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Renewal of “The Way”

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Renewal of “The Way”

The testimony of prophecy on renewal of “the Way.” (a) St. Peter—the time of restitution of all things. St. Peter to a multitude of Jews in Jerusalem excited by the healing of the impotent man at the gate of the city, testified that the healing was a manifestation of the power of God through Jesus Christ, and then went on to say that the God of their fathers had glorified Jesus whom they had delivered up to a false judgment and denied the Holy One, and the Just, and had killed the Prince of Life, whom God had now raised from the dead, whereof he and his brethren were witnesses. “Repent ye therefore,” were his words to the multitude,

and be ⟨ye⟩ converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began. (Acts 3:19-21)

We emphasize by repeating in substance, namely: there is to be, subsequent to the days of Peter and his associate apostles, a “time for the restitution of all things which God hath spoken by the mouths of the holy prophets since the world began.” A “time of refreshing from the presence of the Lord,” when there may be hope for Judah’s eyes to be opened to the fact that their Messiah was Jesus of Nazareth, whom they and their rulers had crucified. A time when God would “again send Jesus Christ who before had been preached unto them”; but whom, meanwhile, the heaven must retain until this time of the “restitution of all things.”

(b) St. Paul—The coming of the Dispensation of the Fullness of Times. And so St. Paul, evidently on the same subject says: God

hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: That in the dispensation of

the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and . . . 〈in〉 [on] earth; even in him. (Eph. 1:8-10)

It has already been set forth in these pages that a dispensation pertaining to the gospel is a giving out by revelation of the things of God; giving out knowledge concerning this plan of salvation; bestowing divine authority upon man to act in the name of the Lord, both in teaching and administering the ordinances of the gospel; and it has also been shown that there have been many such dispensations from the days of Adam until the days of the Christ. And now in this prophecy we have a promise that there shall be a “dispensation of the fulness of times” which can only mean a dispensation of which all others we have considered so far are but parts. And now comes this “dispensation of the fulness of times” which shall include them all in one, and that dispensation is undoubtedly the “time of the restitution of all things spoken of by the prophets”; a dispensation in which God will again send Jesus Christ to the earth, fulfilling the predictions concerning him; fulfilling the words of the angels who appeared to that group of friends watching the receding form of the Christ from the earth, and who put the question to that group: “Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner” (Acts 1:11).

And again St. Paul,

The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; When he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe. (2 Thes. 1:7-10)

Surely the voice of prophecy requires us to believe in the incoming of this dispensation subsequent to the meridian dispensation.

(c) *St. John: Vision of a restoration of the gospel in the hour of God's judgement.* Among many visions given to St. John on Patmos was this masterful one:

I saw another angel fly(ing) in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgement is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters. (Rev. 14:6-7)

This vision is to be realized in the hour of God's judgement. A period that connotes with St. Peter's “times of the restitution of all

things,” when Jesus Christ, whom the heavens are retaining now, will be sent again to the earth and in judgement; also it connotes with St. Paul’s “dispensation of the fulness of times,” in the which all things shall be gathered together in one in Christ, things both in heaven and in earth. And let it be observed that the emphasis in this message given to St. John on Patmos comes on the part where the men of all nations, kindred, tongues, and people are called back to the worship of the true God, he “that made heaven and earth and the sea and the fountains of water,” implying most strongly that the whole world in the hour of God’s judgment would not be worshipping the true and the living God, Creator of heaven and earth. Also since this gospel restored to the earth by the ministering of an angel in the hour of God’s judgment is to be preached to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people, *it* strongly implies that all nations, kindred, tongues and people would be without the gospel, hence it is restored to the earth to be universally proclaimed. None are to escape the warning voice of it. It shall be preached as the Christ himself declared,

for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come. . . . And he shall send his angels with \langle the \rangle [a] great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other. . . . Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away. But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only. But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. (Matt. 24:14, 31, 35-37)

What a unity there is in all this voice of prophecy upon the incoming of this “time of refreshing from the presence of the Lord,” these “times of the restitution of all things,” the incoming of a “dispensation of the fulness of times,” the restoration by angelic ministration of “the everlasting gospel” to be universally preached as a witness and then the end to come with the glorious appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ unto judgment!

