

### The celestial degree

Who will go to the celestial degree of glory and live with the Father and the Son?

From another vision of celestial glory had by Joseph Smith, we receive the following information:

"And I also beheld that all children who die before they arrive at the years of accountability, are saved in the celestial kingdom of heaven." (*Documentary History of the Church*, vol. 2, p. 381.)

By revelation the Lord set the age eight as the age of accountability for little children. (D&C 68:27.)

In addition to little children, others who go to the celestial glory are those who receive a testimony of Jesus, in other words, the gospel of Jesus Christ. They must be baptized by immersion in water and receive the Holy Ghost by one having authority. Also, they must keep the commandments, and be those who are "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 76:53.)

Certainly many of the people in celestial glory will be holders of the holy Melchizedek Priesthood.

"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];

"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.)

### Other degrees of glory

The Lord has declared that the honorable people of the earth who do not accept the true gospel of Jesus Christ will go to the terrestrial glory.

The wicked people of the earth who have not denied the Holy Ghost—"they who are thrust down to hell . . . until the last resurrection"—will be assigned to the telestial glory.

The people who commit the unpardonable sins of denying the Holy Ghost or shedding innocent blood shall be cast off with the devil and die the second death.

### Where we go after death

Where do we go when we die? It depends on how we live while here in mortality, and how much light and truth we receive, and how much opportunity we have had. Also, for those who have not had a chance to hear the gospel while here in mortality, they will have an opportunity in the spirit world and temple work will be done for them. The Lord revealed to the Prophet Joseph Smith:

"All who have died without a knowledge of this Gospel, who would have received it if they had been permitted to tarry, shall be heirs to the celestial kingdom of God: also all that shall die henceforth without a knowledge of it, who would have received it with all their hearts, shall be heirs of the kingdom for I, the Lord, will judge all men, . . . according to the desires of their hearts." (*DHC*, vol. 2, p. 380.)

I bear testimony that the true gospel of Jesus Christ has been restored to earth again. It is found in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. In the name of Jesus Christ. Amen. ○

## ELDER BRUCE R. McCONKIE

### Of the First Council of the Seventy

● I am grateful beyond any power of expression that I have for the knowledge that is in my heart of the truth and divinity of this great work. I am thankful for the testimony of Jesus, for the whisperings of the Spirit that have come to my soul certifying that this

kingdom, the Church, is God's kingdom on earth; and I desire to bear that witness, not in words only but also by my acts, to be in word and in deed a witness to the world of the truth and divinity of the gospel cause—all in harmony with the instructions we have

received in our revelations.

Will you join with me in considering these eternal truths:

### True religion revealed

True religion comes by revelation; there is no other source.

Where there is true religion, there is revelation; and where there is no revelation, there is no true religion.

God reveals himself or he remains forever unknown.

He is our Father in heaven; we are his spirit children, and he ordained the laws whereby we can advance and progress and become like him.

He is the author of the plan of salvation, which his servant Paul designates as "the gospel of God, . . . Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord." (Rom. 1:1, 3.)

He has revealed this plan of salvation in successive gospel dispensations, and he is revealing his mind and his will today, thereby showing that he is the same God yesterday, today, and forever, and that a soul is just as precious in his sight in this day as in any age.

Thus true religion comes from God, and from no other source.

### Priesthood administers gospel

It is his priesthood that administers the gospel. It is his power that governs his church.

It is at his direction that the gospel is preached and that the gifts of the Spirit are poured out upon the faithful.

His is the power by which miracles are wrought, by which the sick are healed and the dead raised.

He seals men up unto eternal life.

He makes men joint heirs with his Son.

He gives them the fullness of his glory and kingdom.

He is the source of all things, of every true principle, of every saving truth, of revealed religion, and without revelation from him there is no true church, no true religion, and no personal salvation.

God sends apostles and prophets, wise and holy men who have the spiritual talent to commune with him, to receive in their hearts his mind and will, and then to communicate these

eternal truths to their fellowmen. Joseph Smith was one of the greatest of these, and we have living apostles and prophets today who make the truths of salvation available to us as a people and to all who will come and join with us.

### Salvation is personal

But people are not saved en masse. Salvation is personal and individual. Religion must come to one man standing alone, independent of all others.

If I am to be saved, I personally must believe and obey the true religion.

