

can develop the capacity to subdue those impulses which lead to degrading and evil actions.

With faith we can school our appetites.

We can reach out to those whose faith has grown cold and warm them by our own faith.

God grant us faith

Let us never forget, my brethren and sisters, that each of us is a part of the whole and that what we do mars or beautifies the magnificent panorama of the kingdom of God.

As our fathers labored in faith with a moving vision of the destiny of this work, even so can we. There is so much to be done, so much improvement to be made, but we can do it, walking in faith.

"If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and *nothing shall be impossible unto you*" (Matthew 17:20; italics added).

So declared the Lord.

God grant us faith, I humbly pray in the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

President Hinckley

The Tabernacle Choir will now sing "Sweet Is the Work, My God, My King," following which Elder Neal A. Maxwell, a member of the Council of the Twelve, will address us.

The Choir sang "Sweet Is the Work, My God, My King."

Elder Neal A. Maxwell

"Both good and evil spoken of"

Throughout the expanse of human history, no prophet has been scrutinized in such a sustained way, on as wide a scale, or for so long a period of time as Joseph Smith, Jr. The communication capacity of this age and the global impact of his work have so ensured.

Young Joseph was told that his name would be "both good and evil spoken of" throughout the world (Joseph Smith—History 1:33). Except from a divine source, how audacious a statement! Yet his contemporary religious leaders, then much better known than Joseph, have faded into the footnotes of history, while the work of Joseph Smith grows constantly and globally.

We have no hesitancy, however, in stipulating that Joseph was, by the standards of the world, "not learned." Isaiah foresaw it. (See Isaiah 29:11–12.) Joseph did not have the

skilled, formal tutoring young Saul had at the feet of Gamaliel. (See Acts 22:3.)

Emma Smith reportedly said that Joseph, at the time of the translation of the Book of Mormon, could not compose a "well-worded letter, let alone dictate a book like the Book of Mormon . . . [which was] marvelous to me—a marvel and a wonder—as much as to anyone else" (Preston Nibley, *The Witnesses of the Book of Mormon* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1968], p. 28).

This obscure young man apparently paused while translating and dictating to Emma—probably from the fourth chapter of 1 Nephi—concerning the "wall of Jerusalem"—and said, in effect, "Emma, I didn't know there was a wall around Jerusalem."

Tutored by the Lord and by past prophets

But Joseph's keen mind was being awakened and expanded as the tutoring words of the Lord and of past prophets flowed through his quickened consciousness. In fact, he was the very seer foreseen anciently by the earlier Joseph in Egypt! (See 2 Nephi 3:6-7, 16-18.)

In a prophetic father's blessing given in December 1834 to Joseph Smith, Jr., Father Smith confirmed those promises given the ancient Joseph, and pronounced added blessings, including these, upon young Joseph: "Thy God has called thee by name out of the heavens . . . to do a work in this generation which no other man would do as Thyself." The ancient Joseph "looked after his posterity in the last days . . . And sought diligently to know . . . who would bring the word of the Lord [to them] and his eyes beheld thee, my son: [Joseph Smith, Jr.] his heart rejoiced and his soul was satisfied."

Young Joseph also heard his father promise, "Thou shalt like to do the work which the Lord shall command Thee." (See 2 Nephi 3:8.)

Earlier, during the approximately ninety days of translating, Joseph was processing—and at a remarkable rate—truths and concepts of immense significance, beyond what was then his capacity. A few gems only from that treasure trove:

Childlike and saintly submissiveness

Could Joseph have been expected, for instance, to appreciate fully that, through him, would be given the only significant scriptural elaboration of one of the most fundamental and demanding declarations of Jesus?

"Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 18:3).

Through Joseph Smith's translation came these stunning, defining, and

sobering words about what childlike and saintly submissiveness really means:

"A saint [is one who becomes] through the atonement of Christ the Lord . . . a child, submissive, meek, humble, patient, full of love, willing to submit to all things which the Lord seeth fit to inflict upon him, even as a child doth submit to his father" (Mosiah 3:19).

Help in overcoming temptation

Likewise, Paul wrote that since Jesus was tempted, he understood how to succor us when we are tempted. (See Hebrews 2:18; 4:15.) Yet it was through Joseph Smith that these confirming and clarifying words of Alma were given:

"And [Jesus] shall go forth, suffering pains and afflictions and temptations of every kind; . . . he will take upon him the pains and the sicknesses of his people . . . that his bowels may be filled with mercy, according to the flesh, that he may know according to the flesh how to succor his people according to their infirmities" (Alma 7:11-12).