The opening of the New Dispensation. The opening of this “dispensation of the fulness of times” came by the opening of the heavens to the prophet appointed of God to stand at the head of it. This prophet was Joseph Smith. He was born in Sharon, Windsor County, state of Vermont, U.S.A., in the year of our Lord 1805, on the 23rd of December. His childhood and early youth knew but poverty and hardships. At the age of ten his family moved and settled in Palmyra, in what is now known as Wayne County, state of New York. When about fourteen years

of age, a religious excitement arose in the vicinity of his home and his mind became intensely engaged upon the question of religion. A neighborhood revival participated in by several churches disclosed how much at variance the different sects were in relation to questions of religion. And these dissensions, together with manifest jealousy and ill will towards each other, excited the wonderment of the youth, Joseph Smith, and led him in the midst of the war of the words and tumult of opinions to frequently ask himself the question: "What is to be done? Who of all these parties is right?" At this juncture his attention was called to the golden text in the Epistle of St. James:

If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, \langle who \rangle [that] giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like \langle the \rangle [a] wave of the sea driven by the wind and tossed. [For] let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord. (James 1:5-7)

The first vision of the New Dispensation. Upon this scripture he pondered frequently until ~~at last~~ it became as the voice of God in his soul, and at last he resolved on putting this inspired message from St. James to the test. Having selected a place in a grove upon his father's farm, he retired to it and endeavored to pray for the wisdom that he felt of all persons he most needed. It was while engaged in this prayer that the heavens were opened to him, a glorious light, surpassing the brightness of the sun at noonday surrounded him, and in the midst of that intense light appeared two glorious personages, glorious beyond any power he possessed to describe them. They were alike, for although Father and Son, age writes no wrinkles upon the ever youthful face of immortals. They were alike, but one said, [pointing] to the other, " \langle Joseph, \rangle This is My Beloved Son, Hear Him!" (cf. JS-H 1:17).

And then to this second person the youth addressed in substance his question: which of all these contending sects is true, which is thy church; and which shall I join?

It speaks well for the steadiness of the temperament of this youth that in such a presence he could clearly hold in mind the object that had brought him to his first verbal prayer. He gives the message he received from this second personage, the Son of God, to whom he was directed by the Father, in the following language:

I was answered that I must join none of them, for they were all wrong, and the personage who addressed me said that all their creeds were an abomination in His sight: that those professors were all corrupt; that "they draw near to me with their lips, but their hearts

are far from me; they teach for doctrines the commandments of men: having a form of godliness, but they deny the power thereof.” He again forbade me to join with any of them: and many other things did he say unto me, which I cannot write at this time.¹

In a subsequent statement the Prophet added the following as part of what had been said to him *in addition to the direct message above*: “I was informed that I was chosen to be an instrument in the hands of God to bring about some of His purposes in this glorious dispensation.”²

The second vision of the New Dispensation: The Book of Mormon revealed. Three years after this *first* revelation an angel of God named Moroni was sent to the Prophet to reveal the existence of an ancient volume of scripture known as the Book of Mormon, a book which gives an account of the hand-dealings of God with the people whom he brought to the continents of America from what we now call the “Old World.”

(a) *The Jaredites.* The first colony came from the tower of Babel at the time of the dispersion of the people from the Euphrates Valley; they were called Jaredites, after their leader, named Jared. They occupied the land located in the southern part of Central America and founded a nation which existed for about sixteen centuries, and then were overwhelmed at last in a series of wars which ended in their complete destruction, on account of their great wickedness. This about 600 B.C.

(b) *The Nephite colony.* It was about the time of the destruction of the Jaredites that a small colony was led from Jerusalem, under divine guidance, to the western continents, where they too developed into a great people and into national life. This colony was made up of Israelites of the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh, and later augmented by a second small colony *made up* of Jews. They continued in occupancy of the land—chiefly in North America—until about 400 A.D. Then came their destruction because of their rebellion and wickedness against God. They lost touch with faith and righteousness until their civilization was overthrown, and they survived only in the tribal relations such as existed at the advent of the Europeans.

(c) *Summary of the book and its translation.* This record discloses the hand-dealings of God with these ancient people through the prophets and teachers God sent unto them, and also gives the

¹Smith, *History of the Church* 1:6; see also JS-H 1:19-20. [In the Roberts typescript, this quote was entirely in capital letters.]