I must get religion into my own heart and soul. What the Prophet Joseph Smith saw and believed and knew will not suffice. True, his revelations make salvation available to me; they open the door. But I must see and believe and know for myself.

I must know God.

I must learn the truths of salvation.

I must feel the power of his priesthood.

I must receive the gifts of his Spirit.

I must be born again.

I must receive revelation.

### Personal revelation

No man can be saved unless and until he receives revelation. Revelation is the rock foundation upon which true religion and personal salvation rest. Peter learned by personal revelation that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God, the Holy Messiah, through whose atoning sacrifice salvation is offered to men. Then the Lord told him that upon this rock of revelation he would build his church.

If I do not build upon this rock, if I do not receive the same testimony of our Lord's divine Sonship that Peter gained, if I do not know by the power of the Holy Ghost that Jesus is the Lord, if I do not have the testimony of Jesus, that is, if I do not receive revelation, I have not received true religion, and I shall have no abiding inheritance in that church and kingdom which is founded upon the rock of revelation.

In our day, in this final gospel dispensation, the revealed knowledge of the truth and divinity of the work in-

cludes the heaven-sent assurance that Joseph Smith is a prophet of God, that he is the revealer of the knowledge of Christ and of salvation to the world today.

### A testimony of the gospel

The first great revelation which men must receive if they are to gain salvation is the revelation of the divine Sonship of Christ, which knowledge is coupled with the Spirit-born assurance that Joseph Smith is a prophet of God. This revelation is called a testimony of the gospel.

But a testimony is only the beginning of revelation. The recipient has just begun to drink at the fountain of revealed truth. He has but opened the door to an immeasurably great storehouse of spiritual knowledge.

The great things that set the Lord's saints apart from the world are, first, that they know by revelation that the work in which they are engaged is true, that they have testimonies of its divinity, and, second, that they then receive added personal revelation concerning many things.

### Gift of Holy Ghost

At their baptism, God's saints have the hands of legal administrators placed upon their heads, and they receive the gift of the Holy Ghost, an endowment from on high. This endowment, this gift, is the right to the constant companionship of this member of the Godhead based on faithfulness.

Joseph Smith said: "No man can receive the Holy Ghost without receiving revelations. The Holy Ghost is a revelator." (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, p. 328.)

Accordingly, those who are saints indeed, those who have been born again, those who are so living as to be in tune with the Spirit—they are they who receive revelation, personal revelation, revelation which is the mind and will of God to them as individuals. They know there are apostles and prophets directing the kingdom who receive revelation for the Church and the world. But they as individuals receive personal revelation in their own affairs.

And there are no restrictions placed upon them; there are no limitations as to what they may see and know and comprehend. No eternal truths will be withheld, if they obey the laws entitling them to receive such truths.

### Revelation to prophets

Joseph Smith and the prophets had revelation. They saw God, viewed the visions of eternity, entertained angels, came upon Mount Zion, stood in heavenly places, and had communion with the general assembly and Church of the Firstborn.

Of these very experiences Joseph Smith said: "... God hath not revealed anything to Joseph, but what He will make known unto the Twelve, and even the least Saint may know all things as fast as he is able to bear them." (*Ibid.*, p. 149.)

### Revelation for all men

Now let me read the words of a revelation, the words of the Lord God himself, the very words of Deity. These words, spoken to Joseph Smith, announce that revelation is for all men, that every faithful member of the Church can commune with his Maker, without limit and without restraint.

They are: "For thus saith the Lord—I, the Lord, am merciful and gracious unto those who fear me, and delight to honor those who serve me in righteousness and in truth unto the end.

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

"And to them will I reveal all mysteries, yea, all the hidden mysteries of my kingdom from days of old, and for ages to come, will I make known unto them the good pleasure of my will concerning all things pertaining to my kingdom.

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

"And their wisdom shall be great, and their understanding reach to heaven; and before them the wisdom of the wise shall perish, and the understanding of the prudent shall come to naught.

"For by my Spirit will I enlighten

them, and by my power will I make known unto them the secrets of my will—yea, even those things which eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor yet entered into the heart of man.” (D&C 76:5-10.)

