

Elder Bruce R. McConkie

I shall speak of one of the greatest gifts ever received by mortal men. It is a superlative spiritual endowment which in its very nature sets the Latter-day Saints apart from the world and makes them a peculiar people. It is a gift which the Lord always gives to his people, which identifies them as the chosen of God, and without which nothing else of a religious nature has any especial value or enduring worth.

Revelation

I shall speak of revelation, of the opening of the heavens, of revelation as it is given to prophets and apostles for the guidance of the Church and the world, and also of revelation to the Saints in general for their own guidance and that of their families.

I have sought diligently for the guidance of the Holy Spirit in preparing these words and now pray—sincerely and devoutly—that your hearts may be open as you hear them, that your bosoms will burn with living fire, and that you will know by the power of the Holy Spirit that the doctrines taught and the witness borne are true.

How does a gracious God commune with his children on earth? How can those of us on earth, whose experiences are bounded by time and space and frailties of the flesh, comprehend that which is infinite and eternal? By what means can mortal eyes see within the veil, or the ears of earth hear the voices of eternity?

A strange thing

It is truly a strange thing for prophets to speak of future events as though they were present before their seeric eyes. It is truly a wondrous thing for earthbound eyes to pierce the fogs and darkness of our planet and see within the gates of heaven. It is marvelous, almost beyond belief, that mere mortals

can begin to comprehend him who is eternal, can know of a surety of things past, present, and future, and can have the assurance of an eternal inheritance with immortal beings who dwell in everlasting glory.

But strange or not, so it is. He who is eternal has provided a way. A gracious and loving Father has ordained the laws, by obedience to which we may learn his ways and know his will.

Gift of the Holy Ghost

Those who believe in Christ as he is revealed by the apostles and prophets of their day, those who forsake the world and repent of all their sins, those who covenant with the Lord in the waters of baptism to love and serve him all their days—these are the ones who receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

This gift is the right to the constant companionship of that member of the Godhead, based on faithfulness. This gift is the right to receive revelation from the Holy Spirit. "No man can receive the Holy Ghost without receiving revelations," the Prophet said, for "the Holy Ghost is a revelator" (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, comp. Joseph Fielding Smith, Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1977, p. 328).

Revelations come in many ways, but they are always manifest by the power of the Holy Ghost. Jesus' promise to the ancient apostles was: "The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things" (John 14:26). Our modern scriptures say: "The Comforter knoweth all things, and beareth record of the Father and of the Son" (D&C 42:17). They also give us this promise: "By the power of the Holy Ghost ye may know the truth of all things" (Moro. 10:5).

When men are quickened by the power of the Spirit, then the Lord can

reveal his truths to them in whatever way he chooses.

A new dispensation

The Father and the Son rent the heavens and came down to Joseph Smith in the spring of 1820 to usher in the dispensation of the fulness of times. From these two glorious personages he then received the promise that if he remained true and faithful he would be the instrument in their hands of restoring the fulness of the everlasting gospel.

The Lord Jehovah—the God of our Fathers; the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; the Lord Omnipotent who was born of Mary in Bethlehem of Judea—appeared in glory to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery on the third day of April in 1836 in the Kirtland Temple.

“His eyes were as a flame of fire; the hair of his head was white like the pure snow; his countenance shone above the brightness of the sun; and his voice was as the sound of the rushing of great waters, even the voice of Jehovah, saying:

“I am the first and the last; I am he who liveth, I am he who was slain; I am your advocate with the Father.

“... I will manifest myself to my people in mercy. . . .

“Yea, I will appear unto my servants, and speak unto them with mine own voice, if my people will keep my commandments.” (D&C 110:3-4, 7-8.)

Michael, Gabriel, Raphael, and divers angels came—“all declaring their dispensation, their rights, their keys, their honors, their majesty and glory, and the power of their priesthood” (D&C 128:21).

Moses returned to bring the keys of the gathering of Israel; Elias came to restore “the gospel of Abraham” and promise mortal men, once again, that in them and in their seed all generations might be blessed; and Elijah came to confer the sealing power so that once again legal administrators might have power to bind on earth and have their

acts sealed everlastingly in the heavens. (See D&C 110:11-13.)

Peter, James, and John restored the keys of the kingdom of God and brought back again the apostolic commission to preach the gospel in all nations and to every creature. Moroni came to restore the Book of Mormon, and John the Baptist to bring again the Aaronic Priesthood with all its keys and powers. (See D&C 128:20-21.)

Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon, on February 16, 1832, at Hiram, Ohio, saw in vision the kingdoms of glory in the eternal world and received such an outpouring of grace and truth as has seldom come to mortal men. (See D&C 76.)

Voice of God heard again

The voice of God—speaking audibly after the manner of our language, and also speaking by the power of the Spirit in the minds of men—has been heard over and over again in our day.

Times without number faithful members of the Lord’s church have labored and struggled with near unsolvable problems, have reached what seemed to them to be proper solutions and have then received a spiritual confirmation certifying to the truth and verity of their decisions.

We cannot speak of revelation without bearing testimony of the great and wondrous outpouring of divine knowledge that came to President Spencer W. Kimball setting forth that the priesthood and all of the blessings and obligations of the gospel should now be offered to those of all nations, races, and colors.