²Smith, *History of the Church* 4:537, from a letter to John Wentworth.

account of the visits of the risen Christ to them, the introduction of the fulness of the gospel by his ministry, which established a true church of Christ in the western world, with all the principles and the ordinances of the gospel necessary to salvation. Therefore it contains the fulness of the gospel.

In this record God has brought forth a new witness to the truth of the things whereof the Hebrew scriptures, the Old Testament and the New also bear witness. Thus an angel came bringing the everlasting gospel which is to be preached to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people. This American volume of scripture, God's new witness to the old truths of the everlasting gospel, Joseph Smith was commanded to translate, and was given the power and means by which he could translate the unknown language of these ancient American peoples. The "means" provided was a "Urim and Thummim." This consisted of two transparent stones set in the rim of a bow, a divine instrument used in ancient times for obtaining knowledge from God. This instrument for translation was found with the gold plates on which the above record was engraven. Joseph Smith translated the Book of Mormon, and through a century now, it has been published to the world. ~~It~~ ***It is translated into*** fifteen of the world's languages.

Third vision: The restoration of the Aaronic priesthood. While engaged in the work of translating the Book of Mormon, and in answer to earnest prayer for light—and this time upon the subject of baptism—Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery were visited by a messenger of God, no other than John, the Baptist, now raised from the dead, who in addition to giving them the needed instruction on baptism laid his hands upon their heads and said unto them:

Upon you my fellow servants, in the name of Messiah I confer the Priesthood of Aaron, which holds the keys of the ministering of angels, and of the gospel of repentance, and of baptism by immersion for the remission of sins; and this shall never be taken again from the earth, until the sons of Levi do offer again an offering unto the Lord in righteousness. (D&C 13)³

This occurred on the 15th of May, 1829.

Having given to these men the authority from God to baptize, they at once baptized each other in the clear water of the beautiful Susquehanna river at the point where the visitation had taken place, the angel—John, the Baptist—standing upon the banks supervising it. Surely the manner of it, and the purpose of it, would be correct when introduced under such supervision.

³Compare Smith, *History of the Church* 1:39–43 and footnote.

Fourth vision: The restoration of the Melchizedek priesthood. Later, most likely in the month of June following, and in fulfillment of a promise made by John the Baptist, when conferring upon these young men the Aaronic Priesthood, viz., that a higher authority than he conferred would later be given to them. In fulfillment of this promise, Peter, James and John, three apostles of the meridian dispensation, came to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery and conferred upon them the Melchizedek Priesthood, a priesthood after the order of the Son of God—even the apostleship;⁴ and bestowed upon them the keys of the kingdom under which plenary power they were authorized to proceed with the preaching of the gospel, organizing the Church, and doing whatsoever might be necessary to bring it in and establish the New Dispensation of the gospel, and prepare the world for the glorious coming of the Lord Jesus, and the founding of his kingdom on earth as it is in heaven.

The development of the New Dispensation. This fulness of the priesthood restored, Joseph Smith guided by further and almost continuous revelation organized the church of Christ to be known finally as the Church of Jesus Christ and to distinguish it from the church of Christ in more ancient times, the phrase was added “of Latter-day Saints,” “The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.” The church of God and the church of the people. A compound title representing a most beautiful possession of this institution, the church of God and the church of the people.

~~Gradually~~, Under the direction of revelations from God, bishops were chosen, with priests, teachers and deacons, grouped into quorums bearing these names, and constituting a complete organization of what is known as the “Lesser” or “Aaronic Priesthood” of God’s church. This division of the organization is charged chiefly ~~in~~ **with** administering in the temporal things of the church—the outward ordinances of the gospel and the administration of the details of the financial affairs of the church, in gathering tithes, and accounting for them and distributing the charities of the church. All this, however, under the supervision of the presidency of the other division of the priesthood, namely the Melchizedek Priesthood, which presidency presides over the whole church and all its affairs.

