those who sit enthroned in everlasting power. And I want you to know that God, in the last days, while certain individuals are proclaiming his name, is not trifling with you or me.

King of kings

Discourses of Brigham Young, 195. We understand that we are to be made kings and priests unto God; now if I be made the king and lawgiver to my family, and if I have many sons, I shall become the father of many fathers, for they will have sons, and their sons will have sons, and so on, from generation to generation, and, in this way, I may become the father of many fathers, or the king of many kings. This will constitute every man a prince, king, lord, or whatever the Father sees fit to confer upon us.

John Taylor, *The Gospel Kingdom*, 138. Thus we shall also become legitimately and by right, through the atonement and adoption, kings and priests—priests to administer in the holy ordinances pertaining to the endowments and exaltations; and kings, under Christ, who is King of kings and Lord of lords, to rule and govern, according to the eternal laws of justice and equity, those who are thus redeemed and exalted.

John Taylor, *The Gospel Kingdom*, 139. We find that after the days of Noah an order was introduced called the patriarchal order, in which every man managed his own family affairs. And prominent men among them were kings and priests unto God, and officiated in what is known among us as the priesthood of the Son of God, or the priesthood after the order of Melchizedek. Man began again to multiply on the face of the earth, and the heads of families became their kings and priests, that is, the fathers of their own people. And they were more or less under the influence and guidance of the Almighty. We read, for instance, in our revelations pertaining to these matters, of a man called Melchizedek, who was a great high priest. We are told that there were a great many high priests in his day, and before him and after him; and these men had communication with God, and were taught of him in relation to their general proceedings, and acknowledged the hand of God in all things which they were associated.

Bruce R. McConkie, “Kings,” *Mormon Doctrine*, 425. See CALLING AND ELECTION SURE, CELESTIAL MARRIAGE, ENDOWMENTS, EXALTATION, MELCHIZEDEK PRIESTHOOD, PRIESTESSES, PRIESTS, QUEENS. Holders of the Melchizedek Priesthood have power to press forward in righteousness, living by every word that proceedeth forth from the mouth of God, magnifying their callings, going from grace to grace, until through the fulness of the ordinances of the temple they receive the fulness of the priesthood and are ordained kings and priests. Those so attaining shall have exaltation and be kings, priests, rulers, and lords in their respective spheres in the eternal kingdoms of the great King who is God our Father. (Rev 1:6; 5:10.)

Bruce R. McConkie, *Doctrinal New Testament Commentary* 3:356. [Until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts] Until the Second Coming of the Lord, until the Millennial day dawns, until the day when “the root and the offspring of David” who is “the bright and morning star” (Rev 22:16) shall reign personally on earth and be the companion, confidant, and friend of those whose calling and election is sure and who are thus called forth as “kings and priests” to live and “reign on earth” (Rev 5:10) with him a thousand years.