Truly, the Holy Ghost is a revealer. He speaks and his voice is the voice of the Lord. He is Christ’s minister, his agent, his representative. He says what the Lord Jesus would say if he were personally present.

The word of the Lord

Speaking “unto all those who” are

"ordained unto" his "priesthood," the Lord says: "And whatsoever they shall speak when moved upon by the Holy Ghost shall be scripture, shall be the will of the Lord, shall be the mind of the Lord, shall be the word of the Lord, shall be the voice of the Lord, and the power of God unto salvation" (D&C 68:2-4).

Truly this is that promised day when "every man might speak in the name of God the Lord, even the Savior of the world" (D&C 1:20).

If all of the Latter-day Saints lived as they should, then Moses' petition would be granted: "Would God that all the Lord's people were prophets, and that the Lord would put his spirit upon them!" (Num. 11:29).

This is the promised day when "God shall give unto" us "knowledge by his Holy Spirit," when, "by the unspeakable gift of the Holy Ghost," we shall gain knowledge "that has not been revealed since the world was until now" (D&C 121:26).

This is the day of which 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" (*Teachings*, p. 149).

And we look forward to that glorious millennial day when "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" (Jer. 31:34).

No end to revelation

But even now there is no end to the revelations we may receive. "We believe all that God has revealed, all that He does now reveal, and we believe that He will yet reveal many great and important things pertaining to the Kingdom of God" (Articles of Faith 9).

To the prophets, seers, and revelators he will manifest his mind and his

will concerning the Church and the world. To the presiding officers in the stakes and wards and quorums he will reveal what should be for those organizations. To fathers and mothers and children he will reveal "great treasures of knowledge, even hidden treasures" (D&C 89:19) to guide them along the way to perfection.

It is his will that we gain testimonies, that we seek revelation, that we covet to prophesy, that we desire spiritual gifts, and that we seek the face of the Lord.

The Lord wants all his children to gain light and truth and knowledge from on high. It is his will that we pierce the veil and rend the heavens and see the visions of eternity.

Knowledge of God

By his own mouth he has given us this promise: "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).

Such is his promise to us here and now while we yet dwell as mortals in a world of sorrow and sin. It is our privilege even now—the privilege of all who hold the holy priesthood—if we will strip ourselves from jealousies and fears and humble ourselves before him, as he has said, to have the veil rent and see him and know that he is. (See D&C 67:10.)

To carnal men, and even to those among us whose souls are not attuned to the Infinite, these promises may seem as the gibberish of alien tongues, but to those whose souls are afire with the light of heaven they will be as a bush that burns and is not consumed. As Paul, our fellow apostle and witness of that same Lord whose servants we are, expressed it: "The things of God knoweth no man, except he has the Spirit of God" (Inspired Version, 1 Cor. 2:11).

Now may I bear a solemn witness, one borne of the Spirit, that these doc-

trines are true, that the Lord God is raining down righteousness upon his people, and that he will continue to do so until that perfect day when they know all things and become as he is. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, amen.

President Marion G. Romney

Elder Bruce R. McConkie of the Council of the Twelve has just spoken to us.

We shall now hear from Elder John H. Groberg of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

He will be followed by Elder S. Dilworth Young of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

Elder John H. Groberg

My dear brothers and sisters, I ask for your faith and prayers that the Lord's Spirit might touch our hearts as together we consider an item vital to our happiness here and hereafter.

One of the greatest needs of mankind generally and of all of us individually is to have more and stronger faith in our Creator. To know that he is literally our Father and that he is kind and just and understands us and knows our needs is one of the greatest treasures we can possess. This treasure is obtained by faith—strong faith.

Faith to be tested

Now it may seem easy to have faith in God when things are going well. But the law of growth requires constant effort and stretching. Thus, in order to have our faith strengthened, it must be stretched and tried and tested.

One of the areas of testing that comes to many of us is when something occurs over which we apparently have little or no control and which to us seems unfair.

For example, I have always been moved as I have seen those who are required to operate on less than their full faculties. I, along with some of you, have asked the question, Why? On many occasions when an accident has occurred, or a terrible illness, or an un-

timely death, or when a mentally retarded or physically handicapped child has been born, or some other seemingly difficult-to-explain situation has taken place, people have come to me and to others wanting reassurance.

I, along with you, have taken great consolation in the scriptures as they tell us that not even a sparrow falls to the ground without our Father knowing. (See Matt. 10:29.) We believe the scriptures, but when it happens to *our* loved one or *our* friend, the question of why still rings. I do not have all the answers, but hopefully the following experience, which happened several years ago, may be helpful to some who are still battling the question of why.

Help for stricken infant

On a small Pacific island an infant girl was born to a faithful family. They called her Felila. There was happiness and joy as this grateful spirit made her debut into mortal life, but soon there were problems. Her head was abnormally large. The doctors diagnosed it as hydrocephalus. The questions of brain damage, of normalcy, of other problems all raised their haunting heads. After much fasting and prayer the elders quorum president approached the branch president, who in turn talked with the district president, who after adequate