The higher or Melchizedek priesthood consists of ~~the~~ high priests, apostles, seventies, and elders, clothed with authority to act for God,

⁴The exact date of the restoration of this order of the priesthood is not definitely known, but the approximate date can be fixed as of this time named in the text. The matter is considered at length in Smith, *History of the Church* 1:40–42.

more especially in the spiritual activities of the church: preaching the gospel and administering in all its ordinances ***including the ordinances in the holy temples***; in teaching and expounding its truths; warning the nations of judgments to come, and of the approaching time when the Son of Man shall again appear on the earth and open up the promised reign of righteousness and peace.

The spirit of priesthood government. All this administrative work, both in the Aaronic and Melchizedek priesthoods, is to be in the spirit of unfeigned love for, and interest in, the people of the world. It is part of the law given unto this Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints that no power or influence can or ought to be maintained by virtue of the priesthood—authority derived from God—only by persuasion, long-suffering, gentleness, by meekness and by love unfeigned, by kindness and pure knowledge, which shall greatly enlarge the soul, without hypocrisy and without guile, reproving betimes with sharpness when moved upon by the Holy Ghost to do so, and then showing forth afterwards an increase of love towards those who have been reproved that they might know that the faithfulness of God’s priesthood is stronger than the cords of death (cf. D&C 121:41–44). In this spirit the Church government, which is purely moral government, is to be administered.

The Church so organized brings back the same organization though somewhat amplified, as that which was established by the ministry of Christ and his apostles in the great meridian dispensation. It has two great functions to perform, this Church: viz., To teach God’s revealed truth to all the people; to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people. And second, to perfect the lives of those who accept this proclamation of God’s message, the everlasting gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ—the Truth.

The organization of the Church. This organization in its humble first forms,[†] began its existence on the sixth day of April, 1830, in Fayette township, Seneca county in the state of New York, and thence has passed through its century of existence until now knowledge of it

[†]On Roberts’s statement about the “humble first forms of the Church,” the committee of the Quorum of the Twelve wished to avoid any implication that the early Church was not fully organized by the Savior himself: “We think that this expression may be misunderstood and the thought may be conveyed that the forms of the Church have been changed, rather than developed.” Of this concern Roberts handwrote **non-sense!** Reporting to President Clawson, George Albert Smith suggested: “Some other word [than “humble first forms”] could be used.”

has spread over all the earth, and through it is restored to the world the Way, meaning by that a full and complete restoration of the everlasting gospel, uniting in one all the previous dispensations of it, and expanding toward that fulness of knowledge through the revelations of God yet future until it shall indeed gather together all things in Christ both things which are in heaven and in earth, “even in Him.”

Enlargement of the New Dispensation over others: Visions in the Kirtland Temple. As showing the enlargement of the New Dispensation over all other dispensations that have preceded it, attention is called to several important administrations that took place in the Kirtland Temple in 1836.

(a) Vision of the Savior. First, following the solemn dedication of the temple on the third of April, the Savior appeared to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery in the temple proclaiming the acceptance of the house, and of the people who had erected it; the latter as his church, then struggling into existence, and blessed them. The description of our Lord’s appearance was worthy of the occasion:

We saw the Lord standing upon the breastwork of the pulpit, before us; and under his feet was a paved work of pure gold, in color like amber. 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 ~~many~~ **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. Behold, your sins are forgiven you; you are clean before me; therefore, lift up your heads and rejoice. Let the hearts of your brethren rejoice, and let the hearts of all my people rejoice, who have, with their might, built this house to my name. For behold, I have accepted this house, and my name shall be here; and I will manifest myself to my people in mercy in this house. . . . And the fame of this house shall spread to foreign lands; and this is the beginning of the blessing which shall be poured out upon the heads of my people. Even so. Amen. (D&C 110:2-7, 10; see also Rev. 1:12-18)

(b) Of Moses. After this vision closed, the heavens were again opened and Moses appeared before them and committed unto them the keys of the gathering of Israel from the four parts of the earth, and of the leading of the ten tribes from the land of the north (D&C 110:11). Thus the way was opened for the restoration of Israel to his proper place in God’s plan of things. For the restoration of Israel to their lands and to the favor of God are among the things to be achieved in the New Dispensation.