Petitionary prayer

Illuminated also was petitionary prayer: "Whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive" (Matthew 21:22). "Plain and precious" and needed light was added to those words through Joseph:

"And whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, *which is right*, believing that ye shall receive, behold it shall be given unto you" (3 Nephi 18:20; italics added).

"He that asketh in the Spirit asketh according to the will of God; wherefore it is done even as he asketh" (D&C 46:30).

Rich language and deep concepts

Not only did confirming and clarifying truths flow through Joseph, but also rich language and deep concepts.

From Ammon:

"How blind and impenetrable are the understandings of the children of men; for they will not seek wisdom, neither do they desire that she should rule over them!

"Yea, they are as a wild flock which fleeth from the shepherd, and scattereth, and are driven" (Mosiah 8:20-21).

From Jacob:

"Ye have broken the hearts of your tender wives, and lost the confidence of your children, because of your bad examples before them; . . . many hearts died, pierced with deep wounds" (Jacob 2:35).

From Amulek, who finally triumphed over ambivalence:

"Nevertheless, I did harden my heart, for I was called many times and I would not hear; therefore I knew concerning these things, yet I would not know" (Alma 10:6).

Theology and beauty combine, again and again, in the pages provided through Joseph, as when the resurrected Christ appeared in the Western Hemisphere:

"And when [Jesus] had said these words, he himself also knelt upon the earth; and behold he prayed unto the Father, and the things which he prayed cannot be written. . . .

"And no tongue can speak, neither can there be written by any man, neither can the hearts of men conceive so great and marvelous things as we both saw and heard Jesus speak; and no one can conceive of the joy which filled our souls at the time we heard him pray for us unto the Father" (3 Nephi 17:15-17).

Serious study of the blessed Book of Mormon admits one to a wonder world of complexity and beauty, even in the midst of the book's simple, but powerful, spiritual refrain. We are

given that which we most need—yet we are athirst for more!

Granted, whenever the words of heaven are filtered through mortal minds and tongues there is some diminution. Yet, as with Nephi of old, so it was with Joseph Smith:

"If ye shall believe in Christ ye will believe in these words, for they are the words of Christ, and he hath given them unto me" (2 Nephi 33:10).

Joseph learned inspirational expression

Joseph later learned to express his own thoughts inspirationally, as in his forgiving letter of 1840 to a betraying but repenting W. W. Phelps.

"It is true, that we have suffered much in consequence of your behavior—the cup of gall, already full enough for mortals to drink, was indeed filled to overflowing when you turned against us. One with whom we had oft taken sweet counsel together, and enjoyed many refreshing seasons from the Lord—'had it been an enemy, we could have borne it.' . . .

"However, the cup has been drunk, the will of our Father has been done, and we are yet alive, for which we thank the Lord. . . .

"I shall be happy once again to . . . rejoice over the returning prodigal. . . .

"Come on, dear brother, since the war is past, For friends at first, are friends again at last" (*History of the Church*, 4:163-64).

Opposition in all things

Was Joseph imperfect like other prophets? Of course! Surely, Joseph could identify with these words of an ancient prophet, which he translated:

"Condemn me not because of mine imperfection, neither my father, because of his imperfection, . . . but rather give thanks unto God that he hath made manifest unto you our imperfections, that ye may learn to be more

wise than we have been" (Mormon 9:31; see also D&C 67:5).

Joseph, who translated the instructive words "there is an opposition in all things" (2 Nephi 2:11), came to understand, by experience, that the calisthenics of spiritual growth involve isometrics, the pitting of the emerging self against the stern resistance of the old self.

Anxieties and unjust accusations

Did Joseph experience the same anxieties in carrying out his mission as did other prophets? Indeed! Joseph could understand and beset Paul with a weary and beset Paul wrote:

"For, when we were come into Macedonia, our flesh had no rest, but we were troubled on every side; without were fightings, within were fears" (2 Corinthians 7:5; see also 2 Corinthians 4:8).

Was Joseph unjustly accused as were other prophets? Yes! Even unto this very day fragments of fact are flung at his memory. Paul was accused of being mad and deranged. (See Acts 26:24.) Even Jesus himself was accused of being a winebibber, of being possessed of a devil, and of being mad. (See Matthew 11:19; John 10:20.)

Loved the work and his associates

Yet, in the midst of all these things, as promised, Joseph loved the work to which he had been called. And he loved his associates! In giving individual assignments to the Twelve, we see his love and humor tenderly intertwined:

"John Taylor, I believe you can do more good in the editorial department than preaching. You can write for thousands to read; while you can preach to but a few at a time. We have no one else we can trust the paper with, and hardly with you, for you suffer the paper to come out with so many mistakes" (*History of the Church*, 5:367).