Thus we learn that any man who obeys the law entitling him to receive revelation shall see and hear and know for himself. Revelation for the Church comes through those who are prophets, seers, and revelators to the Church, but personal revelation, revelation for the guidance of the individual, revelation which says to a man and a woman, “Son, daughter, thou shalt be exalted; thou shalt have part and lot in my kingdom,” this revelation comes to them as individuals, alone and apart from all others.

Joseph Smith received this revelation: “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.)

### The brother of Jared

Among those who complied with the law of righteousness here revealed was the brother of Jared, a prophet who lived some 2,000 years before our Lord’s birth into mortality. Of the vision which he saw, Moroni says: “. . . because of the knowledge of this man he could not be kept from beholding within the veil; and he saw . . . 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.)

### Personal righteousness

From these revelations we learn that there are no limitations placed upon any of us. Revelations are not reserved for a limited few or for those called to positions of importance in the Church. It is not position in the Church that confers spiritual gifts. It is not being a bishop, a stake president, or an apostle that makes revelation and salvation

available. These are high and holy callings which open the door to the privilege of great service among men. But it is not a call to a special office that opens the windows of revelation to a truth seeker. Rather it is personal righteousness; it is keeping the commandments; it is seeking the Lord while he may be found.

God is no respecter of persons. He will give revelation to me and to you on the same terms and conditions. I can see what Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon saw in the vision of the degrees of glory—and so can you. I can entertain angels and see God, I can receive an outpouring of the gifts of the Spirit—and so can you.

### The course to glory

There are goals to gain, summits to climb, revelations to receive. In the eternal scope of things we have scarcely started out on the course to glory and exaltation. The Lord wants his saints to receive line upon line, precept upon precept, truth upon truth, revelation upon revelation, until we know all things and have become like him.

Let us press forward in making our callings and elections sure, until, as Joseph Smith said, we shall have the personage of Jesus Christ to attend us, or to appear to us from time to time, and until even he will manifest the Father unto us. (See *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, p. 151.)

I know man can commune with his Maker, can petition the throne of grace and receive answers to his prayers, because I have done so.

I know man can receive revelations, because I have received them. God has spoken to me, not for the guidance of the Church, not for your benefit, but for mine. The same thing has or can or should happen in the life of every member of his kingdom.

God be praised that, unworthy though we are, he stands ready to and does in fact reveal himself to those of us who are sons and daughters in his kingdom.

### Witnesses of the truth

Now in this day in which we live we have been appointed to stand as

witnesses of the truth. Our elders go forth proclaiming the message of the restoration to the world. They go out to teach and to testify. When the Lord sends them forth, it is with this commission: ". . . ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord, that I am God." (Isa. 43:12.)

And since God stands revealed or remains forever unknown, there is no way on earth or in heaven for anyone to come to a knowledge of him unless he receives a personal revelation of God or unless he hearkens to the voice of witnesses who have received revelation. Man can and will receive revelation from the Holy Ghost if he heeds the testimony that is borne by the living witnesses who are sent forth to raise their voices and to proclaim the everlasting gospel.

As elders in Israel we are expected to be witnesses. We become witnesses because of personal revelation. When a man receives the surety in his heart that this work is true, when he gains a testimony by the power of the Holy Ghost, then he knows what the world does not know, and he can go forth and bear record of it to them.

We are not concerned particularly or especially with the matter of intellectuality. Everything pertaining to the gospel is rational and reasonable. It is intellectual in the sense that we can sustain it by sense and reason and wisdom, but religion is something far more than intellectuality. Religion is a matter of revelation, of spirituality. Religion comes from God, and those who receive it become living witnesses of its truth and divinity.

### Obligation to testify

And so there rests upon me and upon you, and upon all the elders of Israel, the obligation to testify of the truth and divinity of the work, and we can do it because we have received the revelations of the Holy Spirit to our souls certifying that the work is true.

Now I as one elder in Israel can stand alone, independent of all others—but there are thousands in a like category—and I can bear testimony of the truth and the divinity of this work because the Holy Spirit has spoken to

the spirit within me. The whisperings of the still small voice have come to my soul, and have told me that there is a God in heaven who is infinite and eternal, from everlasting to everlasting. They have told me that he chose his Only Begotten Son, the Firstborn in the spirit, Jesus our Lord, to be the Savior and the Redeemer of the world; that he sent his Son into the world—born of Mary and born of him, thus inheriting the power of mortality and the power of immortality—so that he could work out the infinite and eternal atoning sacrifice, so that he could bring to pass immortality for all men, and make eternal life available for those who believe and obey.