(c) Of Elias. This vision closed, one Elias appeared, and committed “the dispensation of the gospel of Abraham,” saying that in these

brethren and their seed all the generations after them should be blessed (D&C 110:12). This personage was one it appears who had been associated with Abraham, and he came to deliver the keys of the dispensation held in the earth in the days of Abraham, and since he was the one chosen to deliver such keys, he undoubtedly stood at the head of that dispensation; and most probably was Melchizedek, the great High Priest of Abraham's time, who even blessed Abraham, and to whom Abraham paid his tithes; and as St. Paul suggests, undoubtedly the lesser is blessed of the greater (Heb. 7:7). Also it is to be noted that he restored something of patriarchal power and blessing since he said unto the brethren that in them and their seed all generations after them should be blessed and this is of patriarchal character, that would be fittingly delivered by a patriarch, whom we have already identified tentatively with the patriarch Shem, the son of Noah.

(d) Of Elijah. Following this vision *of Elias* came one which is characterized by those who received it as "great and glorious," for Elijah, the prophet, who was taken to heaven without tasting death stood before them and said:

Behold, the time has fully come, which *<is>* [was] spoken of by the mouth of Malachi—testifying that he (Elijah) should be sent, before the great and dreadful day of the Lord come—To turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the children to the fathers, lest the whole earth be smitten with a curse—Therefore, the keys of this dispensation are committed into your hands; and by this ye may know that the great and dreadful day of the Lord is near, even at the doors. (D&C 110:14-16)

From the keys of knowledge which Elijah restored great light is thrown upon the plan of salvation showing it to be of more extensive application to the human race than was ever dreamed of in the conceptions of men previous to this visitation of Elijah.

Brief allusion to this extension of the application of the Atonement, and of the whole plan of the gospel, to those who had not had opportunity to learn of it in this life, or who having heard it, failed to avail themselves of its sovereign grace—as in the case of those who lived in the days of Noah (1 Pet. 3:18-20; 4:6)—has already been made in chapter forty; but the importance of the subject requires that further details be added here.

It is learned from the keys of knowledge which Elijah restored that the hundreds of millions who have died without a knowledge of Christ or of his gospel, including all the so-called heathen races, together with those who have been misled by the teachings of pseudoministers of Christ, are not eternally lost, but that, since the spirit of man when

separated from the body retains all the faculties of mind, the gospel is preached in the spirit world to the disembodied spirits, and that on condition of their accepting the gospel, and living according to the laws of God in the spirit, they may be saved on condition of the outward ordinances of the gospel being administered vicariously for them upon the earth by their agents—their relatives, or chosen friends.

The message of Elijah—salvation for the dead. That the gospel is preached to departed spirits is evident from the scriptures:

For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit: By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison; Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water. (1 Pet. 3:18–20)

The plain, simple statement here is that the spirit of Christ, while his body lay in the tomb, went and preached to the spirits which were disobedient in the days of Noah. Turning again to the subject in the chapter following the one just quoted, the apostle says:

For this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit. (1 Pet. 4:6).

That the ancient saints also knew something about performing ordinances vicariously for the dead is evident from this remark of the apostle Paul: “Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? why are they then baptized for the dead?” (1 Cor. 15:29).

And we ask, if there was no such thing among the ancient saints as baptism for the dead, why, then does Paul refer to it in such positive terms?

Other ordinances for the dead. If baptism may be performed vicariously for the dead, it stands to reason also that other ordinances associated with securing salvation for man may also be vicariously administered on behalf of the dead: confirmation into the Church of Christ, and to baptism of the Spirit; ordination to the priesthood; marriage, eternal marriage—by which the parties to the marriage covenant are married as men and women are married who are in the flesh, who are alive: married in the bonds of an eternal covenant of marriage, not merely “until death do us part,” but married for always, “for time and for eternity!” For such is the nature of the marriage

covenant under the authority of the holy priesthood, the power which binds on earth and it is bound in heaven; which looses on earth, and it is loosed in heaven. This the power Jesus bestowed upon St. Peter when he gave unto him “the keys of the kingdom of heaven,” saying: “And whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven” (Matt. 16:19). So that while it may be true, as saith Christ it is, that in the resurrection they “neither marry, nor are given in marriage” (Luke 20:34-37); that means no more than that earth-life and the earth are the time and place of marriage, as it is also the place and time of baptisms, and confirmations, and ordinations, and all ordinances and ceremonies pertaining to the earth-life of man and his salvation; and not that the marriage status does not obtain in the eternal worlds—in our world when it shall become a sanctified and glorified sphere—a celestial world—a heaven, inhabited by the redeemed of this world and shall be their heaven.⁵