Joseph was filled with mercy as evidenced in the healing of the many

fevered sick on the banks of a river, and where his hands could not go, Joseph sent a healing handkerchief! (See *History of the Church*, 4:3-5.)

He sorrowed over his loss of a newborn child and was given permission to care for a neighbor's child during the day, then return the baby to her mother at night. An older sister of the baby, Margarette McIntire, later reported:

"One evening he did not come [home] with [the child] at the usual time, and mother went down to the Mansion to see what was the matter, and there sat the Prophet with the baby wrapped up in a little silk quilt. He was trotting it on his knee, and singing to it to get it quiet before starting out" (*Ensign*, Jan. 1971, pp. 36-37).

Leader-servant

Was Joseph a leader-servant? Demonstrably! A girl and her brother were struggling in the deep mud on their way to school. The Prophet Joseph "stooped down and cleaned the mud from our little heavy-laden shoes, took his handkerchief from his pocket, and wiped our tear-stained faces. He spoke kind and cheering words to us, and sent us on our way to school rejoicing" (*Juvenile Instructor*, 15 Jan. 1892, p. 67).

In fleeing with Joseph from a mob, a young man reported, "sickness and fright had robbed me of my strength. Joseph had to decide whether to leave me to be captured by the mob, or endanger himself by rendering aid. Choosing the latter course, he lifted me upon his broad shoulders and bore me with occasional rest through the swamp and darkness. Several hours later we emerged upon the only road and soon reached safety. Joseph's herculean strength permitted him to [save] my life" (*New Era*, Dec. 1973, p. 19).

A victim of intolerance, Joseph Smith was deeply offended when a Catholic convent was burned in New England, saying, "Yes, in sight of the very spot where the fire of American

Independence was first kindled" (*History of the Church*, 2:465). Maligned, even today, Joseph once declared, "I am just as ready to die in defending the rights of a Presbyterian, a Baptist, or . . . any other denomination" (*History of the Church*, 5:498).

Tens of thousands come to truth

While most mortals misunderstand the significance of Joseph's ministry, the adversary surely did not!

Unsurprisingly, Joseph Smith, Jr., was still growing spiritually and intellectually, when he was murdered. Yet, Joseph lived long enough to "lay out the plan of all the work which God has given you to do" as promised in the blessing from his dying father in 1840. Now the ends of the earth inquire after his name. No wonder an admiring but dying Brigham Young's last words were "Joseph, Joseph, Joseph!" (Joseph Fielding Smith, *Essentials in Church History*, 24th ed. [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1971], p. 459).

Thus, those who revile Joseph Smith will not change Joseph's status with the Lord (see 2 Nephi 3:8)—merely their own! Instead—as was promised Joseph in an 1834 father's blessing:

"Thousands and tens of thousands shall come to a knowledge of the truth, through thy ministry, and thou shalt rejoice with Them in the Celestial Kingdom; [and] thou shalt stand on Mount Zion when the tribes of Jacob come shouting from the north, and with thy brethren, the Sons of Ephraim, crown them in the name of Jesus Christ."

Gratitude for the Prophet

Some may seek to explain Joseph merely by attaching to him the generous adjective *remarkable*. Joseph was remarkable, but, much more importantly, he was instrumental!

Even now, one hears faintly the distant but approaching drum roll of history building toward a crescendo of mortal recognition when all shall see "things as they really are" (Jacob 4:13).

Meanwhile, the ancient records which a young Joseph translated will be with us "from generation to generation as long as the earth shall stand" (2 Nephi 25:22; see also D&C 5:10). These records defined a seer as one who can translate ancient records, is a revelator, and knows of things past and future. (See Mosiah 8:13–17.) Such a seer, wrote Ammon, is greater than a prophet! (See Mosiah 8:15–17.)

Therefore, brothers and sisters, I have no hesitancy—only gladness—in declaring my everlasting admiration for Joseph, the Seer! I thank the Father for providing such a seer! I thank my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, for calling, directing, and tutoring Joseph!

Humbly, I give apostolic "praise to the man who communed with Jehovah," in the name of Jesus Christ, amen!

The Choir sang "Praise to the Man" without announcement.

President Hinckley

We have heard Elder Neal A. Maxwell, a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, followed by the Choir singing "Praise to the Man."

The Choir and congregation will now join in singing "Hope of Israel," following which we shall be pleased to hear from Elder Franklin D. Richards, a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

The Choir and congregation sang "Hope of Israel."

President Hinckley

Elder Franklin D. Richards, who was released yesterday as a member of