

APRIL CONFERENCE 1974

One of the most profound truths ever uttered came from the lips of the Lord Jesus in these words: “Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.” So it is recorded in our Bible.

In the more perfect Nephite account this glorious doctrine is taught more accurately in these words: “And blessed are all the pure in heart, for they shall see God.”

I believe—with sincerity, certainty, and conviction—that these ancient pronouncements, recorded in the Bible and confirmed by the Book of Mormon, mean exactly what they say; and that when the Lord of Life says that the pure in heart shall see God, he means that the pure in heart shall see God.

It is of this personal and intimate relationship that can and should exist between the Lord of Heaven and those of his friends on earth who are pure in heart that I desire to speak. In the very nature of things this is such a holy and sacred matter that it can be approached only with the guidance of the Holy Ghost, and any statements made with reference to it “must be spoken with care, and by constraint of the Spirit,” lest the Spirit being grieved withdraw its influence and we be left without either inspiration or understanding.

To the carnal mind the things of God are esteemed as foolishness, for spiritual realities can only be known and understood by the power of the Holy Ghost. God stands revealed or he remains forever unknown. Revelation is the sole source of that knowledge which leads to salvation in his kingdom, for “no man can know that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.”

And so now, I pray that the Father of us all, whose word is truth and who desires that all men come to a knowledge of the truth, will pour out his Spirit upon us so that my spoken word, whether heard or read, shall sink into receptive hearts and aid in guiding the faithful saints along that course which will enable them to see Him whose we are.

In the eternal sense all men have seen and will yet again see their divine Creator. We are the spirit children of the Eternal Father. We dwelt in his house, saw his face, heard his voice, and learned his laws. All who were noble and great in that pre-mortal sphere desired to become like him and gain glorified bodies of their own which would in fact make them exalted beings in their own right in the eternities that lay ahead.

And all men, both the just and the unjust, the righteous and the wicked, shall in due course “stand before God to be judged according to the deeds which have been done in the mortal body,” yea, all shall come forth in immortality and stand “before the pleasing bar of the great Jehovah, the Eternal Judge of both quick and dead.”

But what of the Lord’s dealings with his mortal brethren? Who among them has or does or will see his face and hear his voice, as when “a man speaketh unto his friend”?

The Lord Jesus, who is the great Jehovah, revealed himself to all who would come unto him during his mortal ministry. In that dispensation God was in Christ manifesting himself to the world, for his Only Begotten Son was also God, who could truly say to all men, "I and my Father are one," and "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father."

Long ages before his mortal birth this same Lord came to Enoch's city "and dwelt with his people, and they dwelt in righteousness. " After his resurrection he appeared on a mountain in Galilee, to more than 500 of his Jewish brethren, and for 40 days he continued to teach and minister to the Twelve of that day. Among the Nephites a great multitude, numbered in the thousands, felt the nail marks in his hands and in his feet and heard the words of life and light which fell from his lips. When the day comes that millennial peace is ushered in, all of earth's inhabitants will be privileged to bask in the light of his countenance. During that thousand-year period when the Lord reigns personally upon the earth, surely millions and billions of his friends shall see his face and hold intimate communion with him.

But let us turn to our own day, which like all past dispensations, is one in which darkness covers the earth and gross darkness the minds of the people, except among those of us who have come out of darkness into the marvelous light of Christ. We have come to know that God speaks again; that the heavens, long sealed, have been opened; and that holy angels and the Lord himself once more hold communion with the pure in heart.

Among the glorious truths revealed anew in our day is this: The Lord Jehovah has given a law unto all things, and that he himself is no respecter of persons. Whenever we abide the law which entitles us to receive a blessing, that blessing flows to us automatically. It cannot be other wise, for the Almighty is a Being in whom there is no variableness neither shadow of changing. He is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

This, then, is his law where personal communion with him is concerned:

1. 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;
2. And that I am the true light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world;
3. And that I am in the Father, and the Father in me, and the Father and are one. (D. & C. 93:1-3.)