The gospel of Christ is not limited, then, in its power to save to this earth-life, or this world alone. Its powers enter into the spirit world. And by its proclamation in the world of spirits the fathers will learn that they are dependent upon their posterity still in this world for the performance of the outward ordinances of the gospel; hence, their hearts will be turned to the children. The children on earth will learn that it is within their power to attend to ordinances of the gospel for their progenitors; hence, the children will be turned to the fathers and the two worlds will be linked together in sympathetic relations. It is because of this, because of the knowledge restored by Elijah, that the Latter-day Saints, wherever they have planted their feet, have sought, even in the days of their greatest poverty, to build a temple, the proper place in which to attend to these ordinances for the dead; and they thus witness to the world that the hearts of the children are turned to the fathers and “that the great and dreadful day of the Lord is near, even at the doors”! (D&C 110:16).

Thus has been brought to pass the renewal of the Way—the restoration to earth of the everlasting gospel in the New Dispensation of it—the Dispensation of the Fulness of Times, in which all things will be gathered together in one—*even* in Christ—and consummated; completed by the coming, at last of the kingdom of God on earth, and the doing of the will of God on earth even as it is done in heaven. ~~Even so, O God, the Eternal Father, may it come, and come quickly!~~

⁵See chapter 55 of this work for further treatment of marriage in the New Dispensation.

If the successive events stated in this chapter be considered, the volume of them, and the glory of them, they will of their own force carry a weight of conviction to the open mind that will go far in establishing their truth. This method of considering them will be a fine illustration of a mind-principle much relied upon by the prophet of the dispensation who brought them forth. “Every word that proceedeth forth from the mouth of \langle God, \rangle Jehovah,” he said, “has such an influence over the human mind—*the logical mind*—that it is convincing without other testimony. Faith cometh by hearing.” His trust in the absoluteness of truth is further illustrated by his continuing remarks on the above occasion: “If ten thousand men testify to a truth you *know* would it add anything to your faith? No. Or will ten thousand testimonies destroy your knowledge of a fact? No.” Then concluding his remarks he said: “I don’t want any one to tell I am a prophet or attempt to prove my word.”⁶ Which is to say that he relied upon the innate power of the truth in that word he spoke—that message he delivered—to be the convincing power of it. He had been taught of God to regard the mind of man as native to the truth and possessed of power to cognize it. “Man was in the beginning with God,” is his doctrine, revealed to him of God.

Intelligence, or the light of truth, was not created or made, neither indeed can be. . . . Behold, here is the agency of man, and here is the condemnation of man; because that which was from the beginning is plainly manifested unto them, and they receive not the light. And every man \langle who \rangle [whose spirit] receiveth not the light is under condemnation. For man is spirit. (D&C 93:29-33)

And being spirit, in the chief fact of him, he has power by reason of that fact to cognize the things of the spirit, for his spirit is native to the things of the spirit, and he is under condemnation when he does not receive them. Hence our Prophet, shortening up Paul’s phrase, and making it more direct, frequently cried aloud in his discourses: “Faith cometh by hearing the word of God” (cf. Rom. 10:17). And upon that “hearing of the word of God,” the Prophet of the New Dispensation relied for the convincing power of its truth. And in that same spirit and confidence of its innate power of convincing men of the truth, we submit this brief account of the restoration of the Way of eternal life to the children of men.

⁶Remarks at Nauvoo, August 6th, 1843, Smith, *History of the Church* 5:526; italics in original.

Further references recommended by Roberts for this lesson: “Epistle of Kallikrates”; Roberts, *Deseret News*, April 28, 1928; Roberts, *Outlines of Ecclesiastical History*, pt. 4, 295-450; Huidekoper, *Christ’s Mission to the Underworld*, esp. p. 49; Pratt, *Remarkable Visions*; Smith, *History of the Church* 1:40-42 and notes; L. Smith, *Joseph Smith*; Widtsoe, *Restoration of the Gospel*; and D&C 1; 20; 110; 127; and 128:20.