And not alone has the Spirit whispered to me that these great eternal verities, which come by the grace of God, are true; it has certified to my soul that the heavens have been opened in this day; that God has spoken anew; that Joseph Smith was called of him, anointed and empowered and endowed with power from on high, and commissioned to begin the rolling forth of this final, great, glorious dispensation.

### Testimony a living thing

Now a testimony of the gospel to be effective, to be in force, to have power and efficacy and validity, has to be brought up to date. It is not enough for someone to know that Jesus is the Lord and that Joseph Smith was a prophet of God. A testimony has to be a current, living thing. And so I certify that I know, as do thousands of you, that those who preside over this church at this time—with President David O. McKay at the head, and these great brethren in the Presidency, and these great brethren who comprise the Council of the Twelve and the Patriarch to the Church—are prophets, seers, and revelators. They hold the keys of the kingdom. The power is in their hands to have the message of salvation presented in all the world.

I have sufficient background and understanding that I could reason these things out from the revelations. I could read the scriptures and ascertain that all this is accurate and sensible, that it

is logical and rational, but what I am now saying is something that is in addition to that. It is very helpful to have a knowledge of the gospel and be able to reason on the principles of eternal truth; it is helpful in that it leads to a testimony of the divinity of the work. But what I am now saying is that I am a witness of the truth and the divinity of the work because the Holy Spirit has revealed to the spirit that is in me that this is God's work, that this Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is the only true and living church upon the face of the whole earth. (D&C 1:30.)

### Valiant in testimony

Now we have a revelation that says, in effect, that in order to be saved in the kingdom of God, we must be valiant in testimony. It is not enough to have a testimony, a knowledge of the divinity of the work, but it is a glorious thing to start there. In order to gain an inheritance in the celestial world, we have to be valiant in testimony, and we have to manifest that valiance by keeping the commandments of God. God grant us the fortitude and courage and wisdom to seek him while he may be found, to learn for ourselves that he is the Lord and that this is his work, and then give us the determination to press forward in steadfastness and devotion, until in fact and in reality we do make our callings and elections sure.

In the name of Jesus Christ.  
Amen. ○

### President Joseph Fielding Smith

I call your attention to the fact that the General Priesthood meeting of the Church will be held in the Salt Lake Tabernacle this evening at 7 o'clock. Priesthood members only are invited to be present. The Priesthood meeting will not be broadcast publicly.

In addition to the overflow meeting in the Assembly Hall, the proceedings of the Priesthood meeting this evening will be relayed by closed-circuit, originating in the Tabernacle, to members of the Aaronic and Melchizedek Priesthood assembled in approximately 550

separate locations in all parts of the United States and Canada, and via closed-circuit television in five buildings in Salt Lake City, and to 10,000 assembled in the Smith Fieldhouse at the Brigham Young University in Provo. It is estimated that approximately ten thousand holders of the priesthood will be on Temple Square, and approximately 150,000 others will gather in the other locations from coast to coast and in Canada.

The Sunday morning session will be broadcast by many radio and television stations in the western United States; and short-waved in English over Station WNYW to Europe, South America, Central America, Africa, and parts of Asia.

Over seventy radio stations will broadcast conference in Spanish Sunday morning to major cities of Mexico and Central America, and by satellite to countries of South America, together with Spanish programming stations in this country to a potential Latin American audience of forty-two million people.

Radio stations in Brazil will broadcast conference in Portuguese, also by means of satellite, to a potential Brazilian audience of fourteen million people.

Arrangements are made for the morning sessions of Friday and Sunday to be carried from the Tabernacle over direct oceanic cables to a large number of Saints assembled in many chapels throughout Great Britain, Germany, France, Austria and Belgium on Sunday. Direct circuits will also carry these sessions to Saints assembled in chapels throughout eastern Canada.

The CBS Radio Network Tabernacle Choir Broadcast tomorrow morning will be from 9:35 to 10:00 o'clock a.m. Those desiring to attend this broadcast must be in their seats no later than 9:15 a.m.

The singing for this session has been furnished by the MIA Girls Centennial Chorus, with Margrit F. Lohner conducting, and Roy M. Darley at the organ.

I am sure this great gathering in the Tabernacle and our radio and tele-