That a great host of prophets, both ancient and modern, have obeyed this law and gained the promised blessing is evident to us all! About 1550 years ago, Moroni wrote: "I have seen Jesus, and . . . he hath talked with me face to face." And then addressing himself to us he said: "And now, I would commend you to seek this Jesus of whom the prophets and apostles have written, that the grace of God the Father, and also the Lord Jesus Christ,

and the Holy Ghost, which beareth record of them, maybe and abide in you forever.”
(Ether 12:41.)

It was this same Moroni, who lived some 400 years after Christ, who left us this doctrinal and historical account:

19. And there were many whose faith was so exceeding strong, even before Christ came, who could not be kept from within the veil, but truly saw with their eyes the things which they had beheld with an eye of faith, and they were glad.

20. And behold, we have seen in this record that one of these was the brother of Jared; for so great was his faith in God, that when God put forth his finger he could not hide it from the sight of the brother of Jared, because of his word which he had spoken unto him, which word he had obtained by faith.

21. And after the brother of Jared had beheld the finger of the Lord, because of the promise which the brother of Jared had obtained by faith, the Lord could not withhold anything from his sight; wherefore he showed him all things, for he could no longer be kept without the veil. (Ether 12:19-21.)

As to the Brother of Jared, Moroni’s record also says:

19. And because of the knowledge of this man he could not be kept from beholding within the veil; 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.

20. 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.)

In the light of these principles, it comes as no surprise to find the Prophet Joseph Smith teaching: “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.”

In November, 1831, while the foundations of this great latter-day work were being laid, before all the keys had been restored, and before men had again been called to the holy apostleship, the Lord said to the elders of his Church:

10. And again, 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 and know that I am—not with the carnal neither natural mind, but with the spiritual.

11. For no man has seen God at any time in the flesh, except quickened by the Spirit of God.

12. Neither can any natural man abide the presence of God, neither after the carnal mind.

13. Ye are not able to abide the presence of God now, neither the ministering of angels; wherefore, continue in patience until ye are perfected. (D&C 67:10-13.)

By March of 1835 the organization of his kingdom had been so perfected and expanded that the Lord was prepared to proclaim the full glory and beauty of priestly authority in these words:

18. The power and authority of the higher, or Melchizedek Priesthood, is to hold the keys of all the spiritual blessings of the church—

19. 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.)

These blessings and privileges—glorious, wondrous, incomprehensible except as made clear by the enlightening power of the Holy Spirit—are the same ones possessed and enjoyed by holy men of old. Of those who magnified their callings in the Melchizedek Priesthood in ancient days we read: “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.” (Alma 13:11-12.)

We ought not to think that the rich and glorious blessings of the gospel are beyond our ability to obtain. We must have the hope of eternal life if we ever expect to gain that high estate. If we expect to become like God what is more important than to become his friends and confidants and gain from him the uplift and desire to continue in godliness until our souls are perfected? How sweet and comforting are these words: “I am in your midst, and I am the good shepherd, and the stone of Israel. He that buildeth upon this rock shall never fall. And the day cometh that you shall hear my voice and see me, and know that I am.” (D&C 50:44-45.)

Nor need we think that the Lord is too busy to hear our petitions or to visit us in our afflictions. His work is to bring to pass immortality for all men. His glory, is to raise those who believe and obey, not alone in immortality, but unto eternal life in his Father’s kingdom. The Lord wants his people to be saved. He wants them to gain eternal life. He pleads with them to make their calling and election sure. He holds himself in readiness to

say to all those who obey the fulness of his law: “Son, thou shalt be exalted. “ It is his desire to give us the Second Comforter.

“Now what is this other Comforter?” the Prophet Joseph Smith asked. His answer, as the Holy Ghost guided his tongue, came in these words:

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 the 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 First Born. (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, pp. 150-151.)

Here is the voice of God to us:

68. ...sanctify yourselves that your minds become single to God, 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. (D. & C. 88:68.)

And here is our answer:

93.... holy glorious is the voice we hear from heaven, proclaiming in our ears, glory, and salvation, and honor, and immortality, and eternal life; kingdoms, principalities, and powers! (D. & C. 128:23.)

In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, who desires to reveal himself unto us, even so,